

‘What is Canada like?’

101 answers from Irish emigrants



Report on the advice and experience of
working holiday participants

March 2014

Introduction

Crosscare Migrant Project is the main Irish based NGO that assists Irish emigrants before they leave the country and on their return to Ireland. We are funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Emigrant Support Programme and as a part of the social care actions by the Dublin Archdiocese have been working with Irish emigrants since the 1940s.

In March 2014, the largest ever allocation of Canadian working holiday visas for Irish people was opened with 10,700 visas available. With increasing numbers emigrating from Ireland to Canada in recent years, we reasoned that Irish people who spent some time on a working holiday visa in Canada in 2013 could act as a valuable knowledge resource for intending Irish emigrants to Canada in 2014.

We conducted an online survey, asking people who have spent some time on a working holiday visa in Canada in 2013 what advice they would give their fellow Irish men and women who will be making the journey for the first time in 2014. The survey was conducted in December 2013 and January 2014. The weblink to the survey was publicised and circulated via a variety of Government and non-government organisations in Ireland and Canada, media, and various social media outlets.

The aim of the survey was to offer as direct a line as possible between Irish emigrants in Canada and those thinking of going to Canada in 2014. No doubt many people will be asking their friends, relations and social media contacts 'What is Canada like?' and this report gathers up 101 answers.

The participants were asked five core questions:

- What advice would you give Irish emigrants looking for employment in Canada for the first time in 2014?
- What advice would you give Irish emigrants looking for accommodation in Canada for the first time in 2014?
- Do you have any recommendations on how to build a social life for people newly arrived in Canada?
- Were there any organisations or Government Departments that you found particularly useful or necessary since your arrival in Canada? If so please mention their names
- Do you have any final advice for first time Irish emigrants to Canada in 2014?

Based on the findings of the survey, we hope this report will provide intending emigrants to Canada an informative representation of recent emigrants' experiences so that they will be able to make more informed decisions and have a supported and safe experience.

Some headline advice

- Network widely with people and organisations in order to find employment
- Preparation and research is key to finding employment and accommodation
- Be financially secure on arrival – costs and difficulties in searching for employment and accommodation mean significant savings are essential
- Budget for the fact that accommodation will not be furnished
- References from Ireland can help with securing accommodation
- Join a club or social group
- Socialise with Canadians as well as with Irish
- See the 'Useful links' section of this report for recommended websites

Profile of the Participants

Of the one hundred and sixteen people who took part in the survey one hundred and one were deemed relevant as they had been on a working holiday visa in Canada in 2013. Of the one hundred and one applicable participants surveyed, 53.5% were female and 46.5% were male. The majority of participants were aged between 26-29 (29.7%) and 30-33 (27.7%). This was followed by participants in the age brackets of 22-25 (26.7%), 33-36 (12.9%) and those aged over 33 (3.0%).

The majority of participants resided in British Columbia (45.5%) and Ontario (42.6%). The remaining participants resided in Alberta (8.9%), Manitoba (2.0%), Nova Scotia (1.0%), Quebec (1.0%) and the Northwest Territories (1.0%). 93.1% of the participants were employed and just 6.9% were unemployed.

The occupations of the participants were varied and concentrated in the occupation sectors of business and finance, construction and planning, information technology and health and social support. For a full list of occupation descriptions cited by participants see Appendix A.

Employment

"What advice would you give Irish emigrants looking for employment in Canada for the first time in 2014?"

Ninety-four people answered this question

Network to improve employment prospects

When asked what advice the participants would give to Irish emigrants looking for employment in Canada for the first time in 2014, thirty participants commented on the importance of networking. Two participants noted that networking is a far more common practice in Canada than it is in Ireland and many participants' comments encapsulated the notion that "networking is key" to securing employment.

One participant stated that: "Canadians are obsessed with networking..." because "many jobs are not advertised" and also because a culture exists wherein securing employment very often depends on who you know and not what you know. For example, one participant warned that "if you think jobs in Ireland go to people in the 'know' you'll be shocked at Canada".

With networking being commonly viewed as "vital to progress", new emigrants were advised to network before departure. One participant recommended getting "in contact with representative groups before you arrive, talk to them about good recruiters, let those groups know you'll be looking to join once you get out here".

Another participant recommended making "contact with people who have come here before" in advance of a move to Canada. "Selling yourself" was also noted as being more dominant in the job seeking process in Canada than it is in Ireland. One participant encouraged new Irish emigrants to "sell yourself well, blow your own trumpet, we Irish are not great at it but the Canadians love it".

The website 'Moving2Canada' offers some advice on how to network and frequently advertises networking events (See: <http://moving2canada.com/jobs-in-canada/networking-in-canada/>) Attending networking events and "knocking on doors" was viewed as a good way to also build contacts and secure employment.

One participant noted that "having a contact in a company is very useful" and that contacts can be established by having "samples of work and your résumé printed off" and by simply "knocking on the doors of offices". One participant highlighted that Canadian employers (in smaller firms) respond well to this and that "persistence is admired in Canada".

Prepare and research

Twenty-six participants advised new emigrants to research and prepare before departure to support employment prospects. The participants noted that securing employment in Canada can be a difficult and lengthy process and intending emigrants should therefore begin the process before departure. This was emphasised particularly in relation to the high cost of living in Canada which can leave individuals vulnerable if savings run out while job hunting.

Four participants recommended that researching the jobs market before arrival can assist with individuals' chances of securing employment. In this regard, it was advised that intending emigrants should research locations where jobs are concentrated "in your particular industry". In one case a participant stated they had secured employment before departure. Canadian online recruitment companies and job search websites can assist job seekers in their search prior to departure.

Three participants advised intending emigrants to look beyond the major Canadian cities as "there are much better employment options in the smaller towns". It may be of value for intending emigrants to realise that the gateway cities, such as Toronto, and Vancouver "are very attractive but have some of the toughest job markets". According to one participant newly arriving emigrants to the major cities will be "competing with top international talent and the universities are pumping out thousands of graduates each year".

Eighteen participants noted that Canadian résumés differ from Irish CVs and Irish job seekers in Canada need to adapt their CV to a Canadian style résumé. As part of the current criteria for the Canadian working holiday program (also known as the 'International Experience Canada' or 'IEC'), applicants must submit a complete and up to date version of their CV using the [IEC résumé template](#)

Two participants recommended that job seekers should "leave out the fact that you are on a working visa on your CV and wait for your interview to tell [employers]". Participants also advised new emigrants to "try getting a job that falls under the requirements for residency after arriving as you need 12 months skilled work to be eligible for it".

Participants of this survey also advised new emigrants to Canada to "have your qualifications certified before you come out" and be advised that some professions require registration and criminal background checks for certain jobs. According to one participant "Canadians are obsessed with their own local qualifications". It was noted by another that every job "from a barman to waitress to any higher fields require papers/licenses etc." So it is advisable to research how to get locally certified before you arrive.

More information on credential assessment services in Canada can be found at here:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/credentials/index.asp

From the views of the participants it is apparent there is much to consider before coming to Canada. There is much to be gained from being proactive, and research and preparation may provide greater opportunities in the Canadian job market.

Be financially secure on arrival

Eighteen participants advised newly arriving emigrants to be financially secure on arrival. Most participants generally offered the same type of advice in this regard and the need to be prepared for a long wait before employment is secured and expensive cost of living in Canada generally takes account of participants' comments.

Although there was a general consensus amongst the participants regarding the issue, there were some discrepancies between how long participants felt it would take to secure employment and how much money was required during the job seeking process. Of course, each person will experience the job seeking process differently, but it is worthwhile to consider the different opinions in relation to the time and finances required before employment.

Fifteen participants advised new emigrants to be prepared for it to take some time to secure employment. Three participants advised new emigrants to be prepared to wait between five to six months to gain employment. Three participants felt that three to four months was a realistic timescale and two participants advised job seeking could take two months. Some participants advised new emigrants to "bring as much savings as you possibly can" and for others the amount of savings required ranged from three thousand Canadian dollars to five thousand Canadian dollars.

It is probably wisest to consider the upper ranges of finances and time required presented by the participants in order to avoid the risky position of being unemployed and without finances. Participants have repeatedly stressed throughout the survey that Canada is expensive. Newly arriving emigrants should consider the range of living expenses, including accommodation, utilities, transport and personal expenses.

Seek help from agencies/websites

Although networking was regarded by most participants as the most effective way to secure employment, for some participants recruitment agencies were also helpful in obtaining work. Seven participants advised seeking help from employment agencies. One participant advised that newly arrived emigrants to “head straight to the recruitment agencies when you arrive as they are a fantastic help”.

While most comments regarding recruitment agencies were positive, other participants advised new Irish emigrant to “stay away from recruitment agencies”. It would appear that the participants have had both positive and negative experiences with recruitment agencies, but there were benefits of engaging with the service from one person’s experience. From their perspective new emigrants to Canada should “get a recruiter even if it is only to get help with your résumé.”

Although some participants believed that seeking work through web based recruitment was ineffective, some websites were mentioned as helpful for networking and job seeking. See the ‘Useful Links’ section at the end of this report for more information.

Accommodation

“What advice would you give Irish emigrants looking for accommodation in Canada for the first time in 2014?”

Ninety one people answered this question

Finding accommodation

Many participants commented on the difficulties associated with finding accommodation in Canada. In short they mostly advise to “be prepared for competition, vacancy rates are extremely low across Canada”. To assist with the challenges of securing accommodation, twenty-four participants commented on online rental advertisement companies as a good way to conduct the accommodation search. By far the most frequently mentioned website was Craigslist, followed by Kijiji, Rentitfaster (Edmonton/Calgary), and the ‘Irish and New in Toronto’ Facebook group.

Although accommodation websites were regarded as the best way to source accommodation, three participants warned of scams and bogus agents. Participants cautioned website users to never send money until they have viewed the accommodation and generally speaking, if the accommodation appears “too good to be true, it probably is”.

Six participants recommend sourcing accommodation by walking the streets of the neighbourhoods you like as “there are a number of buildings who don't advertise online, yet have signs outside”. In other cases “the apartment buildings have rental manager contact numbers displayed” so you can call property managers directly.

Finally, as with job hunting, four participants mentioned networking as an effective way to source suitable accommodation.

The cost of accommodation

Nineteen participants cautioned new emigrants to be prepared for “quite expensive” accommodation costs and four of those participants also advised having “enough money saved to get you through the initial period of house/apartment hunting”. To help overcome expensive rents and accommodation costs, six participants also suggested ways to source less expensive accommodation. Suggestions included renting outside ‘downtown’ areas and that “it is best to share a house with others” to reduce costs. Shared accommodation was also regarded as a good option as it may offer more social and networking opportunities.

One participant recommended new emigrants to aim for affordable accommodation in their first year and then upgrade in their second year as they become more established. When starting off in Canada a number of alternative accommodation options were offered. The online accommodation service 'Airbnb' (www.airbnb.ca) was suggested as an inexpensive short-term option and that short term lettings can be cheaper than hostels. Two participants suggested basements as a cheaper accommodation option and another stated "a lot of the universities offer accommodation during the summer which can be significantly cheaper than hostels".

The expense of accommodation does not just entail the cost of renting a house/apartment. Twelve participants highlighted the associated furnishing costs and seven participants commented on accommodation security deposit costs. The participants suggested that landlords usually require a security deposit and the "first and last months rent". One participant noted that, in some cases prospective tenants without a credit history may have to pay an extra security deposit.

Accommodation in Canada generally comes unfurnished so "have a budget and assume you'll need to buy all furniture". In some cases leased accommodation is furnished, but one participant suggested that "you'll pay more for a furnished place" and the furniture provided will be minimal. To help with the expense of furnishing your accommodation some participants suggested using the websites Craigslist and Kijiji and by shopping at thrift stores.

Research accommodation options

Eleven participants advised researching accommodation and the location before arrival. Advice mainly entailed new emigrants to "research the city before you go, looking at suitability, affordability and safety". Others suggested having accommodation organised before arrival and later start looking for longer term options. In this case it was suggested that accommodation may be sourced before arrival or new emigrants might stay with friends or relatives on arrival if the option exists.

Six participants advised new emigrants to consider the location of the accommodation and "take into consideration how far will you have to commute". One participant cautioned that "you may save cash on cheaper rent but then have to spend extra on transport every month". It was advised to try to source accommodation close to public transport and if possible "wait till you secure a job so you know where you will be working to give you an indication of how far you may or may not have to travel to and from work".

Two participants recommended new emigrants research neighbourhoods to "get to know the different areas, get an idea where you want to be based". Consider researching what "supermarkets etc. are in the neighbourhood; it may not seem important at the time but [it] can make life easier down the line". Another participant warned new emigrants not to "move to any

apartment in any neighbourhood because you think it's a good deal. We ended up in a reasonably priced flat close to downtown, but realised later that it was in a very unsafe area with awful neighbours”.

References and credit checks

Seven participants advised new emigrants to be prepared to be asked for references and/or credit checks when renting accommodation. The message highlighted was: “plenty [of landlords, letting agencies etc.] will ask for references and a credit history”.

Some participants stressed that this can pose difficulties renting and that new emigrants should “be ready for a lot of rejection” if they do not have the relevant references. Again, participants urged new emigrants to be persistent and that these challenges can be overcome by prior preparation and having landlord references from Ireland.

It is possible to get an Irish credit report from the Irish Credit Bureau at www.icb.ie although its effectiveness in satisfying Canadian landlords has not been tested.

Seek accommodation at the right time of the month

Finally, seven participants advised new emigrants to be aware that rentals are available from the “first of the month” so new emigrants should try to coincide their arrival with the times properties are available for lease. Most advised new emigrants to try to arrive in the middle of the month to have at least two weeks to look for accommodation. If accommodation is not found before the first of the month, it may mean having to wait a further month before it is possible to start a lease.

Building a social life

“Do you have any recommendations on how to build a social life for people newly arrived in Canada?”

Eighty nine people answered this question

Join a club, group or society

Thirty-seven participants recommended joining a group, club or society to help build a social network in Canada. Most suggestions involved joining sports related groups with GAA clubs mentioned most frequently by participants. Sport related clubs/groups also included outdoor pursuits, skiing, running, soccer, rugby and dodge-ball groups.

Other groups suggested for new emigrants included the Irish Chamber of Commerce, local political groups, local community groups, volunteer groups and hobby groups.

Two participants emphasised that there are many activities on offer in Canada “that you can’t do at home”, so “be open to new things” and “don’t be afraid to put yourself out there”. Also, one participant was of the view that group involvement would be all the richer when groups consisted of Irish and non-Irish members.

Using online websites and social media sites to connect with others

Seventeen participants suggested social media websites as an effective way to build social connections in Canada. The most frequently mentioned site was Facebook, with particular reference to Facebook groups for Irish emigrants. As one participant stated: “There are lots of forums on Facebook and other social media for Irish people, make sure to look these up, some people usually try to organise for people to meet up for a day to get to know each other”. Facebook pages were also generally regarded as a good source for networking events, particularly for new Irish emigrants.

Other websites were also mentioned, including ‘Meet up’, which offers users the opportunity to link in with groups in local communities and/or to organise a local group. ‘Moving 2Canada’ also was recommended as a good website for the networking events it runs. The Vancouver based ‘Urban Rec’ received mention as a good site to link in with sport-related activities, and finally the dating website ‘Plenty of Fish’ was cited as a good way to find a date.

Connect with other Irish people and integrate with the host residents

Fifteen participants recommended making connections/integrating with the host residents and seven participants recommended building a social network through other Irish people living in Canada. While most participants highlighted the benefits of integration others highlighted the benefits of connecting with other Irish. For example, one participant felt that: "while it is important to integrate with local people, having a network of people who understand what you are going through can be very helpful at the beginning".

Two participants expressed the opinion that it was a good idea to make connections with "other Irish, but [do not] necessarily depend on other Irish". The 'Irish pub' was mentioned as an obvious place to meet other people, but some participants recommended not relying on it as an exclusive social outlet. One participant urged new emigrants to "try not to stick to Irish people" even though "familiar is good when you are away". Other participants felt more resolute in their advice that Irish people should integrate by "stay[ing] away from Irish people" and that new emigrants need to "try and get to know the Canadians, not just your own nationality, integration is key".

Four comments took account of how friendly and polite Canadians are, and that Irish people are generally received well and one participant noted that "they'll [Canadians] love your accent". However, four others commented on the difficulties they encountered when trying to meet Canadians. For example, one participant urged new migrants to "try to connect with locals, but it is in truth easier to make connections with other foreigners". Another participant found it difficult to build social ties with Canadian people because they found local people "stand-offish", "polite but unfriendly".

Considering some of the participant's comments, it may be that some of the difficulties associated with meeting local people are due to way Canadians and Irish people generally socialise. For example, two participants advised new Irish emigrants not to "be upset/offended if they [Canadians] won't go for pints with you". It may not be because of any personal reasons but because "socialising in Canada doesn't revolve around the pub. They [Canadians] are big outdoors people. Be prepared to go hiking".

Ten participants suggested work and networking events as a way to build a good social network. Some participants advised new emigrants to "never refuse an invitation-Canadians are very hospitable and if an invitation is extended it is always meaningfully extended". Another participant conveyed that "meet up groups are good, try and mix with work colleagues if you can, put yourself out there and call people when they give you their number".

Helpful Organisations in Canada

“Were there any organisations or Government Departments that you found particularly useful or necessary since your arrival in Canada?”

Seventy eight people answered this question

The participant's comments regarding interactions with organisations in Canada ranged from “excellent” to “poor”. However, the majority of comments were positive. Below is a list of the governmental and non-governmental organisations commented on positively in the survey.

- Twenty three participants found the ‘Irish Canadian Immigration Centre’ (I/CAN) helpful. Described by one participant as “an invaluable resource”, I/CAN is a not for profit organisation offering outreach and information in areas such as employment, social services, and immigration. See: www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org
- Eleven participants found the ‘Moving2Canada’ website helpful. Described by one participant as “full of information for new arrivals”, it’s an online resource that aims to help build an international network of people that are willing to share information and experiences in order to help others. See: www.moving2canada.com
- Five participants found the ‘Service Canada’ website helpful. Described as “great” by one participant for having nice staff, excellent job-seeking resources and for free computer and printing use. The Canadian Government service provides a one-stop, personalized access to Government of Canada services and benefits. See: www.servicecanada.gc.ca
- Four participants found the ‘Irish and new in Toronto’ Facebook page helpful. One participant described the social media resource as “most helpful”. See: www.facebook.com/groups/123680717695499/
- Three participants found the ‘Citizenship and Immigration Canada’ (CIC) helpful. The online Canadian government resource provides information and application processes for immigration related visas and citizenship. See: www.cic.gc.ca/english/
- Two participants found the travel company ‘USIT’ helpful. See: www.usit.ie

Five participants reported negative interaction with organisations. One participant found that “some Canadian government services are just as slow as the ones in Ireland”. Another participant found that “official departments are unhelpful, unfriendly, and overly officious”.

Final advice for first-time Irish emigrants to Canada

“Do you have any final advice for first time Irish emigrants to Canada in 2014?”

Eighty one people answered this question

Be patient and persistent

Given the potential difficulties and time it takes to secure employment and accommodation it is not surprising that seventeen participants advised new emigrants to be patient and persistent when starting a new life in Canada. By and large the participants comments reflected the view that settling into a new life in Canada is “a huge adventure but you have to be determined to see it out and stick with it”.

Participants highlighted that, although starting a new life in Canada can be new and exciting, there may be many challenges along the way. The challenges commented on mostly relate to the time it takes to build social networks and to find a job and accommodation. In many cases, the participants had to lower their expectations, particularly relating to finding employment. In short, “don't think that you'll get off the plane and walk straight into a job, you're going to have to prove yourself and your worth”.

Three participants conveyed that the expectation in Canada is that “you may have to start all over again here, no matter how much experience you have in Ireland, be prepared for that”. One participant stated it “can be soul destroying, searching for a job in your field and not getting anywhere”. Because of these challenges, another participant advised new emigrants that “it's better to take the view that the working holiday visa is not necessarily the start of your career but be open to everything and then if things go well, great, but not to get disheartened”.

Despite the challenges in the resettlement process the participants were of the view that persistence and patience will pay off. Getting through the harder times may require help and support so “don't be afraid to reach out. But don't expect to be given a job or friends etc...you have to work for it”. From one person's perspective “nothing is ever easy at first but with time everything will fall into place”.

Be prepared, and do your research before moving to Canada

Fifteen participants reflected the earlier advice that new emigrants to Canada should be financially secure on arrival. The advice mostly relates to the real possibility that "it may take a while to get a job" and "Canada is expensive getting set up".

This advice ties into fourteen participants recommendations to research and plan before arrival. "Have a plan of action before you come out and to order your priorities (job first, accommodation second -whatever your circumstances dictate). It can be beneficial "do as much research as you possibly can before you depart Ireland". The benefit of preparation and research was commented on by one individual who managed to get "a job and apartment within one week of being here". From their perspective "organisation and research is key. It saves SOOOO much money, reduces stress and you can enjoy yourself so much better".

Research and preparation prior to departure was also commented on broadly in other areas including climate, visas, and mental and emotional preparation for the journey ahead. The emotional/mental preparation mentioned typically related to the potentially long and frustrating bouts of unemployment and accommodation uncertainty and homesickness. One participant advised new emigrants to "be prepared to be on a high for the first couple of months as everything is new and exciting" but this feeling may wane so be "prepared for when and you start to become homesick". Considering the potential challenges posed by a transition to Canada, one participant cautioned that it is important to realise that this could potentially be "the hardest part of your adjustment, but [it] can be overcome".

Integrate and enjoy the experience

Most of the participants commented on the very positive aspects of life in Canada. In particular eleven participants urged new emigrants to "make the most of it". Also in this regard, many participants have advised new emigrants to go to Canada with an "open mind", "experience new things", "get out of your comfort zone and have a blast".

Six participants urged new emigrants to Canada to try to integrate and "immerse yourself in [the Canadian] way of life". One participant emphasised that Canadian life not only entails integrating with Canadian people but also a whole host of other cultures in many areas of Canada. "Canada is a very multi cultural country and takes pride in this fact" it is also "very diverse, full of culture and things to do".

Conclusion and Summary

Employment

Given that 93.1% of the participants represented in this report are employed, it suggests that there is work in Canada for Irish people but the participants have reported the process of finding work as lengthy and difficult. In some cases it may require Irish people to adapt to less- utilised job hunting methods such as networking. Many participants encouraged new emigrants to Canada to “learn to sell yourself, make contacts your primary purpose on arrival”.

There may also be a certain amount of administrative work to overcome, such as registration and/or certifying Irish qualifications before any employment can commence. Because of these challenges in the job seeking process and in securing accommodation the participants of this survey strongly advise Irish emigrants to be prepared before making the move to Canada. This preparation can entail researching job/accommodation locations and opportunities, networking, administrative work, and perhaps most importantly being prepared for the possibility of a wait before securing employment. This can mean being “prepared financially and emotionally” as many participants have also warned newly intending emigrants to lower expectations of work on arrival.

Lowering expectations may mean that you may have to take a job below your qualification and demonstrate what you are capable of. Many participants also relayed the view that finding the job you want starts with “getting your foot in the door” and working your way up.

Accommodation

Sourcing accommodation was widely commented on by the participants particularly in relation to low vacancy rates, competition for accommodation and high rents. Difficulties sourcing accommodation were predominantly mentioned in the cities of Toronto and Vancouver and most participants advised using internet based accommodation resources to assist with the search. Participants also recommended that new emigrants might source accommodation by networking and by contacting property managers directly in local neighbourhoods.

New emigrants were cautioned that landlords require a security deposit and that accommodation generally comes unfurnished. Given the range of accommodation costs along with potentially protracted lengths of unemployment, the participants suggested sharing accommodation, renting basements, sourcing short term temporary leases and locating outside of the major cities.

Participants also advised new emigrants to research and be prepared before arrival. This generally entailed securing accommodation before arrival, researching the local area and being aware that

many landlords require references before renting. Some participants conveyed their frustration at being refused accommodation because they could not provide or establish sufficient credit or references and so advised new emigrants to have available Irish lease and credit references before arrival.

Building a Social Network

The majority of participants recommended joining a club, group or society to assist with building social ties and networks. Most suggestions related to joining a sport related group and some participants highlighted that certain groups offered new opportunities not available in Ireland. Social media websites were also frequently mentioned as a good way to build social networks, with particular reference to the many Facebook sites aimed at Irish emigrants in Canada.

It was suggested that making connections with other Irish people was beneficial in terms of having a shared understanding of the emigration and resettlement experience. However, some participants recommended that Irish emigrants should not only rely on other Irish for social interaction and to reach out to local people too.

Generally, the participants felt welcomed by local residents but some participants found it difficult to create social ties with Canadians. This may have been in some way due to how Irish and Canadians socialise differently. It was suggested that Canadian social life did not typically revolve around the 'bar' and equally Irish social life did not typically revolve around outdoor activities.

Although there are cultural and social differences, it was generally conveyed that there are many opportunities to gain real Canadian experiences and that Irish people generally integrated well in Canada.

Helpful organisations in Canada

The vast majority of participants gave examples of useful organisations and/or government bodies that they had interacted with in Canada. Their experiences ranged from very positive to negative, yet the vast majority were positive in nature. The most popular and positive organisations were organisations aimed at assisting Irish emigrants in Canada (Irish Canadian Immigration Centre and Moving2Canada). Also popular were Irish emigrant Facebook pages and the government run immigration site 'Service Canada'.

Final Advice for new emigrants to Canada

A recurring theme expressed in this report is the potentially lengthy and difficult process involved in securing employment and suitable accommodation. Most participants urged new emigrants to be patient and persistent during this phase of resettlement and to be financially secure. Although this period was widely commented on as 'difficult' most participants expressed that challenges can be overcome but patience, persistence, and relevant finances were necessary.

Research and preparation before departure was also commented on as a significant way to support the transition from Ireland to Canada. The general advice encompassed having a plan of action before arrival and to be mentally and emotionally prepared for the move.

Finally, many participants imparted the view that new emigrants should above all enjoy the experience of emigrating to Canada. Many positive aspects of Canadian life were commented on and participants urged new emigrants to go with an "open mind", "think of Canada as a blank canvas" and "enjoy every minute of this beautiful country".

If you are thinking of going to Canada on a Working Holiday Visa (also known as the International Experience Canada) see the website of the Embassy of Canada in Ireland www.ireland.gc.ca.

You can also see our website www.migrantproject.ie for more information or contact us directly at:

Crosscare Migrant Project
1 Cathedral Street
Dublin 1

Phone: +353 (0)1 873 2844

Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie

Useful Links

General

- Official information on the International Experience Canada/working holiday: www.canadainternational.gc.ca/ireland-irlande/experience_canada_experience/index.aspx?lang=eng&view=d
- Embassy of Canada to Ireland: www.ireland.gc.ca
- Official Canadian Government Immigration website: www.cic.gc.ca
- Official 'Welcome to Canada' Guide: www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf
- Service Canada: www.servicecanada.gc.ca
- Embassy of Ireland to Canada: www.embassyofireland.ca
- Department of Foreign Affairs – assistance abroad information: www.dfa.ie/travel/assistance-abroad/
- Crosscare Migrant Project: www.migrantproject.ie

Irish Emigrant Related Resources in Canada

- Irish Canadian Immigration Centre: www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org
- Moving2Canada: www.moving2canada.com
- Irish Women's Network British Columbia: www.irishwomenbc.net
- Irish Cultural Centre: See: <http://irishculturalsocietyoftoronto.com>
- Irish Sports and Social Club Vancouver: www.isscvancouver.com

Employment

- Craigslist Canada Classifieds: www.craigslist.org/about/sites#CA
- Kijiji Classifieds: www.kijiji.ca
- Working in Canada: www.workingincanada.gc.ca
- Monster Employment Resource: www.monster.ca
- Irish Job Resource in Canada: www.irishjobs.ca
- Canada Job Bank: www.jobbank.gc.ca
- Linked In: <https://ca.linkedin.com/>

Accommodation

- Craigslist Classifieds: www.craigslist.org/about/sites#CA
- Kijiji Classifieds: www.kijiji.ca
- Rent it faster Calgary/Edmonton: www.rentfaster.ca
- Airbnb: www.airbnb.ca

Networking in Canada

- Irish Canadian Immigration Centre networking page :
www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/How-do-I-Network.pdf
- Moving 2Canada networking page: moving2canada.com/jobs-in-canada/networking-in-canada/
- Irish Canada Chamber of Commerce Canada: <http://www.ireland-canada.ca/>

Qualification Certification/Credential Assessment

- Canadian Government Credential Assessment: www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/credentials/index.asp
- Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials: www.cicic.ca/

Irish Credit Report

- Irish Credit Bureau: www.icb.ie

CV/Résumé

- Official résumé template for International Experience Canada applicants: www.canadainternational.gc.ca/ireland-irlande/experience_canada_experience/resume.aspx
- Irish Canadian Immigration Centre résumé page: www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org/?s=Resume
- Moving2Canada résumé page: <http://moving2canada.com/jobs-in-canada/write-a-resume/>

Social Network Sites

Facebook

- Irish and New to Toronto: www.facebook.com/groups/123680717695499/
- Irish in Vancouver: www.facebook.com/irishinvancouver
- Irish in Edmonton: www.facebook.com/groups/485006624866771/
- Irish in Calgary: www.facebook.com/pages/Irish-support-in-canada/123624207696992#!/groups/132443770140133/?fref=ts
- Irish in Manitoba: www.facebook.com/pages/Irish-Association-of-Manitoba/168220363216568
- Irish in Regina: www.facebook.com/newreginairish
- Irish in Newfoundland: www.facebook.com/IrishInNL
- Irish Women's Network of BC: www.facebook.com/groups/88155390806/
- Irish in Saskatoon: www.facebook.com/#!/groups/310255762403815/

Other

- Meet up: www.meetup.com/cities/ca/
- Urban Rec: www.urbanrec.ca
- Plenty of Fish: www.pof.com

Appendix A

List of Participant Occupations

Business/Finance: 2 x Banking, Accounting Administrator, Account Manager, Actuarial Associate, Business Analyst Corporate Banker, Finance, Global Banking & Market Operations Business Support, Insurance Representative, Junior Business Analyst, Business Development Coordinator, Business Development Manager, Project Manager.

Administration: 2 x Office Administration, 2 x Human Resources, University Administration Support, Gift Processor, Medical Secretary, Government Office Administration, Project Administration, Property Administrator, Front Desk Worker.

Retail/Sales: 2 x Retail, Customer Service Workers, Customer Service Representative, Event Coordinator, Retail Manager, Sales Representative, Designer, Buyer, Warehouse Distributor, Purchasing Assistant.

Hospitality and Services: 2 x Bar Tenders, 2 x Nanny, Bar Manager, Chef/Cook, Tour Guide, Hairdresser, Kickboxing Instructor.

Health/Social Support: 2 x Social Worker, 2x Social Care Worker, Youth Worker, Speech Pathologist.

Information Technology: 2 x Software Developers, Social Media / Marketing Manager, Social Media Manager, Software Engineer, IT Manager, IT Professional, IT Product Specialist.

Construction/Planning: 7 x Engineer, 2 x Architect, Building Commissioner, Construction Surveyor, Electrician, Labourer, Health and Safety Manager, HVAC Designer, Construction Project Coordinator, Environmental Consultant, Urban Planner.

Marketing: Easy-line Specialist, Marketing, Marketing Manager, Recruiting Assistant, Advertising Account Director

Other: 2 x Teachers, Auction Administrator, Copy Editor, Emergency Programs Advisor for Enbridge Gas Distribution, Energy Trader, Lab Technician, Regulatory Affairs/Quality Assurance.