

# **Evaluation of the Impact of the Provincial Policy Statement on International Agricultural Workers' Housing in Ontario**

by

Damilola Oyewale

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## **Abstract**

### **Evaluation of the Impact of the Provincial Policy Statement on International Agricultural Workers' Housing in Ontario**

Damilola Oyewale

University of Guelph, 2024

Advisor:

Prof. Ryan Gibson

This study investigated policies, programs, and initiatives affecting housing options for International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) who contribute to Ontario's Agri-food economy. Both key informant interviews with stakeholders and a review of the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 and the Revised Draft Provincial Planning Statement 2023 were conducted. The findings showed inconsistencies in housing standards across municipalities, with varied and sometimes unclear local approaches observed. The evaluation showed the resultant effect of housing conditions on integration, work-life balance, and assimilation into communities. Planners, agricultural operators, and all levels of government were found to have a role to play in influencing housing discourse, with COVID-19 exacerbating impacts. Recommendations include collaboration between different stakeholders including government levels, coalition groups, and municipal planners. The goal is a comprehensive understanding of the current conditions, gaps, and what could be done in terms of evidenced-based housing solutions through integration and enhancement recommendations.

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## List of Abbreviations

1. ADUs - Additional Dwelling Units
2. AMTCO - Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario
3. IAW - International Agricultural Workers
4. MAW - Migrant Agricultural Workers
5. MMAH - Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
6. MZOs - Minister Zoning Orders
7. PNP - Provincial Nominee Program
8. PPS - Provincial Policy Statement
9. SAW - Seasonal Agricultural Workers
10. TFAW - Temporary Foreign Agricultural Workers
11. TFW - Temporary Foreign Workers

# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Rationale and Background**

The agricultural industry in Ontario, Canada, has progressively depended on foreign agricultural workers to fulfill its labour requirements in recent years (Vosko et al., 2019). Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), who are frequently employed in agriculture, have a crucial function in bolstering agricultural output and guaranteeing food security (Falconer, 2020). International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) - a subtype of TFWs who specifically work in agriculture in Ontario - fill important roles in harvesting and processing crops. Nevertheless, there have been raised apprehensions regarding the housing circumstances and entitlements of these workers, underscoring the necessity for efficient policies and regulations to cater to their distinct requirements. The Ontario Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is a strategic document that offers guidance for land use planning issues in the province. The PPS incorporates clauses pertaining to housing, intending to guarantee sufficient and appropriate lodging for all inhabitants. To gauge the success of the PPS in enhancing the living conditions and safeguarding the rights of international agricultural workers (IAWs), it is crucial to evaluate its influence on housing, as posited by Viswanathan et al. (2022) and Gerassime (2023).

Assessing the effectiveness of policies and identifying opportunities for improvement is of utmost importance. The PPS has a substantial impact on the housing circumstances and living standards of international agricultural workers (Viswanathan et al., 2022). The PPS serves as a crucial policy tool at the provincial and local levels. It establishes government policies for land use planning, to direct development and foster sustainable communities (Fudge et al., 2009; Pysklywec et al., 2022). The policy statement covers multiple facets of the agricultural sector, such as land utilization, environmental conservation, and the provision of housing for labourers (Weerasinghe, 2020). More precisely, it offers standards and principles to guarantee that accommodation for international agricultural workers fulfills the criteria, including safety, cleanliness, and habitability (Hennebry & Preibisch, 2012).

This study aims to assess the influence of the PPS on housing for IAWs by analyzing alterations in housing conditions, the degree of policy implementation, and the viewpoints of local government planners engaged in its execution. By comprehending the capabilities and constraints of the PPS, policymakers and stakeholders can discern possibilities for enhancement and formulate tactics to tackle the housing requirements and entitlements of IAWs more efficiently (Rich, 2014). This study aims to establish a thorough understanding of the background and context of the research issue. This understanding will serve as a basis for examining the research objectives and addressing the research questions described in the next sections of this document.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The research objectives describe the precise goals and intentions of the investigation. The identified aims of this research are as follows:

1. To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Ontario PPS on housing conditions and rights for IAWs.
2. To gather perspectives from local government planners on the implementation of the PPS and its outcomes related to housing for IAWs.
3. To identify opportunities for enhancing the PPS by integrating it with local government planning to better address the housing needs and rights of IAWs.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

The research questions serve as guiding inquiries to address the research objectives. In this study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How has the Ontario PPS influenced housing conditions and rights for IAWs?
2. What are the perspectives of local government planners regarding the implementation and outcomes of the PPS in relation to housing for IAWs?
3. How can the integration of the PPS with local government planning be improved to address the housing needs and rights of IAWs more effectively?



## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study's importance rests in its potential to enhance comprehension of housing circumstances and rights for IAWs and evaluate the efficacy of the Ontario PPS in tackling these concerns. The finding has several important implications, each noted below.

### **1.4.1 Academic Significance**

This study aims to enhance the current academic literature by offering empirical information on the influence of the PPS on housing for IAWs. The study will provide useful insights into the effectiveness of the policy framework by assessing housing circumstances, rights, and opinions of local government planners. The findings will contribute to the existing body of information on planning strategies and their consequences for housing vulnerable groups in the agricultural industry.

### **1.4.2 Policy and Planning Significance**

The study's results can provide valuable insights for the formulation of policies and planning strategies pertaining to housing for IAWs. Through the assessment of the efficacy of the PPS, the study can pinpoint deficiencies and obstacles in the execution of the policy and propose avenues for enhancement. The study's recommendations can guide policymakers, local government planners, and key stakeholders in improving the integration of the PPS with local planning procedures. This will help to effectively address the housing needs and rights of IAWs.

### **1.4.3 Social and Humanitarian Significance**

The findings of the research could facilitate action to enhance the living conditions and safeguarding the rights of IAWs is of paramount social and humanitarian significance.

#### **1.4.4 Practical Significance**

The research findings will offer practical insights for different stakeholders engaged in housing provision for IAWs. The study's conclusions can be advantageous for local government planners, lawmakers, agricultural employers, and advocacy organizations.

#### **1.5 Positionality**

As a researcher examining housing policies impacting IAWs in Ontario, I need to acknowledge how my social identities and experiences shape my perspectives and approach to this work. As a Black individual of African heritage, I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Ontario. I am keenly aware of belonging to an ethnic minority, a group that many IAWs also identify with in this province. My role as a student and member of the Rural Planning research team grants me privileges and opportunities not commonly accessible to these IAWs. For instance, I have access to interview planners through professional networks and referrals, providing me with unique societal advantages.

I do not have lived experience of the challenges faced by IAWs regarding cultural and linguistic barriers, precarious immigration status, or inadequate housing and living conditions. My understanding of the housing issues experienced by IAWs, and my proposed solutions are informed by relevant literature and stories heard on and off the internet. My position as an "outsider" to the IAW community means I do not embody an emic, or insider, cultural understanding of their experiences.

I also recognize that the University of Guelph through my advisors, trains me to value metrics and "objective" evidence over mere perceptions. Therefore, I have conducted this research through an equity-driven, human rights-based lens that respects diverse knowledge and prioritizes the perspectives of professional planners in Ontario. By maintaining ongoing self-reflection and making my positionality transparent, I have navigated inherent power dynamics ethically and worked to mitigate the influence of my ethnic background and assumptions using rigorous research methodologies as I explored this research.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.0 Introduction to the Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to offer a detailed summary of the previous research that has been conducted on this subject. Through the review of relevant studies, reports, and scholarly papers, the researcher can determine the areas in which there is a lack of information, expand upon the findings of earlier research, and contribute to a better understanding of the intricate link that exists between the PPS and IAW housing. The following is a list of the goals that the literature review aims to accomplish:

1. To conduct a review of the current literature on the Ontario PPS, including its land use planning and development aims, principles, and consequences in Ontario, and investigate the housing concerns that IAWs are confronted with, including problems with availability, price, quality, and access to necessary services.
2. To conduct a literature analysis of the prior research that has explored the effect that the PPS has had on housing for IAWs, including the methodology that was used, the most important findings, and the limitations. More so, it will also determine the areas in which additional study is required and the gaps that exist in the existing literature to improve our understanding of the influence that the PPS has had on the housing of IAW.
3. To provide a framework that will serve as a roadmap for the analysis of the impact that the PPS has had on housing for IAWs.

Throughout the literature, there are many terms used to describe IAWs. This includes migrant workers, foreign workers, temporary foreign workers, and seasonal agricultural workers. These terms are used to describe individuals who come to various parts of Canada on different visa arrangements and temporary stays to fulfil work roles across economic sectors. All of these programs are administered by Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada, and they share a common purpose - enabling Canadian employers to recruit foreign nationals for temporary positions when suitable Canadian candidates are not available. These initiatives serve to fulfill short-term labor demands while maintaining rigorous standards for recruitment procedures and safeguarding the rights of workers. Throughout the literature review chapter, I use the language of

the authors in their original study. Regardless of language or terminology, all research was deemed to be connected to IAWs.

## **2.1 Introduction to IAWs**

According to a report by WDG Public Health (2022), IAWs, commonly recognized as migrant farm workers or temporary foreign workers, are viewed as crucial labour force who migrate to Ontario from other countries with the specific purpose of engaging in agricultural and related industries. The contribution of IAWs to Canada's agricultural industry is undeniable, particularly in regions like rural Ontario, where their presence helps meet labour demands, ensures agricultural sustainability, promotes economic growth, and supports food security (Bertoni, Cavicchioli, & Pretolani, 2018; Rye & O'Reilly, 2021). In 2021, Ontario saw an 11.5% increase in temporary foreign agricultural workers, reaching nearly 27,000, accounting for 43.2% of all migrant workers in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022).

In Canada, housing and planning regulations play a pivotal role in shaping the living conditions and access to suitable housing for IAWs. The complexities and restrictions associated with these policies pose challenges, which may have implications for the physical and mental health of IAWs and their social integration within Canadian communities (Banerjee, 2023; Clemens et al., 2018; Karki et al., 2019). As this review delves into this topic, it aims to identify gaps in the existing literature and advocate for improved planning methods and equitable housing outcomes that prioritize the overall well-being and integration of IAWs in rural Ontario.

The utilization of IAWs raises important questions related to labour rules, social justice, and the potential for labour exploitation due to their temporary employment status (Haley et al., 2020; Moyce & Schenker, 2018). IAWs often encounter challenging working conditions and face vulnerabilities associated with their transitory job nature (Paul & Yeoh, 2020). A critical examination of prior research is essential to shed light on the complex issues surrounding IAWs' presence in Canada's agricultural sector, particularly in rural Ontario, and to gain insights into the socioeconomic, legal, and ethical factors that influence their experiences (Paul & Yeoh, 2020; Rotz et al., 2019). Through this literature review, we aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of housing and planning policies on IAWs in Canada, contributing valuable insights

that can inform more effective policies and strategies to enhance their well-being, integration, and overall working conditions.

### **2.1.1 Importance of Housing and Planning Policies for IAWs**

To the government, the principal protections for the well-being and productivity of IAWs are allegedly housing and planning restrictions (Alcantara & Morden, 2017; Stasiulis, Jinnah & Rutherford, 2020). A closer look finds that these laws often fall short of offering IAWs sufficient and inexpensive housing, exposing them to physical and mental problems (Gabriel & Macdonald, 2017; Gibson-Graham & Dombroski, 2020). The housing alternatives now accessible to IAWs remain insufficient and unsatisfactory despite the recognized importance of housing in supporting work satisfaction and effective integration into Canadian society (Mouratidis, 2021; Perrin et al., 2020). IAWs productivity and work performance are also hampered by inadequate housing arrangements, which eventually undermines the alleged advantages of the housing and planning legislation (Mouratidis, 2021; Perrin et al., 2020). Planning constraints also make it more difficult for IAWs to find appropriate housing choices. These limitations significantly impact important factors such as housing location, density, cost, and accessibility of essential utilities and services (Blay-Palmer et al., 2021; Malanski, Schiavi & Dedieu, 2019; Spector et al., 2019). As a result, IAWs have fewer and lower-quality housing alternatives available to them, which worsens their marginalization and jeopardizes their well-being (Buccieri et al., 2023; Karki et al., 2019). Temporary shelters are used by homeless individuals who lack fixed housing, while slums suffer from inadequate infrastructure and sanitation. Subpar housing conditions exhibit structural defects, insufficient insulation, and inadequate ventilation, resulting in health hazards for the occupants, while overcrowded dwellings have the presence of an excessive number of individuals in a confined area leading to the emergence of discomfort, absence of privacy, and heightened levels of stress (Perrin et al., 2020). There is an urgent need for effective planning methods that place a high priority on the creation of vibrant, inclusive communities that are specifically designed to meet the needs of IAWs (Caxaj et al., 2020; Chartrand & Vosko, 2020; Esses et al., 2021; Vosko, 2018; Zhang et al., 2023). Such planning techniques can lessen the adverse effects of planning constraints and develop more equitable housing outcomes for IAWs by providing amenities and

support networks that improve their well-being and encourage social integration (Buccieri et al., 2023; Karki et al., 2019).

### **2.1.2 Planning Policies and their Impact on IAW Housing**

There has been an increasing research interest in examining the influence of planning policies on the accessibility and standard of housing for international agricultural workers (Paul & Yeoh, 2020). Harvey et al. (2019) conducted a study investigating the influence of zoning regulations and land-use policies on the spatial allocation of housing opportunities for international workers. The researchers discovered that the implementation of restrictive zoning laws has the potential to impede the creation of new housing developments, thereby intensifying the scarcity of housing and compelling workers to reside in substandard living conditions (Harvey et al., 2019).

Spatial planning decisions heavily influence the distribution of IAWs across regions in Canada. Specific provinces and communities have emerged as focal points for utilizing temporary foreign workers within the agricultural sector. While this particular focus may enhance the ease of labour market entry, it can also give rise to various social difficulties. The concentration of workers in particular regions can strain local infrastructure and services, potentially affecting the overall welfare of the workers and the communities they reside in (Hayami & Ruttan, 2019).

In order to delve deeper into the ramifications of spatial planning decisions on housing for agricultural workers, a scholarly investigation conducted by Moyce & Schenker examined the enduring consequences of worker concentrations in particular geographical areas. It was discovered that regions characterized by elevated concentrations of temporary foreign workers encountered challenges in social cohesion and community dynamics. On the other hand, distributing workers across different regions resulted in a more sustainable form of integration and alleviated the burden on local resources (Moyce & Schenker, 2018).

### **2.1.3 Policy Frameworks for Protecting International Agricultural Workers**

At both the national and international levels, policy frameworks have been constructed to protect the rights and well-being of IAWs. According to Steimikis & Balentis (2020), IAWs suffer a distinct set of obstacles and vulnerabilities because of their temporary and insecure working

situation. Conventions, such as Convention No. 143 on Migrant Workers and Convention No. 184 on Safety and Health in Agriculture, have been formed by the International Labour Organization to address the rights of IAWs as well as the working circumstances that they are subjected to. There are also protections for IAWs provided by international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Wibisono & Sadiawati, 2021). One of these protections is the right to housing. Many nations have passed laws and policies at the national level to protect the rights of workers. These laws and policies address topics including employment contracts, working conditions, minimum salaries, and access to social services (Fanzo et al., 2021). The employment of migrant workers, including IAWs, is regulated by bilateral and multilateral agreements between countries. These agreements may include recruitment practices, labour standards, and social protection. More so, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups also play an important part in lobbying for the rights and implementing programs to enhance their well-being (Rijswijk et al., 2021).

#### **2.1.4 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement: Overview and Relevance**

In the Canadian province of Ontario, the PPS is an important policy document that directs land use planning and development. The PPS provides a framework for decision-making related to land use, infrastructure, and the protection of resources and natural heritage. This framework was developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. According to Viswanathan et al. (2021), the PPS lays forth policies to promote sustainable development, effective land use, and the conservation of the environment. It addresses a diverse variety of planning and development issues, including land use compatibility, urban expansion, transportation, agriculture, natural heritage, and the supply of affordable housing, among other things. According to Caldwell et al. (2022), the PPS applies to all of Ontario's municipalities and planning agencies, making it possible to maintain a coherent policy framework across the province. The PPS has implications in terms of the availability, price, and quality of accommodation for IAWs. These implications are directly related to housing for IAWs. The policy acknowledges the significance of offering housing options that are adequate and appropriate for a variety of inhabitants, including those who are only there temporarily. It promotes the building of housing that is accessible to low-income individuals, the

preservation of agricultural lands, and the coordination of residential and commercial growth (Penfound, 2023). The potential impact that the PPS could have on the planning and implementation of housing solutions geared toward these workers is what gives this program its relevance in the context of IAW housing. The policy has the potential to have an impact on the accessibility of various housing options for IAWs, including the availability of services and amenities, the placement of housing projects, and the designs of such projects. In addition to this, it establishes criteria for the quality of housing and its compatibility with the uses of land in the surrounding area (Connell, 2021).

## **2.2 The Current Housing Conditions of International Agricultural Workers**

The housing conditions for IAWs in Canada have been a longstanding concern. The utilization of temporary foreign workers to address the labour demands of seasonal agriculture has presented a range of difficulties in ensuring appropriate housing provisions. The study conducted by Smith et al. (2016) revealed that many of these individuals reside in densely populated and substandard accommodations, which offer limited opportunities for accessing essential facilities. Gong et al. (2019) unveiled that certain employers offer subpar housing as a component of their employment agreements, resulting in a limited degree of autonomy for the workers in determining their living arrangements.

Engaging in laborious agricultural work can evoke feelings of dismay when paired with confined and uncomfortable residential conditions that lack the essential amenities and comforts deserving of individuals. The influence extends beyond individuals' spheres and extends to their professional contexts as well. The repercussions of substandard housing are evident in individuals' productivity and job satisfaction levels. Workers' performance is inevitably hindered when they experience physical and mental health complications due to inadequate living conditions. The occurrence of absenteeism and the reduction in work hours have become increasingly widespread, thereby compromising the overall efficacy of the agricultural labour force (Taylor, Rozelle & de Brauw, 2018).



Consider the potential psychological impact experienced by individuals in such circumstances, encompassing heightened stress levels, increased anxiety, and a sense of social detachment. Individuals who reside far from their native countries and families often experience homesickness and cultural dislocation, which can intensify their mental distress. The combination of these factors ultimately leads to a workforce that exhibits lower levels of engagement, diminished commitment to their current positions, and an increased propensity to actively pursue alternative employment opportunities (Van, 2018). Providing appropriate housing is not solely a matter of physical infrastructure but indicates societal regard for these industrious individuals. Acknowledging and attending to their housing requirements conveys a significant message of esteem and gratitude for their valuable contributions. Investing in the dignity and well-being of individuals can foster a sense of empowerment, which in turn can cultivate a more content, physically and mentally healthier workforce and more committed to their work. Consequently, it is imperative to consider the housing requirements of international agricultural workers due to the significant humanitarian and economic implications involved (Schilling & Logan, 2017).

To gain a thorough understanding of the housing conditions experienced by IAWs, Taylor et al. (2018) provide valuable insights into the specific difficulties female workers face, revealing that not only males but also female agricultural labourers frequently face supplementary housing obstacles, such as inadequate provision of gender-specific living arrangements and increased safety concerns. Acknowledging and tackling these gender-specific concerns is imperative to advance gender equality and establish a secure and nurturing atmosphere for all employees (Taylor, Rozelle & de Brauw, 2018).

Feminist capacity development critically enhances housing and planning policies for IAWs in Canada by promoting inclusivity, empowering individual agency, and amplifying workers' voices for improved housing conditions. It challenges traditional gender norms, encourages collective action, and fosters more equitable decision-making, leading to policies that better address the diverse needs of all workers (Odame & Sarapura, 2009).

## A. Legal and Employment Issues

The housing conditions experienced by IAWs frequently intersect with challenges regarding legality and employment. The legal framework can significantly impact the housing provisions for these workers, which can substantially influence their living conditions and overall experiences in Canada (Karki et al., 2019). According to Pham et al. (2018), it has been observed that certain employers may establish a connection between housing provisions and work contracts, resulting in the emergence of vulnerabilities and dependency among workers. This practice can give rise to exploitative circumstances wherein workers may resist asserting their rights due to concerns over potential repercussions on their housing and job stability (Pham et al., 2018).

Their employment status significantly influences the housing options available to international agricultural workers. Temporary foreign workers are frequently associated with employers, and their capacity to switch employment may be limited by the terms and conditions outlined in their work permits. The limited mobility experienced by individuals can have implications for their housing options, potentially resulting in a dependence on employer-provided accommodations that may not consistently meet satisfactory standards (Grossman, 2017). A study examined legal and employment issues, highlighting the need for effective grievance channels for agricultural employees abroad. Workers with extensive grievance channels are likelier to reveal housing-related difficulties and seek remedies without fear of punishment. Legal protections and worker empowerment may improve housing dispute resolution (Banerjee, 2023; Clemens et al., 2018; Harvey et al., 2019; Karki et al., 2019)

## **B. Social Integration and Community Well-being**

In addition to the tangible aspects of housing, the well-being of IAWs in Canada is shaped by their social integration and the overall welfare of their communities (Banerjee, 2023; Karki et al., 2019). Enhanced housing conditions positively affected the workers' perception of belongingness and their level of engagement within the community. The provision of suitable housing, in conjunction with thoughtfully planned communities, has the potential to cultivate feelings of stability and safety, thereby enhancing the mental well-being of these individuals (Herrero, Fuente and Gracia, 2019). Conversely, substandard housing conditions and insufficient community assistance can result in social isolation and harm mental well-being. IAWs frequently

encounter language barriers and cultural disparities, significantly challenging their integration into Canadian society. Community-based support programs and initiatives that facilitate cultural exchange have the potential to significantly contribute to the improvement of the overall well-being of these workers and the promotion of a more inclusive environment (Costanza et al., 2017).

In order to further explore the significance of social integration, research conducted by Herrero, Fuente & Gracia (2019) investigated the influence of community involvement on the ability of international agricultural labourers to remain in Canada. The results of their study suggest that employees who experience a sense of connection to their communities exhibit a higher propensity to remain in their current positions and cultivate enduring affiliations with their employers. Establishing a hospitable and all-encompassing atmosphere can foster stability within the workforce and augment the overall efficiency and contentment of agricultural labourers from various nations (Herrero, Fuente & Gracia, 2019).

### **2.2.1 Concerns Surrounding Canadian Housing Policies and IAWs**

The impact of Canadian housing and planning policies on IAWs is a subject of serious concern, prompting the need for case study research to address these issues (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2018; Côté et al., 2019; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Liu-Farrer, Oscilowicz et al., 2022; Russo, 2018; Yeoh & Baas, 2020). Despite government efforts to attract, integrate, and retain immigrants, achieving geographic dispersion to meet the housing demands of IAWs remains challenging (Diehl, 2020; Hill et al., 2019).

### **2.2.2 Challenges Faced by Skilled Immigrants, Including IAWs in Integration**

Contrary to common perception, international workers face various barriers that keep them from successfully integrating into Canadian society. Another aspect of this situation is the housing and zoning regulations, which provide additional challenges for foreign employees, notably IAWs. Despite the well-known Federal Skilled Worker Program, Canada's economic and social outcomes for foreign workers, particularly IAWs have been productive (Van Riemsdijk & Basford, 2022). These challenges have significant socioeconomic effects that affect migrant employees' overall health and well-being. As a result, it is crucial for all parties involved in international workers'

integration, particularly those handling IAWs' housing and planning requirements, to thoroughly understand the particular circumstances and challenges faced by skilled international workers in Canada (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018).

The settlement patterns of new immigrants in Canada present significant concerns regarding the impact of housing policies on IAWs (Landry et al., 2021; Papademetriou and Hooper, 2019). While larger cities attract the majority of immigrants, smaller communities have made strides in attracting immigrants to address labour gaps and explore business opportunities (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2018; Côté et al., 2019; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Liu-Farrer, Oscilowicz et al., 2022; Russo, 2018; Yeoh & Baas, 2020).

To address these concerns, initiatives like the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program have successfully attracted and integrated immigrants, including IAWs, through streamlined application procedures, sector-specific support, and community engagement (Banerjee et al., 2018; Farazmand, 2023; Jeram & Nicolaides, 2018; Weiler, Sexsmith & Minkoff-Zern, 2020). However, challenges persist, affecting the retention of IAWs. Issues such as barriers to credential recognition, limited affordable housing, and scarce labour force needs and business opportunities in rural areas significantly impact their settlement (Ebrahimi, Schillo & Bronson, 2021; Paul & Yeoh, 2020; Sincaian, 2020).

Further studies raise skepticism regarding the effectiveness of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program in achieving a substantial shift in regional immigrant distribution (Gisselquist, 2020; Liston & Carens, 2008; Revington et al., 2018). Overcoming the allure of major cities and encouraging international workers to consider alternative settlement options remains uncertain. The existing housing and planning policies, coupled with the attraction of urban centers, create formidable challenges in achieving a more equitable distribution of immigrants across the country (Carter, Morrish & Amoyaw, 2008).

To ensure the long-term effectiveness of housing and development policies affecting IAWs in Canada, it becomes imperative to address issues such as barriers to acknowledging credentials, a lack of affordable housing, and limited labour force needs and business prospects in rural regions.

Creating inclusive and supportive communities and offering economic opportunities are crucial components for the successful integration of immigrant agricultural workers in diverse regions across the country (Drolet & Teixeira, 2019; Gamso & Yuldashev, 2018; Abdurakhmanov et al., 2019; Haas et al., 2019).

### **2.2.3 Housing Experiences and Challenges of IAWs: Quebec and British Columbia**

Perry's (2018) research used a critical mixed-methods approach to investigate the housing experiences and demands of IAWs in Quebec. The study gathered insightful data by using semi-structured interviews with 28 IAWs who were living in bunkhouses in Leamington, Ontario. The “English as a Second Language” (ESL) and computer literacy sessions were explicitly targeted for recruitment, and a snowball strategy was used to find more participants. The interviews were performed in a native language to improve communication, ensuring the participants' voices were heard and maintaining participant anonymity using pseudonyms. Significantly, the researcher's experiences living and working with migrant workers and working on farms contributed a distinct viewpoint, highlighting the workers' agency and building an everyday awareness of their difficulties and prospects (Perry, 2018). Perry's research brought to light the pressing housing challenges that IAWs in Quebec confront, including the absence of affordable homes, linguistic obstacles, and insufficient support services. The study emphasized the need for housing programs that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of IAWs, as well as the need for enhanced lines of communication between IAWs and housing service providers. The research also stressed the value of language assistance and cultural sensitivity in promoting IAWs' successful housing integration in Quebec. These results underlined the pressing need for comprehensive and focused actions to improve housing assistance and advance the general well-being of IAWs in the province (Perry, 2018).

British Columbia's housing assistance programs for international agricultural workers (IAWs) are the focus of a case study. Cohen & Caxaj's (2022) study uses in-depth interviews and focus groups to examine the availability, quality, and efficacy of current housing alternatives and support programs for IAWs. The results show that housing assistance has severe limitations, such as excessive fees, insufficient availability, and language hurdles. The research highlights the need

for coordinated efforts between government agencies and community groups and specialized interventions, including affordable housing programs and language assistance services. These results highlight the critical need for individualized and all-encompassing strategies to improve housing assistance for IAWs in British Columbia (Cohen and Caxaj, 2022).

Caxaj and Diaz (2022) focused on the specific context of the interior region of British Columbia. They investigated the relationship between housing support, belonging, and well-being in the study and adopted a qualitative narrative approach, informed by participatory action research principles, to explore the lived experiences of Temporary Migrant Agricultural Workers. The findings revealed a dominant theme of marginal living, encompassing stories of isolation, exclusion, the struggle for necessities, and reducing workers to mere labourers. These experiences significantly influence the well-being of IAWs and their ability to establish a sense of belonging within the community. Despite the challenges faced, the review also highlights the agency and resilience demonstrated by IAWs through their efforts to build community, provide mutual support, and engage in advocacy. By shedding light on the day-to-day realities of housing and planning policies for IAWs, Caxaj & Diaz's review contributes to a better understanding of the concepts of partial citizenship and structural exclusion in the context of rural British Columbia. The insights gained from this review can inform the development of more effective housing and planning policies, ensuring improved well-being and a stronger sense of belonging for IAWs in Canada (Caxaj & Diaz, 2018).

#### **2.2.4 Employment Hurdles and Integration Efforts for Skilled Immigrants**

Despite being significant beneficiaries of immigrants, Canadian municipalities are often disregarded when immigration and integration policies are being developed (Guo, 2023). Guo & Guo (2016) draw attention to how the existing governance paradigm marginalizes municipalities, which makes it difficult for different levels of government and community groups to work together effectively. The instance of Calgary is examined, with particular attention paid to the city's initiatives to include community partners and take a holistic, collaborative approach to immigrant settlement and integration. The Guo and Guo (2016) study focuses on efforts to develop welcoming environments, encourage community involvement, and introduce creative programs to

aid in the effective integration of immigrants. The research recognizes that it does not thoroughly investigate the more general structural constraints and their broad implications for immigration and integration results.

### **2.2.5 Enhancing Settlement Services and Collaboration for Skilled Immigrants' Integration**

Guo and Guo (2016) use an exploratory case study technique to acquire insights into the intricacies and distinctive features of two chosen community centres in Calgary via the use of document analysis and in-person interviews. Their goal is to create signs of a welcoming community and comprehend the circumstances and difficulties experienced by immigrant programs in these environments. Guo's (2023) analysis's use of public records, interviews with municipal employees and program coordinators, site visits, participant observations, and other research techniques and data sources increase the study's reliability and dependability. It is crucial to remember that the study's restricted focus on only two community centres may limit how broadly its conclusions may be applied (Guo, 2023).

### **2.2.6 Employment Hurdles for Skilled International Workers Through Settlement Services**

Canada's abroad workers strategy aims to attract competent foreign employees who can contribute to the country's economic and social aspects. Nonetheless, despite the emphasis on skilled professionals, international employees have substantial difficulties in finding work that fits their qualifications and talents. This calls into doubt the effectiveness of Canada's integration attempts, notably in housing and planning policies, as well as aid for skilled immigrants (Stasiulis, Jinnah, & Rutherford, 2020; Spector et al., 2019). The review of the literature shows the issues and unique needs of skilled workers in Canada. It emphasizes the need of needs-based settlement services, culturally and linguistically appropriate health and social services, and all-encompassing help that addresses socioeconomic, linguistic, cultural, and health-related challenges. To improve settlement policy for skilled foreign workers, it is necessary to examine the accessibility and effectiveness of settlement services and to research worldwide literature on the subject. Excluding skilled foreign workers from integration programs and services may lead to marginalization and

exclusion, highlighting the need of stakeholder participation in promoting their complete integration and well-being (Donato & Ferris, 2020; Niraula & Triandafyllidou, 2022).

### **2.2.7 Accessing Social Support for Migrant Agricultural Workers (MAWs)**

Caxaj and Cohen (2021) investigate the challenges faced by migrant agricultural workers in accessing adequate social support within the context of public services. Caxaj and Cohen's study critically examines the concept of social support, employing a situational analysis methodology to uncover the intricate dynamics of context, discourses, and social processes surrounding social support for migrant agricultural workers. The study conducted group consultations with 235 migrant agricultural workers and one-on-one consultations with 28 formal support individuals, revealing three key factors that restrict and impede support for migrant agricultural workers: the onus placed on international workers, paternalism and control by employers, and system-enabled vulnerabilities. IAWs often carry the burden of risk and responsibility, facing limited access to services due to their temporary status and reliance on employers. Moreover, paternalistic assumptions and employer control further restrict their access to support, including limitations on movements and visitors. Additionally, the study uncovers significant gaps in support services, characterized by limited funding, lack of accessibility, and the exclusion of temporary foreign workers. These systemic barriers perpetuate the vulnerability of migrant agricultural workers, resulting in insufficient support. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbate these issues, as employers exert greater control over workers' movements and scarce resources hinder adequate support. Both migrant agricultural workers and IAWs share common hurdles related to their temporary status, reliance on employers, limited access to services, and systemic barriers in accessing support. Therefore, the findings of this study can provide valuable insights into the broader circumstances faced by IAWs and emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive and accessible support systems that address the vulnerabilities of both groups, empowering them to assert their rights and entitlements equitably in Canada (Caxaj & Cohen, 2021).

## **2.3 Rethinking Overseas Worker Exploitation**

The characterization of the exploitation of foreign overseas workers in the Global North as trafficking, which is pervasive in the political, legal, and media arenas, is critically addressed by



Strauss and McGrath (2017). The complex and varied dynamics that underlie unfree labour interactions, including precarious work, impacting both migrant and non-migrant populations, are hidden by the sole focus on trafficking as the primary lens to comprehend migrants' unfreedom. To better understand their interconnectivity, Donato and Ferris (2020) urge the categorization of diverse types of unfreedom along a continuum of labour relations. This causes overseas workers to struggle with limited mobility brought on by severe immigration laws, which lowers their negotiating power in labour markets. Donato and Ferris (2020) illustrate how insecure employment, ambiguous legal status, and unfree labour relations are intertwined and how workers manage and oppose these problems using the case of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) in Canada. Donato and Ferris (2020) advocate for policymakers such as government agencies, employers, and community organizations to address these systemic issues comprehensively, moving beyond a singular focus on trafficking and ensuring the welfare of all workers, including foreign agricultural workers in Canada. It does this by urging a broader understanding of the multifaceted nature of unfree labour relations and precarious employment (Donato & Ferris, 2020).

### **2.3.1 IAW's Precariousness**

Robillard sheds light on how institutional violence sustains the precarious situations of female temporary foreign workers by drawing on the perspectives of service providers who serve female live-in caregivers and migrant agricultural workers in Ontario and Quebec. The research delineates several factors that contribute to this susceptibility, including the influence of transnational social pressures on women's employment retention, the constraining characteristics of women's employment agreements, the dearth of opportunities for unionization, and the isolation and absence of privacy encountered by female workers. The interplay of these factors contributes to an asymmetrical employer-worker dynamic, leading to precarious international labour conditions that render individuals susceptible to exploitation and physical harm while impeding their ability to avail of essential services and social support.

Despite their difficulties, service providers seek to have a positive influence through programs, including empowerment seminars, support services, and workshops on human rights

education. The availability of more choices for Canadian citizens seeking permanent residence status might act as a basis for ensuring that temporary foreign employees receive appropriate services following their fundamental human rights. The Canadian state must ensure the protection and respect of temporary foreign workers' universal human rights in light of their significant contributions to Canadian society (Robillard et al., 2018).

### **2.3.2 Health Challenges of Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada**

In order to assess the Canadian literature on the health of temporary foreign workers and their families in Canada, Salami, Meharali, and Salami (2015) did a scoping study. Despite making a considerable economic contribution to the nation, temporary foreign workers are subject to systemic injustices and have few rights, which can harm their health. The evaluation entailed delving into ten previously published studies that examined the health of temporary foreign workers in Canada, particularly seasonal agricultural labourers in Ontario. Major health problems found among these employees were mental health, occupational health, unsanitary living circumstances, and impediments to healthcare access, such as language hurdles and deportation anxiety. It was discovered that the insecure housing status of temporary foreign workers in Canada significantly impacted these health issues. The study's conclusions highlight how urgent it is to eliminate obstacles to healthcare access and call for more research on groups of temporary foreign workers outside the agriculture industry. Salami shows the urgent need for better care and support for the physical and mental health of temporary foreign workers and their families living in Canada (Salami, Meharali, & Salami, 2015).

## **2.4 Case Studies**

Case study analysis becomes crucial as it reveals the nuanced contextual subtleties and intricate complexity of the implementation and results of housing and planning policies for IAWs (Hill et al., 2019; Li, 2019; Niu, Lyu & Gu, 2022; Zhang et al., 2018). Case study analysis provides a critical lens to assess the merits and flaws of these policies in practical settings, enabling evidence-based decision-making and significant improvements in the lives of agricultural workers (Louis, 2020; Moyce & Schenker, 2018; Niraula & Triandafyllidou, 2022). This is accomplished by bridging the gap between abstract theories and practical realities.

### **2.4.1 The City of Calgary's Welcoming Community Policy and Local Implementation**

The concentration of new immigrants in major cities like Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver highlights the failure of government initiatives to achieve a balanced regional distribution (Choe and Lugosi, 2021; Dias-Abey, 2018; Spitzer et al., 2019). To address this issue, the City of Calgary has implemented the Welcoming Community Policy and Local Implementation, a comprehensive strategy promoting balanced immigration distribution.

The policy encourages immigrants to settle in areas beyond densely populated metropolitan centers by providing specific measures and incentives. These areas offer affordable housing options, promising job prospects, and opportunities for active community engagement. The Local Implementation aspect involves collaborative efforts with local organizations, community groups, and businesses to create a supportive environment for newcomers.

Guo & Guo (2016) emphasize Calgary's Welcoming Community Policy's aim to promote inclusion and fair opportunities for all people. The city utilizes a hub model of community-based integration activities, developed in partnership with community stakeholders. This approach prioritizes immigrants' needs and acknowledges their contributions, fostering inclusive environments.

Overall, The City of Calgary's Welcoming Community Policy and Local Implementation seek to alleviate strain on major cities while enhancing socio-economic development in smaller urban and rural areas through strategic immigration distribution (Drolet & Teixeira, 2019; Spitzer et al., 2019).

### **2.4.2 Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program for Housing and Planning Policies**

The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme (PNP) offers an insightful perspective on Canada's housing and planning policies for IAWs. The PNP can strategically handle the housing and planning demands of the agricultural workforce by permitting the selection of economic immigrants to suit the province's needs. In Manitoba, immigration has significantly increased due

to its aggressive usage and promotion, creating a potential labour pool for the agriculture industry. Additionally, the program's focus on luring immigrants to smaller towns and rural areas may be able to aid with any labour shortages that may arise in far-flung agricultural districts. However, this strategy also raises crucial questions about the accessibility of decent housing, the growth of the infrastructure, and the blending of foreign agricultural workers into the local populations. To maximise the PNP's advantages for the agricultural workers while addressing possible problems, a balanced strategy that provides sufficient housing provisions, community support, and equitable planning regulations will be essential (Gibson, Annis & Bucklaschuk, 2018).

### **2.4.3 New Brunswick Critical Worker Pilot**

The New Brunswick Critical Worker Pilot, spanning five years, seeks to address labour shortages across various industries in the province. This program offers a valuable opportunity to examine the impact of housing and zoning regulations on foreign farm labourers in Canada. The employer-driven strategy employed by the Pilot provides a distinct perspective on the living conditions and planning requirements of these individuals as it attracts qualified workers to sectors facing continuous recruiting challenges. Understanding the implications of this recruitment approach is vital for developing effective housing and planning policies for overseas agricultural workers, considering the absence of direct applications (Government of New Brunswick, 2022).

### **2.4.4 Canada's Seasonal Agriculture Worker Programme (SAWP)**

In 2016, Horgan and Liina (2016) critically analyzed Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), concentrating on a group of low-wage international labourers in Nova Scotia. The research explores these international employees' complex social and legal position, which is closely related to international politics and economics. Through in-depth interviews with former SAWP participants, the research clarifies the uncertainty surrounding their job, and legal status, giving birth to "social quarantining." The study carefully examines the practical effects of international labour laws on numerous aspects of these overseas workers' lives aside from their employment-related activities. It also looks at how housing and planning regulations affect people's access to essential resources and sense of belonging, perpetuating social isolation. While calling for policy changes to improve international employees' well-being and promote inclusion

in host communities, the Horgan and Liina (2016) study's constrained scope may be criticized since it omits a thorough assessment of the overall efficacy of the SAWP program.

In 2019, Binford thoroughly analyzed TFWPs, focusing on SAWP. It is typically held up as a model because of the rights it affords employees and the safeguards it imposes. It is clear from an examination of the currently available anthropological and sociological literature and the author's research that farmers have considerable control over temporary foreign labour from Mexico and several English-speaking Caribbean countries. The SAWP's development and higher production due to this power dynamic have given rise to its domination in important Canadian agricultural areas. Unfortunately, some barriers prevent these employees from organizing local bargaining units or joining unions; in some circumstances, they are punished or blocked (Binford, 2019).

Salami's critical examination of the impact of the 2015 changes to the TFWP on temporary migrants in Alberta reveals a disturbing reality. The restrictions on their rights intensified exploitation, and the resulting mental health strain highlighted the detrimental consequences of these policy changes. By limiting access to social protections and benefits, temporary foreign workers are left in vulnerable and precarious positions, hindering their ability to attain stability and integrate into Canadian society (Salami et al., 2019). The urgent need to broaden pathways to permanent residency for low-wage temporary foreign workers becomes apparent, along with the imperative to strengthen labour protections and support services. Failure to address these issues perpetuates the marginal status of temporary migrant workers, perpetuating their exploitation and undermining their overall well-being (Hennebry & Preibisch, 2010).

## **2.5 Strategies and Effective Approaches**

Several scholars have suggested improving the housing and planning policies for IAWs in Canada (Banerjee, 2023). To enhance these workers' living conditions and overall experiences, policymakers such as government agencies, employers, and community organizations must institute and enforce all-encompassing housing regulations specifically tailored to address the accommodations provided for agricultural workers. It is imperative to conduct routine inspections and monitor living conditions to ascertain adherence to established standards and promptly address

any arising concerns. Moreover, the collaborative efforts among government agencies, employers, and community organizations indicate that multiple levels of government and stakeholders need to work together to develop practical solutions that prioritize the well-being of these workers (Banerjee, 2023; Karki et al., 2019; Vanlauwe et al., 2019).

Furthermore, it is imperative to thoroughly deliberate upon the planning and spatial allocation of IAWs. Implementing strategies aimed at distributing workers across different regions can effectively mitigate the strain experienced by specific communities and infrastructure. In addition, it is imperative to involve local communities in decision-making processes to guarantee that the allocation of temporary foreign workers aligns with their requirements and aspirations. It is imperative to reevaluate the legal framework for employment contracts and housing provisions for IAWs. Implementing appropriate measures to safeguard workers' rights and mitigate housing exploitation is imperative. Granting employees increased autonomy in selecting their lodgings and allowing them to pursue alternative housing arrangements independently can positively impact their overall welfare and level of contentment in their professional roles. Consequently, it is imperative to consider the housing requirements of international agricultural workers due to the significant humanitarian and economic implications involved (Sims et al., 2019; Vanlauwe et al., 2019).

### **2.5.1 Supporting International Agricultural Workers: Best Practices for Public Services**

To better understand how support persons affect international agricultural labourers' access to and use of public services and places, Caxaj and Cohen (2020) performed research. The study sought to develop best practices that may help international workers, despite this demographic's minimal understanding of support networks. Caxaj and Cohen (2020) identified four best practices resulted: (a) anticipating and addressing barriers, (b) fostering trust and community, (c) recognizing rights and system accountability, and (d) bearing witness and looking to the future. The idea of "support readiness," which emphasizes the requirement for support persons to have specific skills, motivation, and personal relationships to aid international farmworkers properly, was crucial to these approaches. The study emphasizes that structural issues must be addressed to

meet this vulnerable group's needs fully, even though these practices can potentially increase international workers' access to public areas and services (Caxaj & Cohen, 2020).

### **2.5.2 Coping Strategies of Farmers for Effective Housing and Planning Policies**

Thompson et al. (2023) illustrated that despite farming's reputation as one of the most demanding professions in the world, there needs to be more studies on stress-reduction strategies that may be accommodated within farming's time and energy limits. The research, which is being undertaken within the context of the agricultural profession, sheds light on both good and bad coping mechanisms utilized by farmers. More research is needed to determine how healthy coping skills might be used in the agricultural environment to reduce farmers' responsibilities and improve their health and happiness. To develop housing and planning policies that appropriately address the specific difficulties faced by IAWs and improve their overall welfare in the agricultural sector, a better knowledge of the coping techniques used by farmers is required (Thompson, Briana, & Jones-Bitton, 2023).

Klocker et al. (2019) explored smaller Ontario cities' issues in recruiting and maintaining temporary immigrants as planned destinations. International workers who had expected to settle in smaller centres ultimately decided to go elsewhere, as shown by the review's finding of negative or zero net migration for these areas. Temporary immigrants' choices are influenced by their impressions of the local community, the availability of social support networks, job and educational prospects, cultural and religious resources, and employer encouragement. International workers leave these areas for ones with a more welcoming environment; this includes a larger immigrant population, cultural and religious facilities, settlement assistance, rewarding jobs, chances for spouses, public transit, housing, and fewer incidents of bigotry and intolerance. Online information hubs, neighbourhood efforts, company initiatives, and relocating incentive programs are all used to attract and retain immigrants. However, it is crucial to use a comprehensive and collaborative approach that encompasses a variety of players, including the government, business associations, community leaders, and the settlement sector. To be rejuvenated as viable, long-term immigration destinations, smaller metropolitan areas and rural communities need both short- and long-term investments (Klocker et al., 2019). Understanding the

issues influencing international workers' residency decisions to leave these places, such as limited housing and a lack of meaningful occupations, highlights the urgent need to establish housing and planning regulations that cater to the special needs of IAWs. By addressing these challenges and providing supportive housing environments, policymakers (government agencies, employers, and community organizations) may help reinvigorate smaller villages as viable destinations for foreign workers and IAWs in the agricultural industry.

### **2.5.3 Implications of the Canada Mortgage Bond Program on Homeownership and Household Debt**

Cohen and Caxaj (2018) explore the Canada Mortgage Bond program and its consequences on homeownership and household debt in Canada throughout the last two decades. This comprehensive review provides a critical analysis of the program's impact, offering insights into its implications for individuals and families in Canada. Through a thorough analysis of extant research and scholarly literature, this study endeavours to offer a comprehensive comprehension of the enduring impacts of the Canada Mortgage Bond programme on rates of homeownership and the accumulation of household debt. The Canada Mortgage Bond programme is predicated on the issuance of mortgage bonds supported by public backing, which are subsequently sold to private investors. This practice has raised apprehensions regarding its potential influence on the levels of household debt in Canada. The Canada Mortgage Bond program, resembling risky financial instruments, raises concerns about its impact on homeownership and household debt in Canada, leaving households vulnerable to economic fluctuations. This has potential implications for international agricultural workers' access to affordable housing and the housing market's stability, prompting a critical examination of housing and planning policies (Cohen & Caxaj, 2018).

### **2.5.4 Culturally Competent Services and Well-being of Newcomers in Canada**

Evans (2019) critically examines cultural competency in social and health services for newcomers in Canada, emphasizing the positive impact of culturally accommodating services on well-being and adjustment. The ethnographic project conducted at the Global Gathering Place in Saskatoon highlights the importance of networks, connections, and minimizing isolation for



promoting well-being among newcomers. The Global Gathering Place is a notable example of a culturally competent organization contributing to high rates of well-being among its clientele (Evans, 2019).

### **2.5.5 Social Justice Perspective on IAWs' Equal Access to Housing**

IAWs' equal access to housing is essential from a social justice perspective because it shows how important it is to uphold their rights and well-being. These perspectives stress the need to address structural inequalities, unequal power relations, and social exclusion that may influence IAWs' access to housing and results (Rotz et al., 2019). The need for ecologically sustainable housing solutions that consider their long-term consequences on IAWs and the greater society is highly stressed by social justice frameworks (Haley et al., 2020). Sustainable housing practices attempt to provide housing options that improve the well-being of IAWs while reducing damaging ecological footprints. These strategies prioritize resource conservation, energy efficiency, and ecologically friendly housing strategies (Rotz et al., 2019).

Perspectives on human rights influence housing discussion and creating planning rules for IAWs. These points of view are founded on equality, the absence of bias, and the availability of acceptable living conditions. To protect IAWs from experiencing poor housing, abusive conduct, or any other kind of discrimination due to their status as migrants or temporary foreign workers, human rights frameworks place a strong emphasis on preserving their fundamental rights (Meerow et al., 2019).

Generalized trust is acknowledged as a vital aspect in the effective integration of temporary immigrants since it fosters the creation of social bonds. This issue is especially relevant in the context of recent international residency, where individuals are frequently perceived, both by themselves and others, as being outside of the established social fabric and thus unfamiliar with the customary norms and expectations that govern typical social engagements within the receiving country. This research uses a unique combination of data from World Values Surveys to analyze the origins and levels of trust among immigrants in the setting of Canada, a country with a sizable immigrant population. The findings reveal a distinction made by recent immigrants between trusts in people in general and trust specifically in Canadians. The temporary immigrants' experiences

influence trust in Canadians in the new host country, while trust in people, in general, is shaped by cultural characteristics existing before migration. Furthermore, the research highlights the significance of trust in Canadians as a critical factor in the successful integration of temporary immigrants. Though fostering trust, particularly trust in Canadians, is essential for the effective assimilation of temporary immigrant agricultural workers within the housing and planning policies implemented in Canada (Bilodeau & White, 2015).

## **2.6 Research Framework**

This research intends to contribute to the theoretical understanding of housing policies and the consequences those policies have on specific populations, particularly IAWs, through the utilization of a theoretical framework. The social-ecological framework (Partelow, 2018) is one example of a theoretical perspective that might contribute to the interpretation of the data. This approach recognizes the interconnection of social systems and the environment, emphasizing the role that policies, institutions, and social structures play in determining housing outcomes (Ghoddousi et al., 2022). When viewed through the lens of this paradigm, the PPS may be regarded as a policy intervention that functions within the larger social and environmental context, with the end goal of influencing the living conditions for IAWs. To gain a better understanding of how the PPS would affect the housing situation of IAWs, the social-ecological framework enables the investigation of several levels of influence, ranging from specific individual characteristics to more general societal and environmental ones. The social determinants of health framework is an additional relevant theoretical perspective. According to Hill-Briggs et al. (2021), this paradigm emphasizes the social and economic aspects that affect an individual's health and well-being. When this viewpoint is applied to the investigation of the living conditions of IAW, it becomes clear that the conditions of housing have substantial repercussions for the physical and mental well-being of individuals. The PPS, in its capacity as an instrument of policy, plays a part in the process of determining the social determinants of health for IAWs by influencing the extent to which they have access to housing that is appropriate, safe, and inexpensive. This research can offer insight on the wider implications for the well-being of IAWs by examining the influence of the PPS on housing outcomes for IAWs via the perspective of the socioeconomic determinants of health (Solar & Irwin, 2010).

## 2.7 Gaps in the Existing Literature

Despite the fact that a number of studies have investigated the effect of the Ontario PPS on housing for IAWs, there are still significant knowledge gaps in the current body of research (Caldwell & Procter, 2013; Churchyard, 2011; Duesling, 2022; Schulte-Hostedde et al., 2007; Van Wagner, 2016). These discrepancies highlight the necessity for additional study in some areas so that we can gain a deeper comprehension of the intricate dynamic that exists between the PPS and the housing of IAW. Finding these gaps in the research is essential to overcoming the constraints of the studies that came before it and advancing the state of the art in this area of study. The body of available literature contains the following significant gaps:

1. **A Limited Emphasis on IAW Perspectives:** Many of the already available research, the majority of which rely on the perspectives of either institutions or stakeholders, concentrate primarily on the effect that the PPS has on the availability, affordability, and quality of housing. There is a dearth of research, however, that directly combines the viewpoints and experiences of IAWs themselves. In subsequent research, greater effort should be made to incorporate the perspectives of IAWs in order to achieve a deeper, more nuanced comprehension of the realities of their housing situations and the obstacles they face.
2. **Variation by Region:** The available research on the effects of the PPS on IAW housing has primarily concentrated its attention on particular areas or municipalities within the province of Ontario. Because of this restricted geographic scope, the findings cannot be generalized to other regions with various contextual elements. The purpose of future research should be to investigate the many ways in which the PPS has been implemented and the effects it has had on IAW homes in the numerous agricultural regions of Ontario.
3. **Longitudinal Studies.** The majority of the previous research that has been conducted on the influence of the PPS on the housing of IAW has been cross-sectional or retrospective in character, providing a snapshot of the situation at a particular point in time. These types of studies do not allow for the examination of trends over time. It is possible to gain useful insights into the longer-term consequences of the PPS and how housing issues for IAWs have evolved over time through longitudinal studies that examine changes in housing conditions over time. These studies track changes over time.

4. **Comparative Analysis.** Despite the fact that several studies have investigated how the PPS affects the availability of housing for IAWs, there has not been much done in the way of comparing these findings to those of other housing policies or regulatory frameworks. It is possible to find best practices, lessons learned, and potential policy options for solving IAW housing concerns by comparing the outcomes of the PPS with those of other policies or initiatives that have been implemented in different jurisdictions or agricultural regions.
5. **Intersectional Analysis:** The intersectionality of characteristics like gender, race, ethnic origin, and immigration status in the process of determining housing outcomes for IAWs has received scant attention in the existing literature. This is despite the fact that these factors all play a role in the process. Future studies must take an intersectional perspective to investigate how the confluence of numerous identities and social positions shapes the conditions of housing and the experiences of IAWs.

## **2.8 Summary**

This research presents a comprehensive compilation of case studies examining the impact of housing and planning policies on IAWs in Canada, delving into various dimensions such as housing assistance initiatives, settlement programs, cultural competency, and coping strategies. Furthermore, it highlights the obstacles IAWs face, such as limited access to services, systemic barriers, and housing affordability issues. The paper calls for collaborative efforts between government agencies, community groups, and stakeholders to establish inclusive and supportive communities that facilitate the complete integration and overall welfare of IAWs. More research around local government and planning is necessary to effectively address the unique challenges faced by IAWs and to develop targeted and effective policies to improve their well-being and integration in Ontario.

Despite the substantial research on the effects of housing and planning policies in Canada, there are still several gaps in the research of their impacts on IAW housing. Firstly, many studies have international geographic scope, which fails to offer a thorough understanding of the difficulties encountered by local IAWs in rural Ontario. Secondly, the current body of knowledge is tilted towards qualitative research, and there is a need for more comprehensive and quantitative analysis

to inform evidence-based decision-making. Finally, more research is needed to examine the long-term impacts of housing and planning policies on the well-being, sense of belonging, and integration of IAWs into the larger community.

## **Chapter 3 Methods**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the approach that was used to examine the impact of the Ontario PPS on IAWs housing in Ontario. The research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, data analysis methodologies, and ethical issues that were considered during the research study are detailed below.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A qualitative study strategy was chosen to achieve the goal of gaining in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of planners in the study area. This research design makes it possible to conduct an in-depth investigation into the policy implementation. A mix of convenience and purposive sampling was utilized as the sampling method because it was the most practical option given the limits of time and resources that were available (Berman et al., 2000; Myers et al., 2010).

Analyzing pertinent policy texts through content analysis furnished crucial contextual insights into the prevailing policy environment. Nevertheless, qualitative research recognizes the limitations of relying solely on policy texts, as they may not fully encapsulate the complexities of real-world implementation challenges (Bowen, 2009).

To address the research questions, I employed content analysis of two policy documents and thematic analysis of the key informant interviews. This approach enabled the ability to capture a more comprehensive view of the research problem (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). The combination of document review and interviews enabled triangulation, validating, and enhancing the findings from both sources (Guion et al., 2011). Insights gleaned from interviews with local government planners actively engaged in the policy implementation practice in their respective geographical areas provided invaluable lived experiences, offering practical perspectives to complement the policy analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.3 Study Area Description**

This research is conducted within southwest Ontario spanning several areas with a high presence of IAWs. The geographical area encompasses the counties of Durham, Essex, Haldimand, Huron, Middlesex, Muskoka, Niagara, Norfolk, Simcoe, and Wellington. Each of these locations presents unique socio-economic, environmental, and demographic traits. Niagara, for example, has a strong wine industry engages on seasonal labour, while Leamington sees IAWs employed predominantly in greenhouses. By examining this diverse spectrum of geographical areas, this study aimed to develop a robust understanding of the housing experiences and integration challenges facing IAWs. The varied characteristics found across this wide study area contribute valuable contextual richness and complexity to explore this issue from multiple perspectives.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Document analysis (Love, 2013) and semi-structured interviews (Kallio et al., 2016) were used as the modes of data collection. Existing research demonstrates that semi-structured interviews with practitioners in the field provide valuable qualitative insights, perspectives, and experiences, which are essential for gaining a nuanced understanding of the research topic (Helps et al., 2021). Semi-structures interviews were utilized drawing on the work of Rubin and Rubin (2005) who emphasized the advantages of employing a semi-structured interview method, highlighting its capacity to adapt to the dynamic nature of the research, the evolving perspectives of the respondent, and the emergence of insights about the subject matter.

#### **3.4.1 Document Analysis**

In conducting the analysis, a content analysis approach was employed to examine the Ontario PPS, the primary document delineating the regulations, guidelines, and objectives governing land use planning and development in the province of Ontario. Specifically, the purpose was to understand housing provisions and allocations, particularly concerning international agricultural workers. The two versions of the PPS analyzed were the 2020 version and the June 2023 draft version. The official revised PPS was not available at the time the research was conducted.

The content analysis involved systematically reviewing the text of both documents and coding excerpts about topics related to housing provisions and allocations for international agricultural workers. Keywords that were coded included workers' housing and accommodation and others. Through this coding process, relevant policies and directives were identified and compared between the two PPS versions. This content analysis aimed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the existing and proposed policy landscape surrounding housing regulations and guidelines. By examining the draft version, preliminary insights were gained around potential upcoming policy shifts, though the official revised version was not yet available. The findings from this document review provided critical context and a baseline for the overall research.

### **3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Local government planners in Ontario who are responsible for managing housing policy are the research's focus and the population of interest. The researcher used convenience sampling to select a sample that would be representative of the whole. The potential participants were found using a variety of methods, including emailing relevant planners from the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO's) directory, using professional networks to recruit participants, industry groups, and referrals from important stakeholders. The sample consisted of 13 local government planners from 10 geographical areas in Southwestern Ontario to ensure that a wide variety of viewpoints were represented (Brown & Marshall, 1995; Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012). These interviews made it possible to gather data. To make it easier to have in-depth conversations, the researcher devised an interview guide that included free-form questions as well as hints and pointers. The interviews were carried over video conferencing (Willson & Miller, 2014). Each interview lasted between 30-90 minutes, and the participants gave their informed agreement to have their session recorded (Morgan & Harmon, 2001).

The selection of 13 local government planners for the sample group was a deliberate decision, considering the resource availability, time constraints, and the feasibility of the undertaking. Among the sample, 9 were women and 4 were men, reflecting diverse gender representation. Furthermore, the composition of the sample group included individuals employed across various municipal tiers, with some working for single-tier municipalities and others for both lower and



upper-tier municipalities. This diverse representation ensures a comprehensive perspective in examining the impact of the PPS on the housing conditions of IAWs.

Representatives from various levels of local government, including upper tier, lower tier, and single tier municipalities, took part in the interview process. Ensuring anonymity was crucial in creating a comfortable environment for interviewees to openly discuss challenges, lessons learned, and perspectives without the fear of being identified. This approach facilitated the elicitation of candid opinions regarding current approaches and tensions within communities. Maintaining confidentiality was paramount in obtaining reliable and nuanced insights into a subject closely tied to public policymaking. Participants felt empowered to offer assessments without worrying about potential political repercussions. Notably, all participants remained engaged throughout the interviews, with no withdrawals or expressions of discomfort.

Nevertheless, some local government planners opted out of participation due to the political sensitivities associated with the topic. This reluctance was evident from our brief discussions, reflecting the delicate balance required when addressing the interests of various stakeholders, including farm operators.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

For data management and analysis, the NVIVO software was utilized for both the document review and the interview analysis. An iterative procedure was used for the analysis, starting with a thorough familiarization with the data through repeated readings of the data followed by the actual analysis. Both the research objectives and the important topics that were identified in the literature review were taken into consideration while developing the codes, which included categories and sub-categories. The classification method considered various factors, including housing conditions, social integration, issues, and stakeholders' opinions (Bowen, 2009).

The 2020 PPS and the 2023 Revised Draft PPS documents were thoroughly examined, and the relevant data was tagged by the categories and subcategories that had been defined already. During

the process of coding, it was necessary to identify crucial comments, data points, or excerpts that offered insights into the housing conditions and the impact of the PPS (Bowen, 2009).

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the entirety of the investigation, issues about ethics were accorded the utmost significance. This research was reviewed and approved by the University of Guelph's Research Ethics Board. Before the interviews took place, the researcher ensured each participant's informed consent, and their identities were concealed during the data processing and reporting processes. Participants were given the assurance that their participation would be kept confidential and that they would be free to leave the study at any time. To ensure the participants' safety and preserve their rights, the research followed all the ethical criteria and regulations established (Walker, 2007).

### **3.7 Limitations**

It is crucial to acknowledge certain limitations inherent in the employed methods. The necessity for planners to possess work experience and operate in municipalities with IAWs meant the potential sample would be small. IAWs are geographically concentrated in a small number of regions of Ontario. The participants provided robust information to answer the research questions, however, there may not be generalizability to the broader population of planners in Ontario. Also, when interpreting the results, it is imperative to consider that relying on self-report data from planners may expose the study to biases associated with recall and reaction.

## **Chapter 4. Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the results of the analysis carried out on the impact of the Ontario PPS on housing for IAWs. The research employed the qualitative data analysis program NVivo and analyzed transcripts from interviews conducted with local government planners. The purpose of this analysis is to obtain a deeper understanding of the present condition of housing efforts for international agricultural workers and the difficulties they encounter in their integration. Additionally, it aims to offer recommendations for enhancing these initiatives. The goal of utilizing the NVivo was to get insights into the policy landscape and how it affects housing projects (Feng & Behar-Horenstein, 2019). The investigation also analyzed standards created by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the involvement of non-profit organizations and community initiatives in offering housing choices and support services for IAWs.

Moreover, the analysis explores the obstacles and issues that impact the efficacy of housing projects for those affected. The utilization of NVivo analysis enabled the discernment of pivotal themes and patterns within the interview transcripts, emphasizing obstacles such as cost-effectiveness, availability, ease of access, enforcement, linguistic and cultural hurdles, and the seasonal characteristics of agricultural labour. A thorough investigation was conducted to investigate the difficulties encountered by IAWs in obtaining appropriate accommodation and assimilating into the wider community.

## 4.2 Document Analysis Findings

### 4.2.1. Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and Housing

The section aims to identify the crucial components of the versions of the PPS pertaining to housing and IAWs. Figure 1 represents the hierarchy of PPS themes related to housing for IAWs.

It also highlights key quotes from the PPS documents.

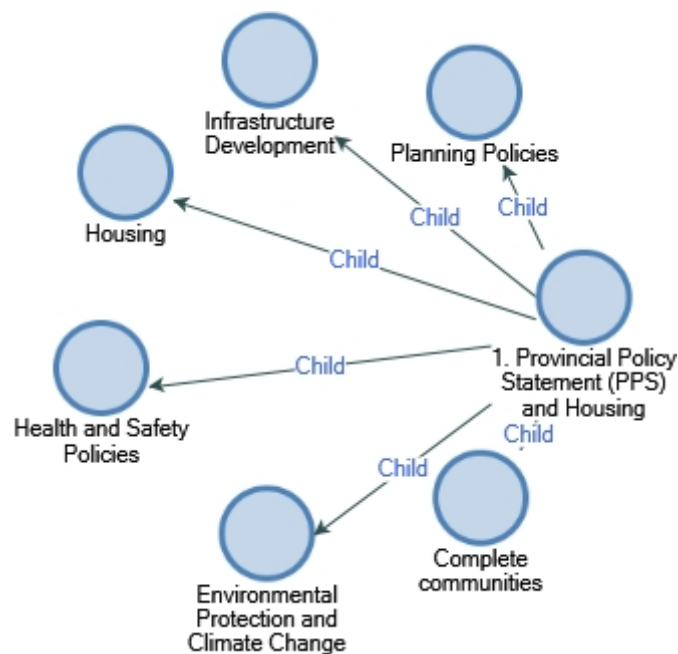


Figure 1. Hierarchy of PPS themes

#### a. Complete communities

The PPS emphasizes identifying appropriate minimum density targets for strategic growth areas, indicating a commitment to efficient land use and urban development. Addressing the type and

scale of development in strategic growth areas ensures that planning aligns with the broader goals of sustainable and well-integrated communities.

*...identifying the appropriate type and scale of development in strategic growth areas and transition of built form to adjacent areas. [PPS 2023]*

**b. Environmental Protection and Climate Change**

The PPS (2020) stresses the importance of avoiding land use patterns that could cause environmental or public health concerns. Additionally, there is a focus on preparing for the regional impacts of climate change, promoting energy efficiency, and minimizing negative environmental impacts.

*Avoiding development and land use patterns which may cause environmental or public health and safety concerns. [PPS 2020]*

Planning authorities are urged to prepare for the impacts of climate change, including increased risks associated with natural hazards (PPS, 2020). This includes measures to address mine hazards, oil and gas hazards, and contaminated sites (Hallegatte, 2009).

*Planning authorities shall prepare for the impacts of a changing climate that may increase the risk associated with natural hazards. [PPS 2020]*

**c. Health and Safety Policies**

The PPS (2020) stresses the collaboration of various entities to mitigate risks to public health, safety, and property damage from natural hazards, including those associated with climate change.

Rigorous assessments and remediation of contaminated sites are mandated before any development activity, ensuring the protection of human health and the environment.

*Development shall be directed away from areas of natural or human-made hazards where there is an unacceptable risk to public health or safety or of property damage, and not create new or aggravate existing hazards. [PPS 2023]*

#### **d. Housing**

The PPS (2020) sets requirements for maintaining the ability to accommodate residential growth, ensuring a diverse range of housing options to meet long-term needs. The policies highlight the importance of establishing and implementing minimum targets for affordable housing, aligning with applicable housing and homelessness plans.

*Establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate-income households, and which aligns with applicable housing and homelessness plans. [PPS 2020]*

#### **e. Infrastructure Development**

The PPS (2023) emphasizes the need for efficient infrastructure planning, ensuring availability and suitability for development over the long term. The 2023 PPS calls for optimizing existing and planned infrastructure, emphasizing strategic location and sufficient capacity.

*Optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities. [PPS 2023]*

## **f. Planning Policies**

Planning authorities are encouraged to coordinate emergency management with economic, environmental, and social planning considerations, fostering efficient and resilient communities. The PPS (2020) mandates the preservation of employment areas and the provision of necessary infrastructure to support current and projected needs.

*Planning authorities should coordinate emergency management and other economic, environmental, and social planning considerations to support efficient and resilient communities. [PPS 2020]*

## **4.2.2. Integration**

### **a. Settlement Services**

The PPS highlights the importance of avoiding land use patterns that hinder the efficient expansion of settlement areas, emphasizing the need for strategic planning to accommodate growth. The 2023 PPS places settlement areas at the key focus of growth and development, encouraging concentration in strategic growth areas, including major transit station areas. The policy promotes accommodating a suitable range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas, considering local characteristics, development scale, and service levels.

*Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development. Within settlement areas, growth should be focused in, where applicable, strategic growth areas, including major transit station areas. [PPS 2023]*

## **b. Social Support**

The PPS (2020) acknowledges the importance of resource-based recreational uses, including recreational dwellings, as a component of social support. The 2023 revised draft PPS extends the focus beyond recreational uses, emphasizing the broader goal of improving social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes, including equity-deserving groups.

*Improving social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes, including equity-deserving groups. [PPS 2023]*

## **c. Support for Persons with Learning Disabilities**

The PPS recognizes the significance of improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons by addressing land use barriers. This is crucial for ensuring their full participation in society.

*...improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society. [PPS 2020]*

### **4.2.3. Economic and Employment Considerations:**

The PPS considers various facets of economic growth including the following:



### **a. Economic Growth**

Both policy statements emphasize the promotion of efficient development and land use patterns that sustain the financial well-being of the province and municipalities over the long term. There is a consistent emphasis on promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities through goods and services, including value-added products and sustainable resource management.

*Promoting efficient development and land use patterns which sustain the financial well-being of the province and municipalities over the long term. [PPS 2020]*

Economic activities in prime agricultural areas are encouraged, while non-related development is directed away to minimize constraints on agricultural uses. Economic development strategies involve providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, identifying strategic sites for investment, and facilitating conditions for economic investment.

*Opportunities to support a diversified rural economy should be promoted by protecting agricultural and other resource-related uses and directing non-related development to areas where it will minimize constraints on these uses. [PPS 2023]*

### **b. Employment Issues**

Both policy statements highlight the importance of providing an appropriate mix and range of employment, institutional, and mixed-use developments to meet long-term needs. There is an

encouragement for a compact, mixed-use development that incorporates compatible employment uses to support livable and resilient communities.

*Providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment, institutional, and broader mixed uses to meet long-term needs. [PPS 2020]*

The 2023 PPS places additional emphasis on providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, maintaining a range of suitable sites for employment uses, and addressing potential barriers to investment. The 2023 PPS encourages the intensification of employment uses and compact development that supports complete communities.

Encouraging intensification of employment uses and compact, mixed-use development that incorporates compatible employment uses such as office, retail, industrial, manufacturing, and warehousing to support the achievement of complete communities. [PPS 2023]

#### **4.2.4. Community Development and Services**

##### **a. Energy Supply**

The PPS encourages planning authorities to provide opportunities for the development of energy supply, including various sources such as electricity generation, district energy, and renewable energy systems, to meet current and projected needs.

*Planning authorities should provide opportunities for the development of energy supply, including electricity generation facilities and transmission and distribution systems,*

*district energy, renewable energy systems and alternative energy systems, to accommodate current and projected needs. [PPS 2020]*

## **b. Transportation Support**

Both policy statements highlight support for active transportation and the importance of transportation systems that are safe, energy-efficient, and capable of addressing projected needs. Emphasis is placed on maintaining and improving connectivity within and among transportation systems, promoting the use of active transportation and transit.

*Promote the use of active transportation and transit in and between residential, employment (including commercial and industrial) and institutional uses and other areas. [PPS 2020]*

## **c. Water and Sewerage Services**

Municipal sewage services and municipal water services are encouraged as the preferred form of servicing for settlement areas to protect the environment and minimize risks to human health.

Both versions stress the need for appropriate waste management systems to accommodate present and future requirements, promoting reduction, reuse, and recycling objectives.

*Waste management systems need to be planned for and provided that are of an appropriate size, type, and location to accommodate present and future requirements and facilitate*

*integrated waste management.* [PPS 2023]

#### **d. Zoning**

The PPS 2023 specifies that if the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issues a zoning order, the resulting development potential should be in addition to projected needs over the planning horizon established in the official plan.

*The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has made a zoning order; the resulting development potential shall be in addition to projected needs over the planning horizon established in the official plan.* [PPS 2023]

#### **4.2.5. Summary of Findings on Document Review**

Several significant topics are addressed in the PPS including housing, environmental protection, health and safety, infrastructure development, planning regulations, integration, economic considerations, and community development and services. Health and safety are of the first importance; it strongly emphasizes collaboration amongst different groups to reduce the risks that natural hazards pose to public health and safety as well as property damage. The PPS considers and addresses issues about the economy and employment by encouraging efficient patterns of land use and development, which in turn contribute to the financial well-being of the province and the municipalities; encouragement is given to diversify the economic base and provide a wide variety of employment opportunities (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2014)

In recent updates, the PPS has emphasized diversifying land use, particularly for agricultural purposes, and a renewed focus on enhancing infrastructure, especially transportation networks, in densely populated areas to meet growing demands and improve accessibility. In addition, the revised PPS emphasizes enhancing social fairness and quality of life for all individuals, irrespective of age, physical capabilities, or social status.

Moreover, the PPS introduces a strategic approach through Minister's Zoning Orders (MZO), which will now cater to the projected future needs of specific lands or areas. This proactive planning mechanism ensures development aligns with anticipated demands, promoting sustainable land use practices. These updates reflect a commitment to holistic development, balancing environmental, social, and economic considerations.

### **4.3 Findings from Interview Analysis**

The findings from the interviews are presented based on the three objectives of this research. Within each research objective, participant perspectives are organized by common themes.

#### **4.3.1 Research Objective 1.**

To evaluate the impact of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) on housing conditions and rights for International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) in Ontario.

This section gives insight into the impact of the PPS and other existing policy documents in individual municipalities through farm Housing inquiries from farm operators. Through the identified themes, readers will gain insights into the housing policies, promotion, and regional disparities in IAW housing across several municipalities in Ontario.

##### **4.3.1.1. Housing Policy Analysis: Farm Housing Inquiries and Farmer Involvement**

Housing policy analysis in farm housing inquiries and farmer involvement focuses on understanding and evaluating the policies and practices that govern housing for farmers and

agricultural workers (Clapham, 2018). Participant 12 emphasized the significant demand among individuals residing in rural areas and on farms who have a keen interest in construction and land divisions. This theme explores the importance of providing suitable and affordable housing options for those working in the agricultural sector. Participant 3 recounted their meetings with farm operators, mostly employers, who sought help after examining avenues concerning provincial or federal regulations for hiring IAWs. The inquiries primarily centered around technical matters, including zoning ordinances, official drawings, setbacks, and building code requirements.

*We have a lot of demand for new housing construction for people who live in rural areas and live on farms who want to build ADUs (Additional Dwelling Units). And similarly, we have lots of demand for severances. [Participant 12]*

*The actual farm operator that does approach us, so the employer, and it'll often be when they've already explored a lot of options with regards to any provincial or federal requirements for seeking international agricultural workers. So they'll often come to us to just look at the specifics of the technical requirements in our zoning bylaws and our official plans in regards to things like, where are they able to locate them? [Participant 3]*

Additionally, the emphasis of farmers in shaping housing policies to ensure that they reflect their unique needs and circumstances is crucial (Lee et al., 2016). Participant 4 shared experiences with farmer operators inquiring about the possibility of labour housing on their farms. Although none of these inquiries materialized, the questions revolved around the types of permitted housing and the permissibility of farm labour housing as a land use on the farm, including considerations of the number of units permitted.

*I have talked to one or two farmer operators who have inquired about the possibility of labour housing on their farms. None. Neither of those inquiries came to fruition but the questions they had were, what forms of housing could be permitted whether farm labour housing was a permitted use on farm? How many units might be permitted on a farm?*  
[Participant 4]

Participants discussed topics revolving around employers expressing interest in acquiring or constructing buildings to accommodate their employees. Participant 5 noted, “That was a very common topic of conversation, it was very frequent that we'd have an employer come in, perhaps they've either purchased or looking at purchasing a property for housing of their workers or developing housing for that purpose.” Participant 6 raised questions on different types of housing and lodgings on farms, specifically focusing on regulations concerning the construction of structures on the same piece of land as the main residence or in fields as supplementary facilities.

*Sort of general inquiries about different forms of housing and accommodation on farms and sort of some of the different policies around setting up on the same, you know, same parcel of land where maybe the primary dwelling is or a parcel of land, that's just field, you know, is an accessory use.* [Participant 6]

The farm operators also play a crucial role in IAWs' housing and welfare. Participant 8 stated that housing decisions were frequently influenced by the concepts farm operators had, which were shaped by the size of their farms. Smaller-scale farms typically concentrate on repurposing existing ancillary structures to create extra living units. Conversely, larger farms utilized temporary structures, which were intentionally brought in for the summer season. This suggests a

varied strategy to housing that takes into account the size and needs of the farms, parallel to the findings from Peng et al. (2018).

The difficulties encountered by farmers in obtaining sufficient accommodation and the consequences of housing laws on their overall welfare and productivity must not be disregarded (Grinker, 2023). Participant 9 shared valuable observations regarding their encounters with farmers during the implementation of the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw. During this period, “there were a lot of questions and a lot of concerns” [Participant 9]. The engagement demonstrated the influence of policy modifications on the agricultural community, highlighting the necessity for elucidation and comprehension during this period of transition (Wyndham-West et al., 2022).

#### **4.3.1.2 Housing Policies and Promotion**

Housing policies and promotion involve a variety of measures and efforts designed to tackle housing requirements, including the provision of subsidies, incentives, and regulations (Karn & Nystrom, 2005). The promotion component is on increasing knowledge regarding accessible housing initiatives, promoting the acquisition of property ownership, and nurturing the growth of the community (Power et al., 1999). Housing laws and promotion tactics aim to guarantee that individuals and families can have secure, satisfactory, and reasonably priced home choices. By tackling concerns regarding cost, accessibility, and environmental impact, these policies can help foster dynamic and durable communities (Swope & Hernández, 2019). Participant 1 expressed positivity towards the PPS, stating that the province views housing for IAWs as an agricultural use. This participant further noted, “the fact that now municipalities are able to allow for it on a more permanent basis is great as well” [Participant 1].



Participant 10 addressed the policies in their region, emphasizing that IAWs were prohibited from residing outside the farm premises in boarding houses. The local ordinances stipulated a maximum occupancy of four individuals per unit, however, many properties encountered challenges with bylaw enforcement due to exceeding this limit. While there was no explicit mandate for green space, several farm operators voluntarily implemented it to enhance the welfare of their workers.

Participant 11 addressed a shortage of housing, emphasizing the importance of paying attention to different groups' housing needs.

*There's a shortage of housing, edge, demand and pricing, and we've talked about money, but like, things like that. So I think I can't really offer a lot because I don't necessarily deal with that policy day to day. So I don't know a whole lot about it. [Participant 11]*

Participant 13 clarified their involvement, stating “We also have a role to some degree in setting those conditions as it relates to farm worker housing in particular. Our involvement is, is more on the housing side than on the actual farm worker side itself.” This distinction highlighted the specific focus on the housing aspect within the evaluation.

Participant 3 provided insights into their knowledge and involvement, emphasizing their role in developing and implementing policies for additional residential units, particularly on-farm housing: “My knowledge is more so I guess, on the land use policy side as a planner with my

county. So, I have been involved at a high level with developing and implementing policies that allow for additional residential units in the form of actual on-farm housing.”

Participant 6 discussed their knowledge regarding "help houses" or on-farm accommodations, emphasizing the need to balance policies that promote, encourage, and permit such housing: “My knowledge comes is sort of the idea of help houses or on-farm accommodations, and trying to sort of balance the policies that promote encourage permit”.

Participant 7 highlighted local research interests related to policies and projects supporting growers using programs for workers in the Niagara region – “We've got research interests, local research interests from Brock University and agri college Vineland Research Centre”. Limited knowledge was acknowledged, particularly concerning the use of land after permission and the existence of jurisdictions disallowing temporary housing on farms.

#### **4.3.1.3 Regional Disparities and Differences**

Regional disparities and differences pertain to the disparities and inequalities that occur among distinct geographical locations within a country or region (Smętkowski, 2013). These differences might appear in different areas, such as economic growth, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and resource availability. Regional disparities can be influenced by various factors, including geography, historical events, government policies, and socio-cultural dynamics (Zymek & Jones, 2020). Comprehending and resolving regional imbalances is crucial for fostering equitable and comprehensive development. The process entails identifying regions or sectors that are experiencing slower progress and implementing specific policies and initiatives to decrease disparities and foster fair and balanced economic development (Gardiner, 2020).

Participant 1 acknowledged regional disparities by comparing their county to another. They noted that the other county appeared to be ahead in addressing housing issues for IAWs, attributing it to their commitment to conducting extensive studies involving applicable stakeholders. Participant 1 noted, “Comparing us with another county, like, I would say that they're steps ahead of us, because they have taken on the oldest to undertake an extensive study involving applicable stakeholders”.

Participant 4 made a comparison by drawing upon their prior experience working in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their focus was on the substantial dependence on IAWs in this area, which is a result of the specific requirements of fruit and crop cultivation. The community's economic, therefore amplifying the importance of providing housing for them. Conversely, they characterized their local county's planning department as helpful but dealing with a less urgent matter about IAW homes.

*I think in Niagara-on-the-Lake, International Agricultural Worker housing is seen as that much more critical to the community's economic success, because without international agricultural workers, you know, that industry arguably collapses. Whereas I think in Huron I think as the planning department, we want to be supportive of farmers who require those needs, but it's been less of a pressing issue for us. [Participant 4]*

Participant 9 offered observations on the shared characteristics of different regions, namely highlighting Leamington and Kingsville. Although Leamington and their county have similarities in terms of terrain and housing, Leamington, being a larger municipality, implemented regulations one year ahead of their county. The difference lies in the policies, namely regarding occupancy

limitations. In their county, there is no maximum capacity imposed for agricultural houses, unlike in Leamington.

*“they actually put policies in place, I think, a year before we did. And they are a little bit different. And the difference is that from what I remember reading is that so our policies remember, at the very beginning, I said, we split it into residential could have 10, or fewer, and agricultural didn't have a max capacity. It just depended on the fire and health code on the occupancy limit.”* [Participant 9]

#### **4.3.1.4. Conditions and Accessibility of Housing**

This section outlines the challenges and accessibility conditions of housing, detailing various housing types and their impact on IAWs. It examines how these housing arrangements influence aspects such as work-life balance, residential environment, and housing types for IAW.

##### **a. Housing Challenges**

Housing policy and analysis consider the conditions and accessibility of housing as a crucial factor. This issue centers around assessing the caliber, security, and suitability of housing choices accessible to individuals and communities (Hacihasanoglu & Hacihasanoglu, 2001). It explores the difficulties encountered by many demographics, including low-income households, marginalized communities, and those with disabilities, in obtaining suitable and inexpensive housing. The main issues under this theme include housing affordability, the availability of social housing, overpopulation, bad living conditions, and the absence of accessibility features.

Participant 1 highlighted a specific instance during the COVID-19 period when it became apparent that there were inadequate space requirements, as mandated by Health Canada, impacting the housing conditions for IAWs. Further, Participant 10 described living conditions, emphasizing the dangerous nature of some scenarios. They mentioned seeing pictures of inadequate bathroom facilities, expressing concern about scenarios where IAWs with families were not housed appropriately. Participant 10 noted, “There are scenarios and there are some scenarios where some of the migrant workers have their families here, and they're not housed in a way that is good”.

Participant 13 was astonished by the inadequate housing standards prescribed by the construction code, which apply to both field workers' accommodations and the general population. They observed that the conditions allowed by the building code may not meet individual requirements, which raises issues about the suitability of the living arrangements. Participant 13 note indicated, “It's a surprise, it was a surprisingly low standard to me in terms of what's been acceptable living conditions under the building code”.

Participant 5 highlighted the limited housing stock and suboptimal conditions – “If they have to find housing, once they get here, you're at a disadvantage, you're gonna find, you know, an older rental. It's usually not, you know, the best conditions”. Issues such as climate change effects, including heat and weather issues, were mentioned. The participant also noted the challenges of finding suitable housing, often resulting in subpar living conditions. Participant 6 further described housing conditions as generally lacking and not meeting the standard considered typical for year-round living in Canada. They noted that temporary or seasonal buildings occupied by IAWs might have lower standards according to the building code.

Participant 8 mentioned receiving substantial complaints about buildings hosting Temporary foreign workers during the summer months – “Complaints have come forward, that it's just these beat-up old structures, and people are living in them. And they're not habitable structures that people should be living in whether they want to or not" [Participant 8]. These buildings raise concerns about the living conditions of the workers. Meanwhile, Participant 9, drawing on their experience as a volunteer firefighter, rated the overall condition of housing as "not very good." They highlighted encountering awful conditions during their involvement, emphasizing the challenging living conditions faced by IAWs.

#### **b. Housing Types**

There is a diverse selection of housing options available, such as detached houses, apartments, condos, townhomes, mobile homes, and several types of shared or communal housing. Participant 1 mentioned that farmers had to engage in the correct planning process, including a zoning bylaw amendment, to establish zoning for new structures dedicated to their workers.

*So those farmers had to come in and go through like the correct planning process, I believe it was a zoning bylaw amendment in order to get there's zoning in place so that they could obtain a building permit to create or to build a new structure for their workers. [Participant 1]*

Participant 11 highlighted the crucial requirement for more on-farm housing, catering to both IAWs and the process of transferring ownership to the next generation. The participant emphasized the need for strategic housing design in the agricultural sector, given its rigorous demands. Participant 2 discussed the availability of additional dwelling units on farm properties

as the only legally permitted housing option. These units could take various forms, such as living spaces above garages, granny flats, or second homes. The regulations were not restrictive or specifically inclusive of a certain demographic.

*What we do have available on like farm properties is additional dwelling units, which is really the only housing option legally. that acts as a mean for like additional housing of like whether it's a family or if it can be a rental unit. [Participant 2]*

Participant 3 shared that in their jurisdiction, commercial-scale farms demonstrating a need for on-farm labour housing were often permitted to have additional residential units. Zoning bylaw amendments were not required unless the farm could not meet the existing zoning requirements. Participant 3 noted, they do not necessarily have to go through a zoning bylaw amendment or another planning application unless they're unable to meet the requirements of a zoning bylaw.

Participant 4 explained that larger farm operators in their county often had multi-unit farm labour housing, commonly known as bunkhouses. These structures typically comprised smaller individual rooms with shared kitchens and bathrooms. Some farmers also provided off-farm accommodation in houses and units in nearby settlement areas. Additionally, there were instances of mobile and modular homes on-site or private farm operators purchasing houses for international agricultural workers.

### **c. Inadequate Finance**

Limited financial resources pose a substantial obstacle for numerous farmers and agricultural operators in terms of obtaining and affording accommodation (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2010). It might impede individuals from acquiring or leasing appropriate housing, leading to overcrowding, inadequate living conditions, or homelessness. Participant 11 emphasized the necessity of additional money to enhance the overall housing infrastructure – “I feel like funding is such a limiting factor, especially like, depending on the scale of the farm”. The presence of increased cash was considered crucial in tackling these difficulties.

#### **D. Location and Living Environment**

The geographical location and surrounding habitat are crucial determinants that influence the caliber of housing and the general welfare of farmers and communities (Wang et al., 2023). An optimal living environment includes elements such as security, availability of natural areas, unpolluted air, and a feeling of camaraderie. An intelligently designed and strategically positioned area can improve the standard of living for people, foster social engagement, and facilitate economic prospects. Conversely, housing units situated in unpleasant or disadvantaged areas may encounter difficulties such as restricted availability of amenities, elevated crime rates, environmental dangers, and social seclusion (Mao & Li, 2022). Participant 1 mentioned an instance where the house of IAWs was attached to a greenhouse, emphasizing that such arrangements were not normal.

Transportation and access to services based on location were highlighted as crucial considerations (Negi et al., 2018). Participant 7 suggested that the location of housing was not ideal, impacting the living environment.



*I think the transportation piece, is it. I've said it already a few times, and I think the condition of living in the house is one thing, but I think the condition based on location and access to services is another consideration, and I would suggest that that condition of location is not ideal. [Participant 7]*

#### **e. Transportation Issues**

Farmers require accessible and efficient transportation systems to conveniently access their workplaces, schools, healthcare facilities, and other key services. Insufficient transportation infrastructure or a scarcity of public transportation alternatives might impede the mobility of those with restricted movement or those lacking private vehicles (Rajabion et al., 2019). These obstacles can manifest as extended travel durations, heightened transportation expenses, and restricted prospects for social and economic advancement (Negi et al., 2018). Participant 1 and Participant 11 highlighted that workers require daily transportation to farm sites. Some workers had to commute from housing located far away from the farm sites. Various transportation modes, including bicycles and modified vehicles, were mentioned. Safety concerns and the need for better transportation options were emphasized.

Participant 7 discussed the considerable distances workers had to walk or cycle to access goods and services, indicating the need for better transportation options to minimize risks for workers in rural areas – “You see that transportation to work from their home is a very big problem like a major problem with the farm workers”.

Biking was identified as a common transportation outlet for IAWs. Participant 9 noted their town implemented upgrades to accommodate the transportation of bikes for these workers: “Like it's so close to amenities that foreign workers could biked. Because that was one of the largest issues was transportation, like I said, and the biggest transportation outlet for foreign workers is biking or walking”.

#### **f. Work-life balance**

Discussions with Participants 10 and 11 unveiled the challenges IAWs face in maintaining a work-life balance with some workers being transported from housing far away from the farms daily. The intensive and time-consuming nature of agricultural work was acknowledged as a challenge in achieving a proper work-life balance.

*I know there's a policy that says how they should be housed, but not what their work-life balance should be. [Participant 10]*

*Farmers in general, that's a struggle. So, I can only imagine how much harder it is when that's what you're hired to do full-time. Like, I know, I'm just I'm, like friends and family who are farmers. I know, they really struggle with that work-life balance, in general. [Participant 11]*

#### **4.3.1.5. Impact Analysis**

This section aims to analyze how various factors impact housing conditions for IAWs through a community engagement and labour-focused lens. Participant interviews and existing research are

referenced to explore challenges like inadequate finances, transportation barriers, and unsuitable dwelling environments.

### **a. Community Engagement**

The issue of impact analysis and community participation centers around the assessment of the societal, financial, and ecological consequences of housing laws and activities on nearby communities. The significance of involving community members, stakeholders, and organizations in decision-making processes concerning housing construction and planning is acknowledged (Burbi et al., 2013). Community participation facilitates the inclusion and consideration of the opinions and viewpoints of individuals who are directly impacted by housing regulations. Participant 1 reported participating in preliminary consultations with farmers who hire IAWs, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Farmers requested talks with municipal personnel regarding the spacing requirements enforced by Health Canada. The discussions encompassed the exploration of possibilities for expanding the current facilities to accommodate additional staff.

*I have had several pre-consultation meetings with farmers who employ international farm workers. This actually happened during COVID-19 more so when they realized that they didn't have the space requirements that were required by I think it was Health Canada. So a lot of these farmers had to come into the municipalities to pre-consult with staff about expanding their current facilities in which they were housing their workers. [Participant 1]*

Participant 12 was involved in reviewing planning applications, and emphasized that when land use is not permitted as of right, it triggers a planning application – “*a lot of my work centres on reviewing and accepting and deeming complete and providing recommendations on different*

*types of planning applications".* This aspect was highlighted in the context of examining various planning applications related to land use.

Participant 13, in the role of overseeing planning and development, managed the growing presence of greenhouses that depended on IAWs. The challenges were identified, including unsuitable dwelling conditions within facilities such as warehouses. The municipality prioritized establishing delineation boundaries to govern and guarantee suitable living circumstances.

*I direct planning and development in my municipality. The town has an increasing number of greenhouses in particular. And the greenhouse industry relies heavily on farm workers, international farm workers, through the Temporary Foreign Worker programme or the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Programme migrant worker programmes.* [Participant 13]

The regional government, through a policy committee, engaged with community members, and farmers. Participant 7 indicated regional government discussions included coordination of access to housing and solving related issues within the agricultural sector. Engagement typically occurred with farm operators or owners applying for building permits for additional housing during the summer seasons (Participant 8). The focus was on ensuring correct placement on the property and compliance with relevant regulations.

A lower-tier municipality got approved for a zoning bylaw amendment and an official plan amendment, specifically targeting temporary foreign workers. Policies were implemented to address boarding, lodging, rooming, and housing for these workers. Participant 9 noted:

*When I was hired, just approved a zoning bylaw amendment in an official plan amendment*

*in association with boarding lodging rooming and housing, and the focus was on international, temporary foreign workers. So, it was great for me to come in and start putting those policies into place.*

**b. Labour and Workers**

Participant 4 provided insights into IAWs, describing them as international citizens hired on a temporary or seasonal basis by farm owners engaged in primary agriculture. Participant 4 shared:

*my knowledge of what international agriculture workers are, or what they do is that they are international citizens who were hired, on usually, from my understanding a temporary or seasonal basis by farm owners or operators engaged in primary agriculture to work in that agriculture industry.*

Participant 7 indicated they had a policy committee with representatives from various programs involved in bringing foreign labour for agricultural activities, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and coordination in dealing with labour-related issues.

**4.3.2 Objective 2.**

**To gather perspectives from local government planners on the implementation of the PPS and its outcomes related to housing for IAWs**

This section explores housing policies for IAWs from the viewpoint of local government planners, delving into the effects of COVID-19 and themes like Farm Worker Housing Support. More in this section gives insight into regulatory compliance, community engagement, and navigating challenges in housing provision.

#### **4.3.2.1. Policies and Programs Affecting Housing Options**

The main objective is to comprehend the distinct housing requirements and situations of IAWs and create specific policies and initiatives to assist their housing needs.

##### **a. Farm Worker Housing Support**

Participant 10 expressed concern about the importance of maintaining healthy living scenarios—prohibited boarding houses to prevent unauthorized operations without proper permits: “we do have workers that are here, and they support the entire village that they came from. But we don't want them living in a scenario that is not healthy”.

Multiple participants referenced the role of official plans regarding housing and IAWs. Participant 11 noted the inclusion of policies in official plans supporting on-farm housing for farm health and international workers – “a lot of the official plans do include policies that speak to, like on-farm housing for like farm health or international workers”. They positively acknowledged the widespread presence of such policies across Ontario.

Participant 4 described the provisions in official plans, specifying residences for farm labour. They acknowledged the diversity of occupants, including older parents and international agricultural workers, and emphasized the employment criteria, requiring individuals to be largely employed on or at the farm throughout the day.

*I think the provisions are worded in that it states residences for farm labour. So, some*

*people you know, it might be there's an older parent living on the farm, and their son also works on the farm. So that would be farm labour. [Participant 4]*

Participant 5 highlighted the existence of policies in the official plan aimed at ensuring housing for the workforce and providing support for farm workers. Participant 6 mentioned the various terms used, such as "help houses" or "temporary seasonal farm worker accommodations," indicating the diversity in naming such facilities.

#### **b. Housing Designation and Location**

Participant 1 stated that local official plans had the flexibility to be more prescriptive, allowing the establishment of actual permanent structures for temporary foreign workers and international farmworkers.

*local official plans are obviously allowed to be a little bit more prescriptive on that as well. You're able to establish an actual permanent structure for your temporary foreign worker, international farmworkers. [Participant 1]*

Participant 10 identified an area named "Woods set" on the map, a purpose-built development entirely for IAWs, including a small parking lot, ample bicycle parking, and modern-style buildings, emphasizing its intentional design.

*We have area that you might want to look at on a map, it's called, it's the addresses to Woods set. It's a development that's entirely purpose-built for migrant workers. So it has a small parking lot. It has tonnes of bicycle parking, they're fairly up to date, style for the buildings. It's a development that was purposely built that way. [Participant 10]*

Participant 13 highlighted rules implemented through zoning, ensuring proper distances and setbacks from operational aspects of farms. Emphasized the provision of amenity spaces, outdoor areas, and the installation of bike racks. They mentioned rules promoting positive relationships:

*some of the rules that we put in place through zoning, ensure that there's proper distances and setbacks from operational aspects of farms in particular, that there's amenity spaces, outdoor amenity spaces for workers that there are things like bike rack, you know that we've also set in some rules around encouraging the relationship. [Participant 13]*

Participant 7 clarified that, as a higher-level administrative division with several lower-tier municipalities, the regional official plan authorized the construction of extra residential units specifically for IAWs. It was explicitly stated that these units were regarded as temporary and permitted to remain only as long as the farm needed extra workers. The anticipation was that these units would be removed once the demand for labour decreased. It was also noted that all of the several lower-tier governments had accepted these units, albeit each had different methods of determining their placement and location. They emphasized that the permissions were not accompanied by a specific duration, recognizing the lack of a specified end date. It was agreed that the units would not be developed into separate properties in the future and, ideally, would be taken away if not being utilized.

#### **4.3.2.2. Impact of COVID-19 on Housing Policies**

##### **a. Financial Factors**



Participants noted three financial factors emerging from COVID-19 on housing policies in their communities and counties. Participant 5 described a confluence of issues during COVID-19 where there was a high demand for construction materials and construction workers – “during COVID-19, obviously, construction materials and construction workers were really in demand”.

Participant 8 stated that the housing condition had worsened due to reduced funding. Although there was hope for increased government funding, this did not materialize, and financial constraints tightened for everyone. The cost of living increased, leading to challenges in maintaining previous living standards, and it was believed that housing conditions for workers had deteriorated. Participant 8 explained, “Money and funding have gone down ... I want to say the government's offering more funding, but unfortunately, that's not the case. Because money just seems to be tightened on everyone's end”.

Participant 9 highlighted challenges related to setback requirements. There were rebuttals against these requirements as they compelled farmers to consider expensive options such as purchasing more property for appropriate lodging. In some cases, due to limited space on the property, farmers had to explore alternative locations for boarding, lodging, and rooming housing, which incurred significant financial investments.

#### **b. Housing Conditions and Approval Processes**

Participants noted a number housing conditions and approval process trends in their communities. Participant 1 noted a shift where some farmers began housing IAWs in settlement areas, a practice less observed before the pandemic. This involved renting houses in those areas. Participant 10 acknowledged that upper levels of government emphasized the need to house workers differently

to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The agri-food industry itself recognized the importance of avoiding outbreaks among workers to maintain a stable food supply. Participant 10 explained, “The upper levels of government have said you have to have as the workers differently and the industry itself has said we can't have our workers getting sick, we can't lose a whole bunkhouse of 60 Guys, to COVID-19 We can't have them all sick because that causes disruptions to the food source”.

Participant 11 mentioned the emergence of non-profits in Southern Ontario addressing the living conditions of IAWs. While not detailing conditions before and after COVID-19, there was an appreciation for the recognition of the need to ensure access to better conditions and appropriate services. Participant 11 describes:

*There were a few like nonprofits in like Southern Ontario that were started to assist on farm like agricultural workers in getting access to better conditions and things like that. So, while I can't necessarily speak much to the conditions before, after, it was nice to see that there was a recognition of the need to make sure that the like, people were still having access to appropriate servicing.*

Participant 12 highlighted efforts by some farmers to retrofit existing bunkhouses, creating separation distances to comply with COVID-19 rules. There was also a need for more bunkhouses to meet distancing requirements. Participant 13 described increased engagement with health units due to retrofitting efforts and the need to ensure compliance with COVID-19 rules, particularly regarding separations. Participant 13 noted, “it was only because of that, that the health unit started

engaging more with us, because they needed to ensure that they were just in separations and some of those sorted COVID-19 rules were being applied.

Participant 4 indicated a transition from allowing residential units for farm labour to multiple residential units. They recognized the government's direction towards providing a variety of housing units. This change aimed to accommodate the growing engagement of farm operators with international agricultural workers, promoting more housing opportunities. Participant 5 shared that housing conditions were perceived to be better during COVID-19, possibly due to limited demand. Some individuals explored different uses, such as short-term rentals or severing lots, during this time. Success was noted in repurposing rooms in motels, hotels, and resorts for those in need.

Participant 7 observed an immediate increase in building permits during and post-pandemic for constructing new agricultural structures, including temporary houses or bunkhouses. This was seen as a response to social distancing requirements, resulting in renovations and new builds, providing increased space for existing labour. Participant 9 noted a shift where farmers started purchasing single detached family dwellings off-site, indicating a change in the approach to providing housing for agricultural workers.

According to Participant 1, many farms had to expand existing housing or acquire additional off-site dwellings during the COVID-19 pandemic to meet increased space requirements mandated by local health authorities. However, as observed through pre-consultation meetings with farmers, some facilities remained outdated and potentially illegal or non-conforming. While community concerns emerged over farmland purchases for off-site housing, as explained by Participant 9 involved with municipal planning policies, regulations were updated to allow such options if

located in agricultural zones with access to transportation for workers. Ongoing cooperation between municipalities, health units, and farmers, as highlighted by Participant 10 experience, has helped foster greater oversight and understanding of appropriate standards for IAW housing conditions post-pandemic.

#### **4.3.2.3. Local Planning and Official Guidelines**

Participant 1 mentioned that the county underwent a review of its official plan in 2021-2022, subsequently approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The participant noted, “The county official plan, we just undertook our county official plan review in 2021 and 2022. It was subsequently approved by the Ministry this past summer. Our policies allow for permanent structures for international farmworkers” [Participant 1]. Participant 12 indicated reliance on *the Planning Act* to understand the parameters of what they could and could not do regarding housing for IAWs.

Participant 2 discussed the consideration of IAWs in a document, possibly not accessible to the public. The evaluation involved a focus on bylaws and the Official Plan to determine how to incorporate housing for IAWs, emphasizing the permitted types of housing.

*I know that there is a document that our policy planners came out with, and I'm not sure if it's accessible to the public, but they were starting to consider looking at migrant workers. And they were just evaluating the bylaws as well as the Official Plan and seeing how it could incorporate migrant workers.* [Participant 2]

Participant 3 shared insights into their official plans, allowing IAW housing as a right on commercial operations. Specific guidelines were mentioned, such as proximity to existing

buildings, especially relevant for livestock agriculture. The zoning bylaw outlined the number of units and required setbacks, serving as the main documents for planning. Participant 4 noted that local zoning bylaws in municipalities permitted farm labour housing, typically in the form of residential units as an accessory to agriculture. The key condition was demonstrating an active agricultural use on the property—local planning policies aimed to support the establishment of these residences based on agricultural needs.

#### **4.3.2.4. Regulatory Compliance and Oversight**

Participant 1 shared that some farmers had built facilities years ago that did not meet current building codes. These structures lacked proper building permits, making them technically illegal. The participant emphasized the importance of adhering to the policy framework and obtaining building permits compliant with the Ontario Building Code for constructing worker housing.

Participant 11 highlighted the significance of ensuring that housing policies were integral to relevant documents and consistently applied across all applicable policy documents. Participant 13 noted changes in the official plan and zoning amendments, specifically the removal of terms like bunkhouses. The new terminology included boarding, lodging, and grooming. Rules were established regarding the existence of these facilities, indicating a shift in terminology and regulations related to worker accommodations.

#### **4.3.2.5. Challenges and Concerns in Housing Initiatives**

a. Accessibility and Infrastructure

The central theme of housing initiatives revolves around the obstacles and problems associated with the accessibility and infrastructure of housing development. Accessibility pertains to the capacity of persons, irrespective of their physical capabilities or mobility, to enter and traverse housing units and their surrounding environs (Zhang et al., 2023). This issue delves into the difficulties encountered by those with disabilities, elderly individuals, and other marginalized groups in obtaining housing that caters to their unique accessibility requirements. Additionally, it explores the significance of integrating universal design principles and accessibility standards into housing programs to guarantee inclusivity and equitable possibilities for everyone (Ruming, 2016). Infrastructure issues within this category pertain to the accessibility and standard of vital services and facilities, such as water, sewage, power, and transportation, that are indispensable for the operation of residential communities. Participant 1 recounted a proposal from a farmer owning industrial properties to house IAWs near heavy manufacturing sites, emphasizing the importance of adhering to good land use planning principles. Participant 1 noted, “we have one farmer who also owns some industrial properties. And this person came forward with a proposal to house their temporary workers on the same property as their industrial buildings, which is absolutely. It does not make sense from a land use perspective.”

Participant 12 mentioned considerations such as spacing requirements and wastewater management as potential challenges. Participant 2 addressed concerns about the location of housing, emphasizing accessibility to essential services like grocery stores and health services. Also, noted the challenges faced by IAWs who may lack access to vehicles. Participant 3 highlighted challenges in the building permit and building code phase, particularly related to the need for large septic systems in agricultural areas without public water or sewage services.

Additionally, Participant 3 emphasized the absence of public transportation – “we don’t have any public transportation. So that would be something that the individuals would have to provide for themselves or their employers.” This perspective was echoed by Participant 4, “they [international agricultural workers] don't have a means to transportation” and Participant 5, “transportation is so hard to come by in rural areas as well.” Participant 7 noted the use of acquired properties with existing houses for farmworker accommodation, highlighting challenges related to location, transportation, and safety concerns, especially in accidents involving farm labour.

A number of planners flagged potential challenges related to water and septic service provisions for worker housing. Participant 4 discussed the need for farmers to provide septic systems. Mentioned the complexity arising if the sewage waste exceeded a certain limit, triggering Ministry of Environment approval. Participant 5 discussed concerns about allowing one septic system to serve multiple dwellings and flagged the potential inefficiency if underutilized. Participant 9 noted, “the biggest challenge, I think, was septic capacity”. Participant 6 discussed the existence of unit caps, particularly related to septic systems, as a potential constraint on housing initiatives. Participant 8 mentioned challenges related to the quality of running water in certain housing situations, noting that some housing “doesn't have, you know, the best running water”.

#### **b. Financial and Economic Concerns**

Participant 11 emphasized the importance of non-profit organizations securing funding to support the dissemination of messages regarding housing initiatives. Participant 12 noted the existence of grants in the economic development department but highlighted that they were not specifically directed toward IAWs. Specifically, Participant 12 noted, “Our economic development

department, they have grants for businesses and small businesses, but that's not targeted towards temporary farmworkers”.

Participant 5 highlighted the high rental prices for local housing, making them unaffordable for individuals on minimum wage. They noted the difficulty from a governmental perspective, especially at the provincial and local levels, as they were not directly operating the programs. They mentioned the challenges at the federal level due to the unpredictability of the agriculture industry, making it hard to predict profit. Participant 6 discussed technical limitations, particularly related to the cost of essential infrastructure like septic systems. Farmers were hesitant to invest due to financial constraints, even if the projects were technically allowed. Participant 6 explained, “... you start getting into a septic system that, you know, might cost \$100,000, plus. So, it's sort of the farmers are really trying to Well, I just need to get this, but I don't want to spend that. So, it's not so much about approvals, as much as not wanting to maybe pay what it costs”. Participant 7 also identified the financial challenges and the rising construction costs as significant factors in housing initiatives.

Participant 8 acknowledged that sometimes farmers cut corners, especially when it came to IAWs, assuming they might not complain. They stressed the importance of considering the cost and policies related to building code standards. They noted, “The cost is the biggest challenge. And most farmers are trying to cut costs and make more profit” [Participant 8]. This is demonstrated in buildings lacking structural integrity or proper placement according to Ontario's building code. There was a sense among some farms that IAW housing is temporary, thus enabling disregard of standards since IAWs were unlikely to complain.



Conditions have declined since the pandemic due to financial strains, exacerbating challenges in maintaining housing quality. In recounting these experiences, participant 8 highlighted the difficulties in enforcing standards and protecting rights when economic pressures incentivize compromising on IAW welfare. Participant 9 highlighted farmers' reluctance to invest a substantial amount of money in housing for foreign workers when they believed their existing arrangements were sufficient

### **c. Lack of Clarity**

A number of planners criticized the PPS as it relates to housing for IAWs. Participant 10 noted, "Part of the problem with the PPS, in my opinion, is it's a broad stroke brush, trying to paint the whole province as the same thing". Participant 11 suggested that if there is a specific need for housing, the PPS should include more explicit wording to address that point. Participant 12 highlighted that while not directly associated with temporary farmworkers, housing-related aspects could impact how farmworkers are housed.

Participant 3 described the PPS as limited, acknowledging that it permits on-farm housing in agricultural areas but lacks specific policies on the location of housing, requirements for farm operators, and the provision of resources or services. The respondent noted the PPS "doesn't really have a lot of policy that speaks to, you know, where should the housing be located" [Participant 3]. Participant 4 stated that the PPS does not explicitly address farm labour housing, leaving municipalities to interpret agricultural policies. They further note that, "the absence of the topic, and the provincial policy statement suggests to me that it does not support the needs and challenges presented with providing farm labour housing" [Participant 4].

Participant 6 noted that the PPS is largely silent on international farmworkers' housing, emphasizing its focus on supporting agriculture and protecting agricultural land. They shared, the PPS "supports the farm, which indirectly, theoretically supports the farm worker. But I, you know, there's no, there's no protections, there's no minimum standards for the worker" [Participant 6]. Participant 7 highlighted that support for IAWs in the PPS requires interpretation, emphasized "the PPS could be more clear and more specific on that". Further, Participant 8 acknowledged the existence of support in the PPS but suggested "there's a lot of room for improvement".

#### **d. Regulatory and Compliance Challenges**

Participant 1 described instances where farmers and employers circumvented the legal process by building structures without permits, leading to troubles with public health. The lack of a standardized process and a system to support them contributed to the challenges. Participant 1 shared, "I have heard from other farmers about like their friend, elsewhere, that was got into trouble with public health for some sort of public health infraction. And they were not able to get their sign off on that". Participant 10 additionally pointed out that some housing units failed to meet minimum standards, with overcrowding issues and high charges per person. Specifically, they noted, "there are still people who are not producing what would be considered a minimum standard" [Participant 10].

A number of planners shared insights on why housing permits are being declined. Participant 12 noted that the majority of development applications they handle are typically recommended for approval, except for those found to be non-compliant with various policies. These may include issues regarding lot size, feasibility, compatibility, and adherence to ministry

requirements. Failure to meet legislative mandates often results in application rejection. Participant 13 mentioned a comprehensive rejection of farmworker housing until new rules and bylaws were established. Building permits were rejected for not adhering to codes, and instances involved fire department intervention based on health unit regulations.

Participant 2 highlighted the absence of specific regulations for the kind of farming that targets IAWs, emphasizing a lack of legal frameworks for these workers. They noted, “we don't have the kind of farming that target migrant workers by law isn't really set up specifically to have regulations for these kinds of workers” [Participant 2].

Participant 7 raised the question of zoning in rural areas for houses not located on farms, suggesting a need for clarity and regulations for accommodations in such settings. They explained, “maybe zoning in the case of a house, that's not located on a farm that is being used in a rural area to accommodate workers. I mean, we've talked so far about a lot of these farms, and I've assumed that the bulk of them are located on farms” [Participant 7]. Participant 9 discussed zoning policies, particularly the separation of boarding, lodging, and rooming houses into agricultural categories, indicating the uniqueness of zoning bylaws.

*when I talked about how these offsite locations had to be in agricultural zoning, so the, I guess, unique thing in our zoning bylaws, so it's these boarding lodging and rooming houses got separated into two, it got separated into agricultural, and that could have any number of occupants as long as it met the health and fire code. [Participant 9]*

Participant 8 emphasized the oversight of basic safety measures in some buildings, revealing a lack of compliance with building codes, including the absence of smoke detectors.

Participant 8 shared that employers of international agricultural workers “don't consider the cost of the policies that they actually have to follow and implement. Ain't as bad as it sounds, like making sure things actually are up to building code, and that the buildings are actually like habitable, you wouldn't believe the number of buildings that like they don't even have like smoke detectors” [Participant 8].

#### **e. Social and Community Issues**

Participant 1 noted resistance from employers regarding expenditures on housing for IAWs. Some employers were reluctant to house workers in settlement areas and provide transportation, despite potential benefits in terms of access to amenities. Participant 2 highlighted the difficulty faced by IAWs in rural areas, impacting their quality of life. This interviewee noted, “when they are in such rural areas, it could be hard for them to have what I would consider a good quality of life, because they're, they're almost in a really narrow way of saying they're almost stuck in these rural areas” [Participant 2].

Participant 5 described the predominant housing options, including single detached homes, short-term rentals, and structures in mobile home parks. The communal living arrangements with shared facilities were mentioned, indicating a common housing pattern. Participant 6 shared that employers might not prefer their employees as neighbors, adding a social dimension to the housing challenges. Participant 9 expressed concern about the limited housing available. Farmers initially believed they had adequate conditions in place but faced setbacks in providing off-site housing when conditions were deemed inappropriate.

#### **f. Transition and Skill Shortages**

Participant 3 described time as a hindrance in physically creating housing and emphasized a general lack of awareness regarding policies and processes. Mentioned delays in the approval process for large septic systems, involving the provincial Ministry of Environment.

Participant 5 pointed out that many agricultural employers lack expertise in planning logistics, especially concerning transportation for workers. Participant 6 shared that a common focus was on maximizing accommodation efficiency by reducing land requirements while increasing the number of beds. They described that “a lot of the push from the farm community seems to be how can we shrink the land requirements, but up the number of beds, I'll say whether that's, you know, units or everything that comes along with accommodation” [Participant 6].

Participant 7 noted a traditional mindset among farmers where houses on purchased farms were seen as assets for housing labour. Highlighted the potential shift in perspective if IAWs were housed in urban areas with access to public transit and mentioned a shortage of skilled trades, leading to delays in construction projects. Participant 7 noted, “We've got shortage of skilled trades, and so that equals a shortage of labour when it comes to building buildings, like houses, and even agricultural buildings. So, it can be quite a wait. If you want to get a building built and hire a contractor to do that you could be waiting quite a while” [Participant 7].

Some planners emphasized the difficulty in managing housing initiatives when there is a lack of communication between municipalities and potential influxes of workers. Participant 9 noted, “But it's really hard if the municipality doesn't know an influx and numbers coming through or I guess that's where my brain is kind of heading is that there's definitely a communication gap” [Participant 9].

### **4.3.3. Objective 3.**

**To identify opportunities for enhancing the PPS by integrating it with local government planning to better address the housing needs and welfare of IAWs.**

This section presents the findings of the interview analysis from local government planners aimed at improving the integration of the PPS with local government planning. It explores recommendations to address the housing needs and welfare of IAWs by exploring integration strategies and offering enhancement recommendations.

#### **4.3.3.1. Integration of Farmworkers in Society**

##### **a. Community Interaction and Environment**

IAWs frequently encounter social and cultural obstacles that can result in their isolation from the wider society (Cruz, 2016). This theme examines tactics and endeavors focused on fostering social unity, cultural interchange, and assimilation between agricultural labourers and the broader community. Participant 10 highlighted the importance of providing green space on farms for outdoor activities and relaxation for workers: “if your housing your workers on the farm, you need to provide X amount of green space, so that they have somewhere where they can do outdoor activities, where they can relax when they're not working”. Participant 13 advocated for outdoor amenity spaces, especially in areas distant from public parks or green spaces. They emphasized, “we want to make sure that there's spaces available for workers outside of the house in particular” [Participant 13].

Participant 6 described initiatives like buses bringing workers into town for shopping and other activities, fostering a sense of community. They acknowledged occasional local resident pushback but noted, “there's also some community being created amongst the workers on various farms” [Participant 6]. Participant 7 mentioned a group in St. Catharines working to provide a social space for interactions among farmworkers. Programs included collecting and distributing bicycles and clothing, contributing to a cultural and social environment for the workers.

#### **b. Cultural Integration**

Participant 10 noted that many farms make efforts to create recreational spaces, such as soccer fields and communal kitchens. These spaces become popular among workers, fostering a sense of community. Cultural diversity is highlighted, as workers from different areas cheer for different soccer teams. Participant 13 further emphasized the significance of sports, particularly soccer, in the lives of farmworkers. Collaboration was mentioned in organizing soccer time on fields, similar to arrangements with local soccer associations. Additionally, cultural initiatives like forming a group of talented musicians from farmworkers were explored, contributing to local festivals and music shows.

Participant 6 described how IAWs spend time in towns, contributing to the local economy – “one or two nights a week, there's large populations of migrant farm workers in these towns. And, you know, there's they're shopping, they're spending their money”. The cultural impact is evident in the emergence of diverse ethnic cuisines in small towns. This showcases the influence of farmworkers on local culture and commerce.

Participant 7 noted the efforts made by churches to offer services in different languages during the

summer, aiming to attract foreign labourers. Additionally, highlighted social events and meet-and-greet activities organized by some farm operators, providing cultural spaces for agricultural workers.

### **c. Social Stigma and Discrimination**

Social stigma and discrimination are pervasive issues that can have detrimental effects on individuals and communities. Participant 10 noted the presence of blatant racism – “there's definitely people who go I don't want Mexicans. I don't want the Mexicans living in my neighbourhood”. Participant 5 described a stigma associated with renting to international agricultural workers, suggesting that this prejudice is not justified. Additionally, they pointed out that these workers might not be integrated into society in the same way as other cultures or workers, potentially due to preconceived notions about mobile housing. Participant 6 highlighted a social sentiment where certain activities are avoided on designated "farm worker nights," indicating a form of segregation or exclusion based on the presence of IAWs. Participant 6 noted that some resident “don't do grocery shopping on Friday night, because the farm workers are going to be there, you know, we don't go to these restaurants on are these bars on Friday nights, because that's when the farmworkers they're going to be there”. This sentiment could contribute to the isolation of these workers from the broader community.

Participant 9 addressed community concerns, indicating that foreign workers were perceived as taking homes away from potential local residents. The "Not in my backyard" sentiment was prevalent, with community members expressing reluctance to have foreign workers as neighbors.



### **4.3.3.2. Enhancement Recommendations**

#### **a. Awareness and Information**

Participant 11's emphasis on education and awareness as a means to combat social stigma and discrimination is well-founded – “I think education, I think that would be the most important thing. Like letting sharing these experiences and like providing people with that education. So, they're made aware, I think, awareness”. Organizing seminars, training sessions, and conferences can serve as valuable learning environments to disseminate information, promote dialogue, and raise awareness about the issues at hand. These events can provide platforms for sharing personal experiences, fostering empathy, and challenging stereotypes and biases. Non-profit groups and various channels, such as websites, social media, and community centers, can play a vital role in making information readily available and initiating conversations. By bringing the issue to the forefront and promoting open discussions, these actions can contribute to breaking down stigmas, fostering understanding, and encouraging societal change.

Participant 3 stressed the importance of "just hearing more from the actual individual and international agricultural workers about their condition”. They proposed a general awareness of social programs and educating individuals about the process and key considerations when adding foreign labour housing. Advocated for general education to provide necessary information during the design and building permit phase. Participant 5 pointed out a perceived lack of understanding among the average person, especially younger individuals who migrate to cities early in their lives. The participant highlighted the need for comprehensive awareness, including understanding the program's purpose, its stakeholders, and the significance of agriculture in Canada and Ontario.

## **b. Collaboration and Networking**

Participant 1 advocated for appropriate regulating bodies beyond municipal planning departments to ensure housing facilities meet standards. They suggested collaboration and information sharing with other municipalities, such as Essex or Kingsville, to learn from their guidelines. Participant 11 stressed the importance of a shared effort at every level, emphasizing collaboration from top to bottom. Highlighted the need for a concerted effort involving various stakeholders to address the housing needs of IAWs.

Participant 3 proposed opportunities for local governments to invest in newcomers' welcome programs and called for potential involvement of the provincial or federal government. The interviewee noted, "there possibly is a bigger role for either the provincial or federal government to be involved in this. You know, if the federal government is approving these applications for these workers to come, I think there may be a role in them, investing in local programmes that support them socially as well". They emphasized a collaborative approach and highlighted the federal government's role in approving worker applications. Participant 5 further identified the federal government as having a significant ability to affect change and recommended collaboration with provincial and local governments. They suggested, "combining forces and funds to make more like centralized housing, to bring those workers into areas and housing available" [Participant 5].

Participant 4 explored the potential of public-private partnerships for farm labour housing, suggesting that a cooperative approach involving local government and multiple farmers could lead to better-managed and maintained housing. Stressed the importance of collaboration for

improved outcomes. Participant 7 emphasized the employer's responsibility for the conditions of IAWs and the need for partnerships, particularly between the municipality, province, and local operators. Advocated for a coordinating role for local municipalities in advancing discussions on transitioning to urban housing for international workers.

### **c. Community and Social Integration**

Planners interviewed noted a number of challenges and suggestions for community and social integration. Participant 13 advocated for creating an environment that promotes outdoor experiences and green spaces. They highlighted the importance of infrastructure that provides workers with access to essential facilities beyond the farm. Participant 13 emphasized changing language and perceptions, such as removing the term "bunkhouse" and promoting the idea that certain housing options are available to everyone in the community. Participant 5 suggested increased pathways for IAWs to bring their families, acknowledging the challenge of aligning schedules with community engagement. Noted that community support could lead to various levels of government backing, either verbally or financially. Highlighted the positive impact of families integrating into the community and drew parallels with the successful integration of Ukrainian refugees with families. While Participant 7 identified opportunities to better communicate and maximize existing programs that provide services like transportation to appointments or grocery stores. Acknowledged the need to improve awareness and understanding of these services among international workers.

### **d. Efficient Transportation Solutions**

Interviewees highlighted a number of efficient transportation solutions related to international agricultural workers. Participant 3 recognized the significance of worker independence and opportunities, leading to their “community investing in biking infrastructure, I think was one of the really good outcomes”. Participant 4 advocated for investment in rural transportation infrastructure to create better situations for IAWs. They noted, “I think that like investment in rural transportation infrastructure, for this reason, and many others could lead to a lot better situations for farm labour when it comes to ensuring that international agricultural workers have a well-rounded life that they're not facing isolation and, you know, other barriers when it comes to working in the agriculture industry” [Participant 4]. Participant 8 emphasized the necessity for better transportation, specifically improved bus routes. Pointed out the need for enhanced transportation to the north and northeast, where many farms are located. Participant 12 mentioned that transportation formalization occurred in Kingsville - referring to the local transit system and would want their municipality to emulate that.

*they also formalized the transportation piece. So, we don't have that in my county yet.*

[Participant 12]

#### **e. Guidelines and Policies**

Participant 1 suggested the creation of specific guidelines for farm labour housing. Expressing uncertainty about the responsible provincial ministry, they emphasized the need for “a housing for farm labour guideline, a guideline for municipalities to use, and we could get everybody kind of approaching this in a, you know, consistent fashion, I think that would be super helpful” [Participant 1]. Participant 2 advocated for the inclusion of IAWs in the bylaws of counties

or regions with agriculture – “all official plans that are for counties or regions that have agriculture, there should be some form of mention of IAWs in the bylaws”. Recognizing the importance of acknowledging this demographic in official plans, they proposed this as a crucial first step, even in areas where IAWs might not be predominant.

Participant 3 pointed out a gap in post-construction involvement in monitoring housing quality: “I would say, typically, after the buildings are constructed, and the building inspectors done their final inspection, often them as pallies, are just not involved in monitoring the quality of the housing. So if there could be some sort of, I guess, something in place that would require annual reporting on housing conditions or something like that”. Participant 9 supported the establishment of standards and licensing requirements for housing initiatives. This recommendation aimed to ensure a consistent and regulated approach to housing for international agricultural workers.

#### **f. Improvement and Repurposing**

Planners provided seven suggestions for improvements. First, Participant 1 emphasized the need for more regulating bodies – “there should be more regulating bodies involved in terms of like making sure these people actually have like, safe, livable, like not just adequate living conditions”. Second, Participant 11 proposed the repurposing of old resorts for staff housing. This innovative approach involved converting abandoned units into living spaces, providing IAWs with safe and clean accommodations while supporting new activities in the resorts or the local community. Third, Participant 13 highlighted progress by removing traditional terms like bunkhouses and farmworker housing from zoning and Official Plan language. This step was seen

as a positive move toward more inclusive and modern terminology and planning. Fourth, Participant 3 advocated for flexibility in septic system regulations from the provincial Ministry of Environment to facilitate quicker and improved housing solutions, especially in terms of quality of life. Fifth, Participant 4 advocated for a provincial and federal approach to create more universal conditions for IAWs, aiming to standardize and improve living conditions across different regions in Ontario. Participant 6 highlighted the importance of a willingness to invest money and phase projects appropriately over the years. Seventh, Participant 7 explored opportunities for housing within settlement areas and urban centers. The goal was to leverage municipal services, eliminate bunkhouses on septic systems, and transition to an urban model with better transportation support for workers.

#### **g. Support and Funding**

Support and finance are crucial to the success and development of suitable housing and even business operations. To effectively tackle the requirements and obstacles encountered by farm operators and IAWs, it is important to investigate inventive resolutions and approaches (Zhang et al., 2023). Finances from taxation, grants, or government intervention can affect municipalities' and local governments' ability to offer critical services, support social programs, and start affordable housing projects. Farm operators, provincial governments, and municipalities each play a vital role in effectively allocating resources for sustainable agri-food production.

Participant 10 suggested giving IAWs scheduled time off and proposed allowing municipalities to tax agricultural facilities, particularly greenhouses. They noted, "I think part of it could be allowing municipalities to properly tax those agricultural facilities. Because we've gotten to the point where, when greenhouses were first brought in, they were just glass over a

field”. The idea was that taxing greenhouses would generate additional revenue for municipalities, enabling them to provide better services, social programs, and affordable housing initiatives.

Three participants highlighted support and funding requests targeted to the provincial government. Participant 11 advocated for the availability of grants and funding, especially at the provincial level, to support local development initiatives. Recognized the importance of having financial resources readily accessible for on-the-ground needs related to housing and community development. Participant 6 proposed government intervention by establishing new standards and providing initial funding injections for the construction of appropriate housing. Emphasized the long-term benefits of building accommodations for a specific number of workers, ensuring their return year after year. Participant 4 highlighted the emphasis placed by the province of Ontario on protecting the agricultural industry in its policies and emphasized the need for incentivization for local governments and farm operators to actively engage in international agricultural worker programs. They acknowledged the federal government's role in immigration targets and the importance of supporting the means for new Canadians, including those in the agriculture sector.

Participant 7 emphasized the role of municipalities as liaisons and facilitators between farm operators and the province. Acknowledged the importance of municipalities understanding the financial needs of operators and acting as intermediaries to secure support and funding for projects.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion and Recommendations**

This section intertwines the empirical findings from this research with existing literature. Every participant's perspective is invaluable in this discourse, but I focus on recurring themes. As we navigate through this discussion, I underscore the importance of my findings and further weave in recommendations for stakeholders.

### **5.1. DISCUSSION**

The assessment of housing initiatives and the welfare of IAWs in Ontario has revealed insights into the current state of available housing, challenges faced by agricultural operators, and factors influencing the societal integration of IAWs. A better examination of these findings allows for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved and identifies opportunities for improving IAW housing provision and integration endeavours.

Based on the findings of the analysis, it was determined that housing policies and promotion of the housing policies are important in meeting the housing requirements. The findings stressed how important it is to formulate comprehensive policies that take into consideration the specific needs of agricultural workers. As per Berkey (2017) and Marsden (1995), elucidating legislation and guidelines will enhance clarity for stakeholders. Similarly, eliminating ambiguity can streamline the experience, helping local government planners in their daily efforts to facilitate housing provisions. The investigation also revealed regional discrepancies and differences in housing situations, which suggests that there is a requirement for individualized interventions that are based on agricultural contexts (Guntner, 2022). To address these concerns, it was suggested that farmer operators be involved in the process of policy formation and decision-making. According to



Nakache (2013) and Henshaw (2023), their ideas and perspectives have the potential to contribute to the creation of housing policies that are both effective and culturally relevant. Each of these themes from the literature was evident in the interviews with Ontario planners.

A common consensus among participants is that the labour force of IAWs significantly contributes to Ontario's agri-food economy. The day-to-day tasks performed by IAWs are often not preferred or feasible for many domestic farm workers. This sentiment is consistent with the research by Helps et al. (2022), which emphasizes the essential role of IAWs in Ontario's agri-food economy. Despite some unpalatable stories related to the experiences of IAWs (Helps et al., 2020), there remains a continuous influx of IAWs into Ontario (StatsCan, 2021) suggesting a trend where they prioritize the financial gains of the program, emphasizing its importance in sustaining their livelihoods. However, due focus should remain on properly addressing this issue. Research suggests it is important to uphold existing employment structures to maintain worker dedication levels (Van, 2018). Failure to protect current IAW arrangements could lead to a greater inclination to actively explore other job prospects. Improving the status quo is key to preventing a drop in commitment from the agri-food workforce in Ontario.

The findings of this study are consistent with Hennebry and Preibish's (2012) observation that some IAWs live in unsuitable housing, underscore the variability in living conditions. This discrepancy in housing quality extends across different municipalities within Ontario, indicating a lack of uniformity in the standards for IAW housing. To effectively address this issue, it is imperative to implement a comprehensive policy framework (Caldwell et al., 2022) that ensures consistency and standardization in housing provisions for IAWs across the province. This

approach is crucial for promoting equitable living conditions and the welfare of IAWs across various municipalities.

Despite considerable differences in circumstances across municipalities, it is reasonable to expect farm operators to provide housing solutions that meet the ongoing needs of agricultural activities in Ontario, considering the long-running IAW program. However, various obstacles hinder this effort. This investigation revealed several difficulties that are experienced by agricultural operators in housing options for their IAWs. These difficulties include inadequate financial resources, problems with location and living environment, transportation issues, and concerns over work-life balance. In addition to this, it covered the many housing alternatives that are available to IAWs, which range from on-farm lodgings to renting possibilities that are located off-farm. It is essential to address the financial obstacles that individuals face to enhance the conditions of housing for IAWs (Pendall et al. 2012). This can be accomplished by establishing programs that provide cheap housing, investigating novel financing models, and offering assistance to farm operators (Shier et al., 2016). It is possible to dramatically improve the work-life experience for IAWs by addressing transportation concerns. According to Salami et al., (2020), fostering work-life balance by providing enough rest intervals and recreational facilities within housing complexes can also help to the well-being and contentment of individuals who are employed in the construction industry. These difficulties were present in the perspectives shared by planners interviewed.

The indications that IAWs face social integration difficulties sometimes due to housing location or quality (Buccieri et al., 2023; Karki et al., 2019) may also suggest that better housing

arrangements could help IAWs integrate better into society. This study demonstrated that governmental policies at both the federal and provincial levels, namely the TFWP and the PPS, had a pivotal impact on the formation of the housing environment. This finding resonates with research by Nakache (2013) and Henshaw (2023). The TFWP which regulates the hiring of IAWs establishes specific criteria for housing standards. Nevertheless, difficulties in implementing and supervising these policies were recognized (Salami et. al., 2020). This finding emphasizes the necessity for more robust supervision and surveillance systems to guarantee that the housing choices offered to IAWs adhere to the mandated criteria and offer a secure and suitable living atmosphere (Snaveley & Tracy, 2000). Since the IAW program has been going on for a long time, it is a good idea for farm operators to provide suitable housing arrangements to meet the long-term needs of agri-food production activities in Ontario.

Silver (2015) found that language and cultural obstacles significantly impeded the social inclusion of immigrants and asylum seekers. This is also the reality of many IAWs as a large percentage also originate from non-English and non-French speaking countries, and have limited proficiency in these languages, hindering their active participation in local society. Findings from this study show that one of the barriers to IAW integration is the inability to obtain information, services, and support networks (Abdullaev, 2021; Ribeiro, 2007). Moreover, cultural disparities and a lack of acquaintance with Canadian standards and traditions might exacerbate sentiments of seclusion and alienation. To tackle these issues, it is essential to provide linguistic and cultural assistance services (Barrueco, 2012) or rather promote the ones available for the IAWs to access. Promoting awareness of and connecting IAWs to existing programs that provide translation, interpretation, and cultural orientation support is paramount. Navigating a new community and workforce culture

can be difficult without proper resources. Ensuring IAWs understand what help is available and how to utilize these types of integration services will be integral to facilitating smoother settlement experiences and social inclusion outcomes.

Furthermore, tackling social and community challenges, such as combating social stigma and prejudice, and fostering inclusive environments, can enhance the well-being and integration of IAWs. Prior studies by Gibson et. al. (2018) has found that embracing community initiatives is key to viewing immigration favourably as a means to solve labour and immigration problems. Providing language training programs, cultural orientation sessions, and interpretation services can enable individuals from different cultural backgrounds to overcome language and cultural obstacles, improve their integration, and foster cross-cultural understanding within the community (Arcury et al., 2010; Cumming & Storer, 1992).

Integrated families could contribute significantly to successful community settlement. An important insight gained from this study concerns community integration which involves enhancing pathways for IAWs to bring their spouses through employment opportunities. Findings revealed from this study shows that through supporting pathways such as family re-unification of IAWs, it becomes possible to encourage their spouses to engage in community activities, ultimately fostering a greater sense of belonging within the community.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Based on evidence drawn from the findings of the review of relevant literature, the PPS, and interviews with local government planners, the proposed recommendations below aim to support equitable housing and inclusion for IAWs in Ontario.

### 5.2.1. For Academia:

- **Examine the yet-to-be-released version of the PPS:** This research made a document analysis of both the 2020 PPS and the Draft 2023 PPS. Considering that the 2023 PPS has not been finalized, it would be beneficial to review the final version to examine its impact on housing IAWs in Ontario.
- **All-inclusive research:** The focus of this study was to gather qualitative data exclusively from local government planners. However, to fully grasp the housing conditions and rights of IAWs, academic institutions need to conduct comprehensive research that encompasses insights from a broader spectrum of stakeholders. While prior research has predominantly centered on input from temporary foreign workers in Mexico (Helps 2020), it is imperative to integrate perspectives from all relevant stakeholders including agricultural operators, agri-food organizations, and bodies in Ontario. Adopting this inclusive approach will depict a bigger picture to facilitate evidence-based policymaking and enable the development of targeted housing programs that cater specifically to the unique requirements of IAWs.

### 5.2.2. For Provincial Government:

- **Policy Amends and for General Standard:** Municipalities require provincially defined guidelines to plan effectively and provide equal support to this important demographic contributing to Ontario's agri-food economy. Standardization at the higher level of government is key to addressing current inconsistencies. The provincial government

should establish a coordinated framework by amending and reinforcing the PPS to specifically focus on entitlements that related to housing requirements to standardize housing provisions for IAWs across municipalities. A consistent approach in standards and terminology used in local plans is needed to promote equitable living conditions for IAWs, regardless of employment location. A centralized strategy that will adapt and reinforce certain regulations, norms, and requirements for housing accessibility, affordability, and satisfactory living circumstances can mandate fair standards and oversight, ensuring IAWs' rights to suitable housing and well-being are uniformly protected.

- **Collaboration with Agricultural Operators and Municipalities:** Through collaboration, stakeholders can combine resources, exchange expertise, and best practices, and establish a comprehensive and synchronized strategy to meet the housing and integrating requirements of IAWs (Schroeder, 1999; Cloutier et al., 2020). There is significant value in the provincial government collaborating with farm operators to innovate an IAW housing fund aimed at supporting the development of affordable yet suitable housing for IAWs. This could entail offering financial assistance to retrofit existing buildings to meet appropriate living standards or providing interest-free loans or incentives for the construction of new housing. This initiative is most likely to address the challenges faced by farm operators in terms of finances to meet requirements to provide suitable housing options ensuring access to safe and adequate housing for IAWs. Collaborating with municipalities to also provide transportation services and fund local transit projects is essential in mitigating IAW isolation. Accessible transportation not only enhances the

mobility of farmworkers but also fosters a sense of connection and community engagement.

- **Partnerships:** Partnering with community organizations and IAW advocacy coalition groups to organize cultural community events and establishing an information hub are effective strategies to foster inclusion within migrant farmworker communities. These initiatives promote social cohesion, cultural exchange, and access to essential resources, enhancing the overall well-being and integration of migrant farmworkers. The reassurance of provincial government support in these coalitions serves to uplift IAWs, reinforcing their sense of belonging and support in Ontario.

### **5.2.3. For Local Government Planners**

- **Community Engagement:** Incorporating IAW feedback into municipal planning is important, thus collaboration with stakeholder groups is encouraged to integrate their perspectives. Planners should regularly and actively engage with IAWs through advocacy coalitions to address evolving needs. Adopting universal design standards in local plans and regulations can also boost inclusive support. Designating lands near agricultural operations for mixed-use comprising diverse housing options and densities may further promote social cohesion. Such engaged planning approaches centered on IAW engagement hold promise for facilitating receptive, responsive communities (Gibson et. al., 2018).

- **Regular Evaluation:** A collaborative process can thus enlighten multidimensional solutions responsive to discrete community circumstances. Planners are advised to conduct thorough assessments of IAW housing environments within their locales, engaging both farmers and IAWs. A needs analysis can effectively show areas in need of affordable development where impacts are most pronounced. With data in hand, planners can advocate for dedicated financing and incentives to construct suitable IAW housing where needed.

By following these suggestions, Ontario may make significant progress in enhancing housing conditions and rights for IAWs, in line with the goals of this research



## **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

The discussion is expanded upon in the conclusion, which provides a summary of the most important findings and recommendations that were offered earlier. It highlights the importance of having a comprehensive strategy to address the housing and integrating needs of IAWS in Ontario. The conclusion emphasizes the significance of affordable housing programs that are adapted to the financial circumstances of IAWs, as well as the requirement for more robust enforcement and monitoring methods to guarantee compliance with housing compliance standards.

Research shows legal protections for IAWs do not always translate to equal access, due to vulnerabilities (Sarapura et al., 2023). Addressing this gap requires coordinated cross-sector collaboration. The study has provided insight into the difficulties and possible solutions for meeting housing requirements and promoting social integration. The results highlight the considerable impact of current laws and programs on housing options for IAWs, underlining the necessity for more robust enforcement and monitoring systems to guarantee adherence to housing regulations. Furthermore, the conclusion highlights the significance of language and cultural support services to overcome communication barriers and enhance integration. It emphasizes the role of community engagement in fostering social inclusion, promoting interactions between IAWs and locales, and creating opportunities for mutual understanding.

The two versions of the PPS promote diverse, compatible land uses and compact development to serve community needs over time. Despite the seasonal nature of the IAW program, its longstanding presence underscores the importance for farm operators to provide suitable housing arrangements that cater to long-term needs. Initially, this could require a significant financial

investment. However, it will greatly diminish the obstacles to employing IAWs as it ensures that housing requirements are fully met. This will also showcase the experience in Ontario in a positive light to international communities, especially to the countries from which these IAWs originate.

While differing in the terms and duration of their stays, the recent extension to programs like Canada's Agri-food pilot immigration stream (Canada, 2024) and changes to eligibility for permanent residence applications for temporary foreign workers (Canada, 2023), on a national scale demonstrate the considerable importance placed on the Agri-food sector. Adaptations at the federal level highlight how IAWs impacts span provincial boundaries, with their crucial role in labour supply and the overall Canadian economy. This recognition suggests IAWs' vital economic contributions on a coast-to-coast scale (Helps et. al, 2022).

To summarize, effectively meeting the housing and integration requirements of IAWs in Ontario necessitates a comprehensive strategy that includes affordable housing initiatives, enhanced enforcement and monitoring mechanisms, language and cultural support services, community engagement endeavours, and adaptable housing solutions for IAWs (Robinson et al., 2007). To ensure effective housing initiatives and integration efforts, continual collaboration, evaluation, and adaptation are crucial. This facilitates the identification of areas for improvement, fostering a fair and inclusive society where all individuals, including IAWs, can thrive in their jobs and contribute meaningfully to their respective communities in Ontario.

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