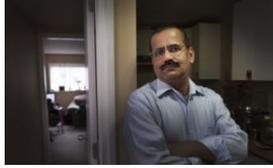


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## LARISSA CAHUTE VANCOUVER DESI

Vancouver's Madhavan Kolayamparampath left India with his family in 2005 to pursue a better life in Canada.

"(It's a) calming country, peaceful, less corruption," Kolayamparampath told Vancouver Desi on Wednesday. "It's really a dream land for people from developing countries."



Matt (Madhavan) Kolayamparampath, originally from Southern India, lives in a basement suite Vancouver, BC, April 3, 2014. Kolayamparampath moved here for a better life in a country less corrupt than India. He worked for 15 years in library archiving in India but has struggled to find a job in his field here

Arlen Redekop

And although he's glad he made the move — with his wife working part time and his son getting a better education at Simon Fraser University — nearly 10 years later, he's still searching for a job in his field as a librarian.

"It's like a transplantation — it's hard in the beginning," he said.

With more than 15 years of experience in Calcutta, he's only been able to land temporary contract work that isn't in his field — even after getting his masters at UBC in 2009.

So in 2012, he accepted a job offer at a library in India, leaving his wife and son behind.

"I was working there, but all that time ... my family was here," he said, adding he returned to Vancouver in the spring of 2013. "Again I'm searching for a job right now."

Unfortunately, Kolayamparampath is just one of many newcomers to Vancouver struggling to find work.

According to Joan Anderson with MOSAIC, a local settlement and employment services agency, the unemployment rate for recently-arrived immigrants is twice as high as Canadian-born and some statistics show it could take anywhere from five to 15 years for a new immigrant to reestablish themselves.

"They are at a real disadvantage when it comes to looking for a job," Anderson said, explaining that 80 per cent of jobs are landed through contacts and networking. "When you come to a new country you leave all your connections behind."

In an effort to better connect immigrants, MOSAIC is holding its third annual job fair next Tuesday. It's the organization's largest job fair yet with 50 employers participating, representing a range of industries from high-tech and finance to health care, hospitality and retail.

"It's an opportunity for newcomers to connect with a whole bunch of employers at one time and in one place," said Anderson.

It's also an opportunity to practise interacting with potential employers, like how to quickly explain their talents, experiences and achievements that contribute to the workforce.

"For many newcomers whose first language is not English, that's not an easy thing to do — that's not even an easy thing to do if you do speak English," said Anderson.

Some employers expected at Tuesday's job fair, which runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Croatian Cultural Centre at 3250 Commercial Drive, include the City of Vancouver and the police department, as well as a number of representatives from the skills and trades sector. The fair is open to all job seekers and admission is free.

## TIPS

### Learn how to job hunt in Canada

Looking for work in Canada is likely different from how it's done in a new immigrant's home country, according to Joan Anderson with MOSAIC.

"People don't even realize that they need to learn (how to job hunt in Canada)," she said. "For example, another country's education may have been the most important thing that you've achieved, but employers in Canada don't care about that."

Instead, what they care about is what you've done, what impact you've made and what you've accomplished — learn how to translate your international experience into the Canadian workforce, she said.

#### **Play up the positives**

“(New immigrants) face a lot of challenges, but they also bring really a lot of assets with them, too,” said Anderson.

Coming from the international workforce, new immigrants bring an international business scope, international connections from their home country, another language (extra valuable for front line jobs) and creativity and diversity to the workforce.

#### **Don't be afraid to get help**

Anderson suggests new immigrants attend job fairs and seek help from organizations like MOSAIC to help in the job hunt

“We encourage immigrants to meet with each other, to go to conferences, to get a mentor, because mentorship is really effective to plug into the Canadian labour market,” she said.

#### **Don't give up**

Looking for work is time consuming and can be difficult, but Anderson's main piece of advice is “don't give up.”

“You need to treat it like a job — looking for work is a job in and of itself,” said Anderson. “You need to be positive, you need to be determined, you need to be diligent.”

She also suggests having a plan A and plan B, where plan A is the overall goal (the job in your field) and plan B is a job for the meantime, either a survival job to pay the bills or a lower-level job in your field from where you can work your way up.