

Three Organizations Recognized as Founding Partners of Immigrant Mentoring Program Receive IEC-BC Leadership Awards

VANCOUVER, BC - The numbers tell the story of the success of MentorConnect. Since the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) introduced the program in 2011, in partnership with three immigrant serving organizations, more than 260 skilled immigrants have been connected with established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships.

The three Vancouver's immigrant-serving organizations were critical to the success of MentorConnect. Their contributions were recognized at the inaugural IEC-BC leadership awards event on April 9. ISSofBC, MOSAIC and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. were the first service provider organizations to participate in IEC-BC's mentoring program.

IEC-BC supports employers in implementing their own successful mentoring program by providing overall program coordination and acting as the liaison between local immigrant service providers, who refer mentees, and employers who recruit mentors from their organization.

Queenie Choo, CEO of S.U.C.C.E.S.S., says the value of mentoring goes beyond learning about industries, employer needs and work cultures. For many of S.U.C.C.E.S.S clients mentored through MentorConnect, the program has helped form the foundation of professional networks.

"S.U.C.C.E.S.S. strongly believes in mentoring programs," says Choo. "It is so important for immigrants in Canada to build their social capital in their professional world and develop their networks. The IEC-BC MentorConnect program helps to facilitate this, which is demonstrated in the remarkable success of this program."

Patricia Woroch, CEO of ISSofBC, says mentoring has been an integral factor in the success of many newcomers.

"Developing networks, understanding the Canadian workplace and the experience gained through the process gives great advantage to a newcomer," says Woroch. "The mentoring process benefits both the mentor and the mentee."

For the mentee, gaining an understanding of their industry helps to inform them and give them confidence. For the mentor and their company, the opportunity to access internationally trained professionals can lead to enhancement of business practices as well as understanding the value of accessing international viewpoints and practices. ISSofBC has seen the very positive results of the mentoring program and the value placed in the program by both parties."

MOSAIC executive director Eyob Naizghi, says for immigrant professionals, the mentoring program can be "life altering".



“It puts them in touch with their profession, exposes them to Canadian expectations within their profession and, most of all, it can mean a job.” Naizghi says an additional benefit for some of the 42 MOSAIC mentees has been in the friendships formed. “I’m told that some are for life.”

Naizghi says the mentoring experience is beneficial for employers, as well, especially in a multicultural city like Vancouver.

“There are people here from all over the world and employers should look at this as an opportunity to learn from international experience. They can learn about the best practices of regions around the world.”

Funded by the Government of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Province of BC, IEC-BC is a provincial non-government organization that stimulates the integration of skilled immigrant talent into the province’s workforce by fostering solutions, building connections and being a champion to help employers attract and retain skilled immigrant talent.

To learn more about the IEC-BC Leadership Recognition awards visit <http://iecbc.ca/2015-leadership-awards>