



PATHWAYS TO RESILIENCE

2019/2020 **ANNUAL REPORT**

Our Vision

A community where all can belong and grow.

Our Mission

Helping immigrants build a future in Nova Scotia.

Settling in a new country isn't easy – it requires courage, support, and adaptability. Many newcomers come to Nova Scotia with experiences of resilience and a wide array of skills. Proudly, ISANS works with newcomers in strengthening pathways toward resilience to help them succeed in their new lives in Canada.

Through our innovative and timely programs and services, we offer newcomers autonomy and opportunities to collaborate, allowing them to bring their strength, skills, experiences, and personal resources to their settlement process.

No matter their journey, we offer deliberate, adaptable, and thoughtful support to every newcomer we meet to help them settle well and rise to challenges, and come back stronger from them as a result.

We help them
strengthen
their resilience.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Stepping forward with courage

This year marks an incredible achievement as ISANS enters its 40th year of providing immigrant settlement excellence in Nova Scotia.

Throughout our history, we have undergone numerous changes, celebrated exceptional successes, and overcome many challenges. Undoubtedly, a consistent link has been our ability to adapt, grow, and develop as an organization. In the uncertain times we find ourselves in today, ISANS is accompanying newcomers, supporting their pathways to resilience and strengthening our own resilience as an organization.

Resilience is integral to growth and achievement, enabling us to cope with and overcome setbacks, barriers, or limited resources. It measures our willingness to forge ahead because of and in spite of our circumstances, whatever they may be.

Combined, responsive and timely programming and services form the cornerstone of our ability to support newcomers as they forge their own pathways. Our values of innovation, inclusion, diversity, respect, accountability, and collaboration enable us to empower newcomers to overcome their challenges and become co-producers in their settlement journeys.

Through our daily work, we are weaving a stronger social fabric that has the ability to withstand adversity, and that recognizes our strength and resilience is a direct result of embracing difference. We are all stronger together.

If we have learned anything over the last 40 years, it has always been to welcome and value new ways of thinking and doing, such as applying technology and supporting clients through programs and services that are expansive, sustainable, and scalable.

This year, and in timely fashion, the ISANS Board of Directors has worked on risk mitigation, as well as financial diversification and stewardship. Our goal has been to bolster ISANS' foundation to maximize the realization of opportunities. Carrying on ISANS' tradition of sustainability, we have worked to ensure another 40 years of service excellence.

To all our clients, staff, supporters, and partners, thank you for your profound resilience, engagement, and compassion. It is because of you that ISANS has become the landmark organization it is today: a national and international leader in settlement programs and services.

As always, we are the front door to many of Nova Scotia's immigrants. By creating a community where all can belong and grow, we are also building a stronger Nova Scotia and Canada for all.



Rosalind Penfound

Chair, ISANS Board of Directors

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Laying a foundation for resilience

As ISANS enters its 40th year, it is impossible not to reflect on our rich and diverse history.

Our history is one filled with growth, expansion, and opportunities for learning, nurtured by the passion, warmth, and dedication of all who have walked through our doors.

Resilience is also a critical aspect of our heritage, forming an important part of our identity. We have seen economic recessions, supported refugee crises, and confronted social intolerance, discrimination, and racism. Through all these circumstances, we have learned, with the support of newcomers, to pivot, adapt, advocate, and passionately engage with our community. We have worked – and continue to work – tirelessly and consistently, to ensure that newcomers have the support they need to thrive and succeed in their new lives in Canada.

As a nation, and as provinces and communities, we benefit greatly from the success of newcomers, and their integration is immensely important to our social and economic health. Overall, immigration helps us create stronger, more diverse, and inclusive societies, encouraging and embracing different points of view, new ideas, and unique perspectives. Diversity and inclusion, in turn, leads to creative collaboration, increased tolerance and education, as well as economic, cultural, and spiritual growth.

ISANS creates pathways to possibilities and helps newcomers strengthen their resilience.

This past year, we are proud to have introduced new programs to contribute to these ends: an employment program for professional, racially visible immigrant women; an online, pre-arrival employment tool for refugees; our first PowerHack “Hackaton” for IT newcomer clients; an anti-racism, art-based program for youth (with many local partners); flash cards on parenting tips for parents and children; and a language course for financial professionals.

We benefit from the wonderful support of our funding partners, community partners, volunteers, staff, and the many newcomers who engage with us virtually and in person.

Thank you for all of your support!



Jennifer Watts

CEO

Get Settled



Our settlement team works with newcomers to help them build futures in Nova Scotia, with programs and services specifically designed to realize their goals as they settle into their new lives in Canada. Upon arrival and through their first year, we work with them to identify their settlement needs and aspirations, and help them maximize their strengths and resources on their pathways to resilience.

Using a strengths-based approach in this work is especially important, as newcomers arrive already equipped with valuable abilities and experience. In conjunction with our trauma-informed programming, our strengths-based practice helps newcomers bolster their skillset and confidence, which not only contributes to their success, but also increases their resilience – a critical aspect of adapting to life in a new country. Ultimately, this practice establishes safety, trustworthiness, and respect. It gives newcomers autonomy and opportunities to collaborate, and allows them to bring their strength, skills, experiences, and personal resources to their settlement process.

Throughout 2019-2020, our settlement staff provided services to over 1,800 newcomers, including 424 recently arrived Government-Assisted Refugees and 87 recently arrived Privately Sponsored Refugees, all in their first year in Canada. Our Private Refugee Sponsorship team received 57 applications to sponsor 102 newcomers. Furthering our focus on trauma-informed programming, we hosted 25 Living Well in Difficult Times workshops to 445 newcomers in 2019, and supported 40 families through the Incredible Years and Handle with Care parenting support groups.

1,800

Unique clients served

25

Workshops on living well in difficult times

424

Government-assisted refugees served

57

Applications to privately sponsor 102 newcomers

Learn English

The ability to communicate clearly with others is an important part of the settlement process. Clear communication fosters opportunities to form meaningful connections, find gainful employment, and navigate new landscapes successfully – all of which increase confidence and feelings of self-worth.

Many of the newcomers we serve do not speak English as their native language, so we are proud to provide comprehensive and diverse language programs to help them build their English language skills and strengthen their resilience throughout their settlement journeys. Through our language programs, we offer everything from literacy classes, special needs supports, home study, early childhood education, to profession-specific language and communication classes.

We understand that individuals have different needs and can face numerous barriers when accessing programming, so we offer our language services alongside our settlement, employment, community integration, and support services to ensure we meet and support newcomers at every stage of their settlement pathways.

In 2019, we served more than 3,000 individuals in over 20 specialized programs, as well as in 90 active classes. Students enrolled in programming indicated that their English has improved and they are more confident to communicate for social or employment purposes, and to look for work, go to school, participate in their community, and access local services – all important pieces of building resilience and integrating to life in Canada.

3,000
Participants in
language classes

90
Active classes

20+
Specialized
programs

In the last year alone, our Language Services programs had participants hailing from over 75 countries.



Each person's pathway to resilience looks different; some may spend months working to achieve credential recognition to work in their chosen field, while others may spend months building skills to obtain their first job. At every stage in their careers, our Employment Programs and Services team works closely with them to plot career trajectories that will help them continue on their settlement pathways and strengthen their resilience.

Our Employment Programs and Services provide newcomers with a wide range of opportunities, from job-search training and practice interviews, to profession-specific bridging programs, to financial support for immigrant professionals seeking licensure in their chosen field. With each program and workshop, we help individuals build on their skills and abilities to gain meaningful employment, contributing to their success and resilience as they adapt to working in Canada.

In 2019, 3,051 individuals participated in Employment Programs and Services, 1,987 of which were new to the program. 1,213 individuals – including 207 with lived refugee experience – secured employment, with 76 doing so in their field or in a related one. Our pre-arrival services continue to be popular, too: 240 newcomers participated in employment programming before they arrived in Nova Scotia, and 208 of them secured employment within six months or less of landing.

3,051

Participants in
employment
& bridging
programs

86%

Pre-arrival
participants
found
employment

1,213

Clients became
employed

Find Employment



This year, seven participants from our Internationally Educated Nurses Orientation Program became registered nurses here in Nova Scotia.

Diversify Your Workforce

Understanding that diversity is a crucial cornerstone of strength, success, and resiliency in the workforce, we help employers build strong and diverse workplaces by connecting them to skilled immigrants through our tailored and innovative programs and services.

In 2019, employers and newcomers took advantage of our services in more than 2,500 instances, including 602 individuals who were new to ISANS.



We also launched our Onboarding Employer Engagement program this year. Our team, comprised of four staff who live and work throughout rural and small centres of mainland Nova Scotia, work together to build relationships with employers in smaller, rural centres and connect them to ISANS Employer Support services. Overall, the team connected with 741 new employers outside Halifax Regional Municipality.

Through 88 Workplace Culture workshops, we were able to help more than 1,200 individuals understand the benefits of hiring, supporting, and retaining newcomers, while also improving their intercultural competence.

We had 98 professionals sign up to be a part of our Professional Mentorship program. The program made 185 mentor/mentee matches, helping newcomers gain insights into their prospective fields.

Our Professional Practice program also helped 67 newcomers find placements in their field, helping them gain Canadian Workplace experience and build their networks.

98

Participants in the
Professional
Mentorship programs

161%

Increase in Workplace
Culture workshop
participation

Learning how to do business successfully is difficult at best, let alone for those who are new to Canada. Running a business involves countless nuances and details, which can sometimes take years of experience to understand. At ISANS, however, we work diligently to expedite this learning curve by offering expert services and support to immigrants at all stages of business start-up and development, helping them navigate Canadian business and workplace culture successfully.

We understand the strength newcomers bring to local and national economies, as well as how much they contribute to social diversity and economic growth. By strengthening Canadian economies and social experiences, their contributions are invaluable not only to their resilience as creators and entrepreneurs, but to our collective resilience as well.

This understanding informs every area of the services we offer, such as business counselling and training, networking opportunities, as well as our Connections guide—an immigrants guide to starting a business in Nova Scotia—which provides a wide range of business resources for immigrant entrepreneurs.

In 2019, 1,944 newcomers received business development services at ISANS, 485 of which were new clients, and we supported newcomers to open 102 businesses across Nova Scotia. We continue to support immigrant-owned-and-operated businesses by promoting and marketing them through the Immigrant Business Marketplace App. Currently, 175 businesses market their products and services through the platform.

1,944
Clients received
business
services

485
New business
clients registered

102
Clients started a
business in
Nova Scotia

Do Business



Our Bridge to Entrepreneurship program helps newcomers develop entrepreneurial skills while earning additional income, launching their endeavours into full-fledged businesses.

Connect with Community

At ISANS, our vision is to build a community where all can belong and grow, and our Community Integration Services are integral to bringing this vision to life. Ensuring the successful integration of all newcomers involves a mutual focus on both individual and community support. These services therefore provide a unique blend of programming designed to build meaningful connections, as well as community capacity.

Examples of these opportunities are our Building Intercultural Competence workshops and the Welcome Ambassador program, designed to strengthen welcoming communities and foster advocacy, tolerance, and inter-cultural competence. Over the last year, 374 participants took part in 36 Welcome Ambassador and Building Intercultural Competence workshops.



We also provide vital orientation services, teaching newcomers everything they need to know about living in Canada – from Canadian laws and tax filing, to proper seasonal attire and recreational activities. Remarkably, over 1,300 newcomers accessed our Orientation program this year, which held 258 sessions.

Foundational to building resilience and integrating to life in Canada are the connections newcomers make in their communities, both to other people and the places around them. Through our Community Connections programs, we partnered with 34 community organizations, and we served 140 families in community gardens, offering them opportunities to grow their own food, familiarize themselves with new landscapes, and meet members of the community. We also helped over 500 newcomers take part in other recreational activities, such as sports, camping, theatre, art-based workshops, and field trips.

500

Newcomers
participated
in community
activities

258

Newcomer
orientation
sessions

140

Families with
community
gardens

For the last two years, we have partnered with Parks Canada to provide yearly "Learn to Camp" events, teaching newcomer families the essential skills they need to camp and have fun while exploring national parks.

At ISANS, it is important that we always offer relevant and accessible services to immigrants throughout the entire settlement process, including before and after they arrive to Canada. Through such programs as Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA), as well as courses focused on everything from building language and employment skills to acclimating to life in Canada, our distance and online services ensure all newcomers arrive prepared and are able to continue their learning no matter their location.

This year, we provided online and distance services to 450 newcomers living outside Halifax Regional Municipality in over 100 Nova Scotian communities. Through our initiative Settlement Online – an online platform that offers a range of courses designed to help newcomers in and destined for Canada prepare themselves for the Canadian workforce – we served over 4,000 individuals from over 485 international cities.

SOPA's Ready to Work Program:

ISANS is one of two immigrant-serving agencies across Canada selected to deliver pre-arrival programming specifically to refugees. Through SOPA, the Ready to Work program will offer pre-arrival refugees the chance to learn about searching for jobs and working in Canada, as well as leveraging their skills to increase their chances of finding Canadian employment.

In keeping with our tradition of innovation and program resilience, we will deliver this highly interactive course entirely through WhatsApp, involving regular contact with a facilitator. This year, we are excited to announce that SOPA's Ready to Work program is prepared for piloting in Jordan as soon as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

450
Clients living
outside HRM served

4,000
Active clients on
SettlementOnline.ca

Distance & Online



In addition to the range of self-directed and facilitated courses available to online learners, SOPA also offers one-on-one employment counselling online.

Support Services

Accessing settlement and community services is the first step in defining pathways to resilience for many newcomers. Our Support Services play an integral role in removing barriers and enabling newcomers to access community services, which they need to settle and integrate successfully.

This year, ISANS paid particular attention to implementing a family-centered approach for Support Services. Guided by an empowerment model of practice, this approach recognizes the interconnectedness of family members' experiences, as well family strengths as a unified whole. Families thus remain at the centre of all of our support services, ensuring collaboration, open communication, and holistic service delivery throughout every level of their settlement process.

Our intake counsellors provide critical needs assessments; our interpretation and translation services allow newcomers and their families to overcome language barriers; and our Early Childhood Education Centres support children's settlement and integration in their new community. Combined, these Support Services and programs enable newcomers to participate in a wide range of programming, increasing readiness for their lives in Canada.

Incredibly, we welcomed more than 27,000 visitors across three locations in the 2019-2020 year, and answered over 21,000 phone calls. We provided 9,200 formal interpretations, as well as translated over 1,000 documents. Our ECE Centres served 829 children.

829

Children in care
in ECE Centres

27,000

Visitors to
ISANS locations



Our ECE Centres now include programs for children with special learning needs

Highlights from the 2019-2020 Financial Report

REVENUE	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	% CHANGE
Federal	\$15,510,293	\$14,513,504	6.87%
Provincial - Nova Scotia	\$4,613,045	\$4,261,322	8.25%
Other funding sources	\$1,402,030	\$855,010	63.98%
TOTAL	\$21,525,368	\$19,629,836	9.66%

EXPENSES	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	% CHANGE
Amortization of capital assets	\$306,369	\$285,830	7.19%
Overhead and operation	\$2,370,728	\$2,373,055	-0.10%
Professional fees	\$292,448	\$274,291	6.62%
Program delivery	\$3,577,639	\$3,548,227	0.83%
Salaries and benefits	\$14,601,209	\$12,781,464	14.24%
Travel	\$95,382	\$93,658	1.84%
TOTAL	\$21,243,775	\$19,356,525	9.75%



72.0% Federal
21.0% Provincial
7.0% Other Funding Sources



68.7% Salaries and benefits
16.8% Program delivery
11.2% Overhead and operation
1.4% Amortization of capital assets
1.4% Professional fees
0.5% Travel

Thank you to our Funders

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity
Canadian Heritage
Colleges and Institutes Canada
Employment and Social Development Canada
Halifax International Airport Authority
HIPPOY Canada
Immigrant Employment Council of BC
Immigrant Services Society of BC
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
J and W Murphy Foundation
MEC Community Investment Grant
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency
Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage
Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
Nova Scotia Department of Education
Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council
Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organization
Royal Bank of Canada Foundation
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TELUS
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