



ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (IEHPS)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project is the expansion of a pilot to develop alternative employment opportunities for Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs) commensurate with their skills and achievements.

The project's primary outcome is to provide decent employment for IEHPs living but unable to practice in Ontario. Through meaningful employment IEHPs can use their knowledge and skills to help Canadians maintain and improve their health and well-being while achieving the same goals for themselves and their own families

IEHPs are routinely enticed by the Canadian government to bring their families and their savings to Canada with the understanding that, following accreditation, they will be able to practice their profession in their new home.

Upon arrival they face numerous roadblocks in the licensing and accreditation process leading to frustration, anger, resentment, and depression. The immediate result is underemployment for newcomers and a loss to Canada and Canadians of highly developed health care skills and knowledge.

A waste which can become increasingly evident as newcomer cultures make up larger segments of our population. Many are trapped in a vicious cycle of survival employment in unrelated careers, are grossly underemployed in the health care industry, seek to move to other countries or bitterly return home. Those who remain experience reduced wealth and a reduced sense of well-being and expectations.

Community Matters has addressed this issue. Through pilot programs conducted over the last 2 years, 25 -30 IEHPs have been successfully placed in meaningful alternative employment or education programs annually.

Our approach consists of intensive workshops conducted in a study group fashion, one on one counselling and mentorship, individual and group follow up and job creation activities. Success is in large part comes from participant networks and program graduates who identify employment opportunities for others in their present work place.

To date, participants include Medical Specialists, General Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Pharmacists, Health Technicians, Homoeopaths and Dental Surgeons from a variety of countries including Egypt, Iran, Nepal and South East Asia. In addition to their clinical skills and health science knowledge, participants usually display excellent organizational ability, skill in Public Health Policy, Health Systems development and implementation and business and management skills.

Over the next 3 years our project will demonstrate a sustainable, replicable, cost effective approach which will support 4 cycles of 25 participants and their follow up annually in establishing meaningful careers in Canada commensurate with their skills and experience. Resources including volunteers, in kind materials and facilities and \$80,000 annually will deliver an entire program including support for the IEHPs, establishment of employment, education and job referral networks, expansion of program tools and the program's evaluation. The financial cost of each successful candidate is \$ 2,500.

"You have no idea when you come here....it is only when you start looking for information about how to get into the system, the information is scattered, and you have to guess at the right steps to take. Many agencies counsel us to forget licensure, to retrain or to move to another country."

Dr. Nicodeme Mugisho-Demu

ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT SOLUTION

Our alternative employment solution consists of direct service to IEHPs, extensive networking, appropriate volunteer opportunities, job creation and an engaged partners working group.

Health Force Ontario has identified the need for capacity to deliver case management services at the local level. This project creates that capacity.

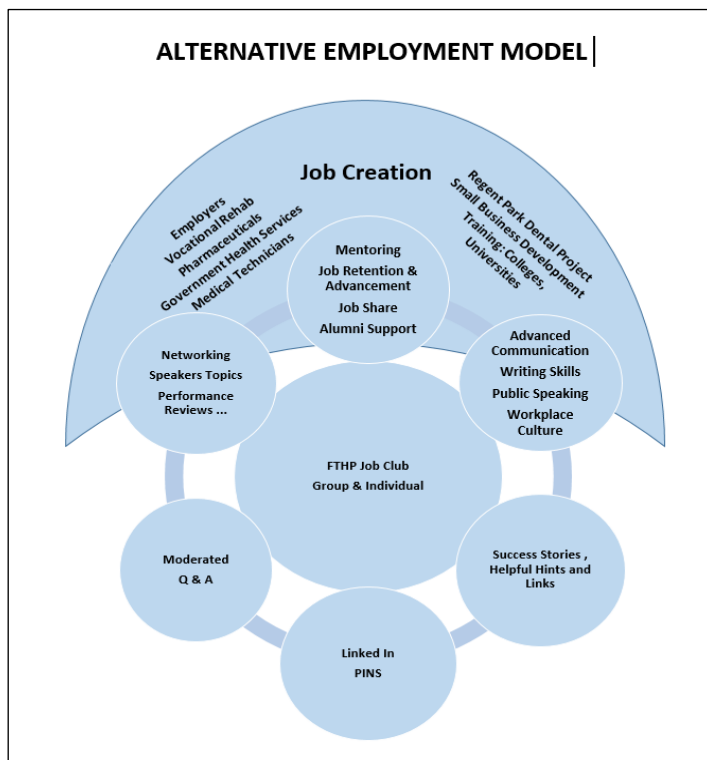
IEHPs seeking alternative employment lack job seeking skills, are unaware of workplace cultural norms, lack the knowledge and skill to properly identify and approach career opportunities, are often frustrated and emotionally drained and have lost some of their confidence and decision making ability. Case management at the local level restores confidence, supports organization of family and domestic responsibility and provides direction, tools and motivation to allow the IEHP to use their high levels of intelligence and motivation to re take control of their careers.

Direct service to IEHPs consists of a series of intensive workshops conducted in a study group fashion, one on one counselling and mentorship, individual and group follow up and job creation activities. Success in large part comes from participant networks and program graduates who identify employment opportunities in their present work place.

The workshops prepare participants through researching employment trends which are a fit with their individual professional skills as well as their own behavioural preferences. Participants follow a disciplined, goal focused career search plan. Increased confidence and constant mentoring and back up leads to improved more precise networking which in turn leads to positive outcomes.

To date, participants include Medical specialists, General Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Pharmacists, Health Technicians, Homoeopaths and Dental Surgeons from a variety of countries including Egypt, Iran, Nepal and South East Asia. In addition to their clinical skills, participants usually display excellent organizational ability, skill in Public Health Policy, Health Systems development and implementation, business and management skills.

Participants have found employment in Medical Research, Pharmaceutical companies, as both class room and on line teachers, in medical reception, in community organizations and in the nursing profession. Some have started their own medical related businesses. Others have decided on a change in career and have chosen to return to school obtaining credits through course equivalent assessments.



Graduates and participants stay in touch receiving ongoing support for themselves and in turn supporting others.

The project has also been successful in creating employment opportunities. We were instrumental in creating a partnership with the Regent Park Community Health Centre’s Dental Services and the University of Toronto School of Dentistry backed up by Internationally Trained dentists presently seeking accreditation. They provide support and prevention workshops and, once qualified will deliver low cost service at the Centre.

Features of this approach are summarized here:

- Support over time
- Individual and group support
- Job Matching
- Local Retraining and Bridging programs¹
- Job clubs, Using FTHP as coaches, spousal employment
- Ongoing Language training, for exams, TOEFL, Canadian slang and professional vocabulary, direct, clinical experience to practice English skills
- Job Development at the community level: Access to medical environments and health related placements and Practice ready assessments and observerships to provide real clinical experience and keep clinical skills alive
- Holistic approaches: Addressing employment, mental health, financial, family and other issues with cultural sensitivity are part of the solution for those who have been working for years towards licensure retraining and employment
- Family support: Access to information about child care, after school programs, housing and financial support.

Examples of Successes

Name	Education	Employment Secured
Dr. Amina Chaudry	Family Physician	Medical researcher
Dr. Nicodeme Mugisho-Demu	Family Physician	Pharmaceutical Team Leader
Dr. Heba Mohamed Ismail Mahdy	Clinical fellow: Gynaecology	On Line Teacher in Obstetrics
Rekha Nilesh Chavan	Medical Lab Technician	Medical Lab Technician
Dr. Behrooz R. Azari	Urologist	Self Employed Educator
Dr. Robin Joseph	Dentist	Qualifying in Canada

¹ Bridge training, together with mentoring and internships, has become a widely acknowledged best practice in helping internationally trained professionals to get licensed and find employment appropriate to their skills and experience. ***Physicians in Ontario do not have access to Bridging Programs***

THE CURRENT SITUATION: IEHPS EXPERIENCE

IEHPS are routinely enticed by the Canadian government to bring their families and their savings to Canada with the understanding that, following accreditation, they will be able to practice their profession in their new home.

Upon arrival the IEHP faces numerous roadblocks in the licensing and accreditation process leading to frustration, anger, resentment, and depression. The immediate result is underemployment for newcomers and a loss to Canada and Canadians of highly developed health care skills and knowledge. Many are trapped in a vicious cycle of survival employment in unrelated careers, are grossly underemployed in the health care industry, seek to move to other countries or bitterly return home. Those who remain experience reduced wealth and a reduced sense of well-being and expectations. This waste will become increasingly acute as newcomer cultures make up larger segments of our population.

Roadblocks are set up on the route to accreditation.

- Bureaucratic processes for written exams are so time consuming that the time required to maintain clinical skills elapses before the exams can be taken.
- Even when exams are passed residencies for IEHPs are severely restricted. After responding to pressure to increase the number of residencies for IEHPs from 5% to 15% a significant portion of this increase was absorbed by Canadian born students who went abroad to Ireland and Australia to study and apply back to Canada for those residency positions.
- Statistics used by governments are flawed. When assessing the number of IEHPs practicing in Canada, statistics include foreign students who actually studied in Canada and received placements as Canadian students.

"There is also growing evidence that language barriers, lack of culturally sensitive healthcare services, and discrimination faced while accessing healthcare can also prevent timely and effective access to healthcare for racialized communities in Ontario, particularly among newcomers. The lack of diversity in the healthcare workforce and accreditation barriers faced by internationally trained healthcare professionals (particularly those from non-European/racialized backgrounds) further limit us from achieving health equity goals. Currently, only 30% of physicians and 11% of nurses are internationally trained professionals."

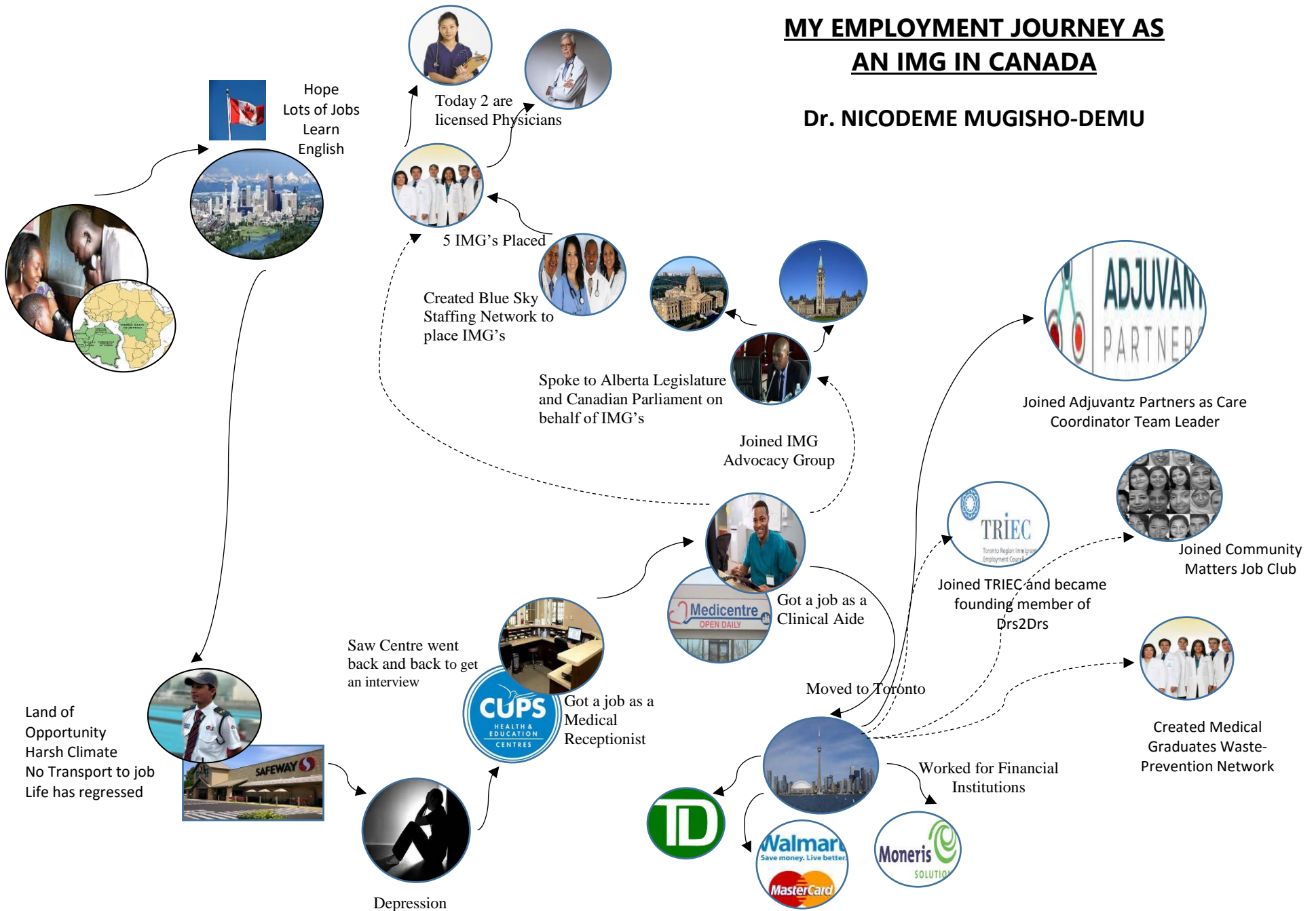
RACIAL JUSTICE REPORT
CARD for ONTARIO June 2014 p. 10

We seek employment opportunities for licensed IEHPs and those who have retrained that reflect the changing demographics of the GTA and the province.

A number of studies about the health care system talk about increasing ACCESS to the Canadian health system. The issue is really access to **effective** services. It is known that people who are treated by health professionals from their own culture have a greater rate of return to that professional and better outcomes. As Canadians age they return to their mother tongue as the preferred language for receiving services. The same applies to seniors from other cultures, who prefer health professionals from their own culture to serve them.

MY EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY AS AN IMG IN CANADA

Dr. NICODEME MUGISHO-DEMU



WORK PLAN

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Activities

- 20 Health Care employers are approached/interviewed to participate in program
- Communication mechanism established to connect members and report/share new opportunities and successes amongst members.
- 4 networking events held with participants and employers

Outputs

- Agreements with 4 employers to provide employment, volunteer opportunities or observerships
- Data Base of successful participants employment opportunities
- 2 published employer success stories (video)

Outcomes

- 15 employment opportunities are created annually
- IEHPs have opportunities to participate in their chosen Canadian career environment

CAREER COUNSELLING

Activities

- 4 – 10 week intensive work shops for IEHPs annually (8 participants each)
- One on one and group counselling

Outputs

- Workshop curriculum
- 4 published Participant success stories (video)
- Participant long term career plan
- Participant skills evaluation
- Participant career development tools
 - a. Skills based resume
 - b. Interview package
 - c. Interview video
- Participant network of at least 30 members
- Family Settlement Plan
- Evaluation Published

Outcomes

- 80% of participants have met 90% of their first goals towards a new career
- Internal networks have been formed in the work place and academia

ADVOCACY

Activities

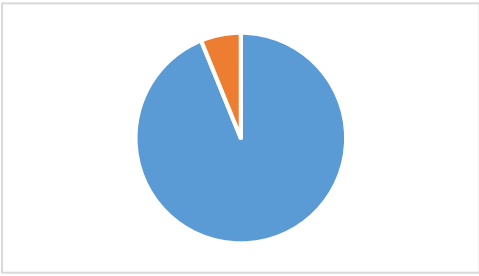
- Public Report to the Community
- Working Group established
- Lobby provincial government for resource support for model

Outputs

- Best practices report published on alternative careers for Health Care Professionals in Canada
- Long Term sustainability plan created and implemented
- Sustainable program to support Internationally Educated Health Professionals attain meaningful alternate careers

Outcomes

- IEHPs engage in meaningful alternative careers in Canada



6% of Immigrant Physicians Applying for Residency are Successful

CHOOSE A DIFFERENT PATH

Alternative Careers for Internationally Educated Health Professionals

A 12-week course leading to meaningful alternative employment for Internationally Educated Health Professionals

Choose A Different Path a skilled trainer and job developer work actively with you weekly in a small group with similar skills and ambitions contact us to discuss your participation.

Contact Mariam or Maltia at (416) 944-9697

WHERE: 595 Parliament St

**When: Tuesdays starting October 13, for ten weeks
From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

Past Team Member Successes:

- Medical research
- Health Care Business Ownership
- Registered Nurses
- Health Care Teachers
- Registered Nurses Assistant
- Nutritionist

Doctors, Nurses, Specialists, Dentists, Pharmacists

Each year in Ontario there are 10000 Internationally Trained Doctors. Some of whom are pursuing licensing. Many are wisely considering other options which provide them the opportunity to use their exemplary skills and remain in the health care profession. **Choose a Different Path** helps guide Foreign Trained Health Professionals to create a plan recognizing and directing their unique skills towards a

A Team Approach

