

GROWING OUR REGION

The Impact of Immigration in Atlantic Canada



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Introduction. This report explores the impact of immigration in Atlantic Canada. Drawing on demographic data as well as newcomer voices, it highlights key ways that immigration is shaping social, cultural, and economic growth in the region. This research suggests that immigration can help offset the effects of an aging population and declining natural growth rate; strengthen the economy by addressing labour needs and business growth; and enrich society through increased diversity, which can also inform how the region advances truth and reconciliation.

Immigration is essential to nation-building in Canada, and the Atlantic region has often played a unique role in this process. The region has historically functioned as a gateway to the country, with 45,000 immigrants passing through [Pier 21](#) each year during its peak in the post-war period. But despite the region's historic role, immigration has had a limited impact on Atlantic Canada in more recent decades. Across Canada, nearly a quarter of the population (23%) are immigrants; nearly half (44%) are either first- or second-generation Canadians (i.e. either an immigrant or the child of immigrants). In the Atlantic region, only 6% of the population are immigrants (ranging from 3% to 8% for each province) while 15% identify as first- or second-generation Canadians. The difference is especially stark when compared to provinces such as Ontario, where nearly a third

(30%) of the population are immigrants ([Statistics Canada](#)).

Since 2015, however, immigration has played an increasingly large role in Atlantic Canada. Between 2015 and 2024, the number of immigrant admissions (including immigrants and refugees) in Canada grew from 271,867 to 483,390, driven largely by federal changes to immigration policy and targets. This increase was even more dramatic in Atlantic Canada where immigrant admissions increased from 8,307 to 39,510 ([Statistics Canada](#); [Open Government](#)). This shift continues to have an ongoing impact on the region, bringing many diverse newcomers to a region that has historically lacked in ethno-cultural diversity and struggled with population decline.

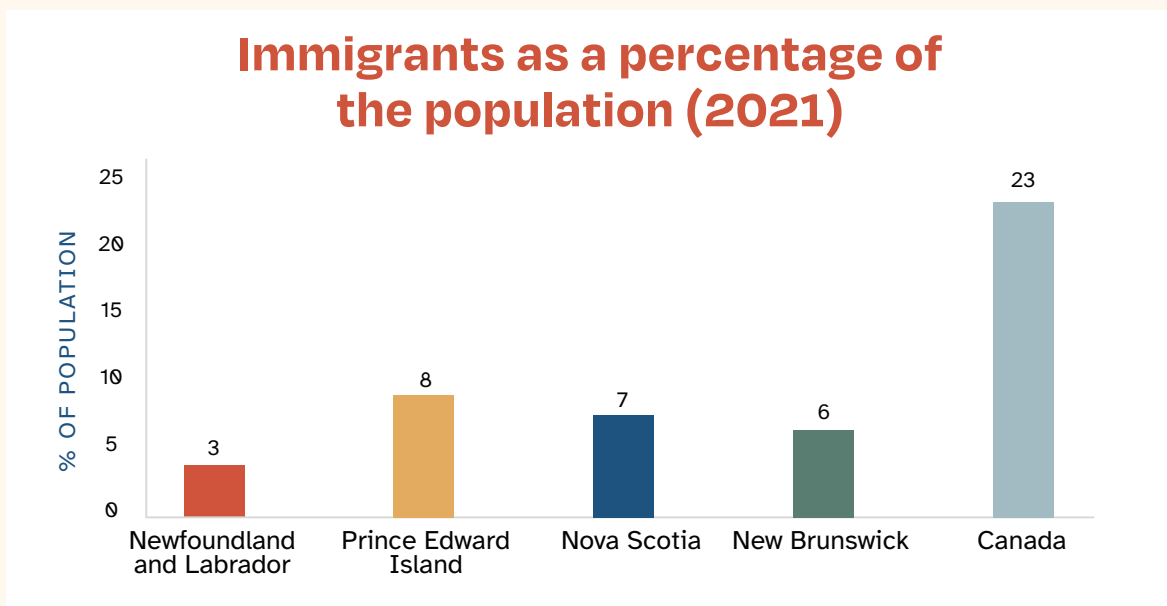


Figure A: Immigrants as a percentage of the total population, Atlantic provinces and Canada ([Statistics Canada](#)).

Yet immigration has become a growing concern for many Canadians, and many perceive immigration as linked to other social concerns. For example, [a 2023 study from the Environics Institute](#) found that 38% of respondents believe immigration has a negative impact on housing, 25% feel immigrants are a drain on public finances, and 25% believe immigration is bad for the economy. As such, there has been a sudden increase in anti-immigration sentiment. In a [Leger-ACS survey](#) conducted in September 2024, 65% of respondents agreed that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada; this compares to 50% of respondents in February 2024 and 35% in March 2019. Anti-immigration sentiment is especially strong in Atlantic Canada, where 72% of respondents said there are too many immigrants.

Despite these shifting sentiments, the present report shows that immigration plays an important and largely positive role in growing the Atlantic region. By relying on data and lived experiences, it seeks to provide an accurate and evidence-based portrait of immigration and its impact on the region. This data can help challenge negative attitudes and

widespread misconceptions about immigration and immigrants. At the same time, the report provides policymakers and settlement service providers with research to support informed decision-making for immigrant and refugee services and programs. The social and economic health of Atlantic Canada depends on building welcoming communities for newcomers, but it also means providing newcomers with the support they need to contribute to a vibrant, respectful, and productive society.





IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVES

Christina and Wynford

Borden-Carleton PE

Christina and Wynford have had a long journey from the **Philippines** to Canada, but after a decade on Prince Edward Island they are thriving as parents and business owners. Their immigration journey began in Taiwan, where the couple spent nine years as contract workers. Exhausted from returning to the Philippines each time their contracts expired, they began to search for somewhere to settle permanently and begin a family. Christina arrived first in Canada in 2012 with Wynford joining the following year; they lived briefly in New Brunswick and Alberta before settling on Prince Edward Island. They spent several years as temporary foreign workers in the food processing industry and found an employer to sponsor them for permanent residency. After years of careful saving, Christina and Wynford started a family and purchased their own home.

In 2021, Christina and Wynford decided to use their savings to start a home-based catering business. This venture allowed the couple to spend more time with their young children while also helping Christina to share her love of baking with the local community. Using Canadian ingredients to prepare Filipino delicacies, they make their products available for large pre-orders and through local businesses across the Maritimes. Their catering business has continued to grow and is now a full-time vocation for the husband-and-wife team. While their food is well received by PEI's Filipino community, Christina and Wynford have also found a growing audience among the broader community who keep returning for Christina's pork buns and other specialties.

Immigration and Population Growth

For much of the 21st century, the Atlantic region has struggled with population growth. The rate of natural increase¹ has steadily declined for decades, and since 2013 the region has had a net negative natural growth rate. At the same time, the region struggles to attract and retain people from other provinces. While interprovincial migration fluctuates from year to year, the Atlantic region has had a net negative rate of interprovincial migration for most years prior to 2016.

A growing, or at least stable, population is necessary to maintain quality of life for residents of the region. Quality of life is determined by a variety of factors including income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety, and work-life balance ([OECD Better Life Index](#)). Many of these indicators are linked to population stability. For example, many services – education, health, housing – require a skilled workforce to meet labour needs. Finding the right balance between labour market demand and workforce supply can be especially challenging when a population is shrinking due to out-migration and average age is increasing. (The following section focuses on the impacts of an aging population.)



¹Natural increase can have either a positive or negative value. A positive rate indicates more births than deaths while a negative rate indicates more deaths than births.

Immigration and population growth have had a positive impact on the region’s economy over the past decade. In 2014, the [Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy](#) observed that “two interdependent factors — an aging and shrinking population and very low rates of economic growth — mean that our economy today is barely able to support our current standards of living and public services.” The Commission further noted that “immigration and economic expansion are mutually reinforcing and both are necessary if the future outlook is to improve.” Since then, the Atlantic region has indeed witnessed economic and population growth as well as an increase in immigration. In 2024, the [Atlantic Canada Momentum Index](#) reported positive momentum on 15 of 25 social and economic indicators. The report notes that “Atlantic Canada is in the biggest boom since the Second World War,” due in part to “healthy momentum in key areas such as population growth, immigration...[which has] supercharged the economies in urban Atlantic Canada.”

Figure B1 shows key elements of population growth in the Atlantic region from 2008 to 2023. **Immigration** is the total number of permanent resident admissions, which includes immigrants and refugees; **net non-permanent residents** is the difference between incoming and outgoing temporary residents, which includes migrant workers and international students; **natural increase** is the difference between births and deaths; and **net interprovincial migration** captures the movement of people to and from other provinces/territories. Figure B2 breaks down immigration for each Atlantic province for the same time period.

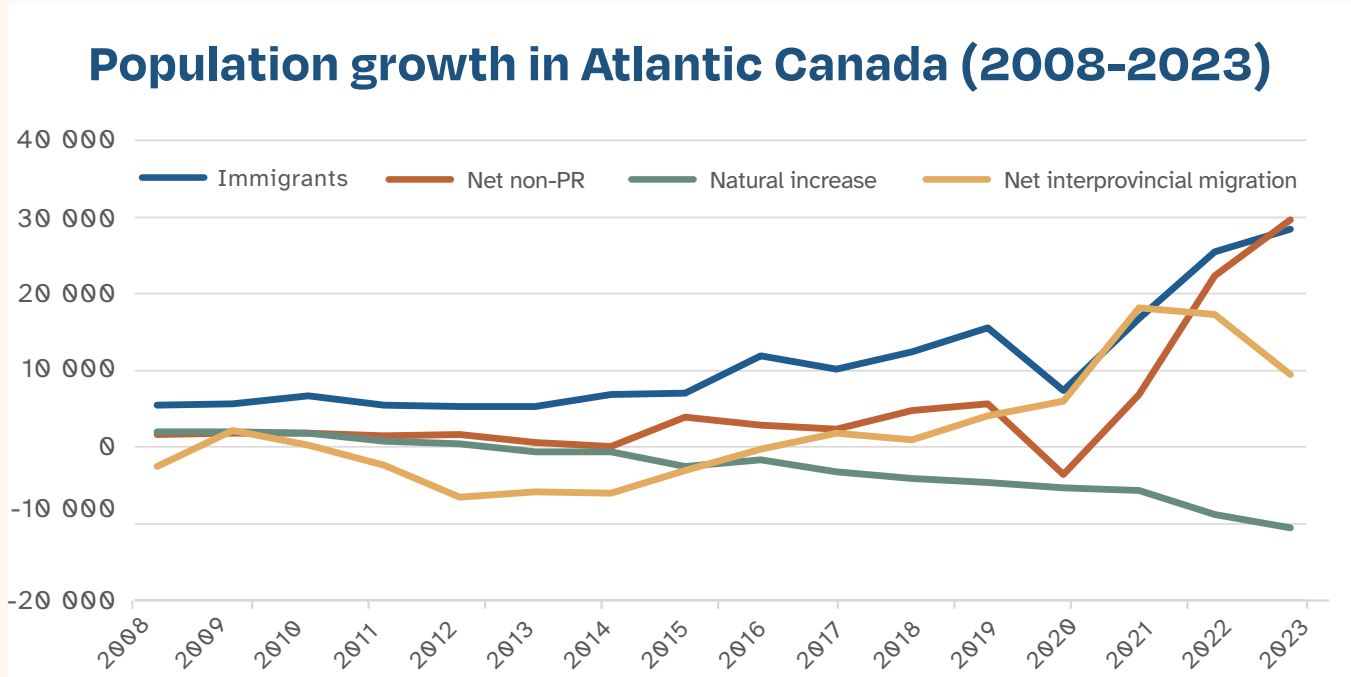


Figure B1: Population growth in Atlantic Canada, combined for the four Atlantic provinces ([Statistics Canada](#)).

Immigration in the Atlantic Provinces (2008-2023)

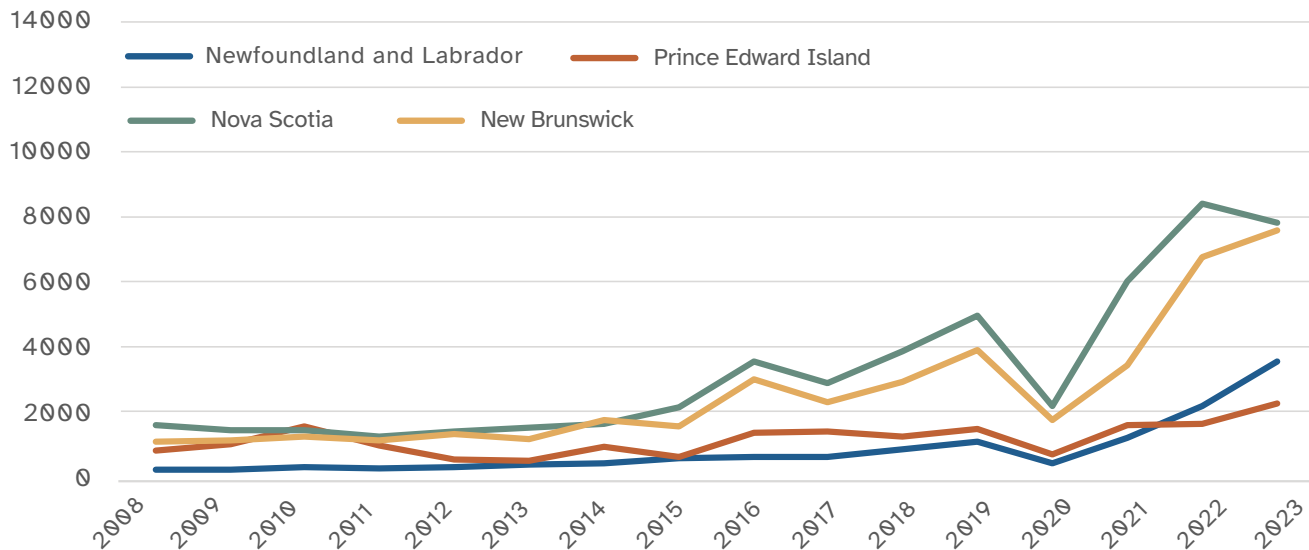


Figure B2: Permanent resident admissions in the Atlantic provinces (Statistics Canada).

These graphs show immigration as an important – but not the only – factor in population growth in recent years. In particular, **Figure B1** suggests a correlation between recent immigration and interprovincial migration (as well as non-permanent residents). When immigration levels are low, interprovincial migration often has a neutral or negative value (i.e. more people are leaving the region than moving to it from other parts of Canada). As immigration increases, migration from

other provinces may also increase.² While there are many factors to this correlation and it is not possible to conclude that one factor causes the other, this trend suggests that both immigration and interprovincial migration are linked to growth and development of the region. In other words, economic and population growth in the region can further attract immigrants as well as people already living in Canada.³

² While interprovincial migration dips in 2023, it nevertheless remains net positive and higher than any year prior to 2020.

³ It is worth noting that retention and out-migration varies for different immigrant populations. For example, [this ARAISA report](#) shows that refugees are more likely to stay in Atlantic Canada than economic immigrants.



IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVES

Paula Raudales

Halifax/Yarmouth NS

Paula Raudales is committed to making Nova Scotia a safer and more equitable place for women. During her childhood in **El Salvador**, Paula always dreamed of living abroad. She applied to universities across Canada and the United Kingdom and ultimately decided to study political science and sociology at Saint Mary's University. Despite her comfort with English, Paula found life in Canada difficult in her first days; she often relied on other international students to navigate activities such as grocery shopping or using public transit. Paula worked in a variety of jobs after graduation and became a permanent resident in 2023.

Since then, Paula has found positions that utilize her talents in research and analysis as well as her passion for helping others. She is particularly committed to preventing gender-based violence, which has led to roles as a Board Member at the Tri-Council Women's Centre, Grant Writer at the Latispánica Cultural Association, and Project Assistant at the Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax. Through this work, Paula informs people about gender-based violence and helps survivors understand what support is available. She explains that *"it's very encouraging to know that there are a lot of other people who want to make a change. For me, that's enough to keep me going. Even if we can change the life of one woman who is experiencing gender-based violence, that's good work."*

An Aging Population

While Canada has an aging population in general, the situation in the Atlantic provinces is particularly extreme. As of 2023, nearly one in five Canadians (19%) was aged 65 years and over. According to population projections, this number is expected to increase to 23% by 2053 and continue rising to 27% by 2073. In Atlantic Canada, the population is aging even more rapidly. As of 2023, 23% of the population are aged 65+; by 2048 more than one in four (27%) Atlantic Canadians are expected to be 65+ ([Statistics Canada](#)). Figure C1 shows the percentage of the population aged 65+ in each Atlantic province, with projections for the next 25 years.

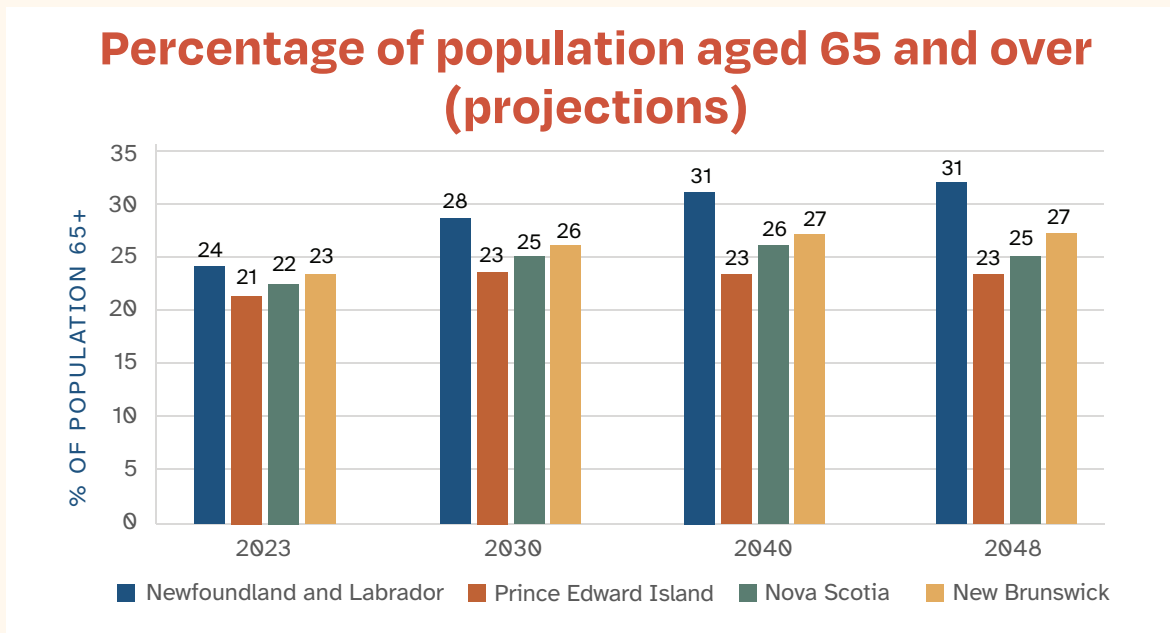


Figure C1: Percentage of the population aged 65 and over for the Atlantic provinces. Estimates for 2023 and projections for subsequent years based on medium-growth scenario (M1) ([Statistics Canada](#)).

An aging population presents several challenges for the region. First, as people age, they leave the workforce to enter retirement. This transition means a shrinking pool of people paying income taxes and, consequently, a decrease in tax revenue to support public services such as schools and hospitals. That is, a shrinking tax base can put increased strain on public resources and lower the quality of service for people in the region.



At the same time, an aging population creates increased demand for certain public services, especially health care. Specifically, an aging population corresponds to higher levels of illness and disability. As of 2022, about a quarter (27%) of Canadians aged 15+ were living with a disability while 40% of the 65+ population were experiencing disability. Disability rates are higher in the Atlantic region: more than a third (35%) of the 15+ population and nearly half (46%) of those 65+ (Statistics Canada). Although illness and disability are also connected to other factors such as socio-economic status, disability rates in Atlantic Canada are at least partly attributed to the population's age. Figure C2 shows disability rates for each Atlantic province in comparison with the national average.

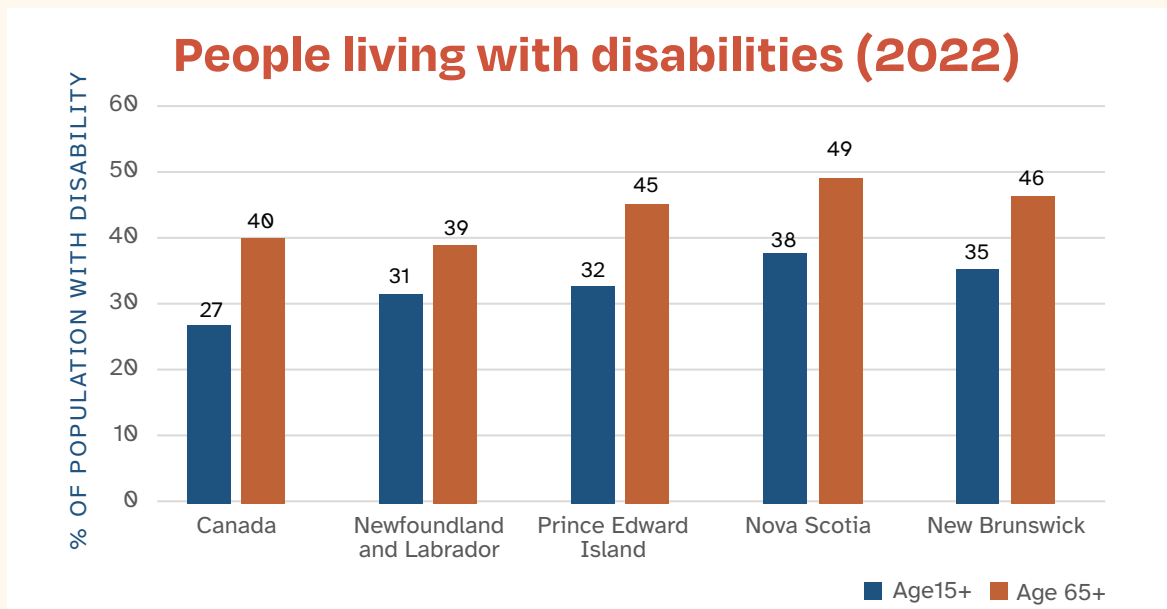


Figure C2: Percentage of the population living with a disability in Canada and the Atlantic provinces (Statistics Canada).

Immigration will be essential to offset the effects of an aging population.

An aging population is projected for every Atlantic province, though rates differ for each. For Prince Edward Island, the 65+ population will likely increase for the next decade before stabilizing around 23%; in Newfoundland and Labrador, it may increase from nearly a quarter (24%) to a third (32%) of the population. An older population in Atlantic Canada already corresponds to higher-than-average disability rates, and disability will likely increase as the population continues to age. Between the shrinking tax base and growing demand for health care, the Atlantic region may experience severe strain on public services. Immigration can help to address this challenge by bolstering the tax-paying workforce while also attracting medical professionals, personal support workers, and other health care workers.

Data further suggests that a decrease in immigration levels will exacerbate this crisis. Statistics Canada provides several population growth scenarios based on factors including fertility, mortality, immigration, emigration, non-permanent residents, and interprovincial migration. Medium-growth scenarios were calculated using “immigration rates corresponding to the targets in the multi-year 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan” (Statistics Canada). In other words, these projections do not reflect the 2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan, which reduces 2025 targets by 21% from 500,000 to 395,000 permanent resident admissions. In light of the reduction to immigration levels, the average age in Atlantic Canada is likely to increase more rapidly than projected and thereby compound the challenges associated with an aging population.

Employment and Labour

Population growth is closely linked to economic growth in the region. Immigrants, interprovincial migrants, and temporary residents are attracted to the region largely because of employment opportunities. Yet economic growth also depends on the availability of skilled and qualified individuals to fill new roles in the labour market. A lack of skilled workers is a major contributor to low productivity growth; skills shortages have a cumulative effect wherein a shortage in one industry will negatively impact other industries (Conference Board of Canada).

Immigration can help respond to the needs of the labour market. Not only does it provide workers for a growing labour force, but immigration also allows for the targeted selection of skilled and qualified individuals who meet the specific needs of the labour market. **Figure D** shows the labour market from 2015 to mid-2024, combined for the four Atlantic provinces.⁴ The labour market is the total of payroll employees (i.e. filled positions) and job vacancies (i.e. unfilled positions).

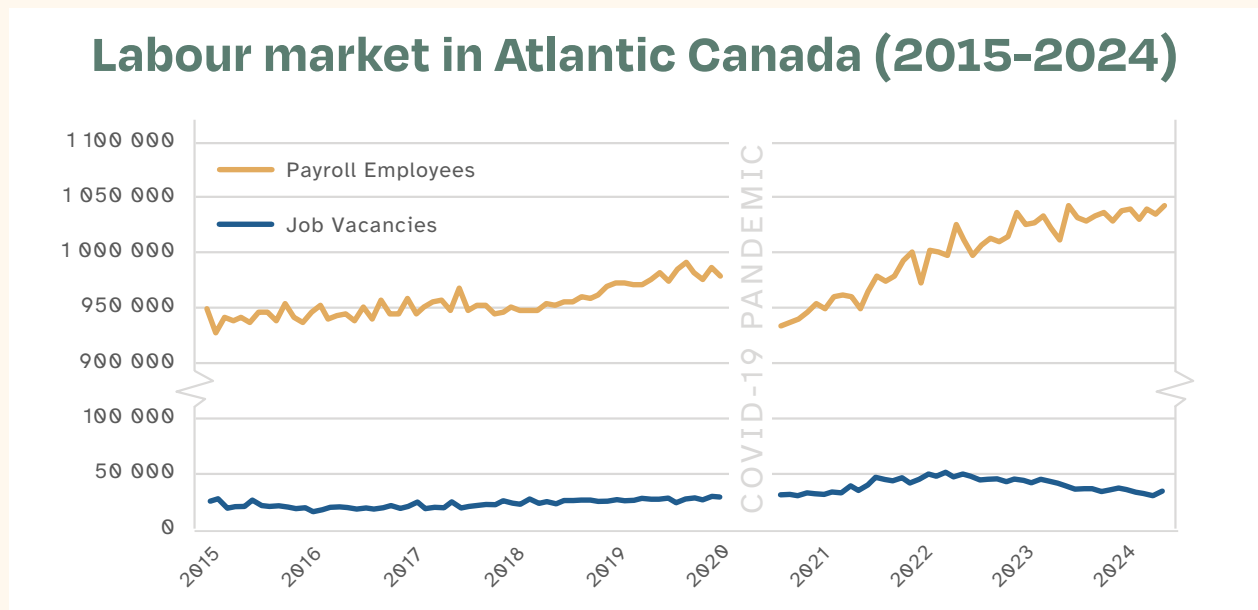


Figure D: The labour market in Atlantic Canada, combined for the four Atlantic provinces (Statistics Canada).

The labour market in Atlantic Canada shows relatively steady growth, from about 960,000 jobs in 2015 to more than 1,070,000 jobs in 2024. (The sudden drop and interruption in data is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) Given the region's declining natural growth and aging population, immigration will continue to play an important role in meeting labour needs.



⁴ Data has been adjusted by Statistics Canada for seasonality.



IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVES

Asmah

Moncton NB

Although Asmah only arrived in Moncton in 2019, she is already **helping to welcome other newcomers into the local community.** Asmah came to Canada as a refugee with her husband and two daughters. As one of only three **Rohingya** families in Moncton at the time, their first days in Canada were not easy. The family received limited support with housing and struggled to find employment. As a mother, Asmah found isolation a particular challenge. Navigating public transit with small children made it difficult for her to attend events and activities around the community.

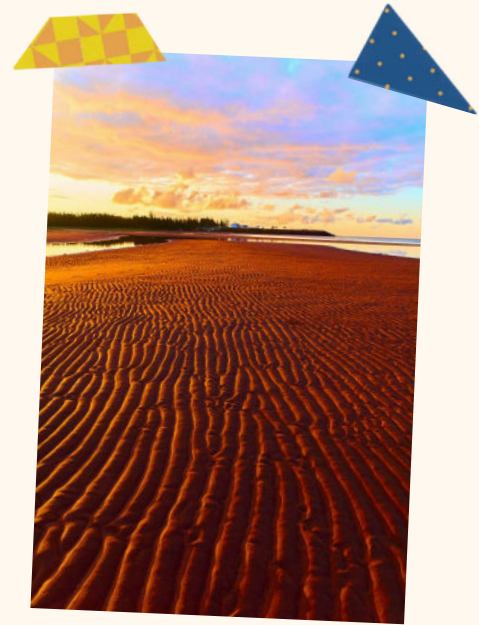
The family has since made Moncton their home and increasingly see themselves as New Brunswickers and recently sworn-in Canadians. Asmah's husband has found stable employment and the family has welcomed two new daughters. Asmah now helps newcomers settle in Moncton, providing support with tasks often overlooked by settlement agencies, such as shopping for a vehicle. Asmah is especially enthusiastic about the education and other opportunities available to her children. She speaks fondly about her daughters' mastery of English and ability to make new friends. While her children are still young and Moncton is still a new home, Asmah is already saving for her daughters' futures.

Business and the Economy

Businesses are essential for economic growth and regional development in Atlantic Canada. They create jobs, stimulate spending, and identify and respond to the need for goods and services. As society evolves and new needs emerge, enterprises play an important role in responding to these new conditions. The creation of businesses therefore enhances the region's ability to adapt to changing economic conditions while also helping to contribute to national and international markets.

Immigrants are especially inclined to start and operate businesses;

as of 2021, 20.5% of immigrants were business owners in comparison to 16.5% of non-immigrants and 6.6% of temporary residents in Canada (Statistics Canada). On the one hand, immigrants tend to be risk-takers; it is a big risk to move permanently to another country, especially for those who are still mastering the local language or have limited knowledge of local culture. This willingness to take risks is expressed in other areas of life, such as through business ventures. On the other hand, immigrants may start businesses out of necessity. For many, immigrating to Canada involves re-starting one's career, either because of challenges with credential recognition or due to a lack of recognition of non-Canadian work experience. Moreover, immigrants also bring a fresh perspective of Canadian society along with experiences from their home countries which can help identify new or emerging market opportunities. *Figure E* shows the percentage of immigrants who are business owners in each of the Atlantic provinces, compared with non-immigrants and temporary residents.⁵



⁵ The percent rate was created by dividing the number of immigrant-owned businesses by the number of immigrants in each province. Rates were similarly calculated for businesses owned by non-immigrants and non-permanent residents.

Business owners by immigrant status (2021)

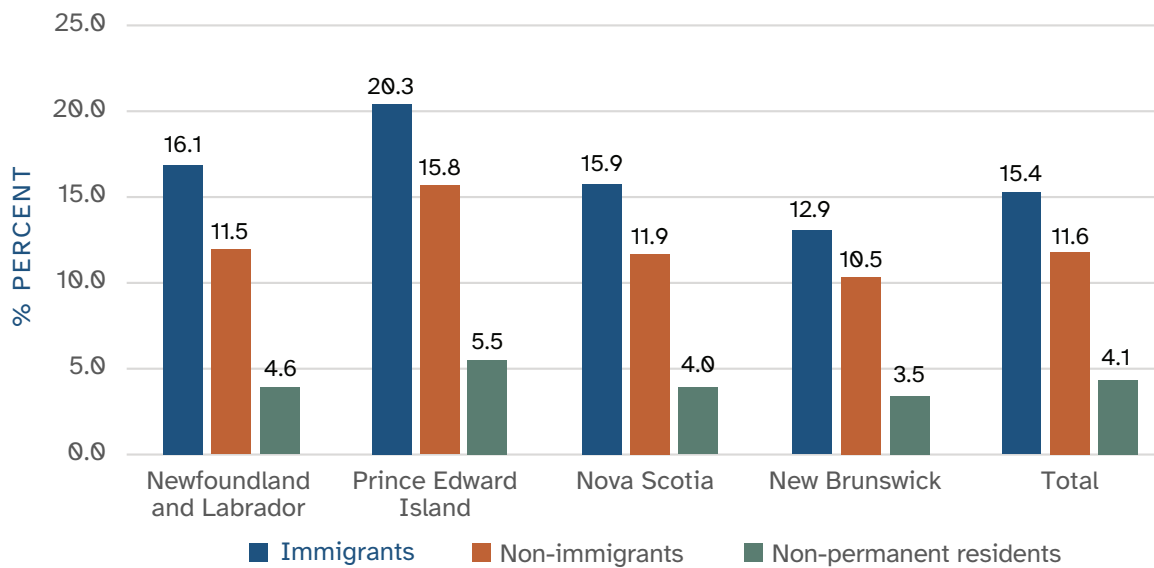


Figure E: Business owners in the Atlantic provinces by immigrant status (Statistics Canada).

Immigrants are reliably more likely than non-immigrants to own businesses. For the Atlantic region, more than 1 in 7 immigrants are business owners; in some provinces the rate is as high as 1 in 5. In contrast, fewer than 1 in 8 non-immigrants own a business (and fewer than 1 in 20 temporary residents). While rates vary, this general trend persists for every Atlantic province.⁶ However, business ownership among immigrants also corresponds with the amount of time spent in Canada. About 59% of immigrant business-owners were admitted to Canada ten or more years ago while only 21% were admitted within the previous five years. That is, while immigrants make a greater per capita contribution to business ownership than non-immigrants, it may take a decade or more for this impact to be felt.

⁶ This trend is not unique to the Atlantic provinces; it persists across Canada. These numbers therefore speak to the contribution of immigrants and immigration to Canadian society and economy, but not to the unique role of immigration in the Atlantic region.



IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVES

Audrick Mofor

Summerside PE

Audrick Mofor is a community leader and entrepreneur who is committed to enriching Francophone culture on Prince Edward Island. Originally from **Cameroon**, Audrick first visited Canada in 2023 to attend a conference for Francophone entrepreneurs in Quebec. He decided that Canada is an ideal place to pursue his business ventures and began to explore pathways to immigration.. Applying to jobs across the country, Audrick received employment offers in Ontario, Quebec, and PEI. He was especially charmed by Canada's small island province and accepted a position as Directeur Général for Jeunesse acadienne et francophone de l'Ile du Prince Édouard (JAFLIPE). Though still new to Canada, Audrick describes his decision to move to PEI as “the best decision of [his] whole life.”

In his role at JAFLIPE, Audrick helps Francophone and Acadian youth to influence social change. Through leadership activities and school tours, the organization works to identify, coordinate, and implement youth-led projects that benefit the province's French-speaking communities. Audrick is also a passionate entrepreneur. Having built several businesses in Cameroon, he has already used this experience to start digital marketing and real estate businesses in Canada. Audrick notes many challenges to starting a new business in a smaller community – especially as a newcomer – but he is working hard to gain credibility through quality products. As part of his commitment to vibrant Francophone communities, his digital marketing business not only specializes in French and bilingual websites but has also provided free website design for several Francophone organizations.

Ethnic, Cultural, and Religious Diversity

Since Canada adopted multiculturalism as official policy in 1971, cultural and ethnic diversity has become a cornerstone of Canadian society. But while diversity is an important part of national identity, people nevertheless experience and encounter diversity differently depending on where they live. According to the [2021 Census](#), more than a quarter (27%) of the Canadian population identify as visible minorities.⁷ In provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia, visible minorities account for more than a third (34%) of the population, with even higher percentages in some regions or cities. Atlantic Canada is considerably less diverse, however, with only 7% of the population identifying as visible minorities. *Figure F1* shows the percentage of the population who identify as visible minorities in the Atlantic provinces compared with the national average.

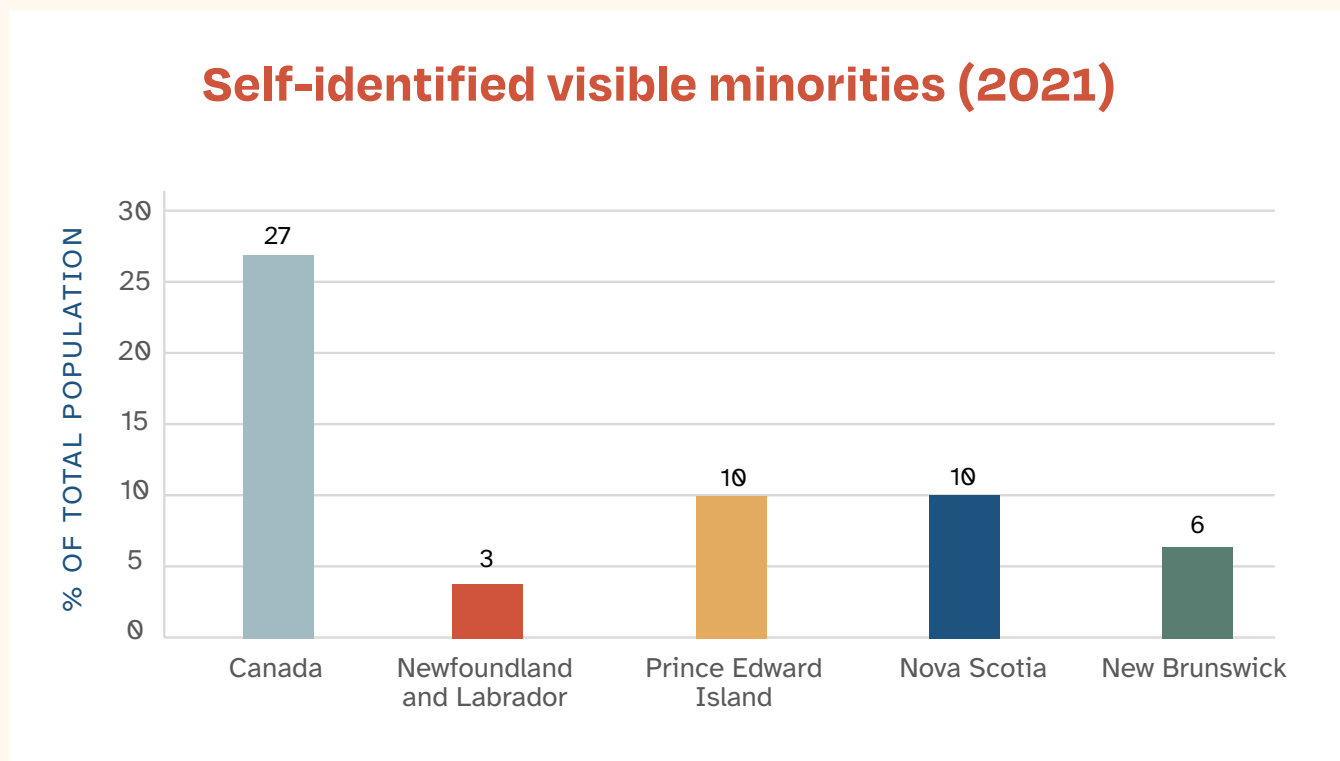


Figure F1: Self-identified visible minorities as a percentage of the population in Canada and the Atlantic provinces (Statistics Canada).

⁷ While Statistics Canada has historically used “visible minority” to align with the Employment Equity Act, [recent consultations](#) suggest that “racialized group” may be more appropriate terminology.

While diversity has its own inherent value, it also helps Canadian society adapt to changing conditions. Across Canada, cultural diversity has created a rich tapestry of linguistic, religious, literary, musical, culinary, and other traditions that people communicate and share with one another. These traditions also provide a pool of experiences, skills, and strategies that society can apply when identifying and responding to emerging challenges. This resilience is evident in the way diversity both creates and responds to changing economic conditions. An increase in Jewish and Muslim immigration during the 20th and 21st centuries, for example, created demand for Kosher and Halal food products. At the same time, people from these communities also created the businesses and supply chains to respond to these needs. (This phenomenon helps explain why immigrants are more likely to own businesses than non-immigrants: they are especially well-positioned to identify and respond to emerging markets.)

Immigration is a key contributor to diversity in the Atlantic region. While immigration to the Atlantic provinces was historically from predominately Western countries, this trend is

changing. For all immigrants in the Atlantic region, more than a quarter (26%) were born in either the United Kingdom or United States; for recent immigrants, only 6% were born in these countries ([Statistics Canada](#); [ARAISA](#)). Immigrants in recent years are increasingly coming from non-Western countries, and especially from Asia. Figure F2 to Figure F5 show the top five countries of origin for recent immigrants in each Atlantic province, as of the 2021 census.⁸

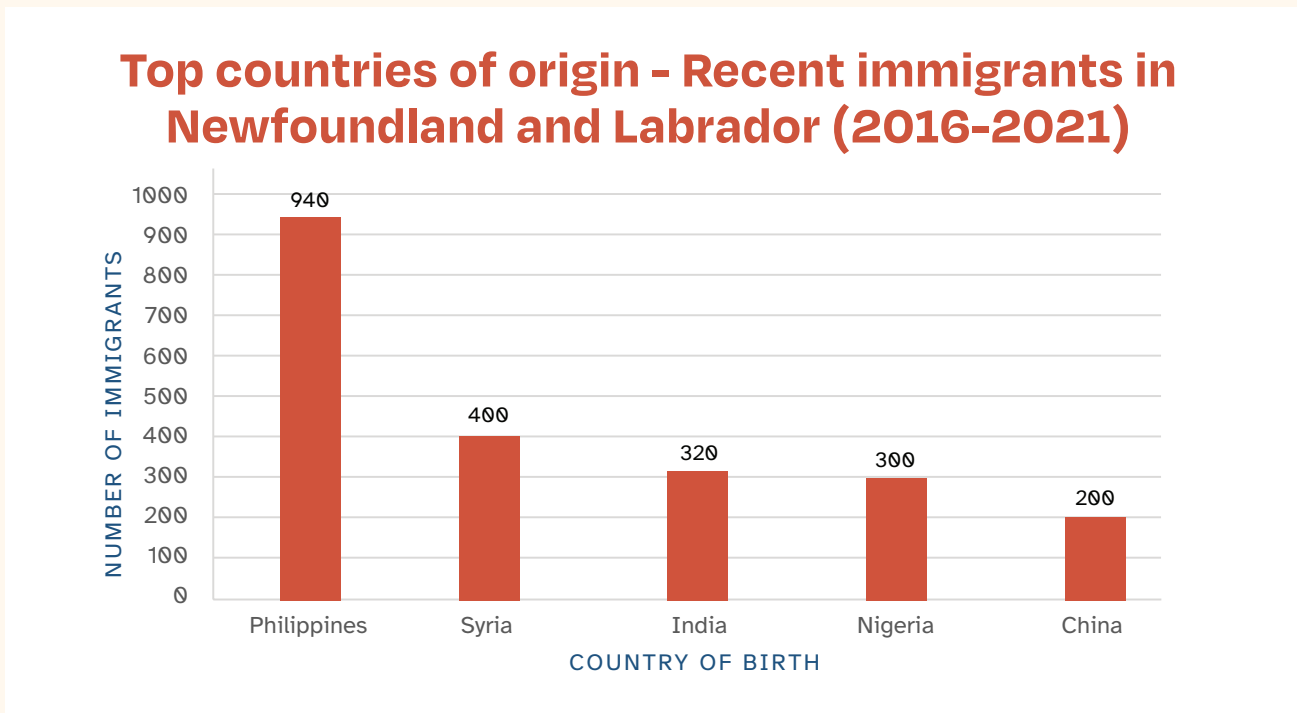


Figure F2: Top countries of origin for recent immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador (2016-2021) ([Statistics Canada](#)).

⁸ Recent immigrants are defined as those who received landed immigrant or permanent resident status from January 2016 to May 2021.

Top countries of origin - Recent immigrants on Prince Edward Island (2016-2021)

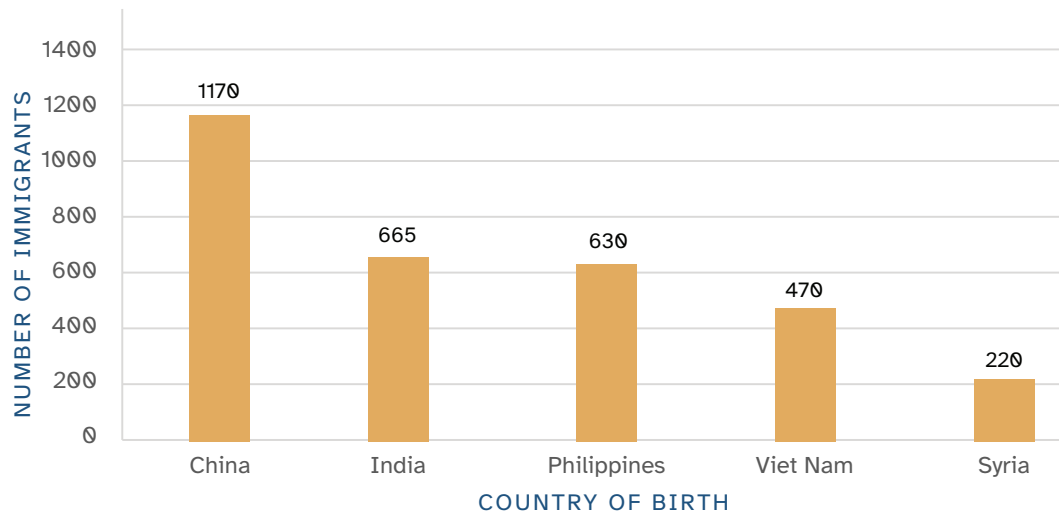


Figure F3: Top countries of origin for recent immigrants on Prince Edward Island (2016-2021) (Statistics Canada).

Top countries of origin - Recent immigrants in Nova Scotia (2016-2021)

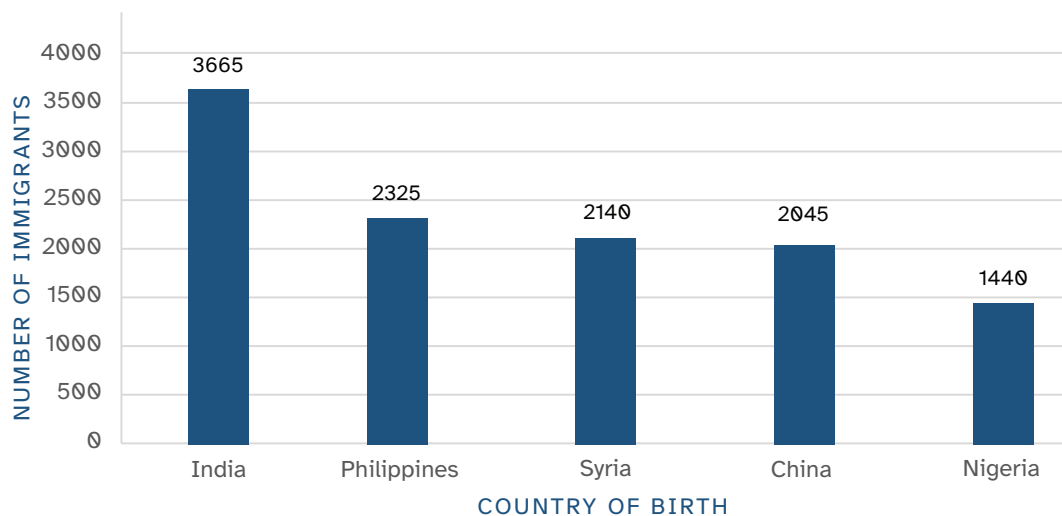


Figure F4: Top countries of origin for recent immigrants in Nova Scotia (2016-2021) (Statistics Canada).

Top countries of origin - Recent immigrants in New Brunswick (2016-2021)

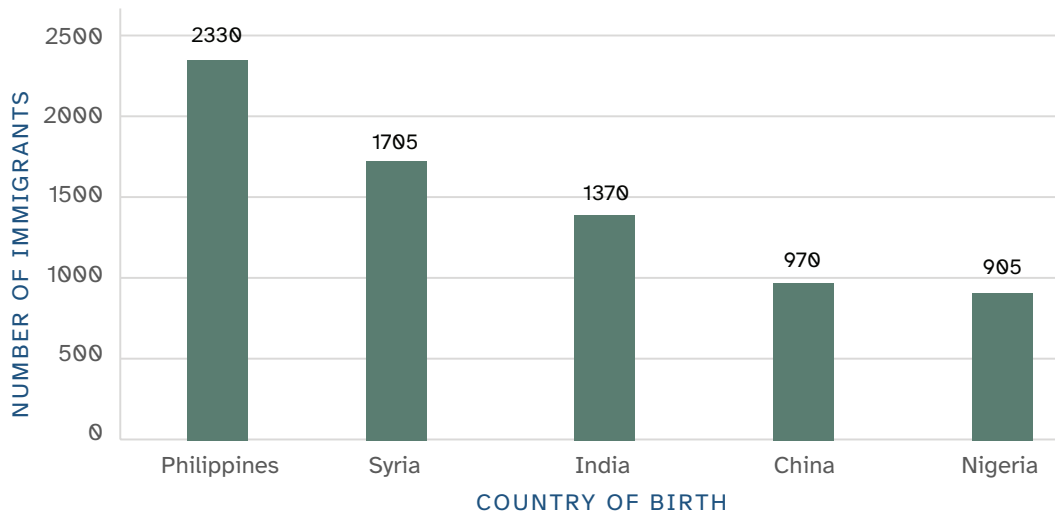


Figure F5: Top countries of origin for recent immigrants in New Brunswick (2016-2021) (Statistics Canada).

While Atlantic Canada remains less diverse than other parts of the country, data suggests this is changing.

For every Atlantic province, the Philippines, India, Syria, and China account for four of the top five countries of origin for recent immigrants. This will likely contribute not only to an increase of visible minorities but also to greater cultural, religious, linguistic, and other diversity across the region. This diversity can help the region respond to changes within Canadian society while also forming stronger connections between Canadians and with the global community.



IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVES

Dr. Zainab Jerrett

St. John's NL

For three decades, Dr. Zainab Jerrett has been making Newfoundland and Labrador a more culturally, socially, and economically vibrant place to live. Zainab moved to Canada from **Nigeria** in 1992 to attend graduate school at Memorial University. While she received support as an international student and Commonwealth Scholar, she also saw many newcomers, new immigrants, and refugees struggling to adapt to their new lives in Canada. After graduation, Zainab began to provide support to newcomers, new immigrants, and refugees first as a board member and later as project coordinator at the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Seeing the need for stronger connections between newcomers and longer-term residents, Zainab established the Tombolo Multicultural Festival Newfoundland and Labrador Inc. as a non-profit in 2012 and founded the We Care Foundation in 2014. Together, these organizations build relationships between newcomers, longer-term residents, non-profit organizations, service providers, stakeholders, and businesses across the province. Focusing on newcomer, new immigrant, refugee, and racialized populations, they provide entrepreneurship skills training; promote newcomer and new immigrant artists, heritage performers, and artisans; organize multicultural markets; address food and housing insecurity; respond to gender-based violence; among other initiatives. By helping newcomers and new immigrants contribute to local business, arts, and community, Zainab's work enriches the province's culture and economy. These initiatives ultimately make Newfoundland and Labrador a more welcoming and desirable place to live and improve quality of life for all residents of the province.

Truth and Reconciliation

Immigration can play an important role in advancing truth and reconciliation.

Reconciliation is an ongoing process that aims to build healthy relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada. In its 2015 final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) addressed the role of newcomers in its 93rd and 94th [Calls to Action](#). Especially noteworthy is the 93rd Call to Action “to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.” In other words, newcomers have a responsibility to learn about Indigenous-settler relations while settlement service providers have a responsibility to teach this history.

Canada’s history of Treaties shapes social and political realities for Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous Canadians, as well as newcomers. The [Peace and Friendship Treaties](#), in particular, provide a unique political framework for Indigenous-settler relations in Atlantic Canada. Much of Canada is governed by the Treaties, formal agreements between Indigenous nations and the British Crown which define the rights and responsibilities of each party. Most of these Treaties surrender Indigenous land to the Crown in exchange for legal rights; other parts of the country are unceded, meaning that local Indigenous nations never surrendered their land by signing Treaties. The Peace and Friendship Treaties – which govern most of the Atlantic region except for Newfoundland and Labrador – are exceptional because they establish a Treaty framework but do not surrender Indigenous land. This framework therefore provides a unique context for sharing land and establishing respectful Indigenous-settler relations. By living within the Peace and Friendship Treaties, residents of Atlantic Canada can work together to advance reconciliation and achieve social change in the region.

The settlement and integration sector has much to contribute to building respectful Indigenous-settler relations. The sector introduces newcomers to Canadian values, histories, rights, and responsibilities as well as helping them integrate into social networks and the workforce. That is, it teaches newcomers about both the ideals and socio-historical realities of Canada. Education about the Treaties, Residential Schools, and Indigenous-settler relations is crucial to this process because it provides newcomers with a foundation to meaningfully engage with Indigenous peoples and advance reconciliation. While immigrants and their families were likely not involved in establishing Residential Schools or other colonial institutions, they are nevertheless part of the Treaties. Moreover, many newcomers come from formerly colonized countries and may be Indigenous to places other than Canada. As such, immigrants can play an important role in deciding how reconciliation proceeds in the Atlantic region, and their experiences are vital to building respectful relationships between all residents of Canada.

Conclusion

Immigration is essential to the economic health of Atlantic Canada. After years of flagging economic momentum and population decline, the region has begun to experience historic growth due in large part to immigration.

Immigrants bring much-needed skills to the workforce as well as an enterprising spirit that helps grow the economy through business creation. A thriving workforce can also stabilize the population and create a tax base to offset the negative effects of an aging population.

Economic and population stability will ensure that the region can continue to grow in the coming years and decades.

Immigration is also enriching the Atlantic region through social and cultural diversity. Atlantic Canada is one of the least diverse parts of the country, although this trend has begun to change with recent immigration. While diversity has its own inherent value, it also responds to new economic markets, strengthens social and economic ties with the global community, and creates a rich tapestry of religious, artistic, culinary, and other cultural traditions that benefit all residents. Many newcomers also bring lived experiences and insights that can inform how Atlantic Canadians understand what it means to live on Indigenous land and as subjects of the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

Building relationships between residents of the region is an active and ongoing project. It requires accurate and evidence-based perceptions of immigration, immigrants, and their contributions to Atlantic Canada. To this end, the present report highlights some of these social, cultural, and economic contributions. This knowledge can enhance language, employment, and other services that help newcomers adapt and contribute to their new homes; it can also inform shared spaces such as workplaces, schools, and community events where longer-term residents build bridges with their new neighbours. When old and new residents work together to grow and enrich the region, it makes Atlantic Canada a more welcoming place where people choose to live, stay, and thrive.



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