

The following paper is considered open to suggestions and feedback.

Please submit any feedback to Jill Bucklaschuk at  
[bucklaschukj@brandonu.ca](mailto:bucklaschukj@brandonu.ca).

***An Overview of Temporary Foreign Workers in Brandon, Manitoba:  
Expectations, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders –  
governments, communities, and employers***

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## **1. Introduction and Background**

Resulting from discussions with government, community, and industry representatives regarding knowledge gaps related to the impacts and nature of the flow of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) and their families to the area, a dialogue group was formed. The Rural Development Institute (RDI)<sup>1</sup> TFW Dialogue Group represents various perspectives and will serve as a mechanism to better understand the TFW process while also developing a network to promote and assist further related work. An overall vision for the group includes the capacity to choose and discuss related topics and engage guest speakers that will inform policy, programming, planning, and research. An inaugural meeting was hosted by RDI on September 11, 2007 and the meeting's goal was to create a forum that encourages open and dynamic discussion that responds to the need for clarity and direction for community and government stakeholders. The outcome of the first meeting was an established group structure, content focus, and processes for moving forward. A second meeting, which was held on November 8, 2007, focused on clarifying the expectations, roles and perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the temporary foreign worker process. This paper will use as its starting point the discussions presented at this second dialogue group meeting combined with information gleaned from various consultations with stakeholders and secondary documents.

As a manner of disseminating knowledge gained from consultations with key stakeholders on the topic of TFWs and insights developed from discussions at the RDI TFW Dialogue group meetings, a series of discussion papers will be produced. Each paper will focus on the topic chosen and discussed at the meetings while also combining the perspectives and knowledge of involved stakeholders with existing data and literature. The intention is to produce literature that is truly discussion-oriented by encouraging stakeholders' feedback throughout the writing process as well as opening the papers to discussion at each of the Dialogue group meetings. While not claiming to be an all-inclusive review of each topic, these papers will represent an attempt to fill in knowledge gaps related to TFWs and rural immigration while also advancing the importance of communication processes amongst those stakeholders in the realms of research, practice, and policy.<sup>2</sup>

The Rural Development Institute's involvement within the field of rural immigration has been relatively recent. In 2005 RDI hosted a rural immigration think tank session, engaging participants from a variety of interest groups both nationally and internationally. Since that time RDI has conducted four Manitoba case studies examining impact and community change associated with the flow of immigrants into rural areas<sup>3</sup>. A series of lessons and knowledge was gleaned through those activities informing future work and policy. Now, in light of the

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<sup>1</sup> RDI is a non-profit research and development organization with a mandate to promote and conduct academic and applied research on rural issues. RDI provides a forum for academia, government, and community through the facilitation of research and activities designed to encourage and promote community involvement. RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders.

<sup>2</sup> Individual names and identifying characteristics will not be mentioned so as to present information in a broad, concise manner, without attributing anything to one particular individual. This paper represents an aggregate of information that provides information on what is happening at the federal, provincial, and community levels, but does not intend to be all-encompassing or authoritative. It is a representation of information learned through a number of different sources, benefiting from collaboration and consultation with involved stakeholders. The information presented here is meant to prove instructive for further research and policy considerations, facilitate collaboration between communities and government and initiate contact and communication amongst involved actors.

<sup>3</sup> All case studies are available online at <http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publications.asp> under the heading "Rural Immigration".

conclusions reached through those case studies and the suggestions to consider each immigrant experience as unique in its own right, attention has shifted towards TFWs. This group of migrants, while being categorically different from those immigrants studied in the Manitoba Case Studies, pose unique challenges and considerations for receiving rural communities as their temporary status is encouraged to become permanent by way of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Ultimately the question that remains for rural communities receiving TFWs or economic immigrants is how can stakeholders ensure successful immigrant attraction, settlement and integration in small communities and rural areas?

Stakeholders in government, research, and community service provision have expressed a desire to better understand the impacts associated with the flow of TFWs into Brandon, Manitoba and area. Immigration and associated community changes have recently become a topic of local interest with the growth of industries, subsequent labour demands, and labour shortages. Economic growth coupled with labour shortages in low to high skilled jobs and expanding operations at industries such as Maple Leaf Foods has resulted in the need to re-evaluate recruiting and hiring practices, extending employee searches beyond the local, provincial, and national labour pools to other countries. Regulated by the federal government, the Low-Skilled Temporary Foreign Worker program (TFWP) offers an expedited process for recruiting and hiring foreign workers with lower skill levels and on a temporary basis. Also of particular interest to this research project is the fact that in Manitoba TFWs have to opportunity to apply to the PNP, thus contributing to the province's annual immigration targets and dramatically changing the demographics of rural centres. In general, Manitoba's immigration policies and documented success with the PNP make it a unique case in which to study rural immigration and temporary workers.

## **2. Context of Immigration in Manitoba<sup>4</sup>**

The Province of Manitoba is often looked at as an example of successful immigrant attraction strategies with such ambitious immigration targets of 10,000 being exceeded in 2006. The most recent provincial immigration goal is to double those annual immigration levels over the next ten years. Supported by the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) which was signed in 1996, Manitoba's immigration policy framework is designed to share responsibilities and cooperation with the federal government. Also, the Province of Manitoba has adopted the *Action Strategy for Economic Growth*, with one of the frameworks' pillars being the *Growing Through Immigration Strategy*. The strategy has set specific immigration targets and ensures that newcomers and communities have all necessary supports.

Manitoba's key immigration tool is the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), which seeks to attract skilled workers and families to Manitoban communities. According to Amoyaw (2008), "in 2006, Manitoba received 6,661 provincial nominees (highest number of provincially selected immigrants across Canada), who accounted for 90.3% of the province's economic immigration (7,375) and 66.7% of Manitoba's total immigration (10,051)". The PNP gives the Province of Manitoba the primary role of recruiting, screening, and thus nominating economic immigrants who are assessed within particular priority streams including family support, employer direct, international students, community support agreements, and strategic initiatives<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> For a detailed report on Manitoba's immigration context see Amoyaw (2008).

<sup>5</sup> For more information regarding Manitoba immigration visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/index.html> and [http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/asset\\_library/en/resources/pdf/mb\\_immigrat\\_reprt\\_06.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/asset_library/en/resources/pdf/mb_immigrat_reprt_06.pdf).

Recently, it has become apparent that there is another element of Manitoba's immigration context that cannot be ignored and that is the arrival of temporary foreign workers (TFWs). The total number of TFWs in Manitoba increased from 1,490 in 1997 to 3,494 in 2006. In 1997, approximately 65% of foreign workers went to Winnipeg with the percentage decreasing slightly in 2006 to 58%. The top 5 source countries for foreign workers include the United States, El Salvador, Philippines, China, and Germany.<sup>6</sup>

Through consultations with industry and government stakeholders it has been learned that TFWs are becoming a significant contribution to the PNP. According to the 2006 Manitoba Immigration Facts released by Manitoba Labour and Immigration (LIM), approximately 400 employers were assisted with recruitment and hiring processes that intended to bring TFWs to the province. The document further explains that these temporary workers are encouraged to become permanent immigrants through the PNP and can apply to the program following six months of working in the province.

### **3. Context of Immigration in Brandon**

The focus of much rural immigration research in Manitoba over recent years has been on the thriving communities of Morden/Winkler and Steinbach, which both, according to Manitoba Labour and Immigration (2006), are amongst the top 65 immigrant destination communities in Canada. Also, Winkler has been reported to have, by population, the largest proportion of immigrants than any other community in Canada.<sup>7</sup> In Manitoba, the majority of immigrants settle in Winnipeg, however, approximately 7,200 newcomers have settled in over 100 communities throughout the province since 2003 (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2007). The percentage of immigrants settling in communities other than Winnipeg was approximately 30% in 2006.<sup>8</sup>

One of the goals of this research project is to shift focus away from metropolitan centres and larger cities such as Winnipeg with the intention of bringing attention to rural areas and their experiences with immigration and TFWs. As the second largest city in Manitoba, Brandon (population of approximately 41,000) cannot be considered a major metropolitan centre, and by all accounts falls within the category of a small, rural city.

Little work has been done on the context of immigration in the City of Brandon, despite the fact that it ranks as the third top immigrant destination in Manitoba. According to the recent 2006 Census data, the population of the city of Brandon has increased by 4.5% since 2001, but the reasons for this growth are not specifically known. It cannot be denied that immigration is having an impact on the city. Brandon has been and is a predominately English-speaking city with the majority of residents being of some European origin. Owing its very existence to immigration in the late 1800s, Brandon's experiences with immigration in recent years have not been significant; however, within the last few years this is changing. According to Brandon's sole immigrant service provider organization, Westman Immigrant Services, their most recent

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<sup>6</sup>Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 2006. Facts and figures, 2006. Digital Library. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/statistics/facts2006/index.asp>.

<sup>7</sup> Case studies conducted in 2005 by Silvius (2005a, 2005b, 2005c) more specifically discuss the context of immigration in the regions of Morden/Winkler, Steinbach, and Parklands, while highlighting deeper insights into the experiences of rural immigrants.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on Manitoba's regionalization strategies and rural immigration see Amoyaw (2008) and Silvius (2005a, 2005b, 2005c).

year-end report indicates that 205 new files representing immigrants from 33 countries were opened between April 2006 and March 2007. These countries include the following:

- Afghanistan; China; Cuba; Ecuador; El Salvador; England; Egypt; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Georgia; Germany; Guatemala; Guyana; India; Indonesia; Iran; Israel; Korea; Liberia; Lithuania; Mexico; Namibia; Netherlands; Russia; Rwanda; South Korea; Sudan; Syria; Taiwan; Turkey; Ukraine; U.S.A.; Vietnam.

Statistics indicate that the number of landed immigrants arriving to the city has increased from 410 between 1991 and 2000 to 780 between 2001 and 2006. According to Statistics Canada<sup>9</sup>, the 2006 Census indicates that there are 2,715 landed immigrants in Brandon, as compared to 2,050 in 2001. In 2006, there were approximately 425 non-permanent residents<sup>10</sup> in city, as compared to 100 in 2001. Another indicator of Brandon's increasing immigrant population is represented by the number of residents whose mother tongue is not English and/or French. In 2001, 2,690 residents reported a mother tongue other than Canada's two official languages, and in 2006 there were 3,635. Immigration to Brandon is increasing, thus changing demographic characteristics and introducing all new challenges and benefits to the community.

### *3.1 Temporary Foreign Workers in Brandon, Manitoba*

The arrival of TFWs in Brandon is a relatively recent phenomenon. When the Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) pork processing plant opened in Brandon in 1999, it became evident within two years of operation that the local available labour pool was not large enough to fill all positions at the plant. In 2001, MLF began their first foreign recruitment campaign for workers from Mexico and have continued with hiring labourers, temporarily, from overseas (for further details see section 4.4 and Appendix A). While MLF is not the only employer using foreign labour in Brandon, they do bring the highest numbers of TFWs to the community. Other industries such as AtomJet Industries (manufacturing and machining) and Wheat City Roofing have hired workers from overseas, but they are concerned with hiring high-skilled, permanent workers.

The number of TFWs arriving to Brandon between 2004 and 2006 increased from 67 to 147. Between those same years, the total number of TFWs living in Brandon increased from 127 to 275 (this approximates 0.6% of Brandon's total population). Paying particular attention to TFWs in the intermediate (or low) skill levels, statistics indicate that over four times more foreign workers with low-skill levels came to Brandon (25 foreign workers arrived in 2004 and 108 arrived in 2006)<sup>11</sup>. Also, in 2006, there were 211 foreign workers living in Brandon with intermediate skill levels compared to 68 in 2004<sup>12</sup>. These statistics may appear to be rather low, but in comparison to the size of Brandon these numbers represent a significant occurrence. More foreign workers are living in Brandon and more are arriving to the community.

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<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. 2007. Brandon, Manitoba (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed December 6, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> According to Statistics Canada, non-permanent residents "are persons from another country who, at the time of the census, held a work or study permit, or who are refugee claimants, as well as family members living with them in Canada".

<sup>11</sup> CIC Facts and Figures 2006.

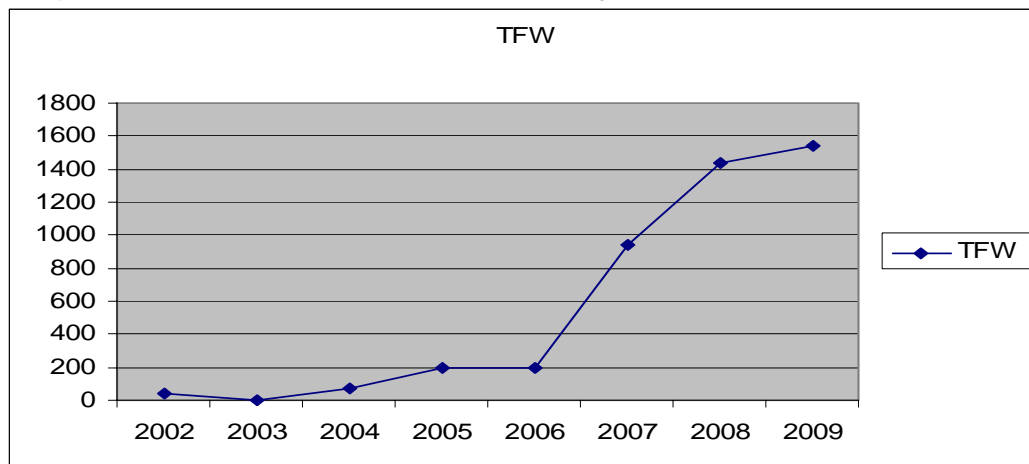
<sup>12</sup> It must be noted that official government data collection techniques may not accurately reflect the number of TFWs living in Brandon as they often are not counted in the Census. Also, categorically, temporary foreign workers may also include counts of entertainers, international students, and other individuals working for a short period of time in Canada.

Specifically at the MLF plant in Brandon, arrival of TFWs is increasing (see Graph 1 and 2 below). As of January 2008, the total number of employees at the plant was approximately 1700. About 60% of current employees are foreign workers and amongst that population the plant experiences a 95% retention rate. In 2007, MLF expanded operations and moved to a second shift, which required an additional 800 employees. Hiring processes for the second shift has occurred in two phases with phase one beginning in mid-2007, which required an additional 200 employees. Phase two is intended to begin in September 2008, requiring an additional 500 employees. Based on the shortages of available labour in Canada and past hiring practices, the majority of the second shift is anticipated to be foreign workers possibly from China, Colombia, Mauritius, and Ukraine. The approximate timeline of hiring for the second shift is as follows:

- September 2007 - 400 new foreign workers
- March 2008 - 150 new foreign workers
- September 2008 - 300 foreign workers
- March 2009 - 50 foreign workers.

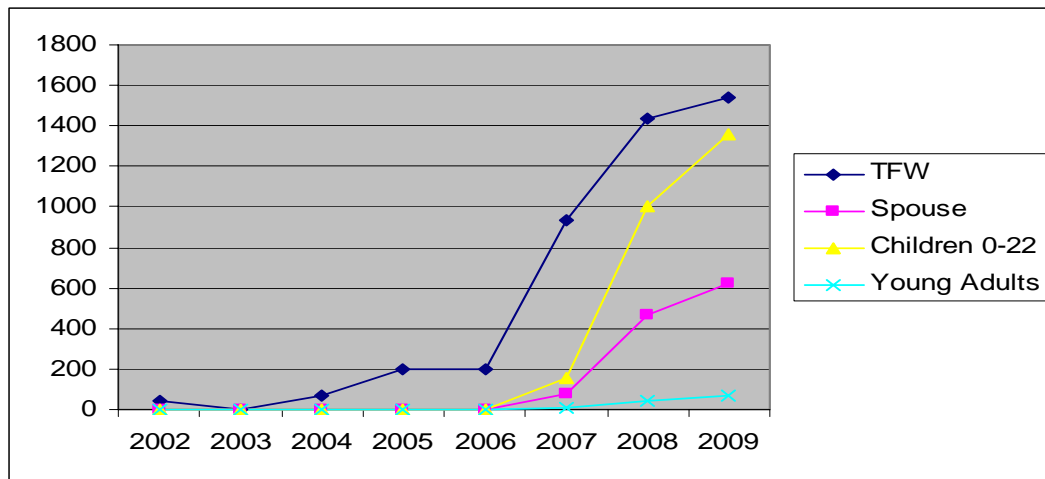
For further timelines of the Maple Leaf Foods plant in Brandon, see Appendix A or visit <http://www.brandon.ca/main.nsf/Pages+By+ID/648>.

**Graph 1: Cumulative TFW Arrivals and Projections<sup>13</sup>**



<sup>13</sup> Source: January 2008 Stakeholder Update Economic Development Brandon: Population Projections Economic Development Brandon

**Graph 2: Cumulative Actual and Projected Arrivals<sup>14</sup>**



## **4. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders**

### *4.1 Federal Government and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program*

Prior to 2002, the majority of TFWs entering Canada were of professional skill levels. Since then the annual flow of low-skilled (intermediate and clerical or elemental and labourers) TFWs in Canada has exceeded the flow of professional TFWs (CIC, 2006). According to CIC (2007b), approximately 90,000 TFWs enter Canada each year. Interestingly, there are no numerical limits or quotas under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and thus, as employers need, any number of TFWs may be requested and/or hired. With pressures from the boom in Alberta and the anticipated decline of population in Canada within the next ten years, the federal government has committed to further develop the TFWP. The intention of this program is to develop a more effective process by which employers can quickly address labour needs by recruiting and hiring foreign workers on a temporary basis (Pascoe and Davis, 1999).

The TFWP is regulated by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). IRPA ensures that those employers hiring temporary foreign workers demonstrate that fair wages are offered and that appropriate working conditions consistent with Canadian standards are in place. Also, IRPA requires employers to demonstrate that they have made reasonable efforts to hire and train Canadian workers and that hiring TFWs will not affect a labour dispute in the workplace. More specifically, two federal government departments - Human Resources and Social Development Canada/Service Canada (HRSDC/SC) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) – negotiate, regulate, administer, and manage the TFWP so that it will work in Canada and reach its goal of benefiting the Canadian labour force.

Between the two federal government departments, the TFWP as a whole is jointly and concurrently managed; however specific tasks, procedures, and processes are assigned to

<sup>14</sup> Source: January 2008 Stakeholder Update Economic Development Brandon: Population Projections Economic Development Brandon



each department. HRSDC/SC's primary role is to work with employers and includes the following:

- reviewing the employer's applications for foreign workers;
- and issuing either a positive or negative opinion on the likely impact that hiring TFWs may have on the Canadian labour market (a labour market opinion or LMO).

Labour market opinions are issued or not issued based on the following considerations:

- whether a Canadian or permanent resident can fill the job;
- whether hiring a foreign national will help create opportunities or a benefit for Canadian job seekers;
- and whether the working conditions equal those of Canadian expectations.

As previously mentioned, HRSDC/SC determines the impact that hiring TFWs may have on the Canadian labour market. While the process of hiring TFWs is driven by employer demand, HRSDC/SC must issue a positive LMO before employers can hire workers. LMO exemptions may be available to shorten waiting and processing times when workers are crucially needed or when there are clearly demonstrable labour shortages within a given occupation in a province. A list of these Occupations under Pressure has been released by HRSDC/SC and is available online at [http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign\\_workers/occunderpres.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/occunderpres.shtml). Considering the list of LMO exempt occupations, almost half of CIC's issued work permits are issued without HRSDC/SC's involvement. To manage the LMO exempt occupations, Temporary Foreign Worker Units were established on a pilot basis in Montreal, Calgary, and Vancouver to guide employers through the application and immigration process. The units pre-screen supporting documents from employers and make the hiring and recruiting process more efficient. The units will only handle applications and cases that are from LMO-exempt industries and occupations.

CIC's primary role is to work with foreign workers rather than employers. Their responsibilities include:

- reviewing applications from foreign workers;
- and issuing work permits.

Generally, applications for work permits are processed by CIC at embassies, high commissions, and consulates outside Canada. Ultimately, CIC is responsible for determining who may be eligible to work in Canada and is the first point of contact for foreign workers. Also, CIC is the source of most statistics regarding TFWs.

Finally, the Canada Border Services (CBSA) has a significant role in the TFWP, but does not have the same program and policy based involvement as HRSDC and CIC. CBSA screens foreign workers at Canadian border crossings and airports to ensure that workers meet admissibility requirements before the work permit is issued. Technically, CBSA has the final say on who may or may not enter the country.

#### *4.1.2 Definitions and Categorizations of 'Temporary Foreign Workers'*

As explained by Pascoe and Davis (1999), oftentimes the term 'temporary foreign worker' refers to highly skilled workers who bring their specialities to the Canadian knowledge-economy and fill positions that cannot be filled by Canadian workers. However, there are a number of different classifications of TFWs, including highly skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers, all of which are needed, in differing capacities, within the Canadian labour force. In CIC's annual Facts and

Figures document of immigration data, four mutually exclusive groups of temporary residents are defined:

- foreign workers, who are in Canada primarily to work;
- foreign students, who are in the country to study;
- individuals in the humanitarian group, who are primarily refugee claimants;
- and others.

Developed by the Government of Canada, the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system more specifically categorizes occupations for foreign workers by skill level. For example, NOC skill levels A & B include those occupations that are highly skilled and require some form of formal training beyond secondary school including apprenticeships, vocational or specialized training, college or technical school certificates, and / or a university degree. The NOC C & D skill classification refers to low-skilled occupations requiring lower levels of formal training, which is the focus of this research.

The NOC C & D Pilot Program, which was formerly known as the Low-Skilled Pilot Project, allows for the temporary entry of foreign workers in positions that require lower skills. This program underwent a number of changes in February, 2007 including an extended maximum period of time for temporary work permits (from 12 months to 24 months). This extension allows employers to continue to employ TFWs for a period of 24 months without requiring them to leave Canada. Under the requirements of the program, to successfully hire TFWs employers must meet the following regulations:

- cover the full cost of workers' travel to and from Canada;
- ensure that any health care premiums are covered until the provincial plan is available;
- assist workers in settling into the community;
- ensuring the *availability* of affordable and suitable housing (employers are not required to provide housing);
- and have in place an employer-employee contract that illustrates wages, duties, and conditions related to transportation, accommodations, health, and occupational safety.

There are other programs for and categories of low-skilled TFWs including:

- The Live-in Caregiver Program, which brings qualified workers to Canada to work as caregivers in the employers' home when there are not enough Canadians to meet labour market needs. After living and working in Canada for two years live-in caregivers can apply to be a permanent resident in Canada.
- The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), which allows for the organized movement of foreign workers to meet the temporary seasonal needs of Canadian agricultural producers during peak harvesting and planting periods when there are traditional shortages of qualified Canadian workers. SAWP was developed by HRSDC and CIC in cooperation with agricultural producers and a number of foreign countries including Mexico and several Commonwealth Caribbean countries. Work permits are issued for no longer than 8 months and workers do not have the opportunity to apply to Provincial Nominee Programs or for landed immigrant status (for more information see <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/seasagri.shtml>).

For more information on the NOC C & D Pilot Program see: Human Resources and Social Development Canada (2007) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada's website (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/low-skill.html> - Working Temporarily in Canada).

#### *4.2 Provincial Government – Focus on Manitoba*

The provincial government works closely with the regional offices of HRSDC/SC to facilitate recruitment of workers in high demand occupations. Also, the Province is responsible for regulating and enforcing employment standards and therefore the well-being of TFWs in the work place is considered, in part, the responsibility of the Province. Regarding employment benefits and rights, TFWs are covered under Provincial and Federal programs including:

- the federal employment insurance program (provided that the required number of insured hours of work, workers can receive sickness benefits and unemployment insurance);
- minimum wage and working conditions;
- workers' compensation;
- Canadian Pension Plan (must make at least one valid payment to the plan and are at least 65 to qualify);
- and health care (coverage available to workers and family members listed on a work permit valid for at least 12 months in Manitoba).

Most Provincial settlement programs that are in place are mandated to only cover Provincial Nominees and landed immigrants, potentially causing service gaps for TFWs. Therefore, including TFWs in settlement strategies and programs has the potential to stretch Provincial resources beyond capacity. The Province is currently working with stakeholders and attempting to find ways to successfully incorporate TFWs into provincial programs.

The role and success of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) particularly makes Manitoba a unique case in which to examine TFWs. Following six months of employment in Manitoba, and provided there is a long-term job offer with a Manitoban employer, TFWs can apply to the PNP, leading towards landed immigrant status. Provided that TFWs choose to use this option and successfully apply to the PNP, a new strategy to meet immigration targets within the Province is unfolding.

More generally applicable to Provincial immigration strategies as well as the TFW process, the Province, and specifically Manitoba Labour and Immigration, engage in the following activities to ensure communication and engagement with stakeholders:

- act as a liaison between foreign contacts and businesses;
- assist businesses with choosing the proper tool to meet labour market needs;
- and assist businesses with long term human resource planning.

#### *4.3 Communities – Focus on the City of Brandon*

Municipal governments and local organizations have a strong role to play in the recruitment and hiring processes. For example, Service Canada representatives have a close relationship with local governments and they work together to evaluate the labour and economic climate of the community with the intention of determining whether a positive or negative labour market opinion is issued. Also, local governments work to promote their community in international venues with intentions of attracting immigrants to fill otherwise vacant positions. Local governments have interests in economic development and growth, and thus a plentiful source of labour is needed if industry and commercial businesses are to prosper.

Within Brandon, the Economic Development office and the City of Brandon have seen their involvement with immigration increase over the past three years or so. With labour shortages evident across a number of occupations, the City has had to look at new ways to address these shortages if they want a thriving community. Hiring foreign labour has not been a common practice in the past, but it is now becoming a viable and attractive option. This hiring practice

can address population declines as well as other demographic challenges. The arrival of TFWs is a recent phenomenon and therefore clearly defined practices and processes to deal with the influx of newcomers are in their infant stages. The roles and responsibilities of organizations and municipal governments are often unclear and are continually redefined. It is the community that is faced with the impacts on and issues related to settlement, such as housing, social services, language, and education.

The Economic Development office has what can be referred to as a facilitation role with employers, service providers, and government. In their facilitation and supporting role, the Economic Development office has created stakeholder meetings, established a number of working groups, and coordinates the “Network Committee” with Westman Immigrant Services (WIS). Other key responsibilities include:

- providing supports and reports on immigration matters for business use;
- working with Service Canada to ensure community capacity for TFWs;
- supporting Maple Leaf Foods;
- and providing assistance to Brandon industries when they approach the office for labour market needs.

In the community, WIS is the primary source for information and services for immigrants. However, WIS is only mandated to provide services such as English as an Additional Language (EAL) to landed immigrants and not TFWs. Recently, the provincial government has stated that organizations such as WIS should be providing some settlement services to TFWs, which is stretching resources even further. In Brandon, the demand for settlement services is greatly increasing as a number of TFWs become eligible for permanent status and bring their families to the community. When families arrive, WIS establishes a family file and assists them with such things as registering for school and finding doctors. Being the only organization of its type in Brandon, WIS's resources are stretched beyond capacity as more newcomers increase the demand for the organization's services.

#### *4.4 Employers – Focus on Brandon and Maple Leaf Foods*

The temporary foreign worker process is driven by employer demand for labour. Employers create the demand for labourers and are responsible for recruiting and hiring TFWs. As such employers are, according to regulations outlined in IRPA and the TFWP, required to cover all costs of traveling to and from Canada, ensure that affordable housing is available, guarantee fair wages, and establish an employer-employee contract with TFWs. While the aforementioned requirements are officially established by the federal government, there is still the opportunity for individual businesses to negotiate the terms and offer other incentives for workers to come to their industry.

In Brandon, MLF has seen their recruitment and hiring strategies change from targeting local to national, and then to international labour pools. To expedite the process of hiring foreign workers, MLF uses the NOC C & D Pilot Program for low skilled workers. Prior to the federal governments' recent changes to the program MLF had negotiated an agreement with the federal government to utilize a two-year work permit for their workers. In attempting to more permanently address labour shortages, MLF explicitly, and early in the process, communicates to foreign workers the option of using the TFWP as a bridge to the Provincial Nominee Program.

To initiate foreign worker hiring, MLF must provide a business case to HRSDC to substantiate foreign recruitment, which leads to either the positive or negative issuance of a labour market

opinion. Once approval is received, the company then works with the following government or inter-government agencies to ensure that the process moves quickly and efficiently:

- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Official CIC approved recruitment agency
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Canadian Embassy in country of selection

Based on an official agreement between IOM and/or recruitment agency, country of selection, and MLF, these three parties work together to screen qualified candidates based on criteria supplied by MLF. With initial screening completed by IOM or an agency, MLF sends a Senior Human Resource representative, a Senior Production Supervisor, and Health Care Supervisor to the country of selection to interview and assess the selected candidates. When interviews are completed and jobs offers are accepted, MLF submits the applications to the Canadian Embassy affiliated with the country of selection, which then conducts the necessary immigration tests to ensure the candidates meet official immigration regulations such as health and police checks. Provided that all requirements are met, an application for a 2-year temporary work permit is processed for each of the selected candidates.

At the community level, MLF works with the City of Brandon on a number of issues regarding settlement services and community impact. For example, the City of Brandon and MLF hold organized stakeholder meetings to discuss successes and challenges associated with the first shift of TFWs to better plan for subsequent hiring. Key stakeholders have been organized around eight key areas of focus including community settlement, daycare, education, health, housing, justice, language training, and transportation. MLF will not financially support social agencies that are publicly funded, but they will work with stakeholders and service support to ensure that settlement services are being met.

## **5. Key Issues & Conclusions**

As outlined in the previous sections of this paper, it is clear that there are many different stakeholders involved in the process of hiring, recruiting, and settling TFWs. With so many different actors in the process inevitably there are a number of issues raised at all levels.

A concern that is often voiced at the local level is that sources of information regarding the temporary foreign worker process are not readily available. This lack of information leads to much confusion regarding the allocation of responsibility and resources for the needs of TFWs. CIC and HRSDC/SC may regulate and manage the TFWP, but information sharing and communication with those at the local and provincial level is considered to be lacking. It is difficult for local and provincial governments to plan for the future when policies and programs change without local consultations or prior notice. Even within the community itself communication amongst service providers is lacking and there is not a clear understanding of which organizations are addressing which needs. Whether officially acknowledge or not, those at the community level become responsible for ensuring the availability of social supports and services. It must be considered at all levels of government and planning that communities bear the brunt of many social impacts associated with influxes of newcomers. For example, in the City of Brandon key concerns amount around the following areas:

- housing;
- day care;
- language including translation and interpretation services;

- EAL;
- and financial resources for training those in service provider roles.

Further points of concern for communities arise when the population of TFWs become permanent. The impacts of family arrivals and a permanent population of immigrants put different strains and pressures on settlement and social services. If the Province plans to encourage TFWs to apply to the PNP then service providers and receiving communities need to know about such intentions so as to adjust plans that will accommodate a more permanent or transitional population of foreign workers. A lack of information and communication regarding family arrivals strains housing, day care, education, and health services. Clear communication regarding future recruiting and hiring plans between industry, government, and community is required to ensure all needs in a variety of sectors are met. Also, if the long-term intention is to retain these newcomers then it must be ensured that all services are being met, focusing on fostering a welcoming community.

An interesting point that must be acknowledged, and which requires further research, comes from concerns raised by other Brandon businesses. MLF has, in a sense, created a source of employees in Brandon through family reunification. When TFWs bring their families to Canada upon receiving PN status not all family members work at the MLF plant, thus seeking employment elsewhere. For example, the hospitality industry is anticipating family arrivals to address their labour shortages through what could be termed a 'trickle down' effect of those TFWs who receive PN and landed immigrant status. Hiring family members of TFWs is increasingly seen as a method to address labour shortages in entry-level, low skilled positions in the hospitality industry. However, employers have expressed that a lack of involvement in TFW-oriented meetings and consultations have caused challenges related to service provision. For example, without a clear understanding of where newcomers can receive assistance, employers act as service providers, offering transportation to financial institutions, doctor's appointments, and bus stations, and struggle with language barriers. On the whole, employers need more resources and services to address labour shortages and manage those newcomers that are hired. As employers in Brandon witness the success of MLF and experience the side-effects of their hiring practices, foreign labour will be increasingly viewed as a solution to labour shortages.

In sum, the main issues facing key stakeholders and their ability to develop plans and processes to cope with influxes of TFWs include:

- A lack of communication and information sharing amongst all involved stakeholders.
- The availability of statistics regarding TFWs is scarce and future hiring plans of industries are not always clearly communicated to those at the community level. This lack of information sharing makes it difficult for service providers and local government to develop forward-looking plans. The importance of having a clear understanding of what is and will be happening in the community is paramount to addressing housing shortages, health care access, and education funding.
- At the local level, knowledge regarding responsibilities and roles is not clear amongst stakeholders, which results in repetition or absence of services.
- There is confusion around who is meeting all the needs of TFWs in the time between their arrival and when they receive PN status.
- Resources at Brandon's sole immigrant service centre are being stretched beyond capacity as TFWs receive PN status and begin to bring their families to the community.

Key questions to guide further research on the topic of TFWs include:

- Who is responsible for TFWs in the period of time between when they arrive to the community and when they may become permanent immigrants? What services are they entitled to within this period of time?
- How can stakeholders ensure successful immigrant attraction, settlement and integration in small communities and rural areas?
- How can TFWs be encouraged to become permanent residents of rural communities?
- What are the impacts of changing timelines and policies of the TFWP on communities?
- What is happening with regards to labour standards and the employment of TFWs?
- How can communities be prepared for the arrival of TFWs?

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## **Appendix A**

### **Maple Leaf Foods timeline in Brandon, Manitoba**

(available online at <http://www.brandon.ca/main.nsf/Pages+By+ID/648>)

#### **August 1999.**

- Plant opened.

#### **May 2001.**

- Maple Leaf extended recruitment campaign to the Atlantic Provinces.

#### **September 2001.**

- Maple Leaf announced that 49 Mexican workers will be in Brandon by January 2002. They arrived in Brandon with a 2 year work permit to work only at the MLF plant.

#### **March 2002.**

- 28 more Mexicans arrived in Brandon.

#### **August 2002.**

- 9 more Mexicans arrived with 7 family members of previously recruited Mexican employees.

#### **November 2002.**

- 44 workers from El Salvador arrived in Brandon.

#### **January – December 2004.**

- The plant welcomed Ethiopian workers (from other provinces)
- Ukrainian workers arrived.

#### **January – December 2005.**

- Arrival of more Salvadoran workers.

#### **January – December 2006.**

- Chinese workers arrived.

#### **September 2006.**

- Second shift is announced which will require an additional 1000 employees.

#### **March 2007.**

- 200 Chinese workers near completion of extensive EAL classes and meat cutting training in China.
- Workers expected to arrive in Brandon in mid June 2007.

#### **April 2007.**

- MLF received approval from Service Canada to bring an additional 400 foreign workers to Brandon in 2007.
- MLF plans to bring an additional 250 foreign workers to Brandon between July and October 2007. Roughly one quarter of these workers will replace employees lost to attrition, while the remaining workers are required to support the second shift expansion.

#### **July 2007.**

- 208 Chinese workers arrived in Brandon between mid June and early July to begin working.
- 165 Columbian foreign workers are scheduled to arrive in Brandon between August and September 2007.
- A significant percentage of foreign workers that have been in Brandon for several years have applied for or already received landed immigrant status. They have begun the process to relocate their families to Brandon.

#### **August 2007.**

- The first 24 of 150 Columbians arrived in Brandon on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to begin working.
- The remaining 126 Columbians will arrive in small groups every two weeks over the next few months.

## **Appendix B**

### ***Additional Resources regarding Temporary Foreign Workers***

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