

Country Profile

Canada

Migration and Skill Corridors

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Canada is a highly proactive immigrant destination country that seeks to increase its population and economy through both permanent and temporary immigration. India recently overtook China as the largest country of origin, providing much needed talent and labour for Canada across sectors through both temporary and permanent pathways. Important emerging countries of origin are Nigeria and Ghana, particularly in the STEM and healthcare sectors. Recent reforms in the Canadian immigration system, especially those affecting international students and their families, will bring significant upheaval to the India-Canada migration skill corridor.

Produced by the EU-funded Link4Skills research project, this profile is part of a series providing relevant information about countries where the project is conducting empirical fieldwork. Our focus is on transnational labour migration with particular attention given to migration skill corridors. Countries investigated by the consortium include Austria, Canada, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland and Ukraine.

<http://link4skills.eu>



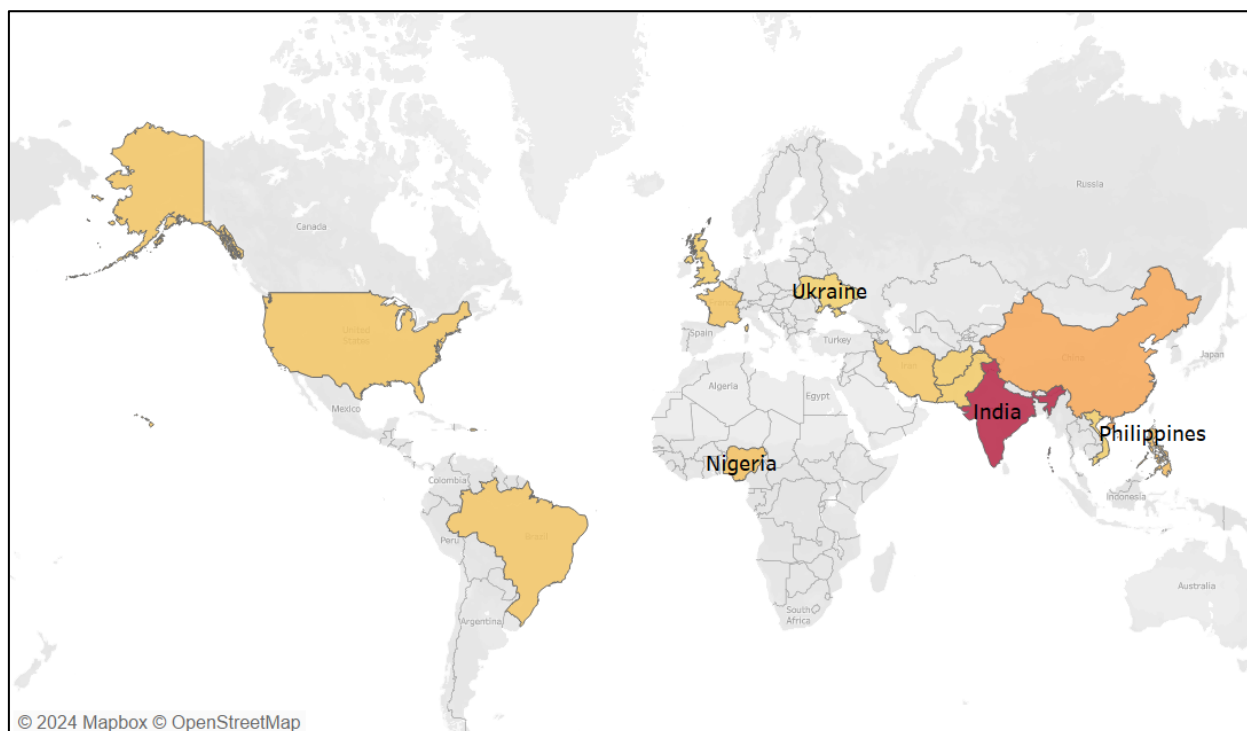
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1. Introduction

Canada is a settler colonial state, an immigrant nation, characterised by a knowledge-based economy and a highly regulated pro-immigration policy and equally positive public opinion on migration (Aytac, Parkins and Triandafyllidou 2024). The country's population stood at 41 million in 2023, and the main factor for its demographic increase is positive net immigration. Nearly 1 out of 4 Canadians (23%) are foreign born. Canada is ranked fifth in terms of inflows of foreign-born population among the OECD countries and represents about 7% of mobility among the OECD countries. Between 2010-2021 Canada experienced a 51% increase in inflows of the foreign-born population. Although other OECD countries had higher rates of growth in inflows, Canada has maintained a high number of inflows over the 10-year period.

The map below shows where Canadian migrants are coming from among the top 10 sending countries in 2021. Among the top migration skill corridors are those connecting Canada to India, the Philippines, Nigeria, and Ukraine. These corridors are the focus of selected case studies in the Link4Skills project. Other major corridors that are not a part of this study are those linking Canada to Brazil, the US, France, and Iran.

Map 1: Top 10 countries of immigrants in Canada



Note: The map above is based on the inflows of persons into Canada in 2021. Inflows of Chinese migrants excludes migrants from Hong Kong and Macau.

Source: OECD.stat (2020). International Migration Database. Accessed on 23 March 2024. Data last updated on 23 October 2023.

2. Migration Corridors

In Canada, economic immigrants may be admitted directly as permanent residents (when they apply through the points system from abroad) or as holders of temporary work or study permits. Table 1 shows the number of Permanent Resident and Temporary Work or Study Permit holder admissions for five countries of origin being examined within the Link4Skills project: Ghana, India, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Ukraine.

In the eight-year period between 2015 and 2023 temporary admissions grew faster than those of permanent ones, particularly among Ukrainians, Indians, Ghanaians, and Nigerians.

Permanent residency admissions have grown as well, but mainly among Nigerians and Indians. Among Filipinos, for example, temporary admissions increased significantly while permanent admissions declined.

In all cases, increases in temporary admissions are related to an increase in international student applications. International students admitted to Canada can be accompanied by their spouses who can receive an open work permit, although restrictions introduced in January 2024 now apply to international students at undergraduate level. The sharp increase in the number of Ukrainians arriving in Canada with temporary status in 2022 and 2023 relates to the CUAET1 special scheme put in place in Canada to welcome those fleeing Russia's war of aggression towards Ukraine.

Table 1: Annual number of Permanent Resident and Temporary Resident admissions by corridor

Statistic	Country of citizenship	Year									8-year growth rate
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Admissions of Permanent Residents	Nigeria	4,090	4,415	5,445	10,920	12,600	6,360	15,595	22,130	17,455	327%
	Ukraine	2,345	3,350	3,310	3,135	2,995	1,675	3,190	3,575	3,110	33%
	India	39,340	39,710	51,590	69,985	85,590	42,875	127,940	118,245	139,775	255%
	Philippines	50,840	41,850	40,905	35,050	27,820	10,975	18,020	22,095	26,955	-47%
	Ghana	365	480	685	895	1,025	545	1,055	1,240	1,645	351%
Admissions of Temporary Residents	Nigeria	7,945	8,925	8,585	9,280	10,475	8,810	13,210	20,950	51,605	550%
	Ukraine	3,145	4,255	4,085	4,110	4,170	3,115	3,825	85,585	109,765	3390%
	India	55,515	89,460	126,405	172,370	241,215	183,270	309,320	388,735	559,540	908%
	Philippines	25,155	25,935	21,040	19,780	23,845	17,990	36,745	54,640	91,360	263%
	Ghana	1,040	1,320	1,345	1,295	1,855	1,315	2,060	3,475	9,240	788%

Note: The number of temporary residents combines study permit holders, temporary foreign workers, and the international mobility program by the year in which the permit was granted. **Source:** (1) Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2023). Permanent Resident – Monthly IRCC Updates. Accessed on 22 March 2024. (2) Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2023). Temporary Resident – Monthly IRCC Updates. Accessed on 22 March 2024.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/03/canada-ukraine-authorization-for-emergency-travel.html>

3. Migration and Skills Corridors

Preliminary data on the distribution of permanent residents across industry sectors by place of birth is provided in Table 2. Indians working in Canada are concentrated in professional, scientific, and technical services (which form a major part of the STEM sector). African nationals (including Nigerians and Ghanaians) are concentrated in the health care and social assistance sector, retail trade sector, and the administrative and support service sector. Eastern Europeans (including Ukrainians) are concentrated in the construction sector. Finally, Filipinos are concentrated in accommodation and food services, as well as the health care and social assistance sectors.

Table 3 shows the distribution of non-permanent residents from India, the Philippines, Eastern Europe (including Ukraine), and Africa (including Nigeria and Ghana) across industry sectors. These groups are more evenly distributed than their permanent resident counterparts, but they are still concentrated in similar sectors.

Table 2: Frequency and share of permanent immigrants who arrived between 2019-21 and were 25+ years old at the time of immigration per industry of employment (selected sectors)

Industry (NAICS code)	India	Philippines	Eastern Europe (includes Ukraine)	Africa (includes Nigeria and Ghana)
23 Construction	1148 (5.59%)	222 (1.83%)	444 (14.82%)	407 (2.93%)
31-33 Manufacturing	1852 (9.01%)	1925 (15.85%)	296 (9.88%)	1445 (10.4%)
54 Professional, scientific and technical services	6185 (30.09%)	407 (3.35%)	333 (11.11%)	1148 (8.27%)
62 Health care and social assistance	889 (4.32%)	1555 (12.81%)	222 (7.41%)	3593 (25.87%)
72 Accommodation and food services	1667 (8.11%)	2444 (20.12%)	148 (4.94%)	519 (3.73%)

Source: 2021 Canadian Census of Population, Public Use Microdata File. Accessed on 23 March 2023.

Table 3: Frequency and share of non-permanent immigrants who arrived between 2019-21 and were 25+ years old at the time of immigration per industry of employment (selected sectors).

Industry (NAICS code)	India	Philippines	Eastern Europe (includes Ukraine)	Africa (includes Nigeria and Ghana)
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	519 (2.52%)	666 (5.49%)	74 (2.47%)	74 (0.53%)
23 Construction	1148 (5.59%)	222 (1.83%)	444 (14.82%)	407 (2.93%)
31-33 Manufacturing	1852 (9.01%)	1925 (15.85%)	296 (9.88%)	1445 (10.4%)
44-45 Retail trade	1741 (8.47%)	889 (7.32%)	148 (4.94%)	1148 (8.27%)
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	2555 (12.43%)	111 (0.91%)	185 (6.17%)	1000 (7.2%)
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	74 (0.36%)	111 (0.91%)	111 (3.7%)	37 (0.27%)
54 Professional, scientific and technical services	6185 (30.09%)	407 (3.35%)	333 (11.11%)	1148 (8.27%)
62 Health care and social assistance	889 (4.32%)	1555 (12.81%)	222 (7.41%)	3593 (25.87%)
72 Accommodation and food services	1667 (8.11%)	2444 (20.12%)	148 (4.94%)	519 (3.73%)
Grand Total				
Permanent and non-permanent immigrants	20555 (100%)	12146 (100%)	3000 (100%)	13891 (100%)

Source: 2021 Canadian Census of Population, Public Use Microdata File. Accessed on 23 March 2023.

4. Link4Skills: The Choice of Migration Skill Corridors

As Canada is a highly proactive immigrant destination country that seeks to increase its population and economy through both permanent and temporary immigration, most migration skills corridors are pertinent for study. To delve deeper into some of the emerging and established corridors for a broader comparative overview, we have selected the following countries of origin:

Nigeria and Ghana (STEM, health)

These are emerging countries of origin for Canada with high dynamism through both temporary and permanent pathways even if their overall populations are comparatively small. Given the importance of the two sectors of occupation - notably the broader STEM and health professions - studying the dynamics and movements within those corridors will yield new empirical as well as analytical insights.

India (STEM, healthcare)

India is the largest country of origin (having recently overtaken China) for Canada and a country that provides much needed talent and labour across sectors and through both temporary and permanent pathways. Within the context of our country-specific and comparative analysis, the dynamics of this corridor are particularly important. It is worth noting that recent reforms in the Canadian immigration system particularly concerning international students and their families will bring significant upheaval to this corridor. Starting with the September 2024 student cohort, international students who study at undergraduate level (whether in universities or colleges) will no longer be able to bring their spouses with an open work permit into Canada. Spouses may accompany the international student but will not be able to work. New rules are also in place with regard to access to the postgraduate work permit – a temporary work permit available to students who complete a post-secondary education program in Canada. Such permits will be accessible to those who complete a full program whether at undergraduate or graduate level, but they will not be accessible to students of private colleges that offer particularly short (one or two years) programs.

5. References

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About the Link4Skills project

Link4Skills is an EU-funded research and project addressing the global challenge of skill shortages and mismatches through innovative, sustainable solutions that foster fair skill utilization and exchange across continents.

Focusing on Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, the project seeks to bridge the gap between skill supply and demand by facilitating re/up-skilling, promoting automation, and encouraging migration as policy options.

Link4Skills is creating an inclusive, participatory policy decision-making environment by integrating a diverse range of stakeholders, including EU decision-makers, inter-governmental institutions, national and subnational decision-makers, employers' organizations, employees' organizations, and civic society co-development institutions.

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This document is available for download at <http://link4skills.eu>

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