

Our new investment is helping new Canadians restart their careers

Windmill Microlending helps skilled immigrants get the Canadian credentials they need to work in their field

Victor Cheng knows the importance of networking to grow a career. As a young lawyer working at Intact in Toronto, he has benefited from senior leaders sharing their experience. But for newcomers to Canada, it can be hard to find those connections. So, Victor jumped at the chance to mentor a lawyer from Zambia through the Windmill Mentorship Program.

“Many ethnic minorities and candidates with law degrees from outside of Canada still face significant barriers to the legal profession once they’re here,” said Victor. “The Windmill Mentorship Program is a fantastic way to help an aspiring lawyer going through the licencing and recruitment process.”

Victor helped his mentee Andrew develop his cover letter and resume, as well as network and prepare for interviews. “I now have two four-month placements in two separate business law firms. Both of my placements are in my desired area of law, which is something very difficult to get,” said Andrew.

Being a mentor also helped Victor develop his own skills. He learned how to anticipate his mentee’s needs and questions — a type of critical thinking he can apply as a lawyer to anticipate and mitigate risks at Intact.

More than mentoring

The mentorship program is one of the services Windmill Microlending provides skilled immigrants and refugees — many of whom are healthcare professionals, engineers, lawyers and IT professionals — to help them restart their careers in Canada and help target one of the root causes of child poverty.

The charity provides low-interest micro-loans of up to \$15,000 so clients get the Canadian credentials they need to work in their field.

Earlier this year, Intact invested \$200,000 in the charity. It was the first of our social ventures — a new way for us to target the root causes of child poverty. Instead of a traditional donation, the \$200,000 investment is a loan the charity will repay over five years with two-per-cent interest that we’ll reinvest in other social ventures.

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