

REAL MISSION

Women putting thought into action



“Our clients were leaders in their countries. They want to be on the ‘giving’ side again.”

JANE LEU, 34

SAN FRANCISCO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER OF UPWARDLY GLOBAL, a national nonprofit organization that works with underemployed and unemployed immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to help them find jobs in the United States that fit their credentials. It also trains corporations in how to hire them.

HOW SHE GOT INVOLVED:

During a stint at a New York refugee-resettlement agency, Leu saw “doctors working in chicken-processing plants and scientists cleaning hotel rooms”—people making their living at jobs they were grossly overqualified for. “It was this talent pool of men and women who want to contribute but who are not used to needing help.” She asked her human-resources friends to develop a job-search program, and in 1999 she launched Upwardly Global.

HOW IT WORKS: Upwardly Global’s website résumé database acts as a bridge between immigrants and corporations. Leu and her staff of three also provide packets of tips for beefing up résumés, negotiating salaries, and mastering interviews. Volunteer mentors teach clients how to network, and corporate partners help train human-

resources professionals in hiring applicants with unfamiliar schooling. “In most countries, modesty is valued. We have to teach our job seekers not to underplay their experience.”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: “We met a microbiologist from Peru who was working in a welfare jobs program, passing out leaflets. We helped her find a job in a lab. She now manages a staff, has published her research, and was able to move her family out of a rough neighborhood.”

WHAT A \$50 DONATION DOES: Pays for interview-skill training sessions for two clients.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UPWARDLY GLOBAL, or to make a donation, visit www.upwardlyglobal.org or call 415-834-9901.

Left: Leu has helped more than 100 clients—most of them women. “When you get smart women together, it doesn’t matter where they’re from,” she says. “Career is a big part of who they are.” Center: Upwardly Global’s clients hail from more than 45 countries, which are noted with arrows on a map on the office wall. Right: Leu and coworker Camille Ramani (center) helped a Mongolian broadcast journalist (right) find a job as a TV production assistant.

WRITTEN BY MARLA GARFIELD PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY NATHAN