



# Brokering Success

Improving skilled immigrant employment outcomes through strengthened government-employer engagement.

Mowat Centre

ONTARIO'S VOICE ON PUBLIC POLICY

# Agenda

## Speakers

Matthew Mendelsohn, Director, Mowat Centre

Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director, Global Diversity Exchange (GDX),  
Ryerson University

## Moderator

Joan Andrew, Public Servant in Residence at Ryerson University

Question and Answer Period

# Today's presentation

Matthew Mendelsohn, *Director, Mowat Centre*

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director, Global Diversity Exchange (GDX), Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE PATH FORWARD



**MAYTREE**

For Leaders. For Change.



**At an estimated price tag  
of \$11.37 billion per year in  
unrealized earnings, we can ill-  
afford to continue discounting the  
qualifications and experience of  
immigrants to Canada.**

# The study

How do governments engage with employers on the issue of employing skilled immigrants?

What tools do governments have at their disposal to improve this engagement and its outcomes?

80 interviews, across 10 provinces, with governments, employers, not-for-profits and immigrant employment councils.

A white line-art map of the United States is positioned at the top of the slide, spanning across the width. The map shows the outlines of the states and major geographical features like the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The background is a solid dark red color.

# Framing the Landscape

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Skilled recent immigrants have an unemployment rate four times that of Canadian-born peers.

The income and employment gap is getting harder to overcome.

Since 2008, Labour Market Agreements have fostered a more demand-led approach to supports.

Upcoming Express Entry and Canada Job Grants depend on employer leadership.

Want to make sure small and medium employers aren't left out of the conversation



# Levers for government- employer engagement



**Legislation and Policy**

**Economic Development Offices**

**Funding Employment and**

**Settlement Services**

**Intermediaries**

# Legislation and policy

## Immigration entry streams

PNP, TFW, Experience class

Employers are seeking speed and local market fit, more than lower wages or security.

## Equity legislation, protection for workers

Equity works, though not for everyone; hard to expand.

Manitoba's WRAPA model: employers must engage through licensing, but receive extra services.

# Economic development offices and employer outreach

Economic development officers have one-on-one contact with employers.

These officers can be first point of contact for programs, requirements, supports.

Economic development work is often regarded as separate from employment and workforce planning.

Exception: *Alliés Montréal*, an Immigrant Employment Council, is co-located with a regional

economic development agency.

# Funding of employment and settlement services

“Classic” funding of job-readiness, work-placement programs via not-for-profit sector (wage subsidy, etc.).

Governments looking for greater funding leverage:

- Instability and constant change a problem.
- B.C. Employer Innovation Fund
- Employers are interested in settlement and integration as employment benefit.
- Marketing settlement services at subsidized rates to business.

# Intermediaries

A major area of connection:

- Sector Councils
- Professional and Industry Associations
- Business Councils, Boards of Trade, IECs

Advantages include:

- Sector-specific knowledge, labour market info
- A consistent network of employers over time

Searching for a sustainable funding model

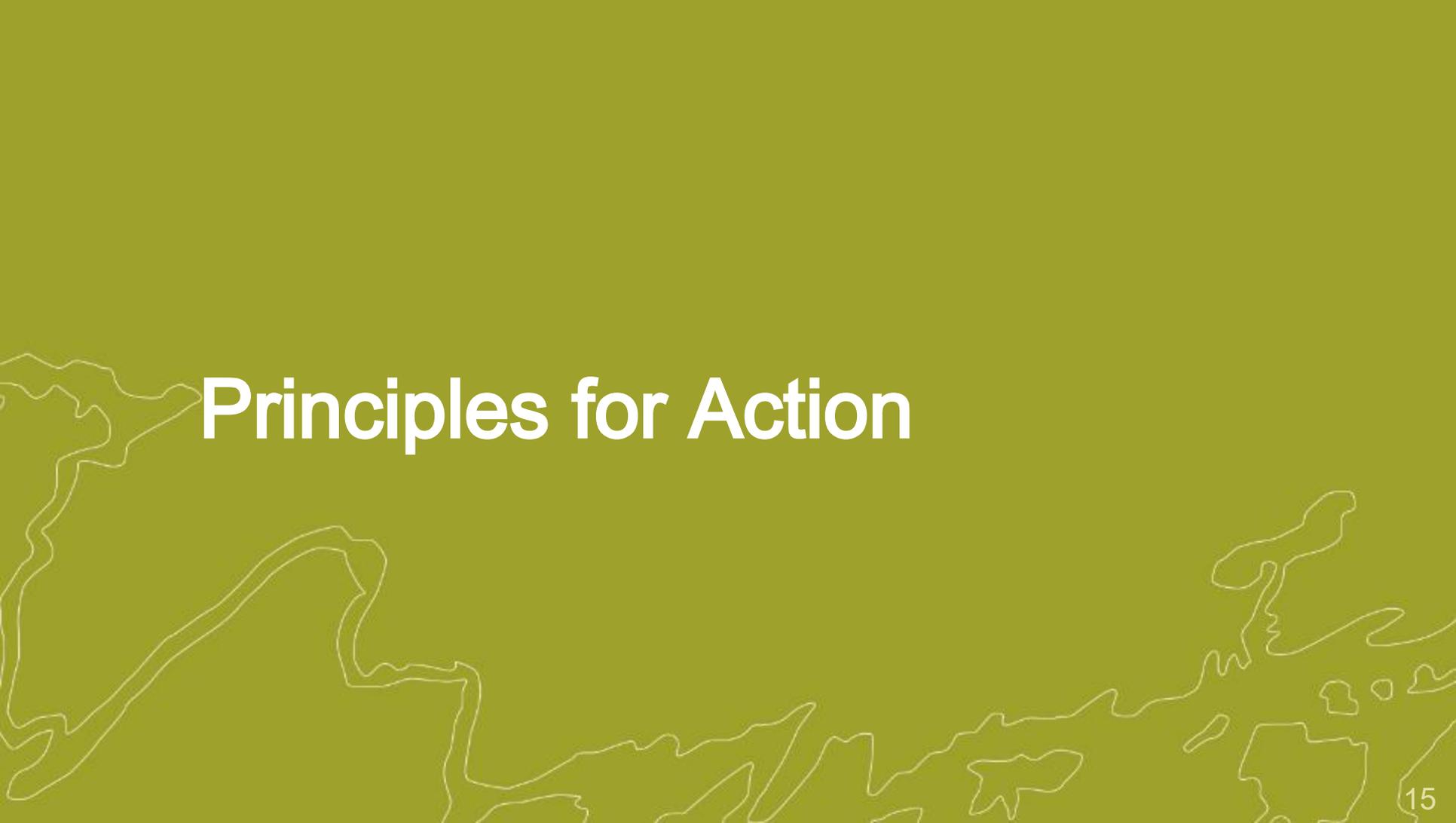


# What's working elsewhere?

- U.S.: Michigan Works!, WIRE-Net
- U.K.: Sector Skills Councils
- AUS: Enterprise Migration Agreements
- NZ: Skills and Employment Hubs

Many ways to approach combination of government, employers and community organizations.

# Principles for Action



# Adapt to local needs

Recognize Canada's regionally-segmented labour market

Culture matters, too: Equity in Quebec versus Ontario

Provinces small and large: make employer engagement as direct as possible

- Economic development officers where feasible
- Otherwise, intermediaries such as sector councils

Incent employers to develop their own solutions

# Support smaller enterprises

Engaging large employers can become the path of least resistance.

Important to include a strategy for SMEs early in the development of new programs.

Combine levers: for example, intermediaries helping SMEs access funded supports.

Governments should aim to benefit those who do engage with greater efficiency: WRAPA regulatory obligation leads to talent solutions

# Build a common language

Seek intermediaries, such as business organizations and economic development officers, who speak the language of business.

Encourage employers to more concretely define skills and qualifications to get past the “Canadian experience” barrier.

Competency-based language can also improve labour market information.

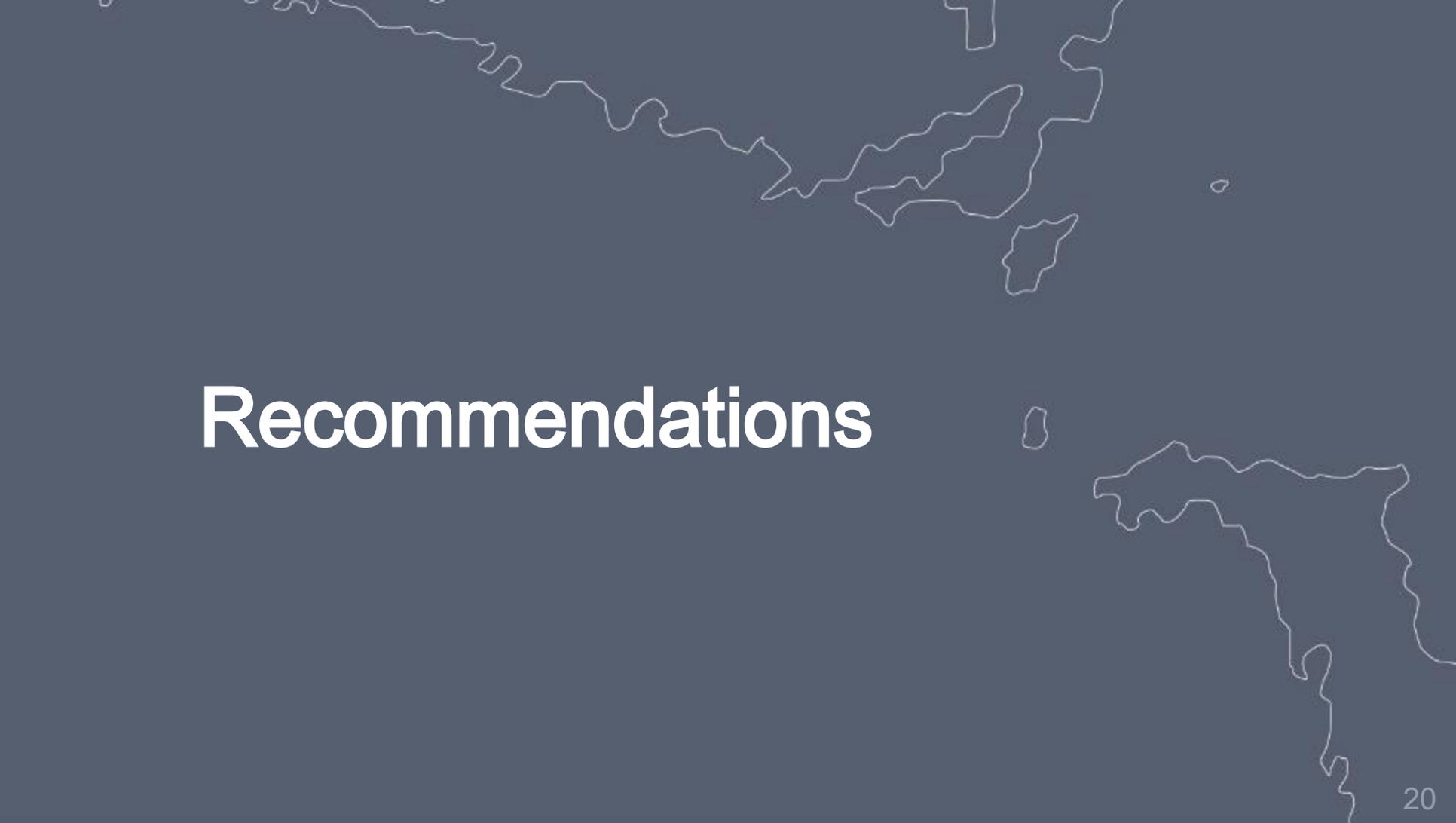
# Promote stability

Keeping up with frequent, disruptive policy changes can cause employer disengagement.

Anxieties around the shape of the Canada Jobs Grant are an example of this.

Long-term stability of program branding, design is key to developing relationships of trust.

Should fix things that don't work, but if something is working, keep doing it!



# Recommendations

- Develop clear strategies for engaging employers

## **“Internal” Recommendations**

- Use an integrated, whole-of government approach
- Undertake more rigorous analyses of the R- O - L of these programs
- Implement rigorous, harmonized metrics for evaluation
- Support more avenues for recruiting skilled labour within Canada

# “External” Recommendations

- pass legislation to create a new licensing and employer registration system
- work together to develop locally-based labour market information
- create incentives for employers to move toward competency-based hiring practices
- pilot programs to create incentives for ongoing employer engagement with government
- develop mechanisms or channels so that employers can provide feedback directly to government

# Going Forward

- 1.** Jurisdiction is an issue
- 2.** Consultation fatigue among employers
- 3.** Over-representation of selection issues in the policy narrative
- 4.** Lack of stability of programs and policies that support employers
- 5.** Employer engagement is always difficult

# Question and Answer Period

Please type your questions in the question box in the centre of your screen.





# Wrap-up

- Recording will be available shortly
- Visit [www.hireimmigrants.ca](http://www.hireimmigrants.ca) to access success stories, sign up for etips and watch past webinars
- Feedback survey

# Thank you

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