



# **Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre Annual Report 2004-2005**

## ***Executive Director's Message***

**Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre is a community based, non profit organization committed to supporting the language learning goals of newcomers. In a creative and respectful environment, we strive to provide quality and effective learning opportunities to promote the active participation of newcomers in our community.**

HILC was established in 1988 and since that time has been delivering a range of language training programs to newcomers in our community. HILC has grown over the years in response to the changing needs and realities of its clients and the focus now, of the private and public sector on labor market integration of newcomers, has demanded a new shift as we add more employment related language training programs to the menu of options delivered by HILC.

The past year has been an exciting and challenging year for HILC staff. The increased national and provincial interest in immigration, immigrants and integration gave heightened importance and profile to the work of HILC. Staff responded with eagerness and professionalism to the added demands for presentations, input, information for media, research, enquiries that were generated by this new interest. Despite the ongoing challenges of the absence of core funding, annual project funding and limited resources, staff have embraced this new environment with a commitment to be a significant stakeholder in immigrant integration in Nova Scotia.

The interest in immigration issues has led HILC to new and exciting partnerships and opportunities for collaboration, some of which, for the first time, have been initiated by 'mainstream' stakeholders outside the immigrant serving sector. Leading associations from the fields of health care, engineering, trucking, tourism, plastics, IT have all been eager to partner with HILC to provide bridging programs to the workplace for newcomers.

Growth this year has also been accompanied with the development of effective organizational structures that ensure an integrated approach to delivery in an efficient and cost-effective manner and we are pledged to continue to work to establish the most appropriate organizational system for HILC.

This has certainly been an exciting year in HILC's history and our goal in the coming year is to build on the momentum and achievements of 2004-05. I am confident that together we will maintain our unequalled reputation in the community by continuing to deliver and develop innovative and effective language training that meets the needs of newcomers.

## ***Partnerships***

Key to the success HILC this year and indeed in the past, has been our commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships. There has been a great deal of attention and emphasis placed on partnerships and collaborations in recent years in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship that we have entered into with various stakeholders to achieve the common goals of language skill enhancement and workforce integration for newcomers. It has been a powerful way to accomplish what would have been much more difficult without partners. Our collaborative undertakings did not involve contractual agreements but focused on the process, on the outputs and on the broadening of the impacts.

Nova Scotia and Halifax in particular, are small traditional, conservative centres, where stakeholders know each other and sit around common tables with common issues. HILC has a long history of sitting at multiple tables to discuss issues of language and employment for newcomers and there is a tradition of collaboration and cooperation in the community. HILC is also highly regarded and enjoys the respect and trust of numerous public and private partners within the community. Developing partnerships, encouraging stakeholder involvement and building support for immigration, and newcomer integration have been key objectives for HILC this year and have contributed in making HILC a sought after voice, expert and partner.

Collaboration is not without its challenges. It requires time and other resources to develop and support the relationships; it's a complex way to work, there are conflicting agendas, approval processes can be longer and more complex. Contradictory timelines, different funding criteria and expectations, respecting each other's organizational and professional culture - we have faced all these issues in the last year. Yet, it is to the credit of all that the shared vision, commitment to the shared goals, open and honest communication, the ability to compromise, mutual respect, understanding and trust have allowed us to work through the challenges and be optimistic and enthusiastic about future collaboration.

This year we have explored, formed and developed partnerships with:

- Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia
- Canadian Council for Refugees
- Canadian Labour and Business Centre
- Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
- Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council
- Capital Health Physiotherapy
- Capital Health Diagnostics
- Capital Health Nurse Education
- Capital Health Occupational Therapy
- Capital Health Pharmacy
- Capital Health Professional Practice

- CE Division, Dalhousie Pharmacy
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- College of Pharmacy
- College of Registered Nurses N.S.
- Community Services
- Dalhousie CME
- Dalhousie Dentistry
- Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine
- Dalhousie Health Sciences
- Dalhousie Learning Resource Centre
- Dalhousie Medical School
- Department of Health
- Greater Halifax Partnership
- Halifax Regional School Board
- Human Resource Skills Development Canada
- LPN of Nova Scotia
- Medical Lab Technologist of Nova Scotia
- Metro Council on Continuing Education
- MISA
- Mount Saint Vincent University
- National Adult Literacy database
- Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
- Nova Scotia College of Physicians and Surgeons
- Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists
- Nova Scotia Community College
- Nova Scotia Department of Education
- Nova Scotia Department of Immigration
- Plastics Sector Council
- Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre
- Respiratory Therapy
- Saint Mary's University
- TESL Nova Scotia
- Trucking Sector Council

Our intention for 05-06 is to strengthen the existing relationships, learn from the experience, expand the partnerships and to continue to link activity and outcomes to the priorities within the province.

## ***Enhanced Language Training***

The Nova Scotia Enhanced Language Training Initiative, funded by a partnership arrangement between the provincial and federal governments provides higher levels of language skills that help immigrants obtain and remain in jobs for which many of them have the training and experience.

IN Nova Scotia HILC and MISA have an agreement to provide an integrated range of services to help bridge the gap to employment for immigrants. This year MISA delivered mentoring, employment placement, and CLB Assessment. HILC delivered English for Internationally Educated Health Care Professionals, English for Work and Business and a Higher level evening class. In addition HILC developed the following materials:

- ✓ Professional Development Day Report
- ✓ English for Work and Business curriculum
- ✓ Orientation to Health Care Systems curriculum
- ✓ ESL for IEHCP curriculum
- ✓ Pathways to Licensure
- ✓ Final Report and evaluation

Although all the projects stood alone in terms of their proposed activities, the focus was not on the individual projects, but on how together, they could provide a holistic and effective approach to enhancing the labour market skills and integration of newcomers in our community. The Executive Director of HILC was the Project Manager for the overall initiative both for the MISA and the HILC projects.

This has been a year of unparalleled interest in newcomer labor market integration by professional associations in Nova Scotia. The ELT initiative in Nova Scotia has provided us with the opportunity and has been the catalyst, at exactly the right moment in time, to provide both services and to advocate for and to explore improved labour market attachment for newcomers.

### **Numbers for HILC ELT Projects**

- ✓ 32 presentations of ELT projects to over 4,000 stakeholders and community members
- ✓ 24 ESL and Employment staff members attended ELT workshop
- ✓ 77 clients accessed English for Work and Business training
- ✓ 11 internationally educated health care professionals accessed ESL for health care training
- ✓ 18 internationally educated health care professionals accessed Orientation to Health Care System

## ***LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada)***

The year 2004/05 was somewhat of a watershed for HILC. LINC funding was maintained but it was still necessary for us to access additional programs and additional funding to cover some of the overhead and administration. The non-LINC operations of HILC have grown considerably in the last two years and that growth has been critical for LINC and allowed us to maintain the same level of this critical up-front service delivery.

This year the LINC program:

- ✓ delivered English language training on site to 168 students (increase of 18%)
- ✓ cared for 42 children in the Childminding Centre
- ✓ trained and had the benefit of 23 volunteers
- ✓ trained and provided educational learning placements for 16 students
- ✓ developed completely new database
- ✓ Represented HILC/the sector on boards of:
  - Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
  - TESL Nova Scotia
  - Immigrant Serving Agencies of Metro
  - Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning
  - N.S. Multicultural Network
  - HRM Literacy Association
  - Atlantic Metropolis Centre of Excellence
  - ESL Coordinating Committee
- ✓ Organised workshops for staff on:
  - CLB evaluation
  - Employment related resources
  - Teaching Pronunciation
  - Conflict Resolution

## ***English in the Workplace***

Unprecedented interest in immigration and in immigration issues in the last year increased even more in January with the launch of the Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy and the opening of the new Office of Immigration. This resulted in an increased awareness by many in the community of some of the issues and barriers facing newcomers and in terms of the English in the Workplace program, highlighted the need for ESL support in the workplace.

English in the Workplace has seen over 200% increase in the requests for the program and although we hired a new instructor in January, 2005, the waiting list and the demand remained high. However, the hiring of Sarah Sampara provided much needed assistance with the program, both in terms of promotion and delivery. EWP provided on site in the workplace language training courses at 33 sites in 2004-05.

A graduation and recognition event took place for students and employers from English in the Workplace on April 22<sup>nd</sup> as part of HILC's Employment Language Training Programs Graduation. 72 people attended including the Deputy minister of Immigration, Executive Director of the Office of Immigration, Nova Scotia Director of Citizenship and Immigration, many employers and regulatory bodies.

The two EWP instructors did an amazing task in promoting the program this year and there was media coverage on EWP -with Chronicle Herald, CBC Radio, ATV, CBC TV, Touchbase, Parkview News.

There have been many requests for presentations on EWP, resulting in the development of two power point presentations and between us in this period we have presented to:

- ✓ Metro Council on Continuing Education
- ✓ Dalhousie Learning Resource Centre
- ✓ Professional Mentors for Newcomers
- ✓ ESL/ELT/Employment Professional Development Day
- ✓ IBDS
- ✓ TESL New Brunswick

## ***Childminding Program***

The onsite childcare program allows parents, especially mothers, to access language training. This effectively eliminates one barrier to access and affords the children a safe, welcoming, caring environment in which to grow and learn. We have had an unsettled Childminding Centre this year in terms of turnover of staff and fortunate that the remaining one member of the childminding staff demonstrated her customary professionalism and commitment in dealing with the changes and the new working arrangements. Her dedication to the Centre, to the welfare of the children and to the parents can not be quantified and HILC owes her much. Through the year we also hired additional childminders to address special one-on-one care needs and to look after the children whose parents were in the ESL for Internationally Educated Health Care Professionals program.



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## ***Volunteers***

This has been our busiest year ever for volunteers. The media and community interest in immigration and settlement issues has contributed to more people wanting to volunteer to assist newcomers. We consider that this is an opportunity for learners to benefit from the wealth of knowledge and skills that volunteers bring; for teacher to benefit from additional assistance within the classroom; for volunteers to benefit in a variety of ways depending on their own personal agenda and for the community to benefit from more of its members helping to create the 'welcoming community' that is a cornerstone of the Nova Scotia Provincial Immigration Strategy.

This year, with the assistance of the LINC administrator, we formalized the training for HILC volunteers and we hope to expand on this in the coming year. This year we enjoyed the contributions of 67 volunteers.

HILC has also always supported the placements of students from educational and training institutions.

This year we provided placements for:

- 4 students from Dalhousie Medical School
- 3 students from MSVU M.Ed. (Adult Education)
- 4 students from Mount Saint Vincent University (

This year we recorded a contribution of 10,452 Volunteer hours to HILC activities

## ***Staff Experience and Competencies***



The most valuable resource of any organization is its staff. Services at HILC are delivered by a team of outstanding professional staff and volunteers who work together to help newcomers to learn the language that they need to successfully integrate, social, culturally and economically in our community. HILC is proud of its staff. In times of reduced funding, it has been HILC staff's commitment and passion for what they do, that has sustained the organization. HILC is especially fortunate in having members of staff for whom the needs of the client are central to their work and focus. From taking people shopping after the Dawn Street fire, to meeting after class with a client who was taking his taxi drivers' test for the third (and last possible time) the staff has once again risen to the challenges of working with difficult situations with limited resources. Their loyalty, their dedication and their hard work for the clients, the Centre, their jobs and the issues involved, have given the Centre the reputation that it enjoys today. They truly are the major strength and resource of HILC.

## ***Regional and National Involvement***

HILC staff continue to devote time to participate in national initiatives within the settlement and ESL sector. Currently HILC staff members sit on the following committees:

- Immigrant Serving Agencies of Metro (ISAM)
- Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA)
- Multicultural Network
- Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia (MANS)
- Multicultural Education Council of Nova Scotia (MECNS)
- Teachers of English as a Second Language Nova Scotia and Canada (TESL)
- Metro Council on Continuing Education
- Canadian Council for Refugees
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks

## ***Client Profile***

Although the official number of immigrants coming to Nova Scotia has fallen every year for the past five years, HILC has never seen a fall in the number of clients served. This is in part to the increase in the number of language programs available to newcomers and to the commitment to provide more occupation specific language training programs. In the LINC program, that HILC has delivered for many years we saw an 18% increase in numbers in the past year and we struggled to deliver training with no additional resources. Targets are always reached in all programs and in most cases, they are surpassed. Some trends that HILC staff has noticed in the past year include:

- ✓ Increased number of secondary migrants from other parts of Canada
- ✓ Newcomers with a higher language level
- ✓ Newcomers with more profession and work related language needs
- ✓ Increased number of refugees from Africa and Middle East
- ✓ More single clients
- ✓ More single parents with children under the age of 5
- ✓ More request for intensive and focused language training programs

## ***Other Initiatives***

This year we developed and received funding for the following projects:

- ❑ HRSD under the Job Creation Partnership. We received the services of a computer skills instructor and IT support person. He provided computer assisted language learning for the LINC classes one morning a week for each class and provided computer skill training for interested clients.
- ❑ HRSD under the Job Creation Partnership. Funding received for a Graphic Designer for 6 months
- ❑ Department of Education This year we received funding to provide evening class for employed/under employed newcomers CLB 5.
- ❑ HRDC for a summer career placement student. This funding has been received for a number of years now and this year we were able to use the student to provide much needed administration support to the Executive Director.
- ❑ Global Television – Raise a Reader  
HILC recently received a substantial grant from Global television under their Raise a Reader program to support literacy in newcomers.

# ***Highlights of the Year***

## **The first Nova Scotia Minister of Immigration and visit of the Minister to Immigrant Services**

In late February the Minister of Immigration, the Honourable Rodney MacDonald, together with the Deputy Minister, Bob Fowler and the Executive Director of Immigration, Elizabeth Mills visited Immigrant Services and came in to the classes and spoke to many of the students.



## **Employment Language Programs Graduation**



**In April, 2005 we celebrated our first** English for Work and Business, English in the Workplace and the English for IEHCP programs graduation. This was came together to hold their graduation event and to thank partners and funders for their support. It was the first time that we had organized a formal occasion to recognize employers and learners and it was an extremely successful event which we intend to make bi-annual in the future. The interest on the part of employers, regulatory bodies, professional associations and other stakeholders was overwhelming and many potential partnerships were born at this event.

## **Co-location with MISA**

As we move in to a new era of settlement with the provincial immigration strategy, HILC's co-location with MISA is proving to be of benefit to both organizations by allowing us to provide a unified voice in the community, a higher profile for immigration and settlement issues, increased attractiveness to diversified funding sources and to create opportunities for enhanced collaboration and programming.

## **New website**

With the assistance of a Job Creation Program participant HILC was able, this year, to develop a new website. Some time ago we recognized the importance of a web site for clients, potential staff, funders, partners etc. and were delighted this year that it has already attracted one funder (Global television).

## **More than just English**

HILC has always provided more than just English. We provide a place where newcomers to Canada can learn about and enjoy Canadian culture. This year, among other activities we:

- Organized and celebrated a winter holiday party
- Celebrated Valentine's Day with a pot luck
- Had an Easter Egg Hunt
- Went on a visit downtown
- Picked apples in the valley
- Went bowling
- Used the Sobeys and the Superstore Community rooms for cooking various foods
- Invited guest speakers from over 20 community agencies
- Visited used clothing stores



## **Reputation**

HILC has been an immigrant service provider for 17 years and our reputation for providing professional, caring, experienced and appropriate service means that we continue to attract clients and are sought after for our expertise.

## **Resource/Materials Development**

HILC has always sought additional opportunities, both with and without funding to expand and improve service to newcomers by developing training materials. HILC has a reputation across the country (and beyond) for developing excellent resource materials. Our ESL Computer books are, for example, used extensively in most provinces, in the public school system in San Diego and in many literacy organizations across the country. This year, we completed Excel 2002. All the ESL Computer books are in pdf. format on HILC's website.

## ***HILC Staff***

<p><b>Executive Director</b></p>
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<p>Gerry Mills</p>
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<b>LINC</b>	<b>English in the Workplace</b>	<b>ELT</b>
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<b>Instructor/ - Jayne Geldart Administrator</b>	<b>Instructor</b> Donna McLean	<b>Instructor - Katherine Macnaughton</b>
<b>Instructor - Kathy Burnett</b>	<b>Instructor</b> Sarah Sampara	<b>Instructor – Carol Derby</b>
<b>Instructor – Beth Vye</b>	<b>Evening</b> Alicia Daley <b>Instructor</b>	<b>Evening Instructor – Ann- Marie Grant</b>
<b>Instructor - Janet Kane</b>		<b>Admin Asst. – Hien Truong</b>

<b>Childminder - Thuy Truong</b>
<b>Childminder – Gaynor Lister</b>

<b>Financial Assistant – Lei Lu</b>	<b>Graphic Designer – Denise Aucoin</b>
<b>Computer Facilitator – Tim Latter</b>	<b>Citizenship Class Instructor- Jeff Meaney</b>

## ***Annual statistics 04-05***

Clients in Labour Market Integration Programs	246
Clients in LINC Settlement Programs	178
Clients in Citizenship Classes	26
Clients in Childminding Centre	61

<b>Profile of HILC Clients</b>	<b>LINC</b>	<b>Labor Market Integration</b>
Male:Female	78%:22%	57%:43%
Refugee	64%	20%
Family Class	24%	8%
Independent	10%	70%
Other	2%	2%

<b>Other HILC Statistics</b>	
Volunteers	67
Volunteer hours	10,452
Supervised Placements	28
Worksites in which training delivered	26
Top 5 professions	Engineers, Health Care, Accountants, Teachers, IT.
Top 5 source countries	China, Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, Sudan
# countries of clients	69