

19th Annual

**IEP**<sup>TM</sup>



[www.iep.ca](http://www.iep.ca)

**CONFERENCE**

A UNIQUE FORUM FOR  
Internationally Educated Professionals

IEP **CONFERENCE**  
**2025**  
**REPORT**

Presented by:



WORKING TOGETHER FOR PROGRESS



# Lead Canada's Economic Transformation

**TRUE  
NORTH  
STRONG** 

PROGRESS CAREER PLANNING INSTITUTE



WORKING TOGETHER FOR PROGRESS

Presents

THE  
**IEP CONFERENCE**  
REPORT

IEP Conference Report

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## PREAMBLE

This report features key information, highlights, and feedback shared by various speakers, industry leaders, exhibitors and attendees who participated in the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) Conference held October 30, 2025, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

## ABOUT THE IEP CONFERENCE AND PCPI

The IEP Conference is Canada's longest-running forum dedicated to assisting newcomer professionals turn their potential and work experience into career success. Since its inception in 2003, the IEP Conference produced by Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI) has assisted thousands of talented newcomers representing expertise in Engineering, Healthcare, Accounting and Financial Services, Sales, Marketing and Communications, and Digital and Information Technology. More recently, the conference has attracted delegates with skilled-trades experience, representing labour market opportunities in infrastructure development and manufacturing. Delegates participate in this day-long event of free programming that blends hands-on job search skills practice with knowledge acquisition, networking, and connection with potential employers, sector-specific panels, and regulatory/accreditation bodies. Coupled with varied employment resources provided by marketplace exhibitors, this event offers professional development experiences that simulate those in an authentic Canadian workplace.

Beyond connecting talent to opportunity, PCPI designs and implements innovative settlement, career development and youth skills programming, builds strong cross-sector partnerships, convenes industry leaders, and champions inclusive workforce practices that benefit individuals, employers, and the broader community. The IEP Conference exemplifies this work by providing a dynamic platform where internationally educated professionals, employers, sector representatives, and community stakeholders come together to exchange knowledge, expand networks, and explore pathways to meaningful employment.

As in previous years, the success of the IEP Conference was made possible through various contributors ranging from financial investment sponsorships to in-kind partnerships. PCPI gratefully acknowledges the long-standing support from CPA Ontario and the City of Toronto both of whom have demonstrated sustained commitment of the conference vision, with the City serving at the planning table since inception. In 2025, OMNI Television re-joined the conference as a valued media partner providing promotional support and serving as Emcee at the opening plenary. Additional promotion of the conference was supported by Canadian Immigrant, also a long-time supporter. Together with academic institutions, community partners and dedicated volunteers, the conference once again offered delegates an engaging and impactful informative day geared to meaningful career advancement.



In a traditional Indigenous welcome ceremony, members of the Nipissing First Nation, Steve Teekens (L) drums and sings while his daughter Wiingushk performs a fancy shawl dance.



OMNI TV journalist and news reporter, Grace Lin welcomes the delegates as conference emcee.

## WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The 19th annual IEP Conference began with a traditional Indigenous welcome ceremony featuring drumming, singing, and fancy shawl dancing performed by Steve Teekens and his daughter Wiingushk, both of Nipissing First Nation. In her opening remarks, PCPI's President and CEO Silma Roddau noted that music and dance "unite us all and connect us in spirit, regardless of our origin." She encouraged delegates to apply their inherent bravery and resiliency throughout the day's events in building skills, opening doors, and developing relationships – all vital in career development. Roddau also thanked the conference sponsors, including the PCPI Board of Directors, and introduced the emcee, journalist and news reporter Grace Lin from OMNI TV.

In sharing the conference theme – ***Lead Canada's Knowledge Transformation*** – Lin reminded attendees of the vital role they play in this country's economic future. "Your talent and expertise are helping drive innovation and growth in every sector", she noted, while also recommending IEPs stay on top of latest trends overall to seize opportunities as they arise. Particularly in the five sector-specific breakouts, she advised everyone to ask questions, build connections, and network to prepare themselves to participate in Canada's transformation.

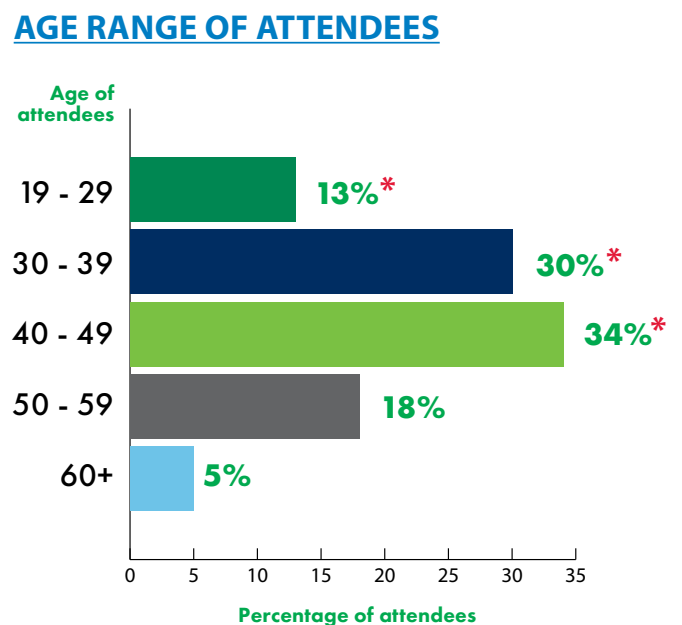
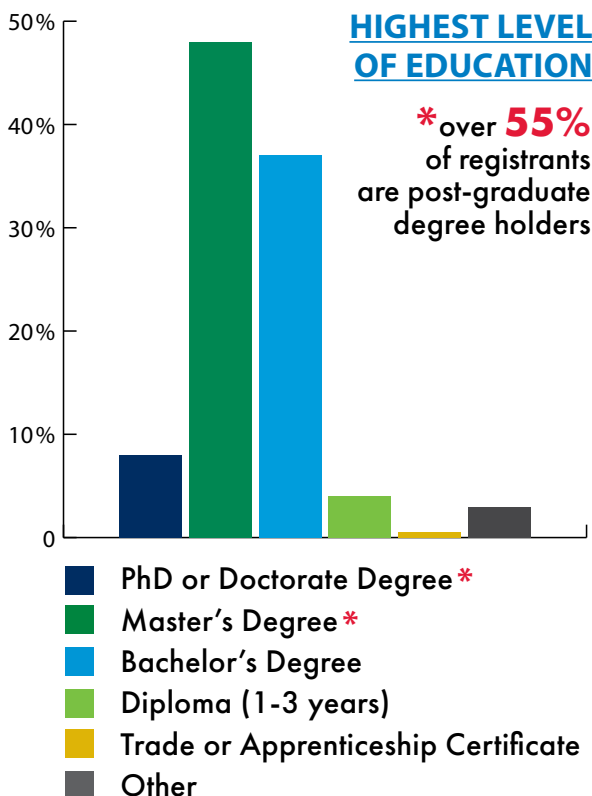


Silma Roddau,  
President and CEO, PCPI

## DELEGATE PROFILE

From the 656 individuals who pre-registered online for the conference, the following demographic information is noteworthy:

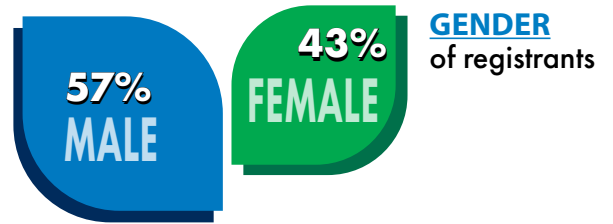
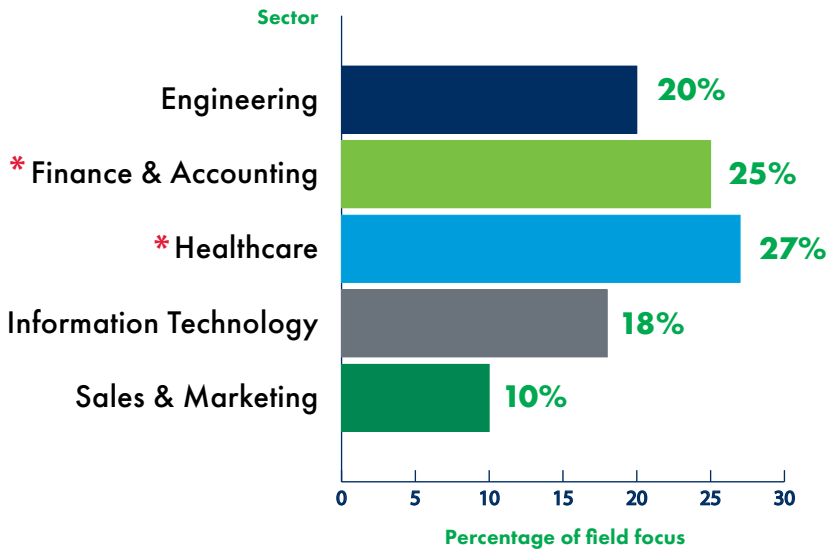
- South Asian participants were predominant
- There was an observable increase in delegate representation from African countries
- Top 10 nations of origin were (in descending order): India; Pakistan; Ethiopia; Nigeria; Bangladesh; Philippines; Ukraine; Sri Lanka; Colombia; and Sudan
- Gender representation indicated 57% male attendees, and 43% female
- 43% of registrants were aged 19 - 39; and 34% from 40 - 49 years old
- 26% identified as over the age of 50; and of those older attendees, more than half were 60 years of age or older
- 36% of registrants identified their status as permanent residents, 30% on work permits, 26% held Canadian citizenship, and 8% were refugees
- Over 55% of the delegates indicated they possessed a master's or higher degree
- 27% of registrants selected the Healthcare and Related Professions sector hub, narrowly eclipsing Finance and Accounting (23%), and Engineering (20%)
- Digital Technology attracted almost twice the attendance of the Sales & Marketing hub (10%)
- 62% or 408 of pre-registrants attended in person; 38% were unable to join on the day
- 9.4% identified Canada as their 'home' country
- More IEPs attending from outside the Greater Toronto Area (nearly 10%)



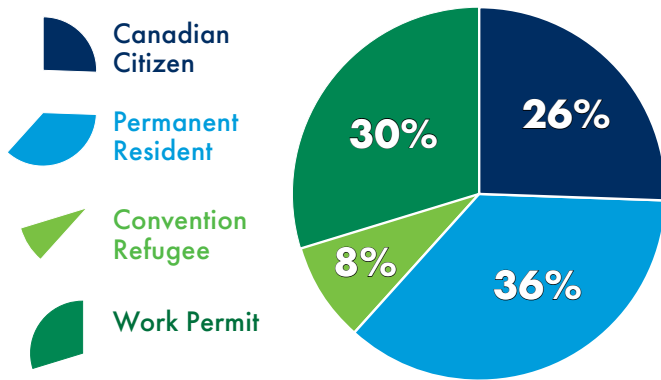
**\* 77%**  
of registrants are at a prime hiring age

## SECTOR FOCUS

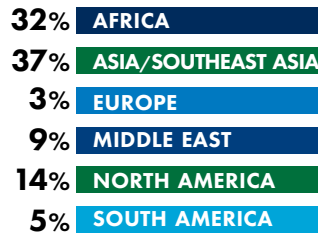
\* **52%** of registrants focused on Finance or Healthcare fields



## DELEGATE STATUS IN CANADA



## REGIONS OF ORIGIN



## ATTENDEE RESOURCE FOR CONFERENCE



## STATS TO NOTE

over **55%** of registrants are PhD, Doctorate or Master's Degree holders; another **36%** hold a Bachelor's Degree or Diploma

by age, **64%** of registrants already have real world work experience while **13%** of registrants are within prime training age

## OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**RAHUL SETHI,**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, RESEARCH, INSIGHTS & STRATEGY CULTURAL INTEL  
ETHNICITY MATTERS



Rahul Sethi, Managing Director, Research, Insights & Strategy Cultural Intel of Ethnicity Matters (a multicultural marketing agency) delivered an information-packed presentation emphasizing how immigrants through their consumer purchasing power as well as growth-oriented focus, are not only transforming themselves but the face of Canada as well.

Particularly in the workplace, newcomers are contributing diversity of thinking and perspectives, contributing to a tidal shift in processes and decision-making already impacted by AI. As immigration continues to supplement Canada's low birthrate, newcomers and multicultural communities will be driving the development of new products and services matching their preferences.

According to the OECD data, immigration is the primary driver of growth, and for Canada this means workforce renewal, innovation and economic competitiveness. In 2023 alone, 6.5M people migrated across 38 OECD countries - a profound demographic shift including cultural identities here in this country.

Sethi recollected his own newcomer journey, arriving in 1989 as a six-year-old child of immigrant parents with \$50 in their pocket, and sleeping on a clothes pile (as a mattress) because they couldn't afford a bed. He attributed his success to his parents eventually starting a business and educating him and his brother - a story repeated by countless immigrants. Empathizing with the delegates' employment challenges, Sethi advised not "getting caught up in your struggles" as millions of others do: "There's hope at the end, even though you might not feel that way now".

### **Below is Sethi's illustration of the typical immigrant pathway:**

#### **Key challenges**

- Recognition of foreign credentials → Enter labour market (often under-employed initially)
- Language /business-culture adaptation → Begin matching skills to host country's economy
- Building local networks and job-search pathways → Access to integration services

#### **Key Transitions/Outcomes**

#### **After three years in host country:**

- Transition from survival jobs to career roles/entrepreneurship → Immigrant employment and self-employment reach higher levels
- Achievement of better job-skill match → Stronger economic contribution, higher labour-market participation
- Higher business creation → Job creation and philanthropic contribution

Statistics show that once past the struggles (typically the first three years), immigrants achieve greater outcomes: they start companies, create jobs, and eventually give back to society through donations and volunteerism, often more than the average Canadian-born citizen.

Sethi further emphasized how migration fills the gap as population growth declines (low birth rate), and people age (25% of our population is retiring and exiting the workforce). By 2041, 52% of us will be immigrants and their Canadian-born children.

### **Immigrants are not just contributing to Canada's growth; they are driving it:**

- 1 in 4 people in Canada today were born abroad – the highest in over 150 years
- Immigrant labour participation has surpassed that of Canadian born workers
- Immigrant-founded businesses employ more than 1.2 M Canadians, and newcomers are more likely to start a company than the Canadian-born population
- Immigrant entrepreneurship drives job creation and economic renewal across advanced economies, and Canada is one of the leaders

***“Canada’s success story isn’t written by policymakers,  
it’s written by you”***



## **How AI is Reshaping Work**

Although 27% of jobs across OECD countries are at high risk of automation in the next decade, these positions are more likely to evolve than disappear. AI will transform how we work, particularly when it comes to:

### **TASKS :**

Automation of workflows (e.g., customer, supply chain, operations) freeing talent for higher-value work – making task completion more efficient rather than replacing humans

### **TEAMS :**

Cross-functional, culturally diverse teams are driving AI projects from data design through deployment, to minimize bias and maximize global relevance; how teams collaborate cross-functionally and cross-culturally

### **TRUST :**

With AI decisions increasingly touching human lives (credit, health, hiring), transparency and diverse perspectives are critical to building trustworthy systems

***In short, AI needs diversity of thought and experience - essentially what immigrants contribute.***

Without cultural and cognitive diversity, we risk building AI solutions that see the world through a narrow lens. In fact, immigrants are leading the AI race, as indicated by 60% of America's top companies being founded by immigrant entrepreneurs.

## **Sethi concluded his remarks with these key takeaways**

### ***You are the Future of Canada's Economy***

- Immigration is not just growth, it's the foundation of Canada's demographic and economic future
- Your global perspective is a competitive advantage that fuels innovation, entrepreneurship and innovation
- In the age of AI, human and cultural intelligence will be the differentiator that defines leadership and trust
- Canada's success story isn't written by policymakers, it's written by you



## IEP LEADERS PANEL

Following a brief audience networking exercise, emcee Grace Lin facilitated the IEP Leaders Panel, comprised of three individuals who successfully navigated their career journeys in Canada.

**Pragya Porwal**, Senior Financial Analyst, *Revlon*

**Wondwossen Fekyibelu**, Quality Lead  
Ontario Line Subway, *Accenture Infrastructure and Capital*

**Vinil Jayaseelan**, CCRPS, Patient Safety Specialist II,  
*Fortrea: Global CRO Advancing Clinical Trials & Drug*



IEP Leaders Panel Moderator, Grace Lin with panellists Wondwossen Fekyibelu, Vinil Jayaseelan and Pragya Porwal.

Individually, they shared how they overcame job acquisition challenges by applying persistence and a methodical approach, often with a support team. A summary of their experiences and advice to delegates is provided below:



**Pragya Porwal** struggled initially after arriving in 2023, but through upgrading her credentials and demonstrating cross functional team collaboration skills, she achieved interviews for financial positions matching her experience and career objectives. She urged delegates to align their skills specifically with job descriptions, keep their *LinkedIn* profiles updated, and to remain positive in their outlook.



**Wondwossen Fekyibelu's** arrival pre-pandemic in 2019 was characterized by difficulty navigating the Canadian construction industry, as well as his absence of local work experience and recognition of his degree. Through networking and the advice of a mentor, he built a support system to effectively guide his job search. He encouraged IEPs to remain competitive by acquiring academic equivalencies, joining groups with similar cultures and professional backgrounds, and taking courses to upskill and widen their knowledge base.



**Vinil Jayaseelan** immigrated in 2022 with his family, applying for 272 jobs with no response. By adjusting his mindset - and learning how to sell himself and his transferrable skills – he realized success with his 301st job offer. He reminded delegates to apply the same effort to their career objectives as they showed in qualifying to immigrate to Canada (“The only person holding you back is you!”)

## **SKILL BUILDING SESSIONS**

Two complementary skill building workshops were offered to enhance and deepen the professional sector hub discussions, ensuring delegates left not only informed but equipped with practical tools for action.

### **Sana Javed**

Career Strategist and Founder, *Succegist Coaching*

**Presentation: *Map Your Canadian Career: Align your Credentials to Opportunities***



“Map Your Canadian Career: Align Your Credentials to Opportunities” focused on tools and insights needed to successfully navigate the Canadian job market. The participants were provided practical guidance on credential recognition, labour market alignment, and career mapping strategies. They were shown how to effectively leverage their global experience and expertise to unlock new career opportunities towards their professional goals.

### **Maham Khalid**

Director Training and Employment, YWCA Hamilton / *Founder Revohub (Clean tech training platform)*

**Presentation: *“The Brand Called YOU”***

The second workshop “The Brand Called YOU” focused on personal branding and strategic self-presentation. Participants gained skills in expressing their distinctive value by presenting their education, professional achievements, and transferable abilities in a compelling way. The session also emphasized persuasive résumé development, interview positioning, and intentional job search strategies that reflect both confidence and authenticity.



Both the professional hubs and skill building sessions offered delegates opportunity to interact with the presenters during the Question & Answer segments, as well as chat informally one on one, afterwards.

In keeping with the Conference’s tradition of showcasing global talent, over 90% of the speakers featured IEPs themselves (including some as former conference attendees). The generous sharing of their own career journeys enriched the interaction with delegates and proved additionally motivating and inspirational.

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS – PROFESSIONAL SECTOR HUBS

For the balance of the morning and early afternoon, delegates accessed profession-specific employment information and labour market trends from thought leaders, employers and regulatory experts contributing to panel discussions in  
**Engineering; Finance and Accounting; Healthcare and Related Professions;  
Sales, Marketing and Communications and Digital Technology**

### MODERATOR

**Hameed Shaheer, MSc., IMG**  
**Community Health Manager, Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre**



## HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

### KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Driving forces of Canada's transformation are its aging population and inherent medical requirements (managing chronic diseases, healthcare delivery)
- Technology (like virtual reality) and new treatment breakthroughs (drugs, personalized medicine) will revolutionize care and the careers of providers
- Top healthcare jobs requiring skilled workers will be nurses, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, physio and occupational therapists
- Transition pathway to labour market for IMGs and IEPs facilitated through college/university bridging stream programs, often with government funding support (e.g., naturopathic college)
- Tailor your relevant skills and competencies (including micro-credentials, multiple languages) to specific healthcare career paths (academia, research, administration) within the medical landscape

### PANEL MEMBERS

**Dr. Rahim Karim, BSc, DC, MBA, CHE, ICD.D –  
President & CEO, Canadian College of  
Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM)**

**Dr. Mohammed Hasson-Ali –  
Consultant Pediatrician at Halton Healthcare**

**Dwight Baker –  
Mentorship Coordinator, Pegasus**

**Dr. Sivakumar Gulasingam –  
Medical Director and Physiatrist at  
William Osler Health System**

**Luciana Lima Dias Da Cruz –  
Case Management Nurse at CARE,  
Center for Internationally Educated Nurses**

- Understand the hiring ecosystem and pay attention to soft skills (e.g., communication etiquette) to complement your technical expertise
- Stay positive and flexible: trying new roles may lead to 'getting your foot in the door' and eventually unanticipated career opportunities



- Investigate volunteer positions to gain local job knowledge, prior to achieving licensure: join a research team as an associate assisting a physician (data collection); or work as a long-term care PSW
- Network with focus and intention to uncover hidden opportunities (attend university public events to talk with people in the field, become familiar with the Canadian context of medical practice)
- When considering moving within Canada to pursue healthcare opportunities (e.g., to border or smaller communities where medical vacancies are typically acute), appreciate that eligibility requirements might not transfer from province to province (do your homework before making decisions)
- Maintain realistic expectations: if you don't get employment immediately or have language barriers, invest in learning those soft skills (this will distinguish you from others with similar technical skills)
- Join a professional association (like *IEN*, *RNAO*) to network, gain Canadian experience familiarity, and professional development/career assistance
- If not pursuing licensure, consider roles in the pharmaceutical industry: medical liaison, research, regulatory, public health (institutions like *La Roche Posay* and *Dexcom*)
- Utilize employment support programs to assist you with pursuing alternative career paths (e.g., transitioning to project management positions)
- Improve your job-finding odds by consulting with internal contact where you are applying, or someone who can refer you to individuals making the hiring decisions

## MODERATOR

**Carmen Jacques, CPA, CGA, B.Com**  
Student Recruitment Manager, CPA Ontario



# FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

## KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Connect with CPA Ontario, the professional body which regulates accounting practitioners and firms, grants licenses and designations, and provides professional and educational guidance and career development for its members
- Newcomers can have their credentials assessed for advanced standing due to reciprocity agreements/MPOI s with countries across the globe
- Stay abreast of standards like IAS vs IFRS to maintain currency in the industry
- Believe in yourself as you “find your voice”: develop and leverage a strong support system, especially during the early days of your career in Canada
- Explore opportunities in the insurance industry as it requires workers with a variety of skill sets affording for ‘crossover’ scenarios
- Major trends impacting this sector are innovation, sustainability and global competitiveness - they will all drive transformation
- Hybrid work models, industry shifts, as well as automation/AI advancements will continue redefining the workplace
- Leadership, adaptability, and digital fluency skills will factor significantly in hiring preferences

## PANEL MEMBERS

**Shraddha Bhagwat —**  
Director of Finance, *Quickbite Collective Inc.*

**Bernice Francis —**  
Director of Finance, *Rogers Bank*

**Beverly Lewis-Hunte —**  
Senior Career Connection Program Officer,  
*Insurance Institute of Canada*

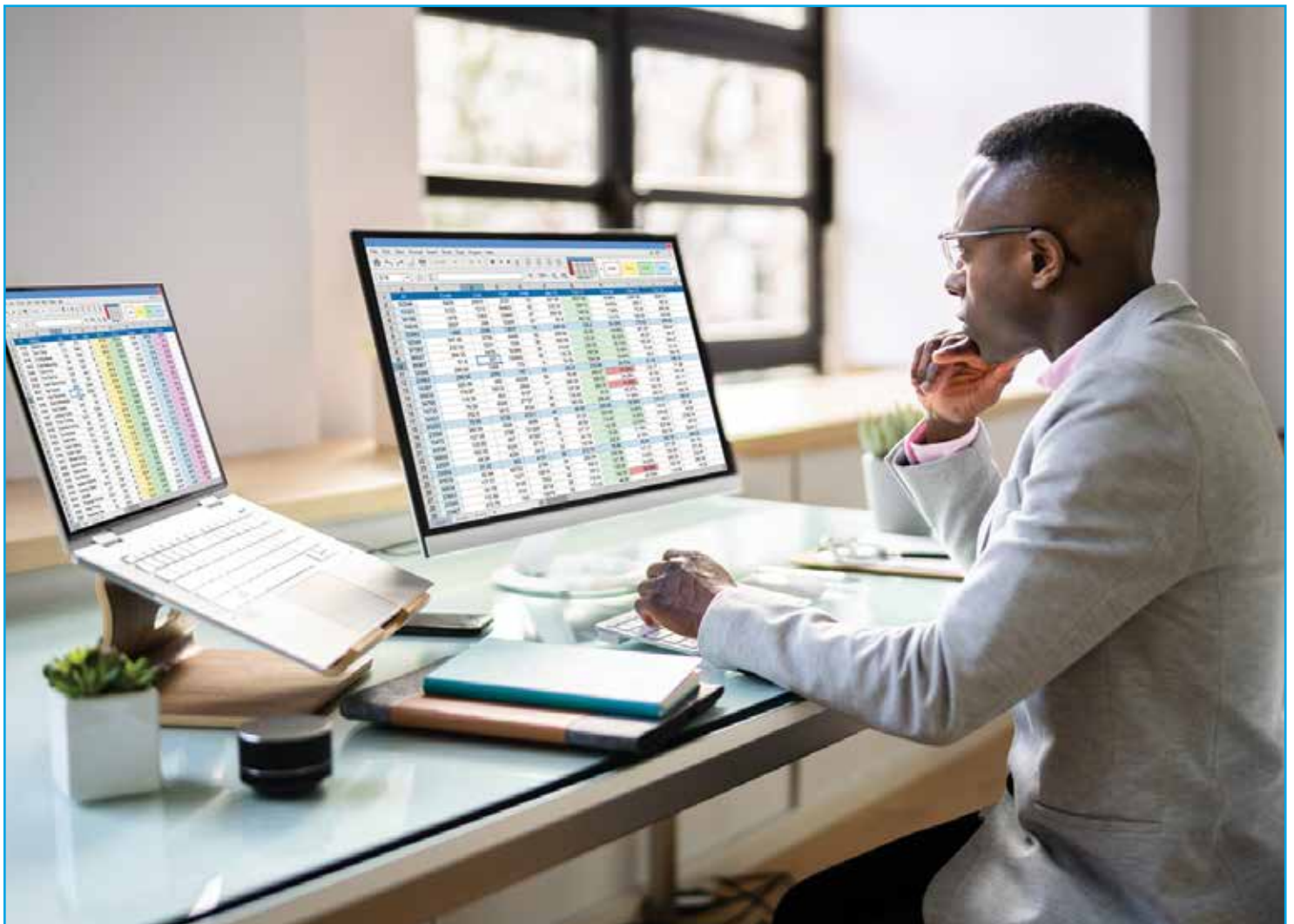
**Omar Salas —**  
Audit Partner, *Ernst and Young LLP*

**Guneet Kaur —**  
Manager, Financial Reporting, *Flexiti*

**Ravneet Sachdeva —**  
Founder & Director, *RavGun CPA Academy*

- Design your résumé to ‘speak’ to the reader by aligning your skill sets with the job description, using updated name conventions and local industry knowledge
- Network wherever possible, including reaching out to hiring managers to introduce yourself and make a valuable contact
- Balance your job search by taking a strategic approach, while also investing in advanced tools like Premium LinkedIn
- Emphasize soft (communication, flexibility, teamwork) and hard (technical, professional, AI) skills, as they transfer across industries and support your competitive advantage in the job market

- Be disciplined, persistent, strategic and objective-oriented when upgrading your credentials
- Stay aware of efficiency/automation technology advancements beyond ChatGBT and Gemini
- AI may replace some entry-level roles in this sector, but most accounting positions are unlikely to be replaced soon due to their complexity.
- Realize that although you do not have explicit Canadian experience on your arrival, you nevertheless have valuable skills/experience that can be utilized in a particular industry (or crossover into another)
- Keep enhancing skill sets/ acquiring knowledge regularly through professional development be determined to earn the Canadian CPA designation
- Demonstrate good networking etiquette by keeping in touch monthly versus daily/weekly; maintain connection via LinkedIn if not able to speak in person
- Appreciate you are not alone in this process: don't hesitate to reach out for help
- Be patient with yourself as you learn to understand the market, and your place in it: if necessary, take a step back to move forward Stay abreast of standards like IAS vs IFRS to maintain currency in the industry

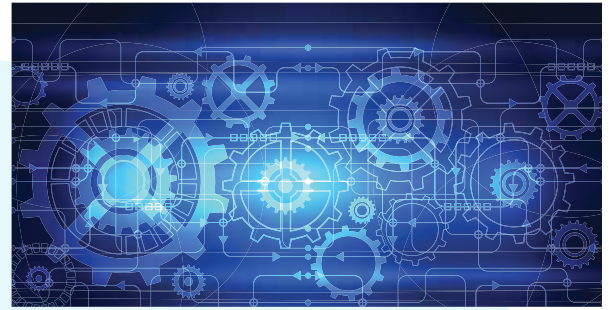


## MODERATOR

**Jagdish Yadav**

**Education Sector Advisor,**

**Economic Development & Culture Division, City of Toronto**



# ENGINEERING

## KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Job landscape characterized by change, engineering layoffs reflected by positions out of synch with labour market demands
- Engineering employers tend to hire mainly IEPs (70%), new grads (30%)
- New opportunities in skilled trades (construction); infrastructure projects in public sector, civil engineering, project management, renewable energy, change management, and advanced manufacturing; software technology in AI-Machine learning, cybersecurity, and cloud engineering
- No straight path for most new IEPs seeking work: be prepared to learn tips and strategies from successful, experienced IEPs
- Pick one industry to focus your career: demonstrate what you can do for organizations to add value
- Seek other perspectives to encourage you to stay positive, focused, and persevere toward your career goal: maintain your integrity and values as you overcome obstacles
- Pursue the PEng license if appropriate, as it provides credibility and professionalism (licensing requires 48 months and does not have to be in Canada)
- Use resources from OSPE, Employment Ontario organizations, and LinkedIn Learning site (to build soft skills); consider volunteering to obtain relevant experience

## PANEL MEMBERS

**Karen Chan** —  
**Founder, Altaris Advisory Inc.**

**Rafael Lepra** —  
**Senior Corporate Process Engineer, IKO Industries Ltd.**

**Mehemed Delibasic** —  
**Vice President, Transportation and Safety, 30, Forensic Engineering**

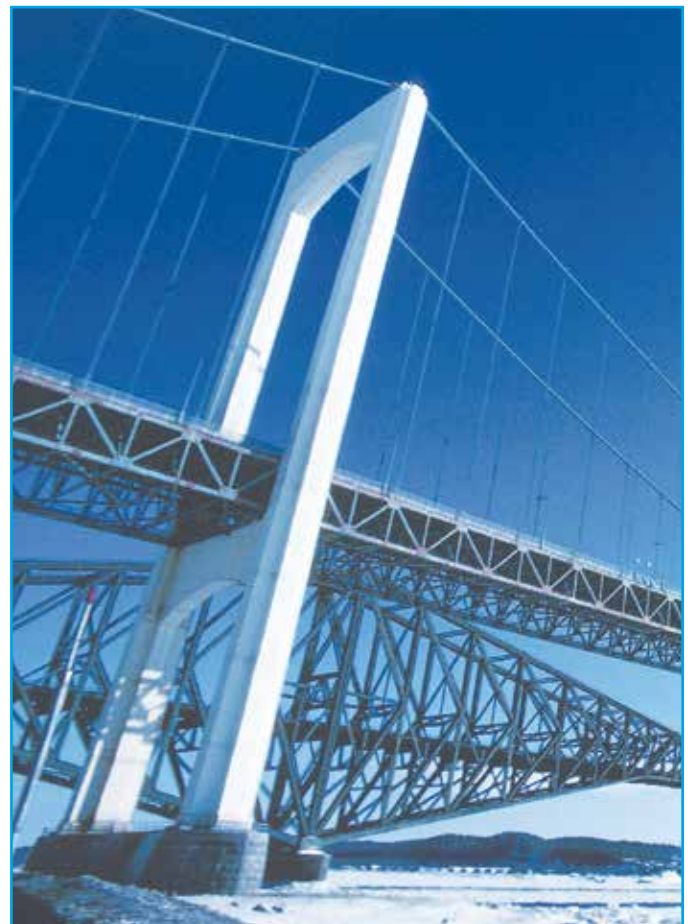
**Hazem Yahia** —  
**Founder, Master VDC**

**Vince Travaglini** —  
**Former President and CEO, StackTeck Systems Ltd.**

**Rakesh Shreewastav** —  
**Board Director, Value Analysis Canada**

- Undergo an academic assessment where your credentials and transcripts are reviewed to prove you meet Canadian engineering academic standards
- Demonstrate at least four years of acceptable engineering work experience (12 months minimum must be in a Canadian environment, under a licensed PEng); access OSPE and PEO resources for assistance (e.g., mentoring from chapters)
- Start process before landing in Canada by taking technical exams; when applicants have met all requirements (academic, experience, PPE, references) and documentation is complete, the final approval could come within 90 days (the fastest possible timeline)

- Obtain a good reference, and get involved with a TRIEC mentoring program; Update your LinkedIn profile to connect with people who are specialized with common professional interests, and include a professional photo)
- Some jobs do not need Canadian work experience (i.e. AutoCAD Technician or Scheduler), but Estimators must have knowledge of process and rates, and this requires Canadian work experience
- Be involved in PEO chapters and attend events to meet IEP colleagues who share struggles as well as effective strategies
- Technical skills like problem solving and critical thinking skills are most needed (root cause analysis, structured problem solving, not just relying on AI)
- Put yourself out there and network: coffee meetings, MS Teams meetings are better than phone or email appointments as they can demonstrate your relationship building and soft skills
- Challenge your brain to learn new things, be a continuous learner especially regarding emerging fields (i.e., sustainability); explore supplemental designations like Project Management (PMP)
- Manage the 'you're overqualified' objection by framing your resumé and experience to relate to employer's needs; highlight outcomes, wins, and accomplishments, and be specific with numbers for credibility
- Know your value and demonstrate with enthusiasm (use CoPilot and ChatGPT)
- If master's degree does not include co-op option, it is better to enroll in an engineering bridging program at Humber or George Brown College since there is a higher percentage of graduates who find relevant engineering experience in the short term
- Limit job applications to organizations where you have strong networking connections, a desire to do the job, and potentially match employer requirements
- Address the 'what's my weakness' interview question by being honest, and showing commitment to narrowing a skills gap or continuous improvement (taking courses, working with a mentor, etc.)
- Demonstrate your soft skills by preparing for each interview as behavioural: structure your responses conversationally, and avoid strictly "yes or no" answers
- Curate your networking contacts not just to be self-serving: seek a win-win deal



## MODERATOR

**Bobby Sahni, MBA**  
Partner & Co-Founder,  
Ethnicity Matters, Multicultural Marketing & Advertising



# SALES, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

## KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sales and marketing are converging into one role, with AI taking on more significance (automation, consolidation)
- Canada de-coupling from the US has opened new markets, and your global skills can be applied
- Remember to 'pay it forward' once you've realized your dream: it will keep you humble and appreciative
- Bring your 'home' career story to life and make it relevant in your applications, especially in applying for your first Canadian position: frame your gaps as strengths
- Canada appreciates diversity, especially in perspectives and marketing to diverse audiences: out of box, innovative thinking is valued, as is collaboration across functions
- Job seekers who combine technical skills with trend recognition can transform insights into performance results for employers
- Establish a long-term strategy with your career, maintaining connections with networking contacts even after you have secured a job
- Proactively pursue hidden opportunities, e.g., approach companies with whom you want to work, but which don't have published job postings
- While performing 'survival jobs' can be frustrating, use them as motivation to maintain clarity and momentum in achieving your long-term career objective

## PANEL MEMBERS

**Gerard Keledjian, Founder —**  
*New Horizons Media founder*

**Megan Adair Titcomb, Principal Consultant —**  
*Stella Polaris Canada*

**Sarita Parchani —**  
*Segments Growth TD Bank*

- Visualize interviewing your future self, asking: "What have I done or need to do to bridge the gap of where I want to be?"
- Use AI cautiously when developing your brand; be authentic showcasing your unique skills and experiences
- Become familiar with the local language of your industry: jargon and terms can differ, so keep current when using them in interviews and in your resumé
- Attend conferences and expo events to help understand the market
- Consider short-term contracts or freelance opportunities to build your reputation with a company, and to establish your Canadian track record
- Check out specific resources like CMA (Newcomer Mentorship Program), AMA (Toronto Chapter), TRIEC, and e-books such as "Job Search for Introverted Newcomers", and "Professional Networking"

**MODERATOR****Donna Paty (Moderator)**

Human Skills Facilitator and Coach, INLAP Program Instructor

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY****KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Key statistics from the *World Economic Forum* indicate that AI and Automation will create around 170 million jobs globally in the next decade
- Prepare to upskill yourself for job opportunities in AI, robotics, automation and sustainability
- Canada established the *Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation* in May 2025, so it's a federal priority
- Ontario may lose around 20,000 employees through retirement, and more than 50% of employers are looking to hire skilled workers within 6-7 months, according to reports by *Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME)* and *Manufacturing Excellence Forum (EMC) Canada*
- This sector has immense scope – only 3% of organizations are using AI, 2% of Canadian businesses are using robots, and 32% of businesses are using automation
- Requisite skills for securing jobs in this sector include imaginative and agile mindset, self-directed learning capability, communication and interpersonal skills, process comprehension, problem-solving, critical thinking, and initiative-taking
- Network to build meaningful connections, not just social media contacts
- Join professional associations like *Canada's Association of IT Professionals (CIPS)*, and widen your reach by including user groups in your sector; build a legitimate online brand/presence

**PANEL MEMBERS****Ian Langdon —**Founder and Managing Director,  
*Agile Computer***Florent Lefevre-Schlick —**Manager of Industrial Training,  
*McMaster University***Zahid Junejo —**Employment Services and  
Placement Specialist, *The Career Foundation*

- Investigate “*Second City*” in Toronto to improve your communication and public speaking skills
- Entrepreneurs looking to hire talent can access PCPI and The Career Foundation for IEP candidates
- Consider obtaining AI certification with Google, or pursue short-term courses with educational institutions; and for non-certified study, check out *YouTube* videos as well as *Tech News* podcasts
- Discover IT professional or technical job opportunities at small and medium sized companies by referring to provincial Chambers of Commerce and also Trade Association listings (visit local offices in person, if possible)
- Supplement online applications with workplace visits and informational interviews

## CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**SABIR SAMI,**  
GLOBAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (RET.), KFC DIVISION



The Conference concluded with an inspiring presentation emphasizing how demonstrating flexibility, interpersonal skills, and a willingness to learn - even if it means accepting lateral positions - can ultimately lead to a fulfilling career.

Sabir Sami shared multiple examples of 'being in the right place at the right time' when it came to advancing his career in marketing, primarily working with multi-national companies and brand name products. His journey began in Pakistan, where he created his own opportunity with *The Coca-Cola Company* by writing to the CEO - not for a job, but to correct him on information in a magazine article. Through risk-taking and sacrifices, he eventually parlayed that first role into progressively senior positions, including running marketing divisions in 14 countries. Sami's ambition as a learner also took him to the bottling/distribution side of the beverage business, where he added retail merchandising, plant management operations, union negotiation, production and quality control to his resumé.

Having achieved CEO of a Pakistani consumer goods company at age 32, Sami immigrated to Canada in 2003 to seek a better life for his family. The Canadian values of "taking care of each other" and giving back to society were compelling motivators in his decision to move. Over time in his new country, he was recruited to *Yum Brands* (parent company of *KFC*, *Pizza Hut* and *Taco Bell*) to be Canadian President for 4 years.

This initiated a series of progressively more senior roles across Asia and the Middle East, culminating in his appointment as Global CEO, responsible for 1.5 M employees and \$32B in business. Without the benefit of an Ivy League education, he still rose to become the first Pakistani CEO and first Muslim CEO of an American company.

In considering what he wanted as a legacy achievement in this ultimate position, Sami chose to address gender inequities in his global direct reports team (comprised mostly of men). He recognized that without diversity of perspectives represented by local talent running the business, the company couldn't optimize growth and revenue opportunities in a highly competitive industry.

### SAMI CONCLUDED WITH THIS ADVICE FOR IEPs:

- **Respect yourself:** speak to what you bring to Canada as that experience is not irrelevant
- **Be resilient, creative, persistent:** appreciate we've all had to fight and struggle as immigrants
- **Overcome self-doubt and imposter syndrome:** "Know that you are enough" regardless of your accent, skin colour, or other biases encountered
- Canada is at a critical stage, building trade agreements beyond the US (with Europe, Asia); our skills are even more relevant because we understand these cultures and history, and have valuable networks. Add value by overcoming inherent Canadian risk-aversion and inward-looking business culture. IEPs see the global marketplace for opportunities, e.g., Africa by 2050 will have the three largest cities in the world - Nairobi, Dar Esalam, and Lagos each will have populations of about 75M
- **"Don't think about fitting in:** Canada needs to fit into us!" Be proud of your experience and its potential to add value in the marketplace
- **Adapt, learn, and grow.** Maintain your essence while building the 'new you' through the advice of a teacher/mentor, or by taking courses (maintain an attitude of "I can learn it.")
- **Be open to taking a job that may be below your experience/skill:** it will open doors and people will notice you (it's not a demotion, but an investment in you)
- **Character, resilience, integrity, humility:** these matter more than degrees and titles
- **Network and give back:** build friends and develop skills through volunteering (sets a good example for your children)



# IEP CONFERENCE

## EXHIBITOR MARKETPLACE AND IEP DIRECTORY



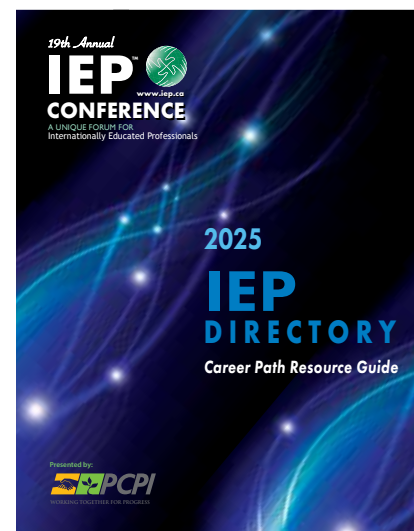
Delegates access valuable resources and insight while attending the Exhibitor Marketplace at the IEP Conference.

### EXHIBITOR MARKETPLACE

A popular feature of the Conference was the assembly of prospective employers as well as professionals in accreditation, education and training, employment counselling, settlement services, municipalities, and financing/micro-lending. In keeping with the conference value of bringing together various stakeholders invested in the success of IEPs, the exhibitor marketplace provided opportunity to access valuable resources and engage in meaningful conversations.

### IEP DIRECTORY: AN EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE GUIDE

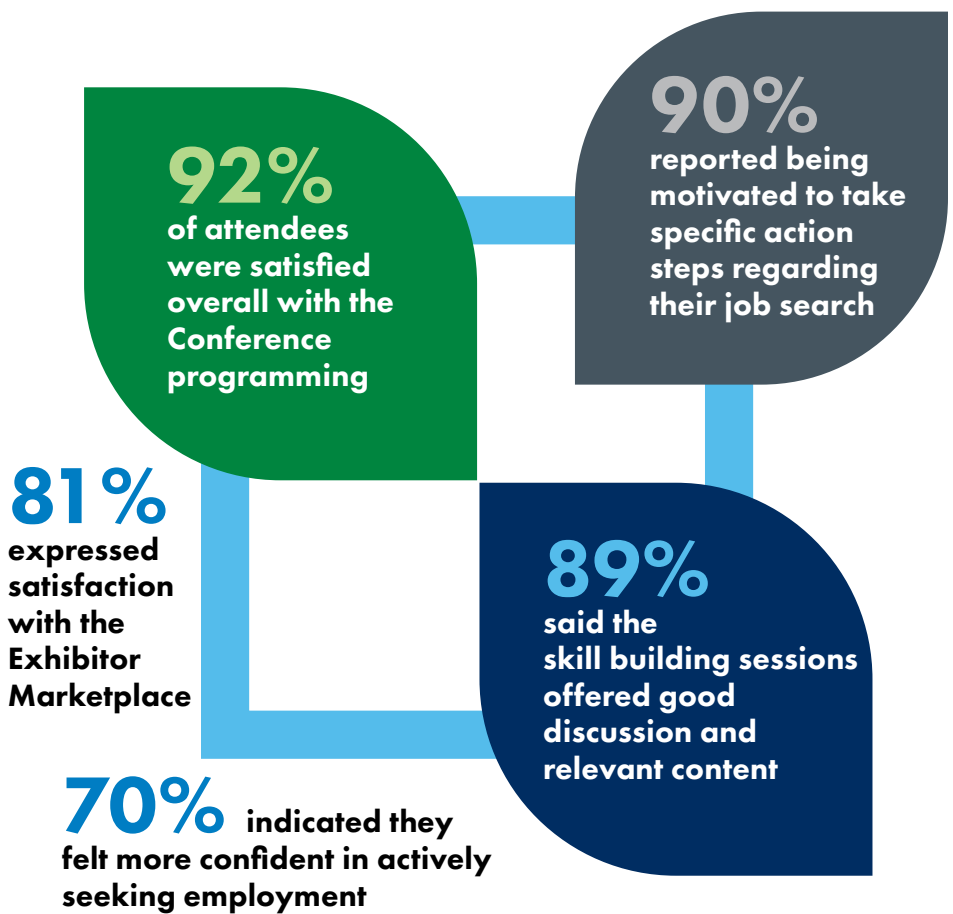
This specialty Resource Guide produced by PCPI and conveniently organized by professional sectors and industries is provided free to delegates. It compiles wide-ranging career and employment resources for IEPs and newcomers. Service providers, organizations and individual job seekers alike value this resource well beyond the conference.





## 2025 IEP Conference Exhibitor Marketplace





## ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

Delegate data captured from written surveys revealed that 92% of attendees were satisfied overall with the Conference programming (keynote presentations and sector panels) while 90% of attendees reported being motivated to take specific action steps regarding their job search (develop a career strategy, do more targeted networking, etc.). Seventy percent (70%) indicated they felt more confident in actively seeking work, 89% said the skill building sessions offered good discussion and relevant content, while 81% expressed satisfaction with the Exhibitor Marketplace.

Most attendees learned about the conference through social media and online sources, with word-of-mouth from friends, family, colleagues, and Employment Ontario providers as the next most common influence.

### Most mentioned attendee takeaways from the Conference were:

1. Networking to build connections and community; and to uncover hidden opportunities (“Dedication and networking are the keys to building your dream”)
2. Customizing your experience and credentials to express value to employers (“I will tailor my job search strategy to leverage the insight gained at the conference for better networking and industry-specific opportunities”)
3. Devising a long-term strategy with practical actions such as finding a mentor, volunteering, and joining professional associations (“I will fine tune my strategy using the learnings, tools, and network I gathered here”)
4. Stretching yourself in new environments to practise language and soft skills (“Don’t be shy to get your hands dirty and get out of your comfort zone.... attitude determines direction”)

## **KEY FEEDBACK, OBSERVATIONS, AND CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Attendance Patterns & Start Time**

It was encouraging to see an increase in registrations compared to last year. As is common with complimentary events, not all online registrants were able to join on the day, and some attendees arrived after the opening sessions. This naturally influences onsite planning and the flow of Marketplace engagement.

#### *Consideration:*

To better support participants' childcare and transportation needs, there may be value in exploring a 9:30–10:00 AM program start.

### **Conference Role Within a Strong Ecosystem**

The newcomer support ecosystem continues to grow, with a wide range of well-established, free resources (e.g., language classes, accreditation, upskilling, bridging, and mentoring). Within this context, there is a timely opportunity to reaffirm and clearly articulate the distinct contribution of the IEP Conference to internationally educated professionals. It is important to remain mindful of current resourcing realities—including volunteer capacity, the absence of public/government funding, and shifts in exhibitor and sponsor contributions—especially amid changes to federal funding for immigrant-serving programs. These factors inform thoughtful planning and pacing for the conference.

### **Data & Insights Opportunity**

Over multiple years, the conference has accumulated a meaningful body of attendee data. Analyzing this information—potentially with a partner—could offer valuable insights into IEP experiences in the Canadian labour market. Such a study could inform stakeholders and extend the conference's impact, whether as part of ongoing programming or as a legacy knowledge resource.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Planning Committee:

Conference Chair - Silma Roddau - PCPI  
Finance - Eileen Nicholson - PCPI  
Website/Registration - Michael Dacuyuy - PCPI  
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Grace Lin, Host - News Anchor, OMNI TV  
Rahul Sethi, Morning Keynote -  
Managing Director, Research, Insights & Strategy Cultural Intel  
(a division of Ethnicity Matters)  
Sabir Sami, Closing Keynote -  
Global Chief Executive Officer(ret.) KFC  
Sana Javed - Career Strategist and Founder, Succgist Coaching  
Maham Khalid - Director Training and Employment,  
YWCA Hamilton / Founder Revohub (Clean tech training platform)

### Special Thanks

To our sector hub moderators and panelists, the Marketplace exhibitors, sector hub scribes and all our volunteers.

# Thank You

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## DELEGATE TAKEAWAYS

*"Networking, mentoring and volunteering are all key to getting integrated into Canada..."*

*"Leverage my network - on & offline..."*

*"Don't be shy - get out of your comfort zone, networking, team development and attitude determines direction..."*

*"Be resilient, persistent, transparent and never give up..."*

*"Build connections and community to uncover hidden opportunities..."*

*"Build a network, join a professional organization, look offline and be selective with your career search..."*

*"AI will transform how we work..."*

*"My journey is just starting and this conference has given me tools, resources and the knowledge that will help me succeed in Canada..."*

*"My job strategy has changed. I'm open to suggestions and different areas where I can excel..."*

*"Customizing my experience and credentials to express value to potential employers..."*

*"I will tailor my job search strategy to leverage the insight I gained at the conference for better networking and industry-specific opportunities..."*

*"Continuously try for better and more by upskilling, being intentional and determined..."*

*"Networking is important; giving is as important as receiving..."*

*"I will look into other opportunities that will enhance my Canadian experience while on bridge training..."*

*"What stood out for me at this conference was the emphasis placed on networking/volunteering in the industry of interest..."*

*"I learned that I need to believe in myself and persevere in order to reach my employment goals..."*

*"The IEP conference was meaningful, educational and informative..."*

*"Network with the right people and don't mind starting low - quit the comfort zone..."*

*"I learned from one of the speakers on the IEP Panel that I need to adjust my mindset. His experience is similar to mine and I have more confidence in moving ahead..."*

*"I gained valuable insight on how to sell yourself and highlight your transferrable skills..."*

*"The opportunity to interact with professionals and service providers was great..."*

*"I was not sure where to start and now I have the insight/tools to create a career path for myself in Canada. Thank you ..."*



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