

AN IDEAL PARTNERSHIP

Glendalynn Dixon and Lameck Osinde were introduced to each other in the LMIEC's Mentorship to Immigrant Employment program. At the time of the match, Glendalynn was a Senior Business Reporting Analyst for Startech.com. With over a decade of business reporting and business intelligence, she was matched with Lameck Osinde, an educator and IT practitioner from Kenya. Lameck was very excited about learning more about the local Canadian job market and securing meaningful employment in London. The two soon discovered the program would benefit both of them and held the key that would unlock the doors to many future successes.

What are your personal and professional backgrounds?

Glendalynn: I'm driven by my curiosity, with a personality that is split between the creative and the logical. My career has been focused on analysis: identifying insights to drive corporate strategy in a wide range of industries. Last year this focus shifted to the foundation of successful analysis, as I am now building a Data Governance initiative from the ground up. Outside of work, I am motivated by environmental, civil and animal rights concerns and I align my volunteerism to those activities. In my spare time I am likely to be found in the garden or lost in a great book.

Lameck: I am technology enthusiast with an Artist's soul. I studied Geospatial Engineering at the Department of Geospatial and Space Technology, University of Nairobi. My first IT job was at the Apple Regional Support Centre, Nairobi, as an Intern. I initially trained as a Trainer, sent for further training, and worked as Customer Support Engineer on completion. After further Technical training on XEROX productivity equipment, I moved on to work as a Maintenance Engineer for United Nations Missions in Somalia and Rwanda. Upon successful completion, I returned to Nairobi and worked as a Technical Support Engineer, Customer Support Manager, Project Manager, rising to IT Consultant. Due to the remarkable changes IT industry landscape was experiencing, I enrolled for a MSc. in Computer Science, and upon graduation, continued working, but I felt a strong inner urge to venture into teaching. This I did, albeit on a part-time basis in several Universities in Kenya, finally settling in at Strathmore University till 2012. In 2012, my wife, our 15-year-old son and I felt that life in the Tropics needed a near-Polar twist of cold and snow, and so we immigrated to Canada as skilled workers.

On arrival, I first worked as an IT & Technology Instructor in a private Technology College, before moving to my current position as a Technical Product Trainer at StarTech.com.

How did you hear about the mentorship program and why did you get involved?

Glendalynn: A member of our Human Resources department arranged for interested employees to meet with Deb Villani here at StarTech.com. That was the first time I was introduced to the goals and success of WIL & LMIEC. Deb's presentation won me over immediately and within a few months Lameck & myself were matched. Until that time, I truly did not understand the value experienced Canadian professionals could lend to new Canadians seeking employment in their field of choice. It was eye-opening.

Lameck: I was introduced to Deb Villani by Zeina Choucair, who then immediately started looking for a match for me. It sounded like a good eye-opener to the Canadian job market. I needed to have better insight into the Canadian job market and understand the culture and expectations.

What did you gain from your participation that you were not expecting? What surprised you most?

Glendalynn: I was unprepared for how rewarding the experience of mentoring would be for me. We truly take things for granted with regard to navigating our job market here in Canada. At each meeting, Lameck would be so excited with the new information he was learning. His positivity was infectious, and he was quite often teaching me



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StarTech.com

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about his experiences prior to moving to Canada. I was surprised by just how much I got to learn along the way, it felt effortless and fun.

Lameck: That I would soon be linked to my current job via LMIEC. Just shows that it works! What surprised me most was realizing the importance of Mentoring and Networking both for job prospecting and professional growth, in this culture. It also emerged that most jobs are not actually advertised, but employers rely on references and other professional and social networks to connect with competent and skilled employees.

What was the best part of the program?

Glendalynn: The day I learned Lameck was being interviewed for a position at our company was the best moment of the whole program for me. We had to stop meeting at that point, however I knew he was going to do a great job selling his skills and letting his personality win everyone over. That was the moment I knew Lameck would finally have a role in his preferred field in Canada. It was the culmination of all the work he had put in with WIL, LMIEC and myself.

Lameck: My mentor is very warm, honest and very professional. We immediately struck an amazing rapport. Whereas I was not expecting her to necessarily get me a job, she was able to open me to the realities on the job market, and additionally helped me re-craft my resume to reflect my strengths and skill set. Due to our common interest and practice in IT, she introduced me to the threads of IT that were options for me to pursue at that time, but she encouraged me into areas that she felt I had strength and a passion for.

Can you share with others why they should get involved in program?

Glendalynn: It can be daunting to think you'll be a mentor if you haven't done anything like this before. We truly undervalue our soft skills and understanding of the way business is conducted in Canada. My advice would be to jump in with both feet! We contribute to building a stronger community and stronger workforce by enabling determined new Canadians to continue to work in their professional capacity.

Lameck: The mentorship Program is a great eye-opener to the Canadian job market. It gives you a great insight into the practices, both professional and other important aspects like the work culture employer expectations, which helps you adjust your expectations to the realities on the ground. This would go beyond just getting the job, but also keeping it and growing professionally.

Did your participation in the program make a difference in terms of your attitude towards finding a job?

Lameck: Absolutely! I was now more focused and aligned my expectations appropriately.

Can you tell us how you networked?

Glendalynn: We met weekly onsite at StarTech.com. It was helpful to meet in a professional setting. It allowed Lameck to observe the interactions between our employees and it created a great mindset for both of us (compared to meeting in a coffee shop).

Lameck: Our meetings were built around mutually agreed times. I was lucky to meet Glendalynn in an office environment, during work hours, where I would practically observe how teams conducted themselves, and getting the feel of the various meeting rooms further boosted not only my confidence, but my resolve and determination to give a good account of myself, when the opportunity arose.

Will you continue to volunteer as a mentor? How did the mentorship program help you connect with your current job?

Lameck: My experience was quiet unique, as I ended up working in the same organization as my mentor. This made it easy for me to put into practice what I had learned from her, and we have continued to network both as colleagues and mentor/mentee. What we shared was greatly influenced by the same Company that I am now working for! It was a great ending to a fantastic experience that I had with Glendalynn. She still looks out for me and we do have regular chats. The onboarding was pretty challenging, but she gave me all the tips and would encourage me regularly of the bumpy road ahead.

Will you continue to volunteer as a mentor?

Glendalynn: I will be absolutely thrilled when I have the chance to partner up with a new mentee. That's a big YES!