


Chapter 15

Healthcare Entrepreneurship and Global Talent: Navigating Visa Barriers, Health Innovation, and Startup Survival as an International Graduate

Lawal Olamilekan Abdulwahab

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4955-244X>


School of Business and Economics, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Odulusi Daniel

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3298-8987>

Kabale University, Uganda

Kabara Auwal Halabi

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7795-7351>

Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Hafiz Bubari Umar

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2093-6570>

Federal Polytechnic, Bali, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how international graduates, in their quest for survival, innovation, and resistance, launch healthcare startups in host countries. Narrative inquiry and autoethnography reveal how these individuals transform personal health disparities and immigration hardships into culturally attuned, socially impactful

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4212-2.ch015

ventures. These startups, emerging from marginality rather than privilege, are shaped by visa precarity, cultural exclusion, and systemic neglect. However, far from being passive policy subjects, these entrepreneurs actively redefine their identities as migrants, students, and innovators. The chapter critiques narrow definitions of entrepreneurial success and highlights the transformative potential of immigrant-led health innovation as a blueprint for justice, inclusion, and global policy reform. By stressing the social impact of these ventures, the audience is invited to feel engaged and committed to the cause.

1. INTRODUCTION

International graduates are often celebrated in policy rhetoric as drivers of innovation and competitiveness. However, their lived realities tell a different story, marked by visa precarity, limited access to entrepreneurship pathways, and systemic exclusion. This chapter examines how international graduates navigating healthcare entrepreneurship transform these constraints into innovation and resilience. It argues that their ventures are not only economic undertakings but also acts of survival and social critique, revealing the moral and structural contradictions of global talent policies. This chapter examines how international student graduates, navigating the intersecting terrains of migration, healthcare inequity, and entrepreneurial aspiration, attempt to build health-focused startups while contending with systemic exclusion. Through narrative inquiry and autoethnographic reflection, we argue that healthcare entrepreneurship, as practiced by international graduates, is not merely an economic activity but also a survival strategy, a critique of structural injustice, and a form of globally situated innovation born out of necessity. While governments often position themselves as magnets for global talent, the policies that shape postgraduate mobility and startup eligibility are deeply contradictory. In countries like the United States, F-1 and J-1 visas prohibit dual intent and restrict access to self-employment, effectively preventing international students from launching companies without corporate sponsorship or investor backing, both of which are inaccessible to most early-stage founders (Conwill et al., 2014). Although proposed reforms, such as the U.S. Startup Visa, have surfaced in legislative debates, few have translated into meaningful pathways for immigrant innovators. This highlights the urgent need for policy reform to realize the full potential of international graduates (Luppino et al., 2012). Canada, long hailed for its immigrant-friendly image, has similarly created bottlenecks through its Express Entry system. This system, developed to oversee applications for permanent residence under specific economic immigration programs, inadvertently creates barriers for graduates from Canadian institutions, thereby complicating their transition from student status to that of startup entrepreneurs.

32 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/healthcare-entrepreneurship-and-global-talent/400509

Related Content

LGBT College Student Career Development: Goals and Recommendations for Faculty Members

Elizabeth L. Campbell and Michael A. Burrows (2020). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 29-40).

www.irma-international.org/article/lgbt-college-student-career-development/260947

Prompt-to-Primal Teaching

Euzeli C. dos Santos Jr (2025). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-13).

www.irma-international.org/article/prompt-to-primal-teaching/397015

Lifting as We Climb: A Social-Ecological Framework to Strengthen Support for Racially Diverse Women in Academia

Lolita L. Kincade and Constance Lacy (2025). *Empowering Women in Academia: Improving Methods, Practices, and Approaches for Change and Transformation (IMPACT)* (pp. 1-22).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/lifting-as-we-climb/371946

Assessment of Language Learning Strategies in Technology-Enhanced Learning Environment

Wagdi Rashad Ali Bin-Hady, Abdu Al-kadi, Ali Abbas Falah Alzubi and Hassan Saleh Mahdi (2020). *ICT-Based Assessment, Methods, and Programs in Tertiary Education* (pp. 83-99).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/assessment-of-language-learning-strategies-in-technology-enhanced-learning-environment/255254

Digital Badge Use in Specific Learner Groups

Jacob H. Askeroth and Timothy J. Newby (2020). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/article/digital-badge-use-in-specific-learner-groups/245769