



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada



# International Experience Canada

## OVERVIEW

**BCCIE Summer Seminar**  
***Concurrent Sessions Series D***

**Whistler, BC**  
**June 23, 2015**



**Canada**



## What we want to speak with you about

- Provide general information on the International Experience Canada (IEC) program.
- Provide information on initiatives underway.
- Gather information on international opportunities offered by your organization to Canadian youth.
- Explore opportunities for partnerships.





## Background on this youth mobility program

- International Experience Canada (IEC) is a youth mobility program that provides Canadian and foreign youth the opportunity to travel and work abroad and in Canada, respectively.
- In addition to helping youth gain valuable international travel and work experiences that contribute to their personal and professional growth, the IEC also supports Canada's economic and cultural interests.
- The initiative originated in 1951 as a reconciliatory cultural exchange between Canada and Germany following World War II.
- Today, Canada has Youth Mobility Agreements (YMAS) with **32 countries** (see Annex A for list of countries) under the IEC.





# IEC in one program with many opportunities

- **IEC has three categories:**
  1. Working Holiday (travel and work): Open work permit that allows work anywhere in the host country.
  2. International Co-operative Education (students only - internships): Employer-specific work permit to gain targeted experience related to field of study.
  3. Young Professionals (career development): Employer-specific work permit to gain targeted experience related to profession or field of study.
- Work permits are valid for up to 24 months, depending on the country.
- Participants can participate in the IEC as many times as they like so long as they meet the age criteria and choose a different country each time they participate.
- **Who can participate? How much does it cost?**
  - Canadian citizens and foreign nationals aged 18-35.
  - Application fees vary by host country, from \$0 to approximately \$850. Canada's IEC Participation Fee, which foreign participants pay, is \$150\*.

***\*Participants do not need to be actively studying or working in Canada to be eligible for the IEC\****





## Benefits to Youth, Canada, and Partner Countries of working and travelling abroad

- In a world of increasing globalization, emerging economies, including recently announced free trade agreements, Canada can only benefit from a labour force with international perspectives.
- Anecdotally, there is evidence that the internationalization of Canadian youth has a positive impact on their labour market outcomes, as they gain a competitive advantage by acquiring valuable skills and abilities in the workplace environment, establish international contacts and relationships, and acquire experience in the international market.
- Moreover, empirical evidence gathered through the Erasmus Impact Study, found that Erasmus student exchange graduates with international experience fare much better on the job market. As a result of their international experience, they are **half as likely to experience long-term unemployment** compared with those who have not studied or trained abroad, and **five years after graduation, their unemployment rate is 23% lower**.
- According to the Canadian Tourism Commission, Canadians spend more than \$35 billion annually while travelling outside the country = a true benefit for the economies of IEC's partner countries.
- In addition to the positive labour market outcomes and economic benefits, international experiences also allow youth to immerse themselves in different cultures and to appreciate the varying social norms and customs which can enhance their cultural awareness and sensitivity – a key element of the IEC .





## Taking advantage of an environment that prioritizes the acquisition of international experience

- Canadian businesses, educational institutions, and federal, provincial/territorial governments prioritize the importance of having a global perspective.
- This has been demonstrated by the release of “internalization strategies” across the country.
- The market of qualified Canadian youth who can contribute to the economic, social and cultural makeup of a foreign country is notable: 68.5% of Canada’s population are of working-age, which is higher than in most G8 countries. Of this, 48.9% represent the younger working-age population (ages 15-39)\*.
- Indeed, the context in which we are working is an opportune time to maximize the use of the IEC program.

\*Statistics Canada, “The Canadian Population in 2011: Age and Sex”, 2011.







## Increasing awareness of the IEC amongst Canadian youth and their influencers

- From an inbound perspective, the IEC is quite popular. In 2014, close to 60,000 foreign youth came to Canada under the IEC program. However, from an outbound perspective, not as many Canadian youth are taking advantage of the IEC program and the international experiences they can gain from participating.
- In 2014, close to 18,000 Canadian youth travelled and work abroad under the IEC. While significant, this imbalance has resulted in a reciprocity gap of 3:1 (three foreign participants come to Canada, for every one Canadian who goes abroad).
- To address this reciprocity gap, the Government of Canada, in April 2014, renewed the IEC's mandate to focus on:
  - Enhancing international opportunities for Canadian youth;
  - Increasing Canadian participation and reaching a target ratio of 2:1 foreign to Canadian participants by 2019 (which means increasing Canadian participation by 50%).
- To meet these objectives, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has been focussing on building awareness of the IEC program amongst Canadian youth and their influencers which includes, parents/guardians, educators, academic and career advisors, and administrators, to name a few. But this is just one piece of the puzzle!





## Go away: some ideas for increasing participation

- **What is CIC doing to increase Canadian participation?**
  - Building program awareness amongst youth, influencers, national/international organizations, ethno-cultural communities and diasporas.
  - Exploring the types of opportunities available to Canadian youth by establishing partnerships with private sector employers in Canada and abroad.
  - Ensuring a seamless transition for Canadian youth in the host country by maintaining partnerships with, and growing the list of Recognized Organizations (ROs) that can provide quality pre-departure and post-arrival services for youth.
  - Building promotional capacity by developing an IEC Alumni Network to facilitate peer-to-peer interaction, creating promotional materials that are effective in reaching out to youth and their influencers, and undertaking market research to better understand the Canadian youth market.
  - Working with IEC partner countries to ensure the entry of Canadian youth to their respective countries is as facilitative as possible.
- **How can we work together?**
  - What are your ideas about how to increase awareness of, and participation in the IEC amongst Canadian youth?
  - How can we help Canadian youth gain valuable international experiences, giving them an added competitive advantage in today's global economy?
  - How can we start changing Canadian mentality from one that hesitates going abroad, to one that jumps at the opportunity?
  - How can we make the IEC one of the primary means for facilitating international work and travel experiences for Canadian youth abroad?







## Working together so Canadian youth go away and come back with a global perspective

- **How can we work together?**
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## Why aren't more Canadian youth going abroad and how can we change that?

- While raising awareness of the IEC program and highlighting the benefits youth can gain from having international experiences will be key to increasing Canadian youth participation, anecdotally, we know of other factors that influence youth's decisions to go abroad:
  1. Family, friends and fear of leaving Canada and living in a different country and culture;
  2. Finances;
  3. Concerns about delaying completion of studies;
  4. Limited employment opportunities and/or lower pay in partner countries;
  5. Limited knowledge of foreign languages; and,
  6. Administrative barriers in the application process in partner countries.
- Moreover, in Canada, the idea of taking a “gap year” and/or travelling and working abroad is simply not yet a part of the Canadian mentality, as it is in other parts of the world (e.g. Australia, United Kingdom, many countries in Europe).
- Together, we can address these barriers in a way that makes acquiring international experiences through the IEC seamless and most importantly, more appealing to Canadian youth.





**IEC coming to a conference room near you!**

**INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE CANADA –  
*Roundtable Discussions***

***Dates & Locations – To be Determined***

**For more information, please contact:**

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## Learn more about IEC

More information on International Experience Canada is available at:

<http://www.canada.ca/iec-eic>



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**Internationale**





## Annex A: List of IEC's 32 Partner Countries

Australia	Greece	Norway
Austria	Hong Kong	Poland
Belgium	Ireland	Slovakia
Chile	Italy	Slovenia
Costa Rica	Japan	Spain
Croatia	Republic of Korea	Sweden
Czech Republic	Korea	Switzerland
Denmark	Latvia	Taiwan
Estonia	Lithuania	Ukraine
France	Mexico	United Kingdom
Germany	Netherlands	
	New Zealand	

