

LEADING THE WAY

ANNUAL
REPORT
2012-2013

**The vision of ISIS
is a community
where all can
belong and grow.**

ISIS is a leading community organization that welcomes immigrants.

Working in partnership, ISIS offers services and creates opportunities that enable immigrants to participate fully in Canadian life.



ISIS' Strategic Plan for 2012-15 focuses on four goals, to: integrate clients more quickly, demonstrate our impact, capitalize on our capacity and enhance financial accountability.

We have made great strides towards reaching these goals, and we wanted to use our Annual Report to share the stories of four clients - Hoda, Janna, Jan and Simon - who have benefited from such focus.



Message from the Chair of the ISIS Board

It was another remarkable year for ISIS - a year in which we began to see the goals of our strategic plan take shape in our day-to-day operations. We have introduced organizational changes that will help us deliver on our goals - integrate clients more quickly, demonstrate impact, capitalize on capacity and enhance financial accountability. These strategic goals support our vision and values, and provide focus for our work with partners.

ISIS is a leader in the settlement service sector, earning respect and recognition from service organizations across the country. We are uniquely positioned to understand the evolving needs of immigrants, and through collaboration with our partners we are able to adapt to meet these needs. Our dedicated and highly capable staff offers innovative and holistic solutions to our clients, and are committed to excellence in service delivery.

On behalf of the ISIS Board, I thank our community partners, funders, the staff and directors, and all of our volunteers for your dedication and commitment to creating a diverse, welcoming community where everyone can contribute. ISIS strives to make a positive impact on the lives of newcomers every day – something anyone associated with the organization can take pride in.

I wish to personally thank our Board of Directors for their commitment to ISIS and for their vision and leadership during the past year. Thanks to our clients and supporters, ISIS continues to lead the way!

Jim Donovan

Message from the Directors

The past year has been a time of much change, and ISIS has deliberately and successfully embraced this change. This report celebrates some of the milestones we've achieved in our mission to help immigrants become active, contributing members of our community.

Over the last year, we provided services to 3,657 clients, 342 of whom were pre-arrival. We welcomed 174 new refugees and taught English to 761 clients. We helped immigrants to open 20 new businesses and we linked 400+ immigrants to the workforce. For ISIS' staff, we increased professional development opportunities and we introduced more flexible work policies. But numbers alone do not tell the story.

ISIS is more than a service provider, we are a *capacity builder*. In the last year we supported hundreds of employers and organisations in their efforts to build capacity to integrate immigrants. ISIS is a *connector*. We initiated the first Local Immigration Partnership in the Atlantic. And ISIS is an *innovator* - the only settlement organisation in Canada providing a range of services to clients before they leave their home countries.

This and so much more is only possible because of our staff members, volunteers and many partners. We would like to sincerely thank each and every one for their commitment to what we do. ISIS is recognized as a national leader in immigrant settlement. This year staff members heard this first hand while attending national conferences, returning with an overwhelming sense of pride in the work they do and in ISIS.

We move into a new year with anticipation and excitement, knowing that the entrepreneurial and visionary spirit of ISIS is alive and thriving. That spirit, supported by sound governance, solid values and strong partnerships, will allow ISIS to continue to strive for a community where all can belong and grow.

Claudette Legault, Director of Programs & Services

Gerry Mills, Director of Operations

We want all parents to be proud to have their children here,

says Hoda Ibrahim, director and owner of Care & Fun Childcare in Halifax. After only a few months, the centre has 50 children and a staff of 11. Hoda came to Canada from Egypt with her husband, Ayman, and children, Amr and Basma, on Canada Day 2009 and, with their support, has worked hard to make this dream come true.

When she arrived Hoda worked in customer service at Winners, assisted at childcare centres and did volunteer work. She enrolled in training to focus on becoming a small business owner.

Hoda earned her Early Childhood Education certificate and Bachelor of Science in Egypt. She worked there as a teacher, a supervisor and a human resources director. Amr wanted to study in Canada so the family immigrated. They lived in Toronto for a year but found Halifax more welcoming. Amr now studies psychology and management at Dalhousie University, Basma is in high school and Ayman, a pharmacist, works as a health company general manager.

Hoda first went to ISIS to have her driver's license translated. Realizing how much the organization could assist her, Arabic-speaking Hoda took courses to improve her English. She also met with an Employment Specialist. "She helped me a lot. She played a big part in my life." Hoda sometimes caters for ISIS and has worked as a volunteer for SupperNOVA Multicultural Potluck. The energetic entrepreneur has taken courses about safety and taxes, as well as *Pre-Employment Workshops*. Family Counselling was useful in understanding the particularities of Canadian life, and a nutrition course was put to good use at work.

Care & Fun Childcare has infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers from several countries. Children up to 12 years old – often siblings of younger ones – participate in an after-school program. "It helps parents to have their children all in one place," says Hoda. She has a staff of 11 including a full-time cook. ISIS provided assistance to find three staff members from Syria, Iran and Libya, as well as on-call substitutes from Ethiopia, Iran, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon. As ISIS helped her integrate, she now helps her staff and the immigrant families whose children come there.

INTEGRATION

44 programs & services
OFFERED ONLINE & BY DISTANCE

1,143 ISIS clients
ACCESSED PROGRAMS & SERVICES ONLINE

342 ISIS clients
PRE-ARRIVAL


Online pre-arrival clients are employed within 6 months

92%

"I have a lot of confidence and experience, but it's a big responsibility," says Hoda who often works 12-hour days, doing everything from managing staff, to dealing with parents, to changing diapers. "You can't be a success unless you know everything about your business."

Hoda says she still faces challenges, but feels she has the right combination of skills to make her centre a success. "I'm honest, I'm not rude and I follow the regulations. I'm happy but tired, and happy that I'm tired!" Indeed, she just might have the right stuff.

The English in the Workplace program proved to be a lifesaver for Janna Mercado, creating a positive impact on her work at a Dartmouth nursing home. "There are times you just don't get the simple conversations like: 'Do you need a lift?' I had no idea someone was offering me a drive; I'd say no and they would wonder why."

Janna came to Canada in 2011, at 23, on a work permit through the Provincial Nominee Program. "I didn't even know this place existed," she says. "My destiny brought me here."

She had taken her Registered Nurse's exam in the Philippines through a New York licensing agency. Because she learned English in school, she worked in a hospital that treated foreigners. "I was able to explain procedures to them," she says, adding that she would sometimes talk to doctors in English as well.

In Nova Scotia she quickly found work at a nursing home as a Licensed Practical Nurse. While she found her skills matched the job, specific language was a challenge. ISIS provided her with a teacher for two hours a week for six weeks. "I felt privileged to have the help," says Janna. "She evaluated my language skills; she made comments and specific suggestions on how to become fluent; she taught me the jargon; she helped me with medical terms." Janna appreciated the practical one-on-one work as she had been concerned that she might use the wrong words or even the wrong tone of voice while providing care. "Coming from another country it's great that ISIS is here to help. It gives me more confidence to speak up."

Janna was also lucky to have relatives nearby who have lived in Nova Scotia since 1966. "At first I was scared to drive and they'd give me a drive." She lived with two Filipino friends, but because of a desire for independence she saved her earnings and found her own apartment, a 15-minute walk to work.

Janna is now at a second nursing home – the Admiral Long-Term Care Centre in Dartmouth –and loves her job. It will take her two years to become a Registered Nurse in Canada, something she may yet pursue. "It takes time to adjust to living here. You have to be psychologically and emotionally ready." Different food is a challenge and, as well, she misses her family. Filipino culture has very close family ties, she explains.

But Janna is high spirited and committed to succeed. This attitude serves her well at the nursing home where she is popular with clients and makes a real impact on their lives. "The residents are so nice. It makes me happy to work with them as their families aren't here every day. I can comfort them and be their advocate. Helping people, that's what life is about."

Helping people, that's what life is about.

IMPACT

 **88,660**
WEBSITE VISITS

 **15,120**
VISITORS TO THE FRONT DESK

 **24,625**
VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGGED

Clients say ISIS helped them find work or open a business

62%



I'm building my future here.



Father Jan Grotkowski greets visitors with a ready smile and a quick laugh. The personable priest moved to Canada in 2007 after 18 years as a priest in Poland. "I was 44 at the time, and I didn't know if I'd be able to work in a different country, different language, different cultural understanding. I thought maybe after a few months I'd go back to Poland. But thanks be to God I'm here six years and I'm happy here."

As a member of the Salvatorians – Order of the Divine Saviour – his mission is to keep the seminary in Poland open. Father Jan explains that because his education was free, he now must send money back to help another young person to study. He chose Canada over Australia, as it's easier to visit his two sisters and brother in Poland.

After 10 months at Halifax's St. Mary's Basilica as assistant priest, he moved to St Anthony's in Dartmouth which, for 20 years, has also included the Polish Mission. As well as being accountable to two congregations, Father Jan has organized community outreach providing food and clothing to those in need. "I see spirit here. We are doing what we can."

He studied Russian and English in school but says he arrived with poor language skills. "Even now I'm not happy or satisfied. For me it is my tools, my work. I want to understand fluently."

Father Jan applied for his permanent residency and became

an ISIS student. He took *English for Work and Business* and *Pronunciation at Work*. "The classroom lessons were intensive which helped me use English in a variety of situations. Conversation in front of the class was not difficult but I was afraid to use right grammar, right tense and right words. Sometimes people laughed and I didn't have a clue what I said!"

ISIS was a godsend. "I'm blessed; I know now after five years how much they helped. It was hard to prepare for the lessons, but now I see it was good," says Father Jan. Speaking Polish regularly is affecting his progress learning English, so he plans to study further.

Life here is busy and active – he skis, swims and bikes. "If I'm not happy I would be back in Poland. I feel at home. I'm building my future here."

An instant community may make it easier for Father Jan than for other new immigrants, but he doesn't take friendship for granted. "You should still work hard for your friends even if you have people around."

He holds ISIS close to his heart. "People from outside are looking for someone to trust. If you give them trust you give them everything – like a piece of wood in the middle of the ocean. It's their hope for the future."

ACCOUNTABILITY

34 funders

18% INCREASE IN
NUMBER OF FUNDERS

98 reports

FINANCIAL REPORTS
COMPLETED

15% decrease

IN PRINTING, PHONE,
WORKSHOP SUPPLIES COST

It was a long road from Simon Mutabazi's homeland of Rwanda to Halifax. He left his war-torn country in 1994 for Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, and then Namibia where he spent almost nine years before arriving here in 2005.

Simon used his industriousness and knowledge from his forestry degree to become self-employed supplying firewood to refugee camps. In Zaire he formed an organization called Protectors of the Environment, spearheading efforts to use efficient stoves that reduced firewood consumption by 70%.

Simon worked with farmers and on forestry projects, became a plantation manager and the Program Director for Community Forestry in North-Eastern Namibia. He couldn't get a Namibia work permit, and not wanting to live as a refugee forever, decided to leave. "They let me work without a permit, but I didn't want to hide. I have the skills and knowledge to live my life in a dignified way."

Simon, his wife, Daphrose Nyiraminani, daughter Simone, then 12, and sons Simon, 9, and Jordan, 2, left for Canada, along with a nephew who has since moved west. "It is a big challenge to come here when you know nobody," says Simon. "We had family back home and friends in the Congo and Namibia. We had a community of people." He considers it fortuitous that ISIS was here to help him and alleviate his worries. And he had many - finding work, accommodation for his family, and whether his children would have a place in school and make friends.

"I didn't want to depend on handouts, but ISIS filled the void of what I needed." He registered in *English for Work and Business*, (he also speaks French, Portuguese, Swahili and other African dialects), and through the *Work Placement and Mentorship* programs, he built his resume. A 2006 job placement at the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources resulted in his current position as Woodlot Education Coordinator, focused on woodlot management. "You feel good when you're contributing."

ISIS helped his wife find food handling, sign language and other courses. She is a life skills worker in group homes and, when requested by ISIS, helps new immigrants. She also is a substitute teacher, while their daughter attends university and sons go to school. Simon considers it important to continue learning and completed a Master's in Adult Education at St. Francis Xavier University.

The family became Canadians in 2011 and, while they continue their African traditions, they have settled well and find the lifestyle appealing. "When I was first here a vehicle stopped and waved me to cross the street," Simon says with a laugh. "I had to call my friends at home to tell them and they thought I was lying!"

But he admits that the immigrant experience takes hard work. "You have to embrace the changes, bring what you know, accept the norms of the new place and marry the two."

You feel good when you are contributing.



CAPACITY

 **135** permanent & short contract

ISIS STAFF

34

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

40

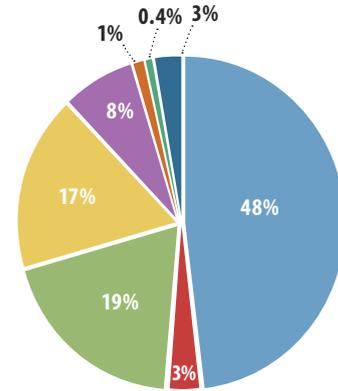
DIFFERENT LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Highlights from the ISIS Financial Report

For the year ending March 31, 2013

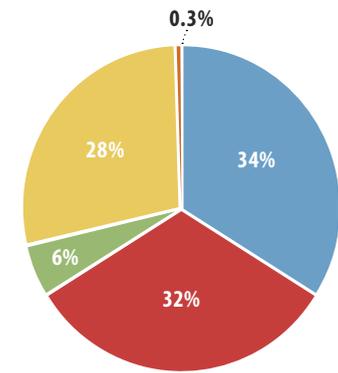
Revenue

	2012-2013	2011-2012	Increase/Decrease
Citizenship & Immigration Canada	\$3,663,566	\$3,432,676	6.73%
Human Resources & Skills Development Canada	\$264,823	\$244,474	8.32%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration - LMA Funding	\$1,452,696	\$1,731,315	-16.09%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration - Settlement Funding	\$1,310,456	\$847,973	54.54%
Nova Scotia Department of Labor & Advanced Education	\$589,907	\$415,592	41.94%
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	\$75,826	\$129,712	-41.54%
Canadian Immigrant Integration Program	\$32,139	\$0	100.00%
Other Funding Sources	\$231,746	\$606,173	-61.77%
Total	\$7,621,159	\$7,407,915	2.88%



Expenses

	2012-2013	2011-2012	Increase/Decrease
Language & Skills Development	\$2,551,157	\$2,458,690	3.76%
Employment & Bridging Services	\$2,408,076	\$2,157,988	11.59%
Business & Workforce Integration	\$403,581	\$382,781	5.43%
Settlement & Community, Communications & Outreach	\$2,110,280	\$1,910,795	10.44%
Amortization & Others	\$25,731	\$109,132	-76.00%
Total	\$7,498,825	\$7,019,386	6.83%



Excess of revenue over expenses	\$122,334	\$388,529
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Arleigh Hood
Barbara Dzierzanowska
Brenda Rowe
Catharine Penney
Claudette Legault
Gerry Mills
Jim Donovan
Joe Malek
Olaf Berghaus
Robert Hiscock
Ross Mitchell

ISIS Board Members

2012-2013

4Cs Foundation
Association of Canadian Community Colleges
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Canadian Coalition of Community-Based Employability Training
Canadian Immigrant Integration Program
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Employment Nova Scotia
Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund
Halifax Regional Municipality
Human Resources & Skills Development Canada
Nova Scotia Department of Education
Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness
Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education
Nova Scotia Department of Seniors
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
Status of Women Canada
United Way

Thank You to our Funding Partners



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