

Leadership-in-Action Project Report

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Growing up in Hong Kong, it's not uncommon for children to grow up with Southeast Asian maids working in their homes — I was not an exception. While my family treated her like one of us, it hurt to see her separated from her own. Hearing her share about the socioeconomic barriers she experienced, I always asked how I could help. It felt too macro and impossible.

Now living in Canada, neither my goals nor the social issues I am passionate about have changed. I aim to assist migrant workers in attaining social mobility one step at a time. My LiA experience is dedicated to exploring social entrepreneurship as a tool to assist these communities.

The Problem

The economic well-being of vulnerable minorities, which is tied to their social and political mobility is greatly integral to Canada's multicultural social fabric to promote collective prosperity, as opposed to increased economic and social segregation. My LiA project seeks to address the following questions:

- How do immigrants, migrant workers, and other diaspora populations generate wealth and what barriers do they experience in this process?
- What is social entrepreneurship? Can it effectively assist (im)migrants in obtaining social mobility?
- What are the necessary policies and resources to support migrant entrepreneurship?
- What are the legal and moral arguments, if any, for social inclusion in the labor market?

Access to opportunities in the social innovation and entrepreneurship space have been closely linked to human and social capital, which has been shown to greatly impact one's socioeconomic status and ability to establish oneself as an integral part of the social fabric. This project will investigate ways minority groups engage or fail to engage in resources that lead to social innovation and venture solutions and provide recommendations to strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion in the entrepreneurial labor market.

The Vision

The Mosaic Institute is a non-profit organization that aims at dismantling prejudice and creating a more inclusive society for everyone through four pillars: **Research, Policy, Dialogue, and Education & Training**. The goal of my LiA project was to create a research publication that would provide (policy) recommendations on generating access to wealth-accumulating opportunities for (im)migrants, which will supplement the broader existing research that is examining disproportionately less intergenerational economic advantages experienced by these communities. As ventures are seeking to cater to a more inclusive population and include diverse perspectives in their decision, the need for dismantling barriers experienced by racial minorities are imperative, which this project aims to accomplish through extensive research and critical analysis. The research report will undergo multiple review sessions and subsequently be published on the Mosaic Institute's website.

Project Details

My publication is an analysis of various sources of descriptive secondary data, primarily comprised of academic literature, community articles, newspaper articles and government resources. This paper first explores the definition of social entrepreneurship as suggested by existing literature, contextualizing its operational model and mission as the intersection of “profit and purpose” through its historical evolution and modern perception. The effectiveness of social entrepreneurship as a tool for wealth generation will then be discussed in relation to the upward mobility of migrant workers, refugees, and other diaspora communities. The purpose of this research is to understand how in the global climate of increasing transnational flows between jurisdictions, social entrepreneurship can serve as a tool for structurally marginalized diaspora communities, including refugees, migrant workers, and other immigrants. Moreover, concepts like intersectionality, feminist and gender theories will also be utilized throughout to holistically understand the barriers experienced by diaspora populations, with the acknowledgement that there are dynamic and diverse cases within the broad (im)migrant umbrella.

I was also actively involved in other activities at the Mosaic Institute. The Mosaic Team is compact but powerful, tight-knit, and united in a shared mission. I attended and contributed to team meetings, and actively learned about each team member's projects, which included campus

collaborations to equip youth and educational practitioners to dismantle prejudice in their own communities. It was an irreplaceable experience to hone my own cultural understanding of various minority groups across Canada, and appropriate ways to engage with community members with empathy and understanding.

Initial SMART Goals:

- 1. Publish an impactful report that would spark curiosity on social innovation as a tool to assist migrants' socioeconomic mobility.**

Achievements:

- I created an extensive research report that addresses my initial research question.
- Through discussing the direction of my research regularly with the Mosaic Team, I have gained knowledge on the complexities within Toronto's migrant population, which is both local and international.
- This report is undergoing review and will be published on the Mosaic Institute's website and in other relevant community journals.

- 2. Utilize this report, and the knowledge I gained from it to develop social entrepreneurship programs with Mosaic and beyond.**

Achievements:

- This report serve as a blueprint for further innovation strategies for social good, which may be incorporated into the Mosaic curriculum in the future.
- I will continue working with the Mosaic Institute as Regional President of their UofMosaic Fellowship Program, this report will continually be used to spark discussions on prejudice against foreign credentials and immigrants.

- 3. Build long-lasting relationships with entrepreneurs and social innovators during the research process.**

Challenges:

- I was unable to conduct interviews with social entrepreneurs or equity-deserving groups advocating for migrant rights due to the limited timeframe and ambitious range of content to cover.

Adapted Goals:

- This research report will be shared with the list of contacts, including social enterprise operators, social innovation scholars, and migrant advocating organizations after being published.
- Dialogue surrounding this report will continue to be fostered with these points of contacts with the goal of knowledge sharing, relationship building, and ultimately to collaboratively orient solutions towards this issue.

Conclusion

Some of my key takeaways from my LiA experience:

- Adopt an agile and flexible approach to the research process.
- When presenting research findings, keep in mind the uniqueness of each locality.
- One can only truly learn through active listening and through upholding the lens of empathy.

While I may not have accomplished all three SMART goals I had initially set, I learned that leadership is more about being adaptable and comfortable with change than checking off boxes on my “to-do list”. Throughout these 6 weeks, I have learned about what it means to be leaders in the social transformation space from the Mosaic team and those I have consulted to adequately address the premise of this project. While personal impact could look like whatever you imagine it to be, leaders are never short of resilience, empathy, and humility.

Acknowledgements

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