



Immigrant struggled to adapt to Canada

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When Alberta Lawson packed up her life and her three teenaged children to move from their native Ghana to Canada in 2003, she was hoping they would become as enamoured with Ottawa as she had while a student at Carleton University a few years earlier.

But after looking for work and dealing with the life changes her children were going through, she wasn't sure any of them, herself included, were going to be able to adapt to life on this side of the world.

"I realized inexperience in the Canadian marketplace was a real obstacle and my job search was a nightmare, the money I had brought me with was draining straight down my arms," said Lawson. "My kids were dealing with culture shock and at one point they wanted me to go back. They said, 'We don't want to stay in this deep freeze!'"

A few years after the family settled in Ottawa, Lawson found a job with Scotiabank after connecting with Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO). Dennis Jackson, Scotiabank district vice-president for Ottawa and West Quebec, said employees like Lawson give his company an edge in marketplace.

"Scotiabank believes strongly in engaging a diverse workforce that reflects the communities in which we operate," said Jackson, following an HIO summit at the National Arts Centre Wednesday. "We also believe diversity contributes directly to business success."

Lawson, who holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Ghana and a master's degree in public administration from Carleton University, currently works with Scotiabank as a senior personal banking officer.

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