



PRIORITY: FIND A *job*

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photos: Courtesy of the CDEM

The Espace emploi job fair organized by the CDEM since 2018 allows Manitoba employers to meet their potential future employees. An opportunity not to be missed for newcomers looking for work.

BY CAMILLE HARPER

Finding a job is often a priority for newcomers. The Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM) has a wide range of support available to help newcomers find a job or start a business.

In order to meet their needs, the majority of newcomers want to look for work very soon after their arrival, or even before. Many of them have pushed the CDEM's doors to get support in this regard.

Salimata Soro is the CDEM's Director of Human Resources and Immigration: "The CDEM's employability service offers training, a job placement service, and organizes job fairs.

"We're there every step of the way, depending on the needs of the people. We can help them write their resume or cover letter, we can work with them on job search and interview techniques, and we can provide them with information about the Canadian workplace. A total of 14 different workshops are offered.

"We do a lot of follow-up, right into the workplace, because all of our programs include paid internships. We visit our internship clients and their employers every week for up to 12 weeks."

In 2019, out of 80 candidates at the job fairs - which the CDEM has been organizing for three years, twice a year in person and once virtually nationwide - 65 found a job.

In addition, out of 60 clients of the Emploi pour tous (Employment for All) Program in the 30+ age group, 48 are now employed. And out of 60 clients in Destination emploi, a program for 15- to 30-year-olds, 54 are now employed. These programs are open to all, but most clients are newcomers. As for clients in paid internships who are then hired, the rate is 94%.

Joel Lemoine, Director of Business Services at the CDEM, believes that "this ability to accompany clients to employment is essential. We make sure that all of our Destination emploi and Emploi pour tous clients have work experience."

He adds that this bridge is just as beneficial to employers. "It takes away some of the fear among employers that someone from a different culture might not be up to the job. They know they've been trained here, and they see that we're there for them. It's a vote of confidence."

Salimata Soro confides that "now, some employers call us directly when they need to recruit, to see if we have clients who might be interested! The mentality has changed a lot."

Joel Lemoine shares the figures: "Every year, the CDEM supports the creation of about 70 businesses. About 15 years ago, there were three or four newcomers buying or creating businesses. Today, about 30% of our clients who go into business are newcomers, which comes out to about 20 to 25 of the 70 businesses we support each year.

"We're here for entrepreneurs. And that's reassuring for them. I can support them in their efforts, answer their questions and guide them. Every year, I take care of about a hundred newcomer files. Not all of them will be successful, but they know we're here.

"We also offer a three-day Business Start training course in French, two to three times a year, which teaches you everything you need to know about the different types of businesses in Canada, business plans, and everything else you need to start a business. Or workshops on the tax system in Canada and time management."

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Joel Lemoine also notes that entrepreneurial immigration is increasingly a response to the succession issues of local Francophone businesses. “Family succession is on the decline, which provides opportunities for newcomers who wish to start a business.”

He said that as of approximately 2018, the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has

an entrepreneurial stream: Business or Agriculture. “People who want to immigrate under this stream often come to buy a business here.”

Furthermore, in partnership with the Accueil francophone, the CDEM also has a pre-departure program for future Francophone immigrants.

Salimata Soro: “We offer online workshops. We make sure before they even arrive that they know and understand the Canadian job

market, that they have an up-to-date English and French resume, and we make the first contacts for a job.”

Among the workshops, the one on workplace integration is particularly beneficial, according to the Director of Human Resources: “It gives us a better understanding of how Canadians view cultural diversity and what to expect in the workplace. Many newcomers who were unprepared lost their first job because of cultural differences.”

Adèle Kapinga

“I arrived from the Democratic Republic of Congo with my husband and children on June 26, 2019. One of our main concerns was to find a job. My husband, Valéry Kambo, was the principal applicant and had already had the opportunity to have pre-departure contacts with a CDEM agent. And when we went there, two weeks after our arrival, an employment counsellor asked us to send our resumes to help us put them in Canadian format.

“We greatly appreciated the involvement of the counsellors, who sent us job offers that might be suitable for us. They even helped me by giving me a list of interview questions and by giving me a mock interview in order to prepare me properly.

“I was also able to participate in the Espace employ job fair and meet a dozen potential employers. Looking for a job in a new country is not easy, and you have to be patient. But thanks to the help I received, I finally got a job at the Université de Saint-Boniface in January as an administrative assistant.”



photo: Marta Guerrero