

Headline: Four SFU alumni-led ventures participate in RADIUS' Slingshot Accelerator Program

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Four SFU alumni-led health focused ventures highlight some of the exciting enterprises in RADIUS' 2017/18 Slingshot Accelerator Program cohort.

The ventures – Ophthalight, Dunya Media, Richer Health and Nomad Nutrition – are among those kicking off RADIUS' emergent Health Promotion Lab, with a three-year focus on the prevention and early detection of lifestyle-based chronic disease.

The Slingshot Program recruits and accelerates social ventures working in this field, supporting them to become growth and investment ready. Current participants span a range of focus areas, from nutrition to digital media to new diagnostic technology, among others.

Entrepreneurs participating in the current Slingshot cohort are from diverse backgrounds, and include SFU graduates from the Beedie School of Business and faculties of communications, health sciences, and neuroscience.

“When we set out to recruit the most exciting ventures for this cohort, we were thrilled to have several of the best applicants come from SFU alumni,” said Donovan Woollard, co-director of RADIUS. “Dunya, Nomad, and Ophthalight are each emerging leaders, and it has been so rewarding to see them develop and flourish over the past six months.”

The presence of so many SFU alumni in this cohort presents a unique opportunity for these entrepreneurs to deepen their relationships in the university's vibrant community while scaling their ventures for success – and for SFU to support important and impactful alumni-led innovation in the field of public health. Two of the companies profiled below – Dunya Media and Ophthalight – will be featured at the SFU Innovates start-up booth at this year's #BCTECH Summit in May.

To meet the entrepreneurs and learn about their projects, people are invited to the RADIUS' BlastOff event Apr. 24 at The Pint Public House at 455 Abbott St. The event will feature the Slingshot cohort's final presentations and networking opportunities. RSVP for BlastOff [here](#).

Dunya Media tackles diabetes rates among province's South Asian population

Fun fact: years before Slingshot, the Dunya Media team participated in one of the very first interdisciplinary Change Lab cohorts at SFU as co-founders Kashif Pasta and Shyam Valera were completing degrees in communications and health sciences respectively.

Valera's health sciences background showed him the value of taking a macro or population approach to health care prevention, and the benefits of communities getting healthier together. Pasta's background in communications taught him the power of stories to engage target audiences and induce them to action.

Together, they have created a health communications company that is research-based and impact-focused (not to mention award-winning).

Dunya's work spans narrative and documentary programming, highlighting culturally relevant health information for the South Asian community, and celebrating South Asian culture and identity.

Recently, RADIUS helped facilitate a connection between Dunya and the Cities Changing Diabetes program; the two are now exploring a collaborative strategy to drive a measurable reduction in diabetes rates in the South Asian diaspora.

SFU is a partner in Cities Changing Diabetes – a global initiative led by Novo Nordisk that partners with cities around the world (including Vancouver) to “bend the curve” on diabetes rates – through both RADIUS and the Faculty of Health Science, the latter under the research work of Dr. Scott Lear.

Valera said participating in the RADIUS' Slingshot Accelerator Program changed their business in the most incredible way.

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“Going through the program, we realized we had the right ideas before but were not executing efficiently,” Valera said. “With good guidance and structure from RADIUS, we created online campaigns that both were cost and time effective for us and had a larger impact for our clients.”

Dunya will be showcasing their work at the SFU Innovates Start-Up Booth at this year's #BCTECH Summit from May 14-17.

Visit dunya.ca to keep up with all of Dunya's upcoming projects.

Nomad Nutrition delivers dehydrated, delicious vegan cuisine

Nomad Nutrition was founded by Denis Mikhailov, Beedie School of Business MBA 2014.

While participating in RADIUS' Slingshot Program, Mikhailov began construction of a brand-new food manufacturing facility focused on dehydrating vegan cuisine, and providing a safe space for other food startups to test their products on the market. Construction should conclude in the next two weeks, with production slated to begin in three-to-five weeks.

Nomad also recently raised the funds to secure exclusive rights to REVdry dehydration technology in the prepared meals category, giving them tremendous momentum for their line of ready to eat, vegan dehydrated meals.

Lastly, Nomad Nutrition has accepted purchase orders for its products from MEC with 22 stores across Canada, and IGA Marketplace with 18 stores across British Columbia, as well as 28 other retail location across the Lower Mainland, Alberta and Washington State. With all of the exciting changes taking place, it's safe to say Nomad has big things “in store” – both literally and figuratively.

Visit nomadnutrition.co for all the latest news from the Nomad team.

Using nutrition and education to achieve Richer Health

Nicolette Richer (post baccalaureate in community economic development, now sustainable community development) has for years been dedicated to using nutrition – specifically a plant-based diet – as a tool to combat cancer and chronic disease. She and her partner launched their first Green Moustache restaurant in Whistler in 2013 and have now grown the chain to seven stores. Several additional locations will be opening soon, including one in Lower Lonsdale in April 2018.

Richer Health is a health education company that delivers workshops (in-person and online) and retreats to share knowledge and build a community of support around reversing cancer and chronic degenerative diseases.

RADIUS worked with Richer Health to refine a blended online/offline format, creating regional clusters of online course participants linked to in-person meet-ups with trainers. Positive response to the Green Moustache / Richer Health offering continues to grow, with the company exploring a substantial investment partnership to scale the business across the country.

Visit richerhealth.ca for all the latest news from Richer Health.

Ophthalight envisions basic eye care through intelligent technology

Ehsan Daneshi joined SFU as a PhD student in computational neuroscience, where he co-founded Ophthalight with SFU researcher Dr. Yaser Roshan and Younes Rashidi.

The vision behind Ophthalight was to create a way for people to access basic eye care using online intelligent technologies. They have created proprietary hardware and software solutions to cost-effectively and accurately diagnose a range of eye and brain conditions, winning several awards in the process.

Their time in the Slingshot Program has been focused on adding business development capacity to balance out their tremendous technical expertise, and on raising money to target key market segments including remote diagnosis and streamlined analysis.

Daneshi said of the program, "Slingshot helped Ophthalight refine its key business activities, access funding, and reach key decision makers in partner organizations."

Ophthalight will be showcasing their technology at the SFU Innovates Start-Up Booth at this year's #BCTECH Summit from May 14-17.

Visit ophthalight.com for all the latest news from Ophthalight.

Meet the Slingshot ventures and connect with the RADIUS community on April 24th at BlastOff! Register here.