

Celebrating
Thirty-Five Years

of making Nova Scotia stronger
by helping immigrants
build their future here

1980-2015

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

ISANS is a leading
community organization
that welcomes immigrants.

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

CHAIR

Thirty-five years! It has been quite a journey for ISANS. There have been many changes over the years but the core commitment has remained the same – helping to make Nova Scotia stronger by welcoming and supporting immigrants.

The importance of immigration to Nova Scotia has received wide-spread attention over the past year. ISANS has been working with stakeholders in many sectors, including government, industry and community groups to turn this attention into meaningful action that will bring more immigrants to the province and improve opportunities for newcomers. As a respected leader in this area, ISANS will continue to facilitate these important discussions and maintain focus on the contribution of immigrants to the future of Nova Scotia.

While thought leadership and community engagement are important parts of the ISANS mission, providing services that directly affect the lives of newcomers is at the very core of who we are. Over 100 employees and hundreds of volunteers are engaged in the delivery of a broad array of language and settlement services that make an immediate and positive impact in the lives of newcomers and the places that they live and work. This has been our guiding vision for the past 35 years and it will guide our way into the next 35 years.

Thirty-five years of success is a significant milestone worthy of celebration, but we have no intention of resting on our laurels! We will continue to innovate and adapt to changes, always looking for the best and most effective ways to support immigrants. Increasing online service delivery, focusing on pre-arrival services and social enterprise models are just a few of the areas ISANS is exploring.

On behalf of the ISANS Board, I want to thank our community partners, funders, the staff and all our volunteers for their dedication and commitment. Please know that you are making a difference in the lives of immigrants and to the future of Nova Scotia – a future made stronger through immigration.

Catharine Penney, Chair, Board of Directors

DIRECTORS

This year ISANS celebrates its 35th year of welcoming immigrants to Nova Scotia and providing services to support them in their integration journey. In that time, ISANS has grown and matured and become recognized nationally as a leading settlement agency known for its innovation. We have acquired invaluable experience in the development and delivery of settlement services. We are stronger and in turn are making Nova Scotia stronger as the Province embarks on an ambitious population strategy, which seeks to ensure we are able to attract and retain the skilled immigrants we need to grow the economy.

Many of the thousands of immigrants who chose to make Nova Scotia home over the past three decades have passed through ISANS doors at one point or another. Some of them are working with us now. Many others we have had the privilege of working with – connecting them to the right employer, helping them navigate the paperwork and culture of doing business in Nova Scotia, referring them to volunteer opportunities. These individuals and their families are represented in every sector of society. They are your child's teacher, your doctor, owner of your favourite restaurant, your carpenter and painter, your firefighter and mechanic. Their children have become engineers and nurses. They are your neighbour and your fellow worshiper and they are making Nova Scotia stronger.

We are honoured to be part of the nation and community building that has taken place over the past 35 years in Nova Scotia, and we will continue to dedicate the many talents and skills of our staff and volunteers to making Nova Scotia stronger. ISANS is ready to play a leadership role for the next 35 years.

Gerry Mills, Director of Operations

Claudette Legault, Director of Programs & Services

KIM DANG

On her way to work at Fred's Tailors at Sobeys on Mumford Road, Kim Dang often sees people of different cultures heading to ISANS office. Like them, Kim came to the organization – then the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) – for assistance when she arrived in Canada.

Kim and her husband landed from Vietnam in 1988 after three years in a refugee camp. "We chose to come to Canada," she says. "We were very young. We arrived here in March. It was beautiful and peaceful. On the airplane we saw white over everything; I wondered, what is that?!" Kim had learned some English from a Filipino teacher at the camp. "At graduation she chose me to speak in front of everyone; she taught me how to pronounce everything. We still have that picture."

She and her husband studied in a government-sponsored ESL class at Bloomfield School for six months and both worked part time – her husband at the venerable Bluenose Restaurant and Kim at a Thai restaurant next door. "We took the bus downtown so we would have money to send back to my family."


Kim and a classmate – still a good friend to this day – went to MISA for a year. MISA, in fact, was established in 1980 to respond to the needs of Vietnamese refugees who arrived here in 1979 and throughout the 1980s. Kim's friend was learning to be a seamstress so Kim decided to do the same and found work at a company called Moores Clothing. "Together we learned how to sew. I learned how to hem pants." A quick learner, after two weeks she was asked to stay on. But Kim went to DKM

Sewing on Isleville Street, and worked there for 17 years. Six years ago she and her husband were about to buy a restaurant in downtown Halifax when they learned that Fred's Tailors' ailing owner was selling his business. They bought that instead. "When I came here I was very nervous," Kim recalls. "I didn't know everything about how to repair the clothes. The boss here was Vietnamese and he said he would teach me. I had to learn everything in one day."


Kim felt uneasy for the first year but found that being honest with her customers was important. "I would say if I do something wrong, forgive me and I'll fix it. Some people would get angry but some know how to sew and they would show me. I just kept building relationships." Kim works six days a week while her husband drives taxi. "This is freedom. I'm here by myself." Sundays she spends time with her children – 21-year-old Thien, a Saint Mary's University student, and 19-year-old Thi who is taking a hair stylist course. She hopes one day to visit her sister in Vancouver – when she retires, she says with a chuckle.

Kim has fond memories of ISANS. "My time there was very enjoyable. There were people from every culture in my class. They taught us about Canadian culture. I'm very grateful for that program." Despite the cold, and the lack of ingredients for her Vietnamese cooking, she liked it here right away. She even remembers the help from a support person who went shopping with her.

"They took care of everything. I will never forget the help they gave me."



"THEY TOOK CARE
OF EVERYTHING.
I WILL NEVER FORGET
THE HELP THEY GAVE ME."



“I FEEL THIS IS MY REAL HOME.
I DON'T WANT TO
MOVE ANYWHERE.”

NADER PARSARAD

Nader Parsarad's workshop on the Old Sambro Road is reflective of another era. Here the Iranian immigrant practices his unique trade of an artisan blacksmith with tools he makes by hand, forging metal over a fire.

Nader came to Canada in 2001 on an artists' trip to Toronto, sponsored by the local Iranian community. He visited friends in Halifax and immediately liked it. “I hadn't planned to stay; I had a successful business at home but it was routine. When I came here it was a big challenge for me.” He appreciates the community's size and found people friendly.

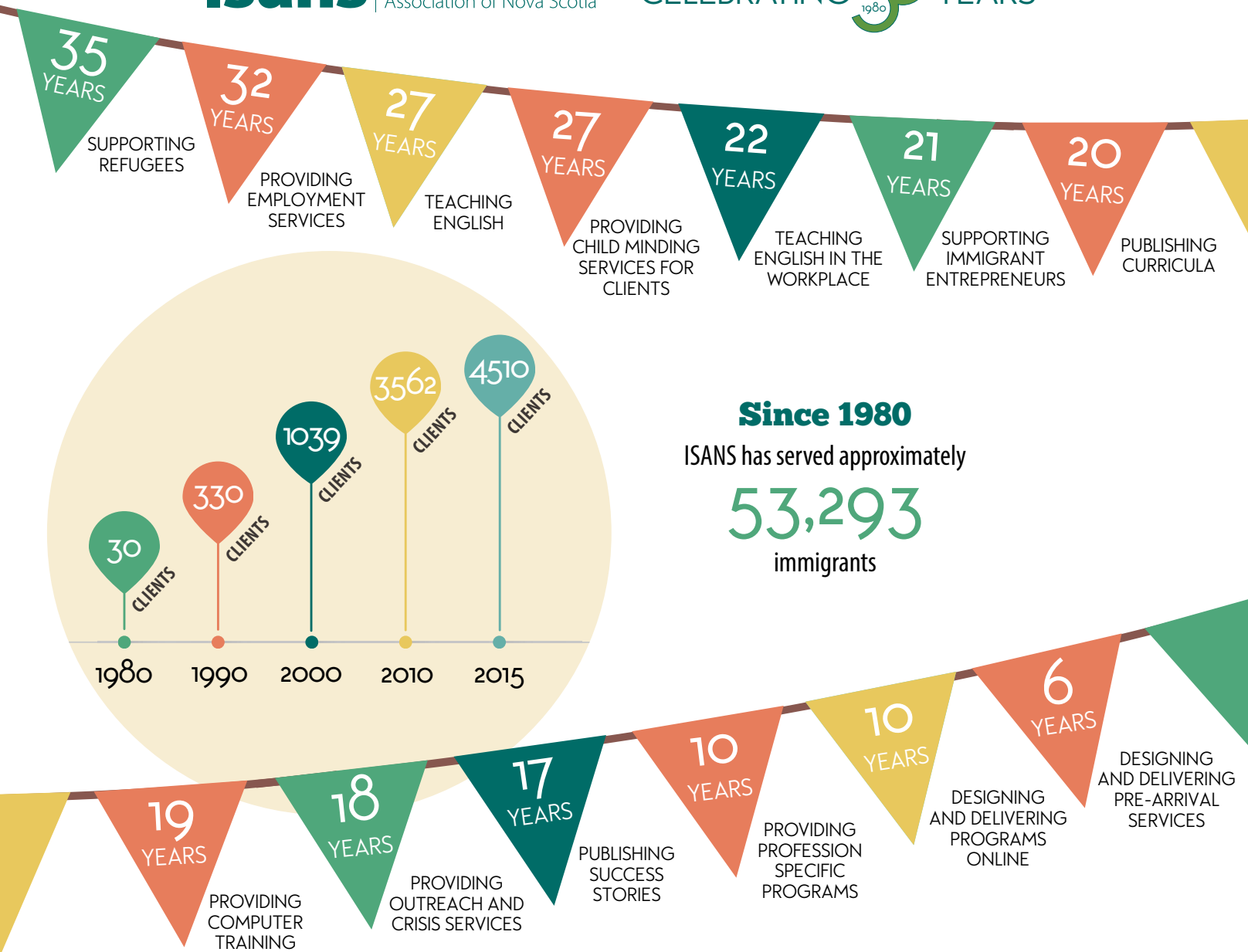
Nader was attracted to this work when he wandered into a blacksmith shop as a child. “I was lucky. This is everything to me.” He studied the trade in Iran and moved on to learn more – to Malaysia, Turkey and then eight years as an apprentice in Cyprus. He could keep learning forever, he says, but knew it was time to work. Most challenging is to create a unique design. “Bending, forging, welding, fabricating is the fun part,” he explains. “Sometimes when I'm sleeping an idea comes to me and I will sketch it. If I don't do that I know I will forget it the next day.”

Nader is also a licensed jeweler, but mainly makes railings and gates – some based on Persian designs. He proudly points to a framed newspaper story about his work for FireWorks Gallery jewelry store on Barrington Street. In 2013 Nader co-designed a spectacular 1,100-kilogram ironwork sculpture – a huge diamond, surrounded by lotus leaves, topped with a dragon – that was hoisted by crane to the roof.

Despite having little English, he opened a shop with a partner soon after he settled here. “I am good with body language. I didn't know English names of tools but I would explain it and draw it on the paper and people would understand.” One day a customer mentioned studying English at school so Nader went along and became a student at the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC) – later to join with the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) to form ISANS. “I studied for four months every day. It was wonderful. It was big-time help. Instead of learning from the book they were teaching me about problems for newcomers – how to talk to 911, how to talk to doctors.” He made friends in class, some of whom he still sees.

Nader lives with Dena, his dog. He has friends here in the Iranian community and is a member of the Maritime Blacksmith Association. He has vacationed in Japan. “I feel this is my real home. I don't want to move anywhere.” Nader hopes that more people learn to appreciate using metal. He'd like to build a sheet metal shop large enough to bid on government jobs. “I love this work; if you don't love it you cannot grow. You create something beautiful from raw material.”

Nader still looks at the photograph of his HILC English class and remains thankful for ISANS. “It's a wonderful, wonderful organization, very friendly and the teachers are professional. They know exactly what newcomers need and they focus on those things.”

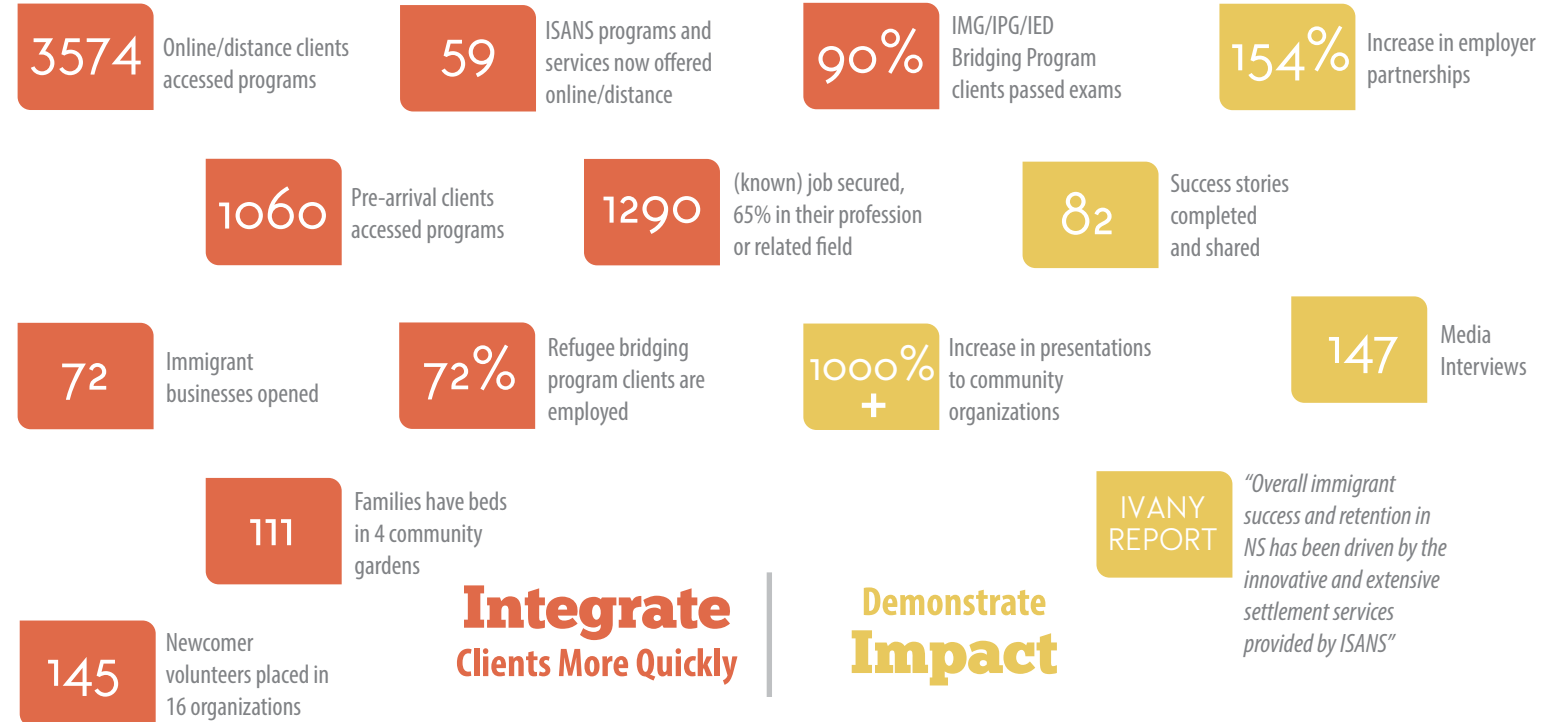


9
Provincial
Premiers

8
Prime
Ministers

6
Halifax
Mayors



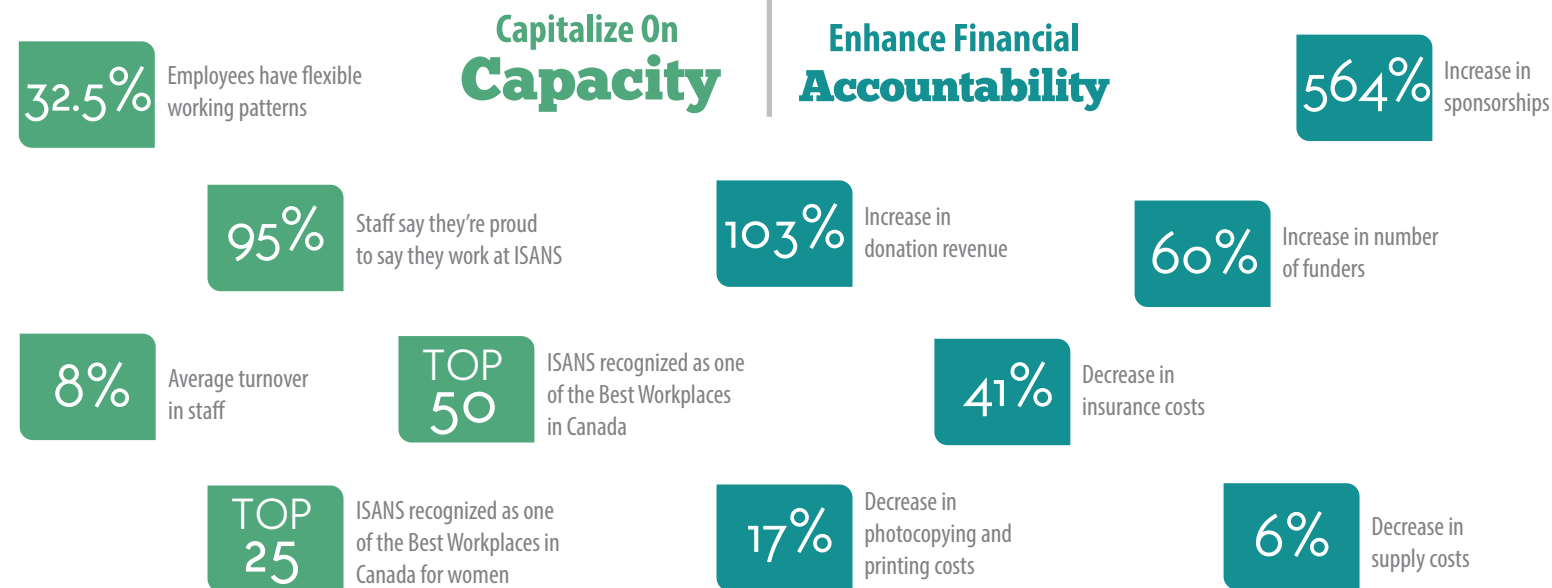


Integrate
Clients More Quickly

Demonstrate
Impact

IVANY REPORT
"Overall immigrant success and retention in NS has been driven by the innovative and extensive settlement services provided by ISANS"

ISANS Strategic Plan 2012-2015



OVER THE LAST 3 YEARS



“I MEET MY FORMER CLIENTS AND THEY
STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST DAY WE MET.
YOU STAY IN THE MINDS
AND HEARTS OF PEOPLE.”

ANNA GREGUS

December 5, 1992, is a day that Anna Gregus will always remember: she became one of ISANS' first settlement workers. “I knew this is the job for me. I had the skills and the experience that I could use. It was one of the best days in Canada; I was so happy.”

As refugees from what is now Slovakia, Anna and her family moved to Halifax after a year in Austria, two years in Ontario and eight years in Newfoundland. Anna had an economics degree but didn't speak English when she left her homeland. She studied education while her husband worked as a doctor in Woody Point, Newfoundland. “My love of learning kept me going,” she says. She taught math and computers there, but was happy to move on from teaching.

Anna employed her advocacy and counseling skills, and her knowledge of mental health issues, to assist new arrivals, soon becoming manager of the settlement team. Although over the years many large groups of refugees arrived in Nova Scotia, one of her biggest challenges was Operation Parasol, a sudden airlift of people from embattled Kosovo to Canadian Forces Base Greenwood in 1999. Anna coordinated the establishment of a refugee camp in nearby Aldershot, as well as another at CFB Halifax Windsor Park. “It happened so quickly that people were shell-shocked. I remember a lady who still had slippers on her feet and hair rollers in her pocket.” She and her team worked hard for weeks as the program received special federal funding for extensive counseling and settlement support.

Anna was working with Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), when it joined with Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC), an organization that offered English

classes to new arrivals, to create ISANS. “We were working closely together. It made sense to join.” Anna still regards her position as a dream come true. “It was a wonderful working environment.” Because many staff members are refugees and immigrants, she feels they share a strong bond with their clients. Anna even completed a social work degree in the evenings to — as she describes it — find more tools to work with. Now retired, her commitment to ISANS and refugees continues as she volunteers on the refugee committee.

Anna is also working with daughter Emily, a dietician student, in a volunteer project at ISANS offering nutrition classes to new arrivals, using produce from community gardens. A life-long learner, Anna is building new expertise foraging for edible wild plants. And because of her concerns about poverty and injustice, she has also participated in two solidarity tours to Paraguay and Bolivia with an NGO called Chalice. “People take care of each other as they have limited resources and government help. I was so impressed.” Retirement, she notes, is keeping her as busy as when she was working. Her husband continues to work at the Dartmouth Medical Centre while two daughters live in Ottawa — Michele, editor of Rabble.ca, and Andrea, a speech therapist.

Anna left her mark at ISANS through her passionate work in settlement. “I meet my former clients and they still remember the first day we met. You stay in the minds and hearts of people.” Anna believes the organization is vital for newcomers. “It not only saves you time with practicalities, but it gives you a strong sense of belonging.”

ABIR HASSAN HUSSEIN

When Dr. Abir Hussein arrived in Canada in 2009, she was surprised to learn how difficult the process is for international physicians to practice medicine here. The native of Egypt was a General Practitioner in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, and her husband, Islam Eissa, was an Internist. “When we applied for Canadian immigration, we knew Canada needed doctors and that’s why we were accepted. We thought that when we pass our qualification exams we will enter a Residency program or start working as physicians.”

They had left the Middle East mainly because of their careers. “We were looking for the best opportunities in medicine, and Canada offered an excellent, balanced health-care system.” They were also impressed with the country’s education, social standards and free speech. They had passed the “Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Exam” in Saudi Arabia and their next exam upon arriving. It took two years to complete everything, including increasing her English competency level. “I tried to do as much as possible to get higher qualifications,” says Abir. She found the process educational. “It’s not just the medicine, but you’re learning a different health-care system. Ethical dilemmas, for example, are not a part of our original training.” It was challenging financially as they were raising a family that has now grown to four girls – Reem, 13, Zayna, 9, Salma, 5, and Lina, 2. Abir and Islam worked in blood collection while studying, and he also took other jobs.

Upon completing the Clinician Assessment for Practice Program (CAPP), Abir received a four-year position in a rural community and was awarded a mentorship. In November 2011 she started her current job at the Ocean View Family Practice in Yarmouth.

Islam is completing his residency in Saint John, New Brunswick, and will soon join his family.

“ISANS assistance was very central in my achievement,” says Abir. She received employment counseling upon arrival and the organization also assisted with clinical exam preparation through a program affiliated with Dalhousie University. “That was one of the most important things that helped me pass the clinical exams.” Abir also participated in English for Healthcare Professionals. “It is sometimes challenging to interview a patient. The instructor provided me with all the materials I needed and taught me how to phrase my sentences so I could take an efficient medical history.” Abir remembers a volunteer nurse at ISANS who met with the internationally trained physicians weekly to help them with clinical exam practice. She also used the Career Access Fund to help support the cost of her exams.

Abir describes Yarmouth as a “friendly environment with supportive people,” noting in particular, Dr Shelagh Leahey, her mentor. “We felt very welcomed. There are lots of extra-curricular activities for the kids.” The only drawback is the small size of the Muslim community. Abir, Islam, Reem and Zayna received Canadian citizenship in April. Pictures posted online by CBC elicited favorable responses. “The comments from Yarmouth people were so touching and welcoming, and from people I don’t know. They were so excited and happy for us, feeling honored that we chose Yarmouth. We felt the love.”

They return to Egypt to visit family and friends. “But this is home,” says Abir. “It’s a good place for the children, and we have satisfying jobs, thanks to help from ISANS.”

“THEY WERE SO EXCITED
AND HAPPY FOR US,
FEELING HONOURED THAT
WE CHOSE YARMOUTH.
WE FELT THE LOVE.”





“MY FOCUS IS GIVING
BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.”

JEEVAN SALDANHA

Jeevan Saldanha, President of SHAP Industrial Ltd., may live in Halifax but he works globally. The native of Bombay came here via Kuwait where he worked for 17 years in engineering, on-site fabrication and service provision in the oil and gas industry. Jeevan, who has a degree in mechanical engineering, once employed about 25 people.

While in Kuwait he often visited Toronto but found it similar to other cities. “I was looking for something different, I don’t know what.” During a 2002 visit to Halifax he phoned a hydraulic company out of curiosity and was invited to a job interview. “I met six bosses around the table. They said we’re interested, why don’t you start?” He returned home and soon moved here with his wife Flavia and two sons. “Coming to Canada with a job was great. It helped me to understand the market too.”

A year later Jeevan left the company to go on his own. “I didn’t waste too much time,” he laughs. He currently manages joint projects with other companies in the power, marine, and oil and gas industries, as well as the Department of National Defense. His Middle East customer base makes up about two thirds of his business. Jeevan employs two people in his office plus a part-time workshop supervisor.

Jeevan heard of ISANS through friends, and also from bus ads. “You’d see the organization’s name everywhere!” He didn’t need language services as English is his first language. But the English in the Workplace program proved useful for his office staff whose first language is Farsi. The innovative and popular program is based on a needs assessment and a customized learning plan

where the instructor comes to the workplace. “It helped them to feel comfortable interacting with customers,” recalls Jeevan. “They learned how to pick up the phone and make a general conversation. It was a great program.”

Jeevan also attended sessions in accounting as part of ISANS Business Development Services that provide training for immigrant entrepreneurs. “You come to Canada as an immigrant and you think the ways are the same, but they’re not.”

The family settled well here. “We didn’t have culture shock because in Kuwait we experienced people from all over the world.” They are active church volunteers and he and Flavia run an Alpha program for prisoners. Jeevan also formed Motivation Tuesday, a group of businessmen who meet monthly to discuss meaningful ways to make a difference. “My focus is giving back to the community.” He also assists other immigrants through Halifax’s Local Immigrant Partnership. Jeevan is committed to Nova Scotia. “My younger son says I’ll go anywhere in the world but I’ll always come back to the lakes of Nova Scotia to go fishing.” Son Mark is soon to enroll at Dalhousie where older brother Jason studies engineering. Flavia works at the Department of Natural Resources.

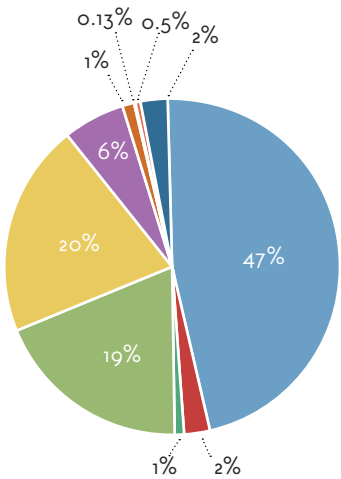
Jeevan stays in touch with ISANS and attends events. He has only good things to say about the organization. “The staff at ISANS is interested in me and in helping me out. They know a lot and know the people in play. They always are friendly, always have a smile and always have answers.”

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ISANS FINANCIAL REPORT

For the year ending March 31, 2015

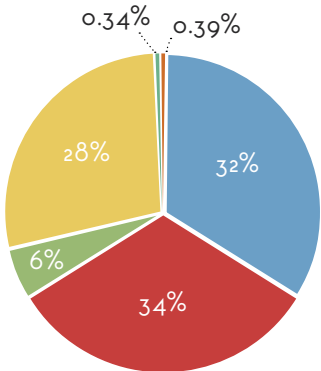
REVENUE

	2014-2015	2013-2014	Increase/Decrease
Citizenship & Immigration Canada	\$3,694,573	\$3,662,218	0.88%
Employment & Social Development Canada	\$198,630	\$162,665	22.11%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration - Job Fund Agreement	\$1,516,760	\$1,668,722	-9.11%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration - Settlement Funding	\$1,631,167	\$1,595,781	2.22%
Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education	\$473,879	\$543,133	-12.75%
Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness	\$91,830	\$63,135	45.45%
Status of Women Canada	\$72,218	\$62,049	16.39%
Nova Scotia Department of Seniors	\$9,978	\$0	New
United Way	\$38,748	\$0	New
Other Funding Sources	\$170,394	\$240,067	-29.02%
Total	\$7,898,177	\$7,997,770	-1.25%



EXPENSES

	2014-2015	2013-2014	Increase/Decrease
Language & Skills Development	\$2,480,409	\$2,631,862	-5.75%
Employment & Bridging Services	\$2,701,455	\$2,625,988	2.87%
Business & Workforce Integration	\$434,749	\$436,934	-0.5%
Settlement & Community, Communications & Outreach	\$2,165,011	\$2,157,497	0.35%
Strategy Implementation	\$26,489	\$72,226	-63.32%
Amortization & Others	\$30,370	\$30,062	1.02%
Total	\$7,838,483	\$7,954,568	-1.46%



Excess of revenue over expenses	\$59,694	\$43,202	38.18%
---------------------------------	----------	----------	--------

ISANS BOARD MEMBERS

2014-2015

- Amanda Marshall

Basia Dzierzanowska

Brenda Rowe

Catharine Penney

Claudette Legault

Colin McLean
- Dick Miller

Gerry Mills

Jim Donovan

Joe Malek

Merlin Fownes

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

- Association of Canadian Community Colleges
- Bank of Nova Scotia
- Capital Health
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Employment of Nova Scotia
- Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund
- IWK Foundation
- Nova Scotia Barristers' Society
- Nova Scotia Department of Education
- Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness
- Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education
- Nova Scotia Department of Seniors
- Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Status of Women Canada
- United Way Halifax

6960 Mumford Road • Suite 2120
Halifax • Nova Scotia • Canada • B3L 4P1
Phone: 902.423.3607 • Fax: 902.423.3154

www.isans.ca