

Access Alliance launches the Immigrant Insight Scholars initiative

The initiative seeks to provide mentored fellowship opportunities, professional networking and career bridging workshops and supports for internationally educated researchers

TORONTO, April XX, 2017 – On Tuesday, May 9, 2017 Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services launches the Immigrant Insights Scholars (IIS) initiative. The launch will be hosted at the Centre for Social Innovation Annex (720 Bathurst St.), from 5:00 – 7:00pm.

IIS is a unique career bridging initiative focused on unemployed and underemployed internationally educated researchers (epidemiologists, statisticians, qualitative researchers, evaluation experts, etc). The initiative is being implemented in collaboration with several academic and research institutes as well as government and community agency partners. As part of the IIS initiative, we will be offering a number of paid and mentored fellowship opportunities every year, hosting an Immigrant Researchers Support Network to facilitate peer support and professional networking opportunities among internationally educated researchers, and delivering a series of career bridging workshops designed specifically for internationally educated researchers. We will also be engaging in demand-side strategies that involve working closely with research/academic institutes and other potential employers to create opportunities for stable career bridging pathways for internationally educated researchers. The initiative is supported by an Advisory Council with representatives from community organizations, government, and academic research institutions.

“Every year, hundreds of internationally educated researchers/analysts settle in Canada. Sadly, many of them remain unemployed or underemployed, or are forced to shift occupations and take up manual labor, odd jobs,” explains Yogendra Shakya, Senior Research Scientist at Access Alliance. “The IIS initiative is informed by evidence that shows that mentored opportunities, bridging programs, professional networking platforms, and demand-side strategies that directly engage employers are the most effective solutions for overcoming labor market barriers facing immigrants.”

“Access Alliance played a key role in working with Ryerson University to initiate the successful bridging program for internationally educated social workers,” says Axelle Janczur, the Executive Director of Access Alliance. “We are building on that success to launch the IIS initiative to provide career bridging opportunities and supports to internationally educated researchers so they can gain stable employment and make meaningful contributions to Canadian research/evidence.”





Momtaz Begum:

Momtaz received a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Melbourne, Australia. She is studying Workplace Wellness and Health Promotion at Centennial College and has worked at research organizations in Australia, Bangladesh and Canada. As an IIS fellow, her focus is on Work and Health.

Anteneh Gedamu:

Anteneh received a Master's degree in Development Evaluation and Management from the University of Antwerp, Belgium and a Master's degree in Sociology from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. He has worked with Social Planning Toronto and his IIS fellowship is focused on Health Equity.

Parisa Dastoori MD:

Parisa is a medical doctor, with a specialty in Community Medicine and a background in research on public health systems, and she has worked as a provincial medical officer for more than 12 years in Iran. As an IIS fellow, her work is focused on Refugee Maternal Health.

About Access Alliance:

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services has been promoting health, wellbeing and improved access to services for immigrants and refugees in Toronto for the past 25 years. A range of programs, services, advocacy and partnerships address medical, social, economic, environmental, settlement and integration issues for newcomers of all ages at all stages of their life. Find out more at: www.accessalliance.ca.

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