



# impact report CANADA 2020



**!gnite**<sup>®</sup>  
small business  
start-ups  
AN SSI INITIATIVE

**SSI**   
settlementservices  
international



# PASSION INTO POSSIBILITY

Ignite® Canada is a program that helps newcomer entrepreneurs realise their dreams and start a viable business in Canada. The program is a joint initiative between Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC) and Settlement Services International (SSI) Australia.

Ignite® Canada was developed and adapted from Ignite® Small Business Start-Ups, an initiative of Australian community organisation and social business, SSI. The program focuses on facilitating the establishment of small businesses for people from a refugee and migrant background, who dream of starting their own business and making a positive impact in their communities. The Ignite® Canada program has been tailored and shaped specifically for newcomers in Canada. Its vision is to unleash the potential of refugees, skilled migrants and carers and inspire them to take greater control of their lives through entrepreneurship and enterprise.

Throughout the Ignite® Canada program, entrepreneurs are supported by specially trained Ignite® facilitators and have access to a local resource team that includes business experts, accountants, marketing managers and financial advisors.

This report captures the essence of Ignite® Canada, outlining everything the program does and everything Ignite® Canada hopes to achieve. The Ignite® Canada program has grounded itself in one core belief: where there's passion, there is possibility.



## IGNITE® CANADA MILESTONES



# IGNITE® CANADA SUCCESS

## Reliance on welfare

As part of a 2016 research study\* on the Australian Ignite® pilot program, interviews with 35 refugee entrepreneurs revealed A\$880,000 savings in welfare benefits each year, and a projected A\$4.4 million savings over five years. Ignite® Canada has so far supported 28 entrepreneurs of which approximately 40% are receiving government assistance through BC Employment Assistance. Early indicators show that this program is on track to following the outcomes reported in the Australian Ignite® evaluation.

\*Collins, Jock (2016) *From Refugee to Entrepreneur in Sydney in Less than Three Years*, UTS Business School, Sydney.

## Wellbeing

Ignite® Canada entrepreneurs have reported that they have experienced a sense of belonging which includes:

- feeling safe living in Canada
- feeling that they are now a more valuable part of the Canadian community
- feeling independent and able to achieve more for themselves
- feeling that they can look forward to improving their financial and social situation
- navigating the local landscape more confidently
- having increased confidence in speaking to lending institutions
- feeling more optimistic about their futures

Ignite® Canada has successfully helped entrepreneurs to establish businesses in the following industries:

Agriculture and agri-food research and statistics

Construction

Culture and Leisure

Energy

Information and Communication Technology

Manufacturing

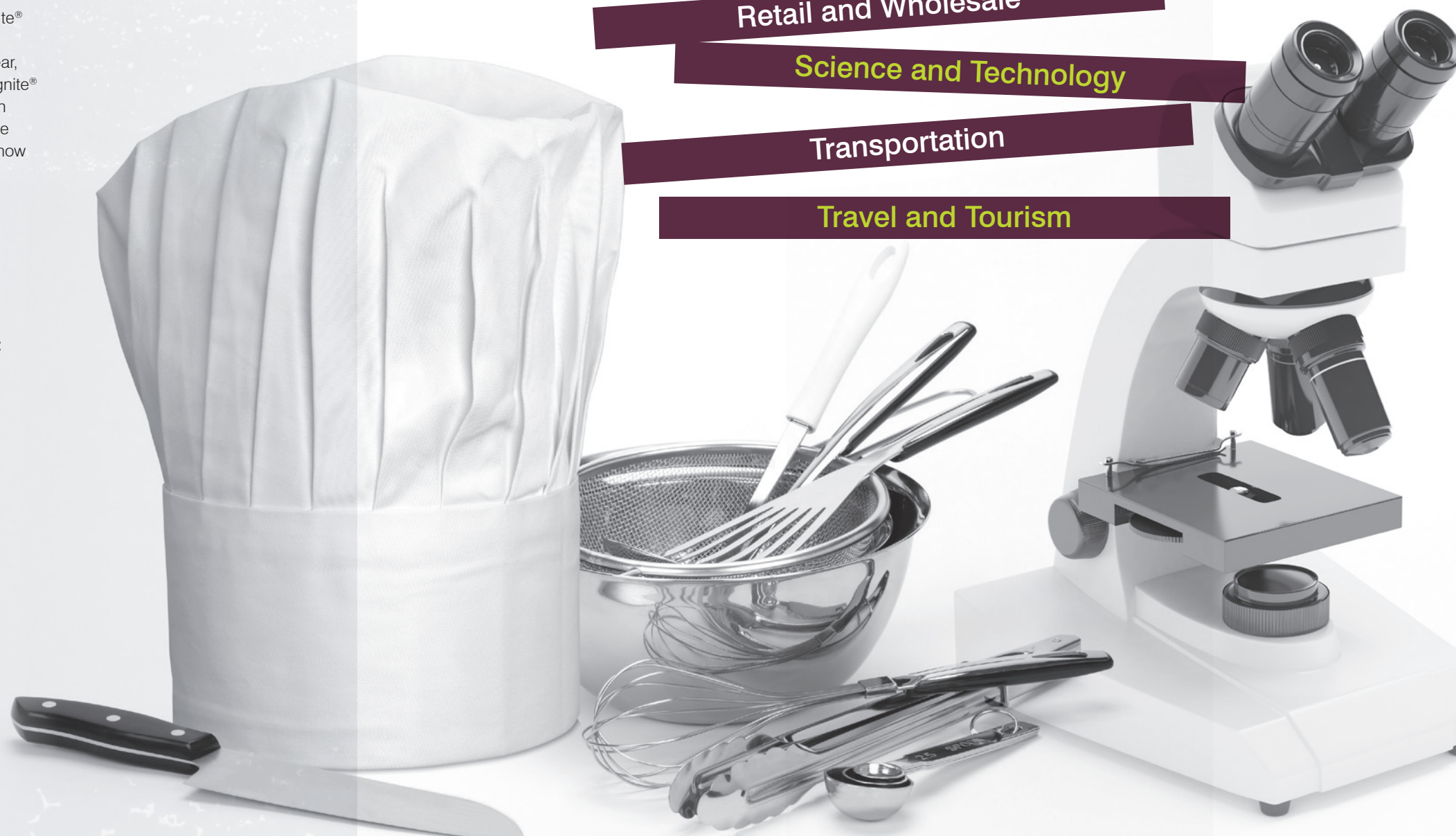
Natural Resources

Retail and Wholesale

Science and Technology

Transportation

Travel and Tourism







# CASE STUDIES



**Nathalie  
Collections**

Nathalie Gakwavu is the founder of Nathalie Collections – a fashion boutique selling African style clothing and jewellery. Nathalie came to Canada in 2014 as a government-assisted refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo. With the guidance of Ignite® Canada, she was able to recreate some of the vibrant African magic of her home country. After being connected to industry experts such as business advisors, marketing professionals and legal advisors, she was able to work one-on-one with an Ignite® facilitator to develop a business and finance plan to get her start-up ready for trading. Now, Nathalie showcases her passion for African culture through clothes and jewellery design. Nathalie is as vibrant an entrepreneur as the fabric of her African-inspired prints. Her fashion line is slowly growing with the support of Ignite® Canada, and is receiving a warm and positive reception from the community.



**Mawlana**

**Boutique**

Assaad and Ghalib came to Canada from Syria in June 2019 as government assisted refugees. From the moment they landed they were brainstorming potential business plans and the steps needed to bring their dream to life. Through ISSofBC, they were connected with the team at Ignite® Canada and soon got to work making their entrepreneurial dream a reality. They now own the Mawlana Boutique, bringing beautiful artisan soap, handmade in Turkey, to the local community. Through Ignite® Canada's ecosystem of support, Assad and Ghalib were given expert advice on market trends and regulatory requirements, as well as connections with professionals who assisted them in testing the products. Assaad and Ghalib now have a storefront in Vancouver's popular Granville Island market.



"WE EXPERIENCE THE UPS  
AND DOWNS TOGETHER,

the achievements and the disappointments.  
Whenever we hit a brick wall, we'd always  
go back to Ignite® for guidance"

**Assaad and Ghalib**



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