

FIRST OF ITS KIND IN CANADA! NEW EMPLOYMENT WEBSITE WILL HELP KEEP INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS HERE IN ONTARIO

Toronto – SkillsInternational.ca, a new website connecting employers across Ontario with internationally educated professionals, will help keep talented professionals from leaving Ontario to find jobs elsewhere.

SkillsInternational.ca is the result of a two-year collaborative partnership between COSTI Immigrant Services in Toronto, WIL Employment Connections in London, and the Waterloo Region District School Board. With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, this innovative online tool will allow newcomer settlement agencies to link newcomers to Ontario's labour market.

"It's clear that without Canadian work experience, newcomer professionals are finding it difficult to find a job in their field here in Ontario," said Mario J. Calla, COSTI's Executive Director. "By creating an employment website dedicated to showcasing the skills of newcomers, we are making it easier for employers to hire internationally trained job applicants and easier for professionals to find employment here."

"Working together on the design, creation, and launch of the SkillsInternational website has been exciting," continued Calla. "We are giving large and small companies an efficient way to tap into Ontario's global talent."

The résumés of hundreds of pre-screened and qualified applicants have already been posted on the SkillsInternational.ca website with thousands more expected to follow. SkillsInternational will give employers the opportunity to view candidates' credentials online and perform searches based on the skills, experience and education they require.

"Our government recognizes Ontario's growing population of newcomers is essential to the province's future prosperity," said Ontario's Citizenship and Immigration Minister, Mike Colle. "This new employment website complements the work the Ontario government is doing to get skilled newcomers into the workforce sooner."

"If Ontario can demonstrate that it is serious about offering employment opportunities to newcomers and is willing to utilize the skills of the immigrants already here, then our province will become more attractive in the world-wide labour market," says Anne Langille, General Manager of WIL Employment Connections. "SkillsInternational.ca is another important step in connecting skilled professionals to the employers that need them".

The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, receives annually \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's casino initiative. The Foundation allocates grants to eligible charitable and not-for-profit organizations in the arts and culture, environment, human and social services, and sports and recreation sectors. For more information, visit www.trilliumfoundation.org.

COSTI Immigrant Services is a community-based multicultural agency providing employment, educational, and social services to new Canadians and individuals in need of assistance. Since 1952, COSTI has been helping those in need, assisting newcomer professionals and tradespersons and all individuals looking for employment, providing hope to refugee families, protecting women and children, strengthening families, combating racism and discrimination, and assisting all those who function at a disadvantage in society. With a staff of over 200 people, speaking more than 60 languages, COSTI strives to ensure that all individuals, regardless of language, cultural, or financial barriers, are given the opportunity to use their existing skills, learn new ones, and participate in all aspects of Canadian life. COSTI presently provides support to over 49,000 individuals annually.

WIL Employment Connections is a non-profit organization dedicated, primarily, to facilitating the economic integration of immigrant and Canadian women and men into the broader community of London and area. To this end, WIL provides services in assessment, employment counselling, employment preparation, information, referral, and advocacy

The **Waterloo Region District School Board** is one of the larger school boards in Ontario serving the seven municipalities that make up the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. Since 1992, WRDSB has received Human Resources and Skills Development Program funding to operate the New Canadian Program. Over these 14 years, the program has developed a proven track record in working with, and responding effectively to, the employment needs of persons new to Canada. Through a vision of *Engaged Learners, Engaged Communities*, the Board operates under the following mission statement: *strive to deliver an exemplary public education through diverse and inclusive learning environments that engage learners in: developing their potential and pursuing their aspirations; and being participating community members.*