



A strong network is key to building a career in Canada, as Shayan discovered during his job hunt. Luckily, United Way donors like you were there to help.

How one young man jump-started his Canadian career

Shayan didn't come to Canada expecting to be handed a job. "I had in the back of my mind that it's a really difficult job market here," he says. But starting his career in Canada turned out to be even harder than expected. "I started applying for jobs, putting out résumés and always getting that same email saying, 'You have potential, but unfortunately...'"

With a degree in economics from a respected university in Pakistan, he'd hoped he'd have a shot at jobs in his chosen field. But no one here had heard of his school, and he had no Canadian work experience. And, like many newcomers, Shayan's professional networks in his new home were thin. After seeking asylum in Canada as a refugee, for the first time ever, he also found himself alone in a new country.

As the rejections mounted, so did Shayan's despair. "As time passed, I started feeling depressed that there weren't many opportunities," he says. But then he heard about COSTI Immigrant Services, a United Way agency that provides employment, educational and settlement supports to a variety of immigrant communities, including newcomers like Shayan. "It was my only hope," he says.

At the agency, COSTI's youth mentoring coach told

him that in order to land a job in his field, he needed to start making connections. She recommended United Way's netWORKS program, which would help him build a better résumé, do practice interviews and, most importantly, meet contacts at job fairs and networking events. Shayan threw himself into the workshops and beefed up his job-hunting skills. He made friends, met potential employers and—to his delight—landed a position in his field just two months after his first meeting at COSTI. Instead of getting up late and reading rejection emails, Shayan now spends his days working as a contact centre service representative, helping bank clients sort out credit card issues. He's certain that netWORKS made the difference in his job search, and is grateful for the help he got from agency staff.

So what's next? Shayan is aiming high. After a couple of years in his current job, he'd like to apply for a financial analyst position. Then he'll shoot for his dream gig: an economist at the Bank of Canada. And he'll use his new connections to help make that dream a reality. "What I learned from this experience is that any connection can be helpful, and with the right contacts, you'll find opportunities."



United Way
Halton & Hamilton

IMPROVING LIVES LOCALLY
FOCUSED ON IMPACT

uwhh.ca