



Tomorrow's Workforce Award

Collaborative Entry, The Skilled Migrant Programme
(Community, Town and Gown)

Valuing People – Creating Value

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- **Your organisation**

This is a combined, collaborative entry from the following three organisations:

Victoria University's School of Linguistics & Applied Language Studies teaches Deaf Studies, Writing and Linguistics courses at undergraduate level and offers a wide range of postgraduate programmes in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. The School incorporates the English Language Institute which has, since 1961, taught students from over 100 countries in its English language courses, its skilled migrant programme, and its widely-respected teacher education programmes. The School is based in Wellington and employs thirty-one permanent academic staff.

The Rotary Club of Wellington is the Wellington branch of Rotary International, an organisation of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. Rotarians develop community service projects that address many of today's most critical issues, and support programs including improving educational opportunities and international exchanges for students. The Wellington-based branch of Rotary has around 150 members.

The Johnson Group is a public sector recruitment agency, founded in 2005. Located in Wellington, they currently have eight staff members. The agency's corporate policy requires all staff to actively participate in social responsibility events and activities, which aligns well with the values of their public sector clients. As recruiters, The Johnson Group are aware of labour issues surrounding New Zealand's workforce, and see skilled migrants as an important part of addressing current and foreseeable skilled-shortages.

- **Tomorrow's workforce initiative**

Workplace Communication for Skilled Migrants (otherwise known as the Skilled Migrant Programme) is a programme of intensive communication skills training for underemployed or unemployed skilled migrants. The course is designed for permanent residents who have a Bachelors degree or higher and whose first language is not English. Participants must already have a good level of language proficiency and at least three years' work experience in their profession, preferably within the last five years.

The programme helps participants to develop appropriate communication skills in professional workplaces, to improve cultural understanding of New Zealand workplaces and to gain New Zealand workplace experience so that they can gain professional employment.

The Skilled Migrant Programme is a unique partnership between three different sectors: education (Victoria University of Wellington), voluntary (Rotary International) and business (The Johnson Group). The course begins with five weeks full time classroom preparation at the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University. This is followed by six weeks' internship with a Wellington

employer, with job placement and interviews organised by The Johnson Group, and then a final week in the classroom.

Members of Rotary International assist in several capacities: as volunteers within the classroom programmes, as guest lecturers, or as job mentors to the participants. The mentoring programme, which involves weekly contact, continues for a full six months after the full-time course and internship ends.

The programme has its origins in the awareness of the significant number of immigrants to New Zealand who are unemployed or are employed in jobs that do not reflect their qualifications, such as driving taxis or stocking supermarket shelves. Few participants have had any previous success in applying for professional jobs.

The Skilled Migrant programme also seeks to redress New Zealand's skill shortages and low productivity. The Department of Labour's Productivity Series identified that support for the integration of skilled immigrants is a key element of increasing the workforce.

- **Development and implementation**

The initiative had its origins in the work of Ms Judi McCallum of the Wellington ESOL Assessment and Access Specialist Service. McCallum was engaged by the Tertiary Education Commission to manage the allocation of migrant programmes in the Wellington region, and made an assessment of the needs of skilled migrants. The issues she identified as being of particular concern were the following:

- Being selected out on the basis of being foreign before getting to interview.
- Unfamiliarity with local culture, making social exchanges difficult.
- Unfamiliarity with NZ workplace culture.
- New Zealanders being unused to dealing with different accents.
- New Zealanders having different accents from those commonly heard overseas.
- Lack of New Zealand work experience.

McCallum felt that a model of skilled migrant education that involved internships as well as classroom teaching would be an effective way to help migrants. The programme should teach authentic workplace language, rather than the academic English used in text books. In October 2004, McCallum approached the Victoria University of Wellington School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies (LALS) about creating such a programme.

The Skilled Migrant Programme was developed with VUW management and teaching staff over the summer of 2004 – 2005, and was aimed at addressing the needs McCallum identified. The first intake of participants was in April 2005; the course has run biannually since.

In early 2005 Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar, the incoming President of Rotary International for 2005–2006, urged the world's Rotary Clubs each to work to establish or to help a literacy project in his year of office. The Rotary Club of Wellington chose the Victoria University course, Workplace Communication Skills for Skilled Migrants for its project. The club has been involved with the Skilled Migrant Programme as a partner since the first intake.

The Johnson Group's involvement came as the result of the company founder's (Leigh Johnson) involvement in Rotary International. Initially The Johnson Group

began volunteering in the classroom to give the course participants tuition on writing CVs and performing well in interviews. Recruitment consultants conducted mock interviews to give migrants practice at putting the techniques they had learned into use.

In July 2007 The Johnson Group accepted at short notice the contract to be the Skilled Migrant Programme's work placement co-ordinator. The Johnson Group now manages the internship element of the programme, interviewing and placing course participants in positions.

- **Management support**

Across all three organisations, it was the management teams who led the development of the Skilled Migrant Programme. The programme aligns well with Victoria University's intent to provide relevant courses to its students; with Rotary's charter values and dedication to social service; and with The Johnson Group's commitment to working in a socially responsible way. Management supports and encourages all staff involved in the programme.

Within The Johnson Group, one or two consultants are responsible for finding internships. During the lead-up to internships, these consultants work up to three hours a day interviewing participants and speaking to businesses; they also receive help from other staff members in an administrative and networking capability. The programme is promoted both internally and externally; consultants do presentations to organisations about the Skilled Migrant Programme and the benefits of internships.

Throughout the course, the three partner organisations have very close working relationships. Leigh Johnson, founder of The Johnson Group, meets with Rotary members for weekly lunches to network with members and discuss the programme with them. Rotary mentors, Victoria University tutors, The Johnson Group consultants and workplace consultants all connect during the course to discuss both individual participants and the programme as a whole.

The central 'accountability' for success is that all participants successfully graduate the course. All migrants must complete an internship in order to graduate; and so far internships have been found for all 85 migrants who have taken part since 2005. In addition, these internships have also resulted in a number of job opportunities for the participants.

Success is also measured by the number of migrants who find work after the course is completed; please see the section on employee benefits.

- **Organisational benefits**

Internship organisation benefits

Organisations who take in a skilled migrant immediately benefit from having an unpaid intern for six weeks—a very obvious contribution to productivity. Anecdotal feedback from organisations shows the programme provides opportunities for staff to:

- practise and improve their training skills
- learn about the value that migrants can bring to the workplace
- get major projects completed ahead of time

If this is the first experience a New Zealand workplace has of a skilled migrant, it may have many ripple effects, including the removal or lessening of prejudices and stereotypes that may have hindered migrants in obtaining work in such workplaces in the past.

Migrants have been placed in numerous sectors, including banking, government, local council, tertiary institutions, telecommunications, accounting, law, freight forwarding and health. Almost all feedback has been positive, and organisations regularly show their support by attending their intern's graduation ceremonies.

Organisations can also benefit from finding new employees. Several migrants each year go on to accept permanent employment opportunities at the organisations they interned at.

Partner organisation benefits

Positive media in newspapers and community groups has led to greater interest in the programme across Wellington, as well as creating good publicity for the three partnered organisations. Since the first intake, three hundred business people have signed up to receive the Skilled Migrant mailing list, which sends out notifications on the migrants' availability and skill sets. In both 2006 and 2008, The Human Rights Commission acknowledged the Skilled Migrant Programme for its contributions to race relations in New Zealand.

As an education provider, Victoria University sees its benefit as being able to provide a course that is highly relevant to students' needs. Nicky Riddiford, the course co-ordinator, finds it personally rewarding to be teaching on a course that can make a very real difference to people's lives.

Supporting with the Skilled Migrant Programme meets the charter objectives and the goals of Rotary International. Rotary's involvement also provides an opportunity for Rotary members with different backgrounds to work together on the same project, members who might not normally get to work together and network. The business-focus of the internships means it is possible for Rotary to build further build networks within the community.

Benefits of this are manifold: it creates new opportunities for vocational service, enhances Rotary's public image and may attract future members to the organisation.

The Johnson Group's profile has increased as a result of their work with the Skilled Migrant Programme, not just as a commercial business but also as a company that acts in a socially responsible way. Positive experiences with migrants have led the company to expand its talent pool and target more overseas candidates. Currently 10% of The Johnson Group's 'talent pool' are overseas candidates; and 50% of The Johnson Group's current staff are migrants themselves.

Kirsty Bidwell, a consultant involved in the programme, says "the programme has really broadened the company's reach and coverage when it comes to clients and contacts outside our usual networks." The Johnson Group is often the first port of call for both migrants and journalists looking for information on job-seeking.

The Johnson Group's involvement was recognised by the national industry body, the RCSA, at their 2008 social responsibility awards, for "Best Development Initiative by a Small Recruitment Business".

(A full cost benefit analysis of programme is in the appendix.)

- **Employee benefits**

When participants start the Skilled Migrant Programme, they are often demoralised and without hope. Most have been unemployed or working in unskilled positions for years. A poll for the first intake of 2007 found that fewer than half had ever reached the interview stage and none had got past the interview.

Surveys of participants in the course are always very positive, rating most aspects of the course at '5' stars out of 5. In his graduating speech, Rodolfo Divino, said that no one can "exactly tell the profound positive impact of this course both mentally emotionally except those who were the product of this programme."

However, the best measure of participant benefits is the number of migrants who are now employed in New Zealand. Since the 2005 intake, 85 migrants have graduated from the Skilled Migrant Programme. While it can be difficult to track where they are now, due to lost contact, the most recent data is as follows:

Number of migrants available for work	77
Definitely employed (as far as can be recorded – this number could be higher)	65
Percentage of migrants currently employed	85%

(Full details of placements and work situations, as well as case studies of participants, are available in the appendix.)

Finding paid work is the most immediate benefit to graduates; it benefits them personally, their partners and their children. The friendships they make in workplaces not only help them to adapt to New Zealand in the wider sense, they are often also crucial in securing paid employment.

While it would be wonderful if 100% of graduates found the job they were looking for after the course, it would also suggest that the selection process in choosing participants was too rigorous—and that participants who would have benefited were being excluded. By accepting some participants who have potential but may not 'make the grade', there will be some assurance that everyone who has the skills to work can earn a chance to do so.

Partner employee benefits

Victoria Unveristy's work with the skilled migrant programme broadens the experience and outlook of the teachers and staff involved. Nicky Riddiford explains, "The programme brings me into contact with people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds as well as many people outside the education sector."

Rotary Club mentors see a similar, positive benefit in their work with migrants. Lee Wilkinson, a regular Rotary mentor in the Skilled Migrant programme, says her involvement with the programme gives her the opportunity to "mix with intelligent, interesting, young, very focused and hard-working people. They are an inspiration."

“I’ve had real satisfaction and felt like I made a real difference,” says Kirsty Bidwell, consultant at The Johnson Group. “It’s incredibly satisfying to know that you’ve helped boost their self confidence and added value for their lives.”

(Full case studies and testimonials of partner employees are available in the appendix.)

- **Plans for the future**

The Skilled Migrant’s course co-ordinator, Nicky Riddiford, always keeps the material covered in the course accurate and in line with the trends of the labour market. All partners in the programme look forward to continuing their efforts to improve the employment outcomes for skilled migrants, and hope that their work also helps to change, in some small way, New Zealand employers’ attitudes toward employing skilled migrants.

Partner organisation representatives:

Nicky Riddiford
Course Coordinator, Skilled Migrant Programme, Victoria University

Ken Fink-Jensen
Chair, Vocational Committee, Rotary Club of Wellington

Leigh Johnson
Director, Business Development, The Johnson Group

Appendixes

- Testimonials from Partner Organisation Employees and Supporters
- Participant case studies and personal accounts
- Extracts from the Hudson Report on migrant employment
- Summary of employment status of graduates
- Rotary Volunteers interviewing Skilled Migrants (photos)
- Skilled Migrant Case Study by John Prebble (attachment)

Testimonials from Partner Organisation Employees and Supporters

Testimonial from Lee Wilkinson, a member of Rotary Club

Some thoughts on my experiences with the skilled migrant programme

It frequently gives me a refreshingly different view of my own culture and language, for example, we think we are very open, but in fact to an outsider, we are often very obscure and overly diplomatic when we are giving negative feedback to people. I always come away from my time with the Skilled Migrants thinking something like: 'Oh, when you think about it, we are odd!' That's refreshing.

It is a programme where something that from the Rotarian point of view is easy and quick to contribute, can provide a big boost to the skilled migrants. For example, it is very difficult for most Chinese to become friends with Kiwis. My current protégée has lived and studied here for 9 years and all her friends are Chinese. Now her Skilled Migrant programme has ended, one of the few times she gets an opportunity to speak more than purely transactional English is when she meets with me. That is so easy for me to do and makes a big contribution to her.

In line with: 'If you can't be rich, you should mix with rich people – if I can't be young, my involvement with the programme gives me the opportunity to at least mix with intelligent, interesting, young, very focused and hard-working people. They are an inspiration.

Increasingly the Skilled Migrants are younger. Often they have similar challenges as any young graduate – the need to get a more sophisticated approach to job search, applications and CV development. In this sense, when we are mentoring them, we are doing what as parents we do for our children in their first few job hunts. It's just that as well as that, the migrants have all these language and cultural challenges and barriers.

Testimonial from Judi Altinkaya, Director of the Settlement Division, Department of Labour

The process of settling in a new country requires migrants to adjust to a new culture and new ways of doing things. An important component of settling successfully involves learning new ways, and building new networks and friendships with locals who can “show you the ropes” and pass on advice.

However settlement is not a one way process of adjustment. Welcoming, helpful locals are a key ingredient for any migrant’s success in a new country. And this is where the Victoria University of Wellington’s Skilled Migrant Programme stands apart from most other migrant employment interventions.

The programme combines the academic expertise of the University’s English language tutors, the human resources specialisation of The Johnson Group and the skilled professional mentoring of members of Wellington Rotary.

The collaborative approach that the partners in the Skilled Migrant Programme demonstrate is unique in New Zealand, if not globally. The three key reasons why New Zealand employers reject migrant applicants for vacancies are because they lack Kiwi work experience, because they have a lack of knowledge about the New Zealand labour market operates, and because their language skills aren’t quite up to scratch.

However what many people don’t realise is that skilled migrants who come to New Zealand are required to have quite a high level of English language. Usually it is the migrant’s *accent* rather than their knowledge of English that an employer struggles with. What is not usually recognised is how very difficult it is to understand Kiwi English - New Zealand English is the least-heard English in the world. The way New Zealanders speak is actually quite challenging even for other English-speakers.

A recent Department of Labour report on barriers to employment for migrants has identified that the three key components of getting migrants into work are: the use of volunteers or mentors who help newcomers to network; work placements to understand how the workplace operates; and the roles of recruitment agencies and Chambers of Commerce, who are able to directly link people into the business community.

There are various programmes throughout New Zealand that offer one or two of these elements, but Victoria University’s Skilled Migrant Programme is the only one that combines all three elements consistently. And its excellent results speak for themselves.

Cost-benefit analysis by Ken Fink-Jensen, Chair, Vocational Committee, Rotary Club of Wellington

If you look at the stakeholders in this, they are the following:

- The skilled migrant, their partners and families
- Victoria University of Wellington
- The individuals who volunteer on the programme including the mentors
- The organisations that provide internships
- The eventual employers
- The Rotary Club of Wellington
- The wider Wellington business and civic community
- The ethnic groups to which the skilled immigrants belong
- Future intakes of skilled immigrants

These are my thoughts on the costs and benefits:

The most immediate benefit to the skilled migrants is getting paid work. This benefits them personally, their partners and their children. It may also benefit their relations overseas through transfer payments. It benefits New Zealand generally, because the skilled migrants become consumers, pay taxes and are able to support themselves, their families and to offer support of various kinds to their community generally, for example the schools their children end up going to.

They benefit from the work experience they get through the internships which help them to understand the New Zealand workplace culture and the New Zealand culture more generally. They may make friendships in the workplaces which will help them to adapt to New Zealand in the wider sense. Those friendships may also be crucial in securing paid employment.

Victoria University benefits from being able to offer a course which enables the immigrants to obtain work in New Zealand. It helps pay the salaries of highly qualified university staff so that the university can continue to offer not only the course provided to the skilled immigrants, but other courses offered by the staff that teach the migrants. It broadens the experience and outlook of the teachers and other members of the university departments involved. The skilled migrants benefit from the courses in other ways, for example the value of the networks they become part of as a consequence of their interactions with a wide range of people, including the other skilled migrants they meet.

The success of the courses also depends on the volunteers who teach on the programme. It challenges them to transfer their own knowledge about being and becoming a productive member of New Zealand society. The experience of teaching skilled migrants influence their interactions with other migrants and migrant communities they may encounter. Their mentors support their efforts to find work for up to six months. This benefit the mentors who learn from these experiences and can transfer the knowledge gained into mentoring efforts involving their own employees and colleagues.

The organisations that provide internships benefit in a number of ways. First there is the essentially free labour provided by the skilled migrant. If this is the first experience a New Zealand workplace has of a skilled migrant it may have many ripple effects, including the removal or lessening of prejudices and stereotypes that

may have hindered migrants in obtaining work in such workplaces in the past. An internship may translate into full-time employment.

The eventual employers benefit from having not only the specialised skills of the migrants involved, but in similar ways to those outlined above.

The Rotary Club of Wellington benefits by being able to achieve the objective of the organisation, especially the Vocational Services Committee. Rotary Clubs exist to have a positive influence in their community at both a national and international level. It sets objectives through which this may be achieved, and it is a positive benefit to the Rotary Club of Wellington that it is able to achieve its objectives of being a force for good by supporting skilled migrants the way it does.

The wider Wellington business and civic community benefits from having a diverse population and a wide range of cultures in the community. It increases the range of cultural experiences available to the residents of Wellington as well as forging links between Wellington and other countries. It has recently been demonstrated that the presence of immigrants increases export opportunities for New Zealand firms.

While migrants should be encouraged to find friends in the New Zealand community generally, their common interests with their own ethnic group fosters the formation of clubs and societies which again add to the diversity of cultural and arts experiences available in Wellington. The work of ethnic clubs and societies benefit not only the members but the wider community, often through charitable and cultural activities.

Successful integration of migrants groups of a wide range of ethnicities also benefit future skilled migrants who find support from their own ethnic communities in Wellington and New Zealand more generally.

It is, of course, difficult to enumerate the costs. In the first place the costs represent the input from Victoria University. It is difficult to say whether the course for skilled migrants is subsidised by the university, i.e. it costs them more than they receive, but of course that cost is offset by the many benefits that accrue to the wider community.

There is a cost in the inputs provided by the many volunteers, mostly from the Rotary Club of Wellington, whose time goes into the programme. It is difficult to say whether the input, if spent in a different direction, could have been more productive from the point of view of New Zealand as a whole. However, the benefits to New Zealand from immigration are indisputable, and the conclusion of the Rotary Club and its members is that the benefits outweigh the costs, even if the assessment is qualitative rather than quantitative.

Participant case studies and personal accounts

Personal account from Ted Lu, graduate of the Skilled Migrant Programme

After nearly two years' work as a fund manager in China I came to Wellington, where I had finished my masters degree at Victoria University a few years before. I was told about a course that was very useful for new migrants for job hunting in New Zealand: Workplace Communication for Skilled Migrants.

I completed the course and found that it was very helpful. I learned communication skills, interview skills, writing, and Kiwi culture. In particular, I had the opportunity for an internship in the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, which really helped a lot in my job hunting process. More importantly, through the internship, I made several good friends in the Reserve Bank.

After I graduated from the course, I was in the job market. It is pretty hard to get a job despite having many interviews with job agents (I visited almost 80% of all the job agents in Wellington). I still could not find a job after two months' hunting.

I emailed my new friend in the Reserve Bank. He gave me a list of some fund managers; some were the CEOs of fund managers, others were CIOs (Chief Investment Officers) and some were analysts. I rang them and asked if there were any job opportunities.

Most of them were very polite and said sorry. But some asked me to send my CV, which was a very good opportunity for me. Two weeks later, I got a call from Grosvenor (my current employer) to have an interview. After two rounds of interviews, I got the job as a research analyst.

Thanks to my friends in the Reserve Bank (now they are not my new friends, but they are old friends), the network is the key. And thanks to the migrant course, as I had the opportunity to make those friends.

Skilled Migrants Graduation Speech from Rodolfo Divino (Graduate, 2009)

Good evening everyone,

Tonight marks another memorable milestone in our life as a skilled migrant and as we celebrate this heart pounding moment "There is a good reason... for this ceremony because... graduation is not the end, [rather] it's the beginning" of our next journey.

Our class is composed of ten skilled professionals from China, Russia, Poland, and the Philippines with a distinct training and experiences ranging from IT, Accounting, Administration, Tourism, Marketing, and Business Management.

My name is Rodolfo (Ardi) Divino. And it is an honor to be chosen by my classmates to be the graduation speaker to express our deepest gratitude- to Victoria University especially to our ever patient, understanding, and supportive teacher Nicky, to Angela our Programme Director and to Judi and Glenda our workplace consultants.

To Kirsty and Melissa of The Johnson Group who worked tirelessly to find our internships. To the many Rotary Club of Wellington members and other volunteers who patiently trained us for employment interviews and likewise to our guest speakers who introduced us to NZ life and culture.

To our workplace managers and mentors, who supported us during our internship. To our job mentors from the Rotary Club who will accompany us in our job search. To our respective families who have supported us.

On behalf of my class, I would like to say thank you all very... much. It has been a privilege to be chosen to be part of this programme.

No one can exactly tell the profound positive impact of this course both mentally and emotionally, except those who were the product of this programme: i.e. us. This course has helped us in many ways. It has helped us to interpret NZ English.

For example, a skilled migrant working in a coffee shop received an order from a customer: "Tea for two please."

She replied, "Ah yes, two for one tea."

The customer said: "No, its tea for two."

"Oh, yes, it's two teas for two. Sorry."

For her at that time, it was all the same. Now she is a proud member of the graduating group. Another example is, a young man fills out an application for a job and does well until he gets to the last question, "Who Should we notify in case of an accident?"

He mulled it over and then writes, "Anybody in sight!"

I believe he should take this course.

The language learning in our class has been reinforced by our workplace experience that affected the development of our NZ pragmatic awareness immensely. Now we feel more confident with our pragmatic competence.

My classmate Ben described reflectively his experience with the course, he said: "I was like a shabby second hand car before I attended this course. After 12 weeks, I have been repaint[ed], decorat[ed] by a mechanic (Nicky). Now I am like a brand new car, and ready to be put on the market /at a [competitive] price."

To my classmates this is the end and a beginning. The end of our course and the beginning of a new chapter. "What we are now is Victoria University's gift to us... We will be very busy applying and filling out application forms.

Let's continue dreaming for "the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

Along the way of our search "if opportunity doesn't knock, [we must] build a door."

My dear friends, "you and I will meet again, when we're least expecting it, one day maybe in some far off place, I will recognize your face, I won't say goodbye my friends, for you and I will meet again."

Can I say again on behalf of my classmates – thank you to everyone who has helped us on our journey over the last three months. We will not forget your support and we will remember you always wherever we are because "...what we become/ are our gift to this University".

Thank you.

Participant Case Study, Paula Yin Sept 30, 2006

Before staying at home for a year with her baby son, Paula Yin's last job was working at a supermarket – now she is a full time loan reviewer at Westpac Bank.

She credits the Skilled Migrant course with this change.

In China Paula had worked in the Beijing financial markets; after coming to New Zealand in 2002 she completed a Masters in Applied Finance at Victoria University, supporting herself with part-time supermarket work. When ready to re-enter the workforce, Paula joined the Skilled Migrant course.

As part of the course, she completed a six week work placement at Kiwibank where she completed a research project on risk management.

It suited her down to the ground. "The relevant work experience is very useful," she says. "[The course gives] new migrants more communication skills – for example New Zealanders always talk about the weather," she laughs.

Paula enjoyed the practical aspects of the course – such as preparing to find jobs. "To look for jobs is very difficult for Chinese because of the language barriers," she says. But the course really helped with interview and CV preparation and setting up networks with organisations. "[Of the] nine to 10 on my course, most got jobs," she says.

Paula is now a full time loan reviewer with Westpac Bank. "This present job is excellent work experience for me but not challenging of my skills and qualifications," she says. Yet at the moment that is just how she wants it, so she can put more energy into her son. "It is flexible hours so I like it very much."

She believes the course placement, matched to her interest and skills, was a significant factor in helping her get the Westpac job. "I have told my neighbours and my friends about it."

Participant Case Study, Jane Tang Sept 30, 2006

For twenty years Jane Tang had dreamed of leaving China and travelling to other countries. She had achieved success as co-owner of an electronics manufacturing company and as a business consultant. She had a chemistry and chemical engineering degree. But it was not enough. "I wanted to do some interesting things, not just get along with my life," Jane, 37, says. "I felt I had to fulfil my dream otherwise I would regret it."

In July 2002 she took the plunge and migrated to New Zealand, as a skilled migrant, but with no job to go to. While her qualifications and skills were what New Zealand wanted, she says, there were few big companies doing chemical engineering here. She postponed job hunting for a while and spent a year travelling around the US and UK, satisfying her long-held travel bug. On returning to New Zealand in 2003, Jane started a Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management at Victoria University.

Telecom offered her an accounts payable position when she finished the course, and in July 2005 she started the three-month Skilled Migrant course.

"The course was helpful," she says. Jane liked the way the course was split into both classroom and placement learning. "You get the classroom [part] to first plan it, and then the placement you get to use it," she says. "We learned how to talk to clients, how to use the system, how to say things indirectly to people."

"The best part of the course was a lot of role play and mock interviews."

Jane completed her six-week placement at EGL, a courier company, where she worked as an administration assistant. "The highlight was the placement – you got to come back [to class] each week and review things."

In June this year Jane scooped a job at NZ Post as a Senior Payroll Officer. She plans to take some more university papers, aim for a job in human resources and is looking at becoming an ESOL job mentor. And did the skilled migrant course help?

Jane smiles. "I have already told other people about this course," she says.

Extracts from the Hudson Report on migrant employment

The full Hudson report, which deals with issues around migrant employment, is available online here: The Hudson Report, New Zealand, July - December 2006, Part 2 / http://nz.hudson.com/documents/emp_nz_Hudson_Report_part2_Q3.pdf.

"Hudson research indicates:

- Almost eight out of ten employers believe that there are barriers to migrants participating successfully in the NZ workforce. Two out of ten said they believed there are no barriers.

Only in a limited number of industry sectors do employers believe there are fewer barriers. Some employers are changing faster than others: possibly this is occurring in those sectors in which skills shortages became acute earlier than other sectors, such as telecommunications, engineering / construction / property and resources."

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"Hudson Christchurch General Manager Roman Rogers sees that for many smaller companies, the process to employ migrants "appears confusing and in the too hard basket. Anecdotal feedback indicates that people prefer to have someone who is more assimilated - Kiwi, in other words."

"In a Catch-22, recruiters find that many employers are reluctant to be the first employer, preferring a migrant who has had at least some local experience. Government departments are still leading the charge, being big enough to have substantial HR departments, which can deal with legal and residency requirements and which are more open to differences."

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Testimonial from Professor David Crabbe, Victoria University

The Skilled Migrant Programme has been a remarkably successful programme at achieving its goals of increasing the chances of employment for skilled migrants. This success is seen in the high percentage of those achieving employment after completing the programme.

From the perspective of the University, the programme is a model of how a university connects with society at large. First of all the programme is based on extensive research by the Language in the Workplace Project based in our School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. This research has identified key features of workplace communication that underpin successful management and social cohesion. The data from the research has been used to produce materials and activities for the Skilled Migrant Programme that are authentic and salient. This in turn ensures a unique preparation for the workplace based on the reality of typical communication. Secondly it draws on the pedagogical experience of the English Proficiency Programme – a programme that has developed over 20 years an approach to teaching and learning that is innovative and again based on research into the nature of language learning. Thirdly it draws on expertise from a number of government, community and private agencies to provide a necessary collaborative approach to achieve the goals.

Overall, then, the Skilled Migrant Programme is one that draws on the strengths of the University and other agencies and applies those strengths to achieve a training goal that is personally useful to the participants and socially useful in that it encourages the deployment of imported skills that could otherwise not be used.

Summary of employment status of graduates

Trimester 1 2005 (10)	Organisation
Mostafa Haider Chowdhury	The Warehouse
P. Antony Paul Nimal Jayasiri Coorey	Self-employed
Shuguang Huang	Department of Labour
Yan Li	DFL
Barnabas Medara	NZ Post
Sue Xiaoning Wang	AUS, Massey University
Yanmei Wu	Unknown
Ranjith Nanayakkara	Statistics New Zealand
Dong Zhang	Unknown
Pradeep	BNZ Newtown

Trimester 2 2005 (11)	Organisation
Paula Yin	ANZ
Frank Li	B Com
Jane Tang	Payroll Officer at Ministry of Social Development
Ambrose Yim	Department of Labour (now deceased)
Sultana Newaz	Unknown
Jayantha Nanayakkara	Self-employed
Sirisena Livanage	National Bank, private banking
Kalyani Wijayawardana	International Student Support, Canterbury University
Zoran Ristic	Part time food safety work
Somaratha Padukkage	IT analyst, Foodstuffs, South Island
Ajay Mistry	Bond and Bond

Trimester 1 2006 (11)	Organisation
Ruihua Gu	ACC
Zhu (Deborah) Li	Self employed, contracts with LTSA
Kai Zhou	Travelex
Laura Xiao	ACC
Donghong Wang	Ministry of Social Development
Zhang (Viven) Zi	In China
Sian Kim	Returned to Korea
Frank Zhou	Unknown
Preeti Sepaha Gupta	Teaching at New Zealand International Campus (Hutt) Global Assessment Certificate
Niu Xiaoyan	Red Cross
Liang Xuejun (Cher)	Internal Affairs

Trimester 2 2006 (8)	Organisation
Sergey Bibikov	Medsafe, Ministry of Health
Eva Dou	NZQA Administration
Sue Feng	Crown Law Office
Kian Huat Lee	Permanent job at Waniuomata High

	School, contracting for Dulux
Owen Li	Self employed
Ying Li	Statistics New Zealand
Fazilaten Noor	The Warehouse
BJ Poudyal	NZQA Policy Analyst, Office of Ethnic Affairs, Senior Analyst

Trimester 1 2007 (12)	Organisation
Omar Faruque	Unknown
Neranjala Siripala	VUW Library
Yibin Guo	Pacific Tyres (accountant)
June Zhang	MAF and now procurement at IRD
Ying Zhou	Returned to China – maternity
Laura Chen	Wheeler Campbell
Lindalva Teodoro	Department of Labour
Yan Tian	Statistics New Zealand
Kyoung-Hee (Lisa) Kim	Assistant Account (unknown where)
Lu Jun (Ted)	Grovesnor (Fund Management)
Charles Chen	Ministry of Justice, Senior Applications Developer Role
Rong Lin (Rhonda)	Defence Department, Senior Accounting Analyst

Trimester 2 2007 (10)	Organisation
Ying Xiang	Defence Department
Lucy Hong Liu	Catley Investments Ltd
Silviana Warli	NZ post – accounts receivable and payable
Natasha Tsyganok	Weta Digital
Vijay Palleti	Data craft, testing analyst
Rao Chen	Stephenson Thorner, business services accountant
Anne Xuetian Hu	Returned to China
Xintao Zhao	Royal New Zealand College of GPs, now at Statistics New Zealand
Alvin Zhen	Codec/Black Coffee
David Yang	Department of Internal Affairs, Accounts Administrator

Trimester 1 2008 (11)	Organisation
Paul Yan	Data Analyst at Justice Department
Shaoqiang Cheng	Martin Meyers Structural Engineers, structural drafting using Autocad
Cindy Yan	Statistics New Zealand
Slava Voronin	Retainer from I Grow
Louisa Yip	Permanent contract at Department of Labour
Lily Wang	Contract as CRM project manager at MTA
Freda Chen	Unknown

Queenie Lin	Short contract at Shell New Zealand, temp work at Novotel
Zara (Zixia) Chen	Accounts administrator at Duxton
William Yang	Department of Corrections
Sergey Vishnyakov	Interpreting

Trimester 2 2008 (12)	Organisation
Yukinori Iwasaki	CRL Energy
Kylie Chu	Transpower: Operations Planning Engineer
Rajinder Singh	Department of Labour
Jin Zhou	Department of Labour, network engineer
Kuang Chung (Grant) Chi	Business Analyst at Department of Labour
Yu Ning (Dylan) Xu	Statistics Analyst at Statistics New Zealand
Zhihui William Wang	Datacom – accounts receivable and payable
Ranil Dharmasekhara	Looking for work
Echo Zhu	ANZ Call Centre
Helen Zheng	NZTA
Rui Zhang	Internt with WCC programme and working at Kilbirnie Library

To date: May 09

85 graduates

8 not looking for work in NZ – maternity, returned home, self-employed, deceased

Total available for work: 77

Employed: 65 (as far as we know, could be higher)

Looking for work: 12 (as far as we know, number could be lower)

Outcome: 85% in work

Rotary Volunteers interviewing Skilled Migrants (photos)

These photos show Rotary volunteers doing mock interviews and small talk practice with the most recent group of skilled migrants. The entire collection of photos of this event is available on the Victoria University website here:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/image-services/VUW_image_library/21288_Rotary/index.htm



