



Giving the Gift of Language
Promoting Immigrants as Assets to America

Adult Children of Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Memories and Influences, September 2011

Fast Facts

- The children of immigrants are the fastest-growing segment of children less than 18 years old in the United States and are changing the face of education.
- This study offers a rare insight into the changing landscape of higher education through portraits of ethnically diverse graduate students whose parents had their own businesses.

“My mom only knows one business model - work harder and longer than anyone else.”

“They gave up their prestige, their education, their aspirations, their goals, their friends, family, relatives, their culture and their history for us. So I’ve got to do what I can to make sure it’s worth it for them.”

- Growing up in a business environment that typically involved direct and constant contact with the public, these children of immigrant entrepreneurs learned not only business survival skills but also useful social skills.
- Such an environment ingrained in them a strong work ethic. They learned that success and sacrifice go hand-in-hand.
- Many of these children of immigrant entrepreneurs experienced the complexities of growing up in two worlds: their immigrant family’s culture and the dominant culture of school and the surrounding community.
- They feel a deep-seated desire to give back to their immigrant communities. This is reflected in their research fields (e.g. urban planning), choice of degrees (public health, education), extra-curricular activities (foreign languages) and choice of work (social work).
- There is an inherent appreciation among the adult children of immigrant entrepreneurs for the sacrifices their parents made to ensure that they have successful careers and lead normal lives in their adopted homeland.