

WORKING ON A DREAM: HELPING INTERNATIONALLY-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS FIND WORK IN CANADA

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TORONTO— Canada welcomes 100,000 to 150,000 university-educated immigrants a year, yet many struggle to find work in this country. For those that do find work, it's often not in their field of study.

To help enhance job prospects for internationally-educated professionals (IEPs) during the current recession and beyond, the Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI) today hosted the largest networking event of its kind, the Annual 2009 International Educated Professionals Conference.

The conference brought together over 1000 IEPs, 100 employers, and employment experts to share perspectives on professional development and strategies to seamlessly integrate internationally-trained professionals into the Canadian workforce.

“Helping internationally trained professionals quickly integrate into the Canadian labour market is a key component of a successful immigration program,” said the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism at the conference. “Our government is committed to helping newcomers integrate, succeed and fully contribute to the richness and diversity of Canadian life.”

Successful workforce integration has been challenging for internationally educated professionals. The national unemployment rate for immigrants reached 6.6 per cent in 2007. In 2006, the unemployment rate reached 11.8 per cent in Toronto, Canada's top destination for immigrants.

“Finding and retaining a job is on the minds of many Canadians during this time of economic volatility,” said Jane Enright, Chairperson of the 2009 IEP Conference. “This issue is most pressing for Canada's educated immigrants who are already facing significant barriers to finding adequate employment in their professional fields.”

Conference events were designed to help IEPs overcome these barriers and educate employers on how to tap into this rich labour force.

Employment experts like Naeem “Nick” Noorani, Founder and Publisher of Canadian Immigrant Magazine and Adeodata Czink, President of the Business of Manners provided essential tips for succeeding in the Canadian workforce. Sector-specific workshops provided IEPs with the knowledge they need to break into their occupational fields.

"Half of those who call Toronto home were born outside Canada," said Toronto Mayor David Miller. "I am incredibly proud of its diversity and I believe all this city's residents should have a chance to realize their full potential. I hope Toronto employers will join in this goal."

An employer luncheon provided a wealth of expertise and resources for employers. The luncheon featured closing remarks by Minister Kenney, employment experts and employers from some of Canada’s leading companies such as COMPAS Research Inc., MCB Solutions, RBC and TD Bank Financial Group.

“Employers in Canada value the skills of IEPs, but lack the resources it takes to integrate employees effectively,” said Silma Hudson Roddau, Director of Operations PCPI and IEP Conference Project Manager. “This conference gives employers the tools they need to reach their human resources goals and helps employees prepare for fulfilling careers in a new workforce.”

About Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI): PCPI is a business-focused, not-for-profit organization that works to enable individuals and organizations to achieve their full workplace potential by providing career development and cultural intelligence products and services designed to improve performance in a multicultural environment. This Sixth Annual International Education Professional Conference is a key component of its work.

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