

Comparative Study of Temporary Foreign Worker Programs in Selected Communities in the Westman Region

Funded by Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)

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Since 2007, the Rural Development Institute (RDI) has conducted a number of research projects that have focused on the capacity of rural communities to attract and retain foreign workers. The main reasons for these new arrivals include labour market factors such as expanding industries and labour shortages. The expansion of operations at Maple Leaf Foods and Hytech/Springhill Farms, for instance, has required new recruiting practices to attract temporary foreign worker from overseas countries. Regulated by the federal government, the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program offers an expedited process for recruiting and hiring foreign workers with lower skill levels and on a temporary basis.

Based on the success of its research endeavors, RDI has established a partnership with the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) to conduct a research study of TFW programs in the Westman region. FOCAL seeks to identify the training and information needs of temporary foreign workers coming to Canada and their family members at all stages of the migration process – pre-departure, during work contracts in Canada and upon return or integration to their country of origin. FOCAL seeks to assess the training opportunities arrival to temporary foreign workers in order to best respond to their needs and interests, as well as to stronger relationships between the host communities in Canada and the sending communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The focus of this project is a qualitative study of the experiences and perceptions of foreign workers hired under a TFW program prior to arriving in Canada and after they have commenced working. To this end, RDI will conduct a short survey that will give a general picture of the needs and aspirations of temporary foreign worker in the Westman region as well as an overview of what information about the TFW programs they were provided both before and after arriving in Canada. Rural Development Institute will then solicit responses from a series of focus group questions, which will inform stakeholders involved in TFW programs with strategies to identify shortcomings, gaps, and deficiencies as well as to strengthen and improve existing TFW programs.

Participants in this particular project will be restricted to Spanish-speaking workers. Approximately 50 foreign workers will participate in the survey and focus group discussions. A workshop evaluation will also be conducted to assess the experiences of the participants engaged in the survey and focus group discussions.



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Research Objectives:

- To better understand the skills and training needs of temporary foreign workers before arriving and after being in rural Canada
- To provide community stakeholders and government representatives with pertinent information regarding skills and training needs of the temporary foreign worker population in rural areas
- To disseminate findings, results, and lessons learned

Overall, the goal of this project is to attain a general picture of what is working and not working in communities making use of TFW programs in their industries. It is expected that the insights gathered from this study will inform subsequent research projects.

The Research Team for this project includes:

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