

ACADEMIC INSTITUTION	University of Calgary	PROJECT NAME	Empower
-----------------------------	-----------------------	---------------------	---------

NEED AND AUDIENCE

Many immigrant women in Calgary hope to start a small business. However, they are often overwhelmed with the amount of bureaucracy and information that they need to deal with before they can start a business in Canada. Learning all of it alone or with little assistance can be challenging and often becomes a barrier that prevents these talented women from pursuing this aspiration further. Thus, the Empower project aims to serve as a resource and network where immigrant women can learn entrepreneurial thinking and fundamental business skills that they can utilize to establish strong small businesses and become successful entrepreneurs.

ACTION TAKEN

In order to reach women who may benefit from Empower, we connected with women centres and immigrant organizations such as the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, Making Changes Association and the Centre for Newcomers. With the help of the mentioned organizations, we conducted info sessions to provide interested individuals with more information about Empower. This was followed by a simple recruitment process where we met with each participant to assess their eligibility and ability to commit to the program. We also connected with business professionals and local entrepreneurs in order to find speakers for each of the workshops. Moreover, we meet with our team advisor from HSBC every 2 months to gain feedback and guidance on the project.

Empower consists of weekly workshops wherein speakers discuss and teach important business topics such as accounting, digital marketing, business law and funding. We also pair student mentors with the women to support and assist them in developing their business idea throughout the program. At the end of the program, the women also get an opportunity to participate in a pitch competition.

IMPACT

There is a total of 20 immigrant women enrolled in the project this year. Many expressed that it is a great opportunity to learn more about Canadian business and network with speakers. Although we are only halfway through this year's Empower project, we have received so much positive feedback from the women involved. They feel more comfortable sharing and presenting their ideas to others and have expanded their understanding of entrepreneurship. Moreover, 13 out of 43 people exposed to entrepreneurship in Empower are University of Calgary students. By mentoring the immigrant women in the project, these students learn valuable communication, mentorship and business skills that they can utilize in their future careers.

STANDARD METRICS

(These metrics are related only to the project presented and represent work done since March 1, 2021)

Number of businesses started	2	Number of existing entrepreneurs helped	20
Number of people exposed to entrepreneurship	49	Number of jobs created	0

PROJECT START DATE	September 2021 (although Empower has been in operation for a number of years)	IS THIS PROJECT WHOLLY-OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE TEAM?	Yes
---------------------------	---	---	-----