

Social networks and employment in study-work transitions for Asia-born New Zealand trained business graduates.

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Abstract

Asia-born New Zealand-educated business graduates involved in our on-going longitudinal study, commissioned by the Asia New Zealand Foundation, identified the importance of social networks in gaining access to the labour market in New Zealand and in Asia. The awareness of the relationship between social networks and employment outcomes became apparent at the second year of our longitudinal study and was explored in greater depth at year three of the study. The importance of social networks for employment outcomes and the circuitous nature of the pathways to employment and residence was not expected by graduates hoping to stay on in New Zealand after graduation and work.

This paper reports from the findings at years two and three related to the relationship of social networks and employment outcomes for Asia-born New Zealand trained business graduates. It describes the circuitous pathways that students take to obtain work relevant to their degree and where immigration outcomes are desired relevant to meet immigration requirements. Perceived barriers to limiting employment opportunities for Asia-born New Zealand trained business graduates include lack of work experience; economic recession; employer and wider community attitudes and changes in immigration and government policies. The paper further explores what policy and practice is needed by government and business agencies to achieve a successful outcome in terms of recruitment of Asia-born New Zealand trained business graduates to bolster New Zealand's declining labour market.