



Ottawa tough job market for foreigners

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Foreign-trained professionals travelling to what many of them consider to be the promised land of Ottawa wind up struggling to survive here, a labour market expert says.

"This is a stream of some of the smartest people you'll ever see," said Bruce Switzer. "What employers, and others in this community, need to realize is that our future is dependent on them."

Switzer is president of Integration Resources Canada, an Ottawa-based employment organization that works with foreign-trained professionals immigrating to the capital in search of work.

Switzer said he's seen individuals with a great amount of foreign education and experience passed over for jobs even though 83% of immigrant job-seekers have post-secondary education, compared with about 62% for their Canadian-born counterparts.

'SURVIVAL' JOBS

"One morning, a man came into my office who had been working as a cost management engineer in China and had done work for companies in the United States," said Switzer. "When he tried to get a job through a variety of employment agencies, they said he needed Canadian work experience. He was told, 'Go get a job at Tim Hortons.' In other words, take a survival job."

A Statistics Canada study released yesterday found many recent immigrants in the 25-54 age range experienced more difficulties in the labour market than their Canadian-born counterparts. The study also suggests immigrants from certain regions, such as Southeast Asia, had more success finding jobs than those from other parts of the world.

Recent studies have also suggested job growth locally after 2011 will be 100% dependent on immigrant labour.