



Fall 2012

# IWIS Newsletter



- IMMIGRATING WOMEN IN SCIENCE, SOCIETY FOR CANADIAN WOMEN IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-

## HEADLINE

### NETWORKING THROUGH

- VOLUNTEERING
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- INTERNSHIP

### IWIS EVENTS

- CIHR- Cafe Scientifique
- Workshops and Seminars

Dear Readers:

Welcome to the Fall 2012 issue of IWIS Newsletter.

In our last issue the theme was “VOLUNTEERING”. Through our pages, we examined the questions of “How and where to find the right volunteering opportunities?” and “How can volunteering help us to find a job?”. Later, we came up with the following questions to make a better volunteering choice:

- Do I wish to build on a skill or utilize my expertise when volunteering?
- What volunteer positions illustrate my skills and passion?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- Do I prefer working alone or as part of a team?
- Who do I want to meet? Who do I want to work with?
- How much time am I willing to commit?

In this issue we would like to talk about “NETWORKING”. It seems the phenomenon of networking is not something that we can avoid because sometimes “*It’s not what you know, but who you know*”. There could be many different reasons why networking is important, personally and professionally but your network web can make a difference in achieving your dreams and accomplishing your goals.

Throughout the article you will find an interview with Dr.Gülner Birol, former IWIS director, and two articles about social media- linkedIn and internship-Mitacs which would bring different perspectives to your understanding of networking. The newsletter ends with events recap and new events announcement.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.  
Have a great fall everyone.

O. Deniz-E. Velasque- L.L.Yang



## GÜLNUR'S VOLUNTEERING JOURNEY



*"...Today was my first day at work. My day started with the birds chirping in the early morning, the sun saluted me with grace. Have I mentioned that every day is a sunny day here? If not, let me tell you. One does not need to think about the weather here, I suspect that there may not even be a weather channel..."*

*From Gülnur's blog*

### Shortly Gülnur Birol:

Gülnur holds an appointment as Senior Educational Strategist in the Science Centre for Learning and Teaching at UBC working on science education research projects in collaboration with science faculty members, administrators and students to improve science learning and teaching. Gülnur, originally from Turkey, received BSc, MSc and PhD degrees in Chemical Engineering from Boğaziçi University. She spent several years as a Senior Research Associate at the Illinois Institute of Technology, USA where she conducted biotechnology research, taught several courses and developed simulators for bioengineering students (PenSim and Glucosim), and as a Research Assistant Professor and a Project Leader for VaNTH Engineering Research Center (VaNTH) at Northwestern University, USA where she conducted vision and engineering education research. Gülnur immigrated to Canada in 2005 with her family.

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**IWIS News: Hi Gülnur. Thank you very much for time. Would you tell us about your latest (Uniterra) and past (IWIS) volunteer experiences? How were they effective in expanding your network?**

Welcome.

I went to Botswana in May of 2012. I volunteered for BOCAIP- it is a Botswana Christian Aids Intervention Program, and they offer programs for orphans and vulnerable children and my role was to evaluate these programs

which involved data collection.

***What got me interested?*** "20 things I want to do before I kick the bucket"

My daughter who is 17 years old, came to me one day, all tired, and said that she had to write 20 things before she hits the bucket as homework for a gym class. As a person with English being a second language, I didn't know what "kicking the bucket" means, and I started thinking, oh my gosh this sounds like a big project, when is it due? ... And I asked her what "kick the bucket" meant. Then she explained it to me as these are the things you want to do before you die. That was an aha moment for me to start thinking about my 20 things before I kick the bucket. And on my list the first thing was "go to Africa". And I started thinking about it more seriously. Around those times, there was a staff meeting at UBC that I attended and I ran into one of the X-volunteers for the Leave for Change Program (L4C) who had gone to Nepal recently. We talked briefly about the program. That got me interested in the program. And I started looking around, reading more about it at UBC and I applied. Before I knew it I was selected.

***Now that I am back...*** I definitely have a better understanding of intercultural communication and





*"One "Do" that I learned today*

*Always start with Dumela Ma/Ra (Hello Ma'am/Sir) to initiate a conversation. Otherwise people will think that you are not interested in talking with them and won't engage in a conversation. I got a chance to experiment with that in a couple of occasions and I can attest that it is true. People's face light up when you say Dumela Ma/Ra to them and they become very friendly instantly. I like that."*

*From Gülnur's blog*



the difficult issues that Africans are faced with. Now that I know better, I feel empowered that I can actually do something about it. We are very privileged, have the education, the skills and the resources here in Canada and have so much to offer who are in great need.

In the past, I had volunteered for other non-profit and a Director for the Immigrating Women in Science and Technology as part of the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology. The L4C volunteering experience was a reaffirmation of the value of volunteering work by skilled volunteers for me. There is a big need for skilled volunteers all around the world and I sincerely believe that I made a difference, which may be very small but it adds up. I would certainly do it again.

Coming back to your question, both volunteering opportunities proved to be helpful in expanding my network. Through both volunteering opportunities, I met a lot of people whom I shared common interests, or whom had very diverse backgrounds and experiences. I find it fascinating to find out about people around me. It all starts with a simple question "What do you do?" and a keen interest to hear what they have to say.

**IWIS News: What have you enjoyed most about this volunteer positions? What made that role challenging? How did you handle the situation?**

There were no lowlights in this experience, I loved every minute of it.... I was a really hard core worker during the weekdays and a hard core traveler over the weekends.

Since I volunteered for BOCAIP- it is a Botswana Christian Aids Intervention Program, and they were offering programs for orphans and vulnerable children and my role was to evaluate these programs using an evidence-based approach. What that meant was that I got to visit the sites in six different cities in Botswana, interviewed 34 people - all the stakeholders (from caregivers, coordinators, counselors, etc.) and created a report summarizing my findings and my recommendations about these programs.

**IWIS News: What is "Leave for Change"? What do you think this experience changed you or your thinking or your life? Would you talk about the organisation UNITERRA?**

Based on the Uniterra website, it is defines as "Leave for Change<sup>®</sup> is a corporate volunteering initiative that enables employees from participating organizations to



*"...I noticed the rising sun; the view was spectacular outside my plane window, the intense layer of red and all the warm colors between the land and the air was breathtaking and looked like a generous never-ending painting with no beginning and no end..."*

*From Gülnur's blog*

transform part of their annual vacation into a 3 to 4 week volunteer assignment in a developing country. Employers invest in the development of their human resources and demonstrate leadership in corporate social responsibility. Employees put their knowledge and skills to work in an international development project, expand their personal and professional horizons and acquire a deeper understanding of broader"

(<http://www.uniterra.ca/become-an-international-volunteer/leave-for-change/>)

I can't say that this experience changed me, but it definitely was an enriching experience. The whole process from the day I applied in October until after the day I came back in June was a great experience. The anticipation, the orientation, the vaccinations (well, they were not the most memorable things but they were necessary), the meeting with other L4C volunteers and learning about Botswana were wonderful.

**IWIS News: How did you learned about this opportunity? Why did you want to be a volunteer in that organization?**

I learnt it through the UBC's announcement for staff. Then I checked out the volunteer

job postings on the Uniterra page ([http://agora.ceci.ca/postesVacantsCS\\_en.html](http://agora.ceci.ca/postesVacantsCS_en.html)). As I said before, I had a general goal of going to Africa as part of *my 20 things to do list*; this presented itself as a great opportunity. I also had a couple of jobs in mind, the kinds of jobs that I wanted to do more to deepen my skills, such as strategic planning and program evaluation. Then I picked three candidate jobs and applied. I didn't necessarily pick the organization but the job descriptions to align with my career goals. The matter of fact is, if there is one attitude that you need to have towards these positions, that is being flexible and open, since the mandate changes quite drastically and you need to be OK with that. My mandate was no exception. It changed dramatically from its original form, and I was able to adopt and it worked perfectly.

**IWIS News: What skills and qualifications do you have that helped you in this position?**

It is interesting you ask this. Because, it is a lot of skills and attitudes that played a role in succeeding in this volunteering job I think. We, as people with science, engineering or technology backgrounds are really good at technical or research skills.





*"I have spent the weekend in Maun camping by the Okavango Delta and sleeping in a tent. After I arrived there early Saturday morning, I headed to the Old Bridge Backpackers Lodge where I met a volunteer from work and everything was arranged for our camping on a remote island."*

*From Gülnur's blog*

But I think the most helpful one was the interpersonal skills including the intercultural understanding and being flexible and open in this situation. When you are in a different context (i.e., different country, different work and social culture, different set of priorities) you just need to be able to think on your feet, observe and understand the situation, and respond positively and respectfully. Being able to couple the interpersonal skills with the skills in education research that I brought made it a very positive experience both for me and the partner organization. I must admit that as an immigrant, this came very natural to me, because every time I moved or changed my job, I had to go through a similar transition. So, in retrospect, perhaps being an immigrant was also advantages for this volunteering position.

**IWIS News: Would you describe a typical day there?**

Well, You are most welcome to read my blog for a typical day: <http://www.focusonpeople.ubc.ca/leave-for-change/author/gbirol/>

**IWIS News: What would you say to our readers lastly?**

Thank you very much for volunteering or considering to volunteer. It is a great way to giving back to the community, to learn from each other and network. And, thank you for your interest in my volunteering experience. I strongly recommend it to everyone.

*Thank you Dr.Birol for sharing your volunteering experience with us.*

**By Ozlem DENIZ**

Gülnur in Botswana



*"LinkedIn is the largest social network for professionals. This is the cyberspace where recruiters and companies find employees..."*

## ONLINE NETWORKING: SIMPLE STEPS TO UNLEASH THE POTENTIAL OF LINKEDIN.



LinkedIn is the largest social network for professionals. This is the cyberspace where recruiters and companies find employees. It is also the place where professionals showcase their experiences and learn about each other.



You may already have a LinkedIn account but have you used it effectively to broaden your professional network? This article discusses the common terms used in LinkedIn, reviews its key features and offers tips on how to use them well.

### 1. Six degree of connections

"Connection" is a commonly used word in LinkedIn. It refers to the people you know. While you are building your own connections, don't overlook who your connections know. They may be able to introduce you to the people whom you want to

connect. You can also ask whether you can use his or her name when contacting them.

To connect with someone whom you have never met on LinkedIn, it is important to send a personalized message that explains who you are and why you wish to connect. This shows that you are sincere and gives others a reason to accept your connection request.

### 2. Join groups to stay connected

Join groups that are related to your professional goals. It allows you to connect with other like-minded users without having to send tons of connection requests. It also keeps you updated with the conversations and events happening in the group. So, you won't miss another important event!

Don't just stop with joining the groups. Follow the discussions and hear what your group members are talking about. Reply to questions that you are confident in offering ideas and tips. Contributing and showcasing your knowledge can help make yourself known in a professional group. This is also a great place to seek advice from those who share similar goals and experiences. Are you connected to SCWIST on LinkedIn?

### 3. Get yourself recommended

LinkedIn allows others to post short and informal "recommendations" about you. Although you can add as many

*"Don't just stop with joining the groups. Follow the discussions and hear what your group members are talking about."*



recommendations as you want, it is wise to go for quality and quantity. Find people who speak well of you and whose opinions matter. A good rule of thumb is to have two to three recommendations from each job you had. Include your colleagues and supervisors to show that you can work with people at different levels. If you are an active member of a volunteer or professional organization, ask your fellow members to highlight the skills you gain outside your profession.

#### 4. Recommend others.

Asking for recommendations can be difficult. One way to get around this is to start recommending others. Networking is about reciprocity. So, write a helpful, positive and professional recommendation for others. Remember what you wrote is also read by the people in their network.

#### 5. Market yourself using your LinkedIn profile

Your LinkedIn profile is essentially an online resume. To help others find you on LinkedIn, describe yourself with keywords commonly used in your industry, while avoiding jargons. Searching for job postings that are related to your position can help you identify the recurring terms.

The title that appears below your name is your "professional headline". This is where other users first learn about you without having to read your complete LinkedIn profile. To stimulate others' interests in reading your profile in details, take the time to develop a specific and eye-catching headline that defines you-what you do and where you work.

#### 6. Post a picture.

This adds a personal touch to who you are. Be cautious and pick a picture that presents you as a professional.

**Bottom line:** Online networking is convenient and is a starting point for those who just begin to build their network. However, it should not substitute your presence at networking events. IWIS is excited to say that our 2012-2013 season is about to begin. Stay tuned for the upcoming series of SCWIST and IWIS networking events and workshops! In our next event, we will introduce Mitacs, a national, not-for-profit organization that provides opportunities for working in industry.

*By Lee Ling Yang*

# MITACS

*"One of our IWIS members has just finished her Mitacs-Accelerate internship..."*



One of our IWIS members has just finished her Mitacs-Accelerate internship in a Vancouver-based biotech company. So, in this article, we would like to talk about Mitacs, a national, not-for-profit research organization ([www.mitacs.ca](http://www.mitacs.ca)).

Oba Harding, the Director of Business Development and the Communications Department for Mitacs, described all the programs for us. Let's take a look and see which one works for you.

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS:

For current graduate students and post-docs (including international students)

**Mitacs-Accelerate** connects current graduate students and post-docs with companies through research projects that enable students to apply their research to real-world business challenges. For each four-month internship project, the company partner provides \$7,500, which is matched by Mitacs. Of the \$15,000, a minimum of \$10,000 is provided to the student as a stipend with the balance of the

grant supporting other research costs. Visit

[www.mitacs.ca/accelerate](http://www.mitacs.ca/accelerate) for more information.

**Mitacs-Accelerate InDev**, a new pilot program, supports projects for grad students and postdocs where the focus of the project is not research, but for collaborative projects with industry that advance or significantly improve new products, processes, materials, systems or services. For each four-month internship, the company provides \$7,500 and Mitacs offers \$3,500. Of the \$11,000, the intern receives a minimum stipend of \$10,000. Click [here](#) for more information.

For graduates

**Mitacs Elevate** Postdoctoral Fellowship program supports recent PhD graduates to work on a joint, co-funded industry-academia research project for up to two years. Fellows lead the collaboration and spend about half of their time at a Canadian university and half at the company. In addition, Mitacs provides the fellows with business skills training so they are well positioned to

*"Mitacs Elevate and Enterprise are well-suited for future entrepreneurs..."*

take on R&D leadership roles at the end of the program. Visit [www.mitacs.ca/elevate](http://www.mitacs.ca/elevate) for more information.

New PhD graduates transitioning to postdoctoral positions at Canadian universities are eligible to apply for Mitacs Elevate. International students are also eligible to apply.

Available in Southern Ontario, **Mitacs Enterprise** is a competitive, 6-month internship and business mentorship program that gives graduates of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines an opportunity to work with small to medium-sized companies operating in a STEM sector in Southern Ontario. Visit [www.mitacs.ca/enterprise](http://www.mitacs.ca/enterprise) for more information.

New college and university graduates are the focus of Mitacs Enterprise.

**Only for undergraduates** **Mitacs Globalink** brings top international undergraduates from around the world for summer research internships at Canadian universities. Visit [www.mitacs.ca/globalink](http://www.mitacs.ca/globalink) for more information.

Training programs: **Mitacs Step**, through one-to-two day workshops, provides

business-ready skills to up and coming researchers. It trains graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in interpersonal, project management and entrepreneurial skills essential to succeed in their future careers. Visit [www.mitacs.ca/step](http://www.mitacs.ca/step).

For future entrepreneurs: **Mitacs Elevate** and **Enterprise** are well-suited for future entrepreneurs. The **Step** program also provides a series of training sessions addressing entrepreneurship and intellectual property.

*By Elizabeth Velasque*



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## IWIS Volunteer Featured on Global BC

Check out the following link where Global BC news article featuring one of our IWIS volunteers, Elizabeth Velasque! Learn how businesses are finding help using Mitacs - a program that started at UBC that is benefiting both businesses and grad students across the country.

<http://www.scwist.ca/?p=4667>

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**IWIS Committee****Present Committee Chair:**

- Gordana Pejic

**Committee Members:**

- Shabnam Rostamirad
- Mayu Ishida
- Iran Tavakoli
- Elizabeth Velasque

**Volunteer(s):**

- Ozlem Deniz
- Lee Ling Yang
- Laxmi Subedi
- Kasia Dospial
- Kristine Carino
- Elga Kandie
- Cheryl Land
- Clare Gladding

We are grateful for  
funding support  
from the Government  
of British  
Columbia.

**IWIS LATEST EVENT****True blood" vs. "Real blood"  
vs. "Synthetic Blood"**

On June 12th, SCWIST hosted another successful Café Scientifique and had a stimulating discussion on the topic "True blood" vs. "Real blood" vs. "Synthetic Blood"! Dr. Gershon Grove and Dr. Maria Gyongyossy-Issa, two experts in hematology (the study of blood), gave us an overview of what vampires want, what transfusionists want and what blood is available in the blood supply.

Dr. Gershon Grove, a Medical Consultant of Canadian Blood Services' BC & Yukon Centre, spoke to us about what types of blood we can donate. We can choose to donate whole blood, or "parts of our blood"! For donating platelets (blood cells which help stop bleeding) or plasma (liquid part of the blood), only your platelets or plasma are collected and the remaining components are returned to you.

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On behalf of SCWIST, we would like to thank our speakers, moderator Dr. Frances Lock and participants for another memorable evening of Science!

You would find info in IWIS blog from the following link:

<http://www.scwist.ca/?p=4485>

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

We regret to inform you IWIS didn't get CIHR grant for this year as other applicants developed better concept and topics. You can check this year events at <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/35898.html>.

IWIS is grateful to all people that helped us last year with CIHR Cafe Scientifique events and with the application for this year. We will continue applying in the coming years. If you know about some interesting topics and speakers related to health and adaptable for general public, please let us know.

**WHAT IS NEXT?**

The date of our November event with the speaker from Mitacs will be advertised in the coming SCWIST bulletin.

**Stay Tuned!**