

## Path to PhD had its challenges

Story by Rob Rombouts

Photo by Blackbird Photography



Growing up in India, **Bharati Sethi** always dreamed about becoming a professor. After a journey filled with challenges, she is close to achieving that goal.

Having completed a Bachelor of Science in India, despite extreme turmoil including abuse and occasionally living on the streets, Bharati moved to Canada when she was 19. Before she could continue her education, she worked in factories and cleaned hotels and houses until she could qualify as a permanent resident of Canada. Then she turned her attention to education again.

Bharati's degree was not recognized in Canada, she returned to school to complete a one-year diploma in social work, supported by a Human Resource Development Canada scholarship. She worked full-time hours while also attending school full-time.

She then enrolled in a BA program at [Laurier Brantford](#), initially taking one course at a time. She has since completed a Master of Social Work at Laurier in Waterloo and is now a PhD candidate there. Bharati is completely focused on her education and it has paid off; she has received many prestigious awards and scholarships and earned national recognition for her research.

Despite her passion for education, Bharati said the need to re-qualify did create a burden for her, including a huge financial one.

Most people don't know their education won't be recognized when they come to Canada, and it is very disheartening to find out, Bharati said. Many immigrants give up on the dreams for that reason.

For immigrants to Canada who may be discouraged about going back to school, Bharati said. "It's a hard road, but if you have a goal there are more opportunities. There are more services here to support people."

Bharati credits the support of the [Workforce Planning Board's](#) IStep program, which helped her with her research, and the support of friends for keeping her motivated.

---

*Education Works Alliance is a community group dedicated to building prosperity through training, education and lifelong learning. The group's mandate is to raise the education, literacy and skill levels of Grand Erie residents, in order to broaden opportunities for employments and economic development. For more information visit [www.educationworks.ca](http://www.educationworks.ca)*