



Annual Report 2016-2017

A FUTURE in Nova Scotia

isans | Immigrant Services
Association of Nova Scotia

VISION

A community where all can belong and grow.

MISSION

Helping immigrants build a future in Nova Scotia.

Message from the **CHAIR**

A powerful force has been unleashed in Nova Scotia. It's intangible and hard to define exactly but it's real and it's having an impact. The compassion and support for immigrants that came forward in a wonderful, welcoming wave during the Syrian refugee crisis has led to ongoing discussions that are influencing the economic and cultural makeup of this province. These discussions about support for newcomers are finding common ground with the concerns of other communities of Nova Scotians who have too often been marginalized.

There is excitement about the role of immigration in Nova Scotia's economic future and a belief in the strength of diversity that goes beyond government and certainly beyond Halifax. Employers, universities and colleges, private citizens – as individuals and in groups with their neighbours and colleagues - and communities across the entire province are engaged. ISANS has always believed that serving immigrants also serves Nova Scotia and we could not be more pleased.

It has been a year of growth. We are offering more services and programs, to more people, with more staff, in more locations than ever before. Mindful that growth is not an end in itself, the organization undertook a comprehensive strategic planning exercise this year which included consultations with hundreds of stakeholders. Our new Strategic Plan creates a framework to ensure that ISANS continues to evolve its services, programs and partnerships in ways that align with the organization's values and mission of *helping immigrants build a future in Nova Scotia*.

We could not do what we do without the support and enthusiasm of hundreds of volunteers, our funding partners and all the organizations that work with us to support and empower newcomers. To all of you, thank you so much.

To the staff, who have shown such grace and compassion, as well as strength and determination during this period of challenging growth – thank you for all that you do every day to improve the lives of newcomers.

As I conclude my term as Chair, I also want to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors who are so generous with their time and incredibly supportive of ISANS' mission. In particular, I must acknowledge the support of our Executive Director, Gerry Mills, who made it possible for me to fulfill my role. It has been a privilege.

Catharine Penney

Chair, Board of Directors

Message from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

This year was the year of change, of innovation, of flexibility and of enormous effort by ISANS as we responded to the different contexts and needs of the immigrants who came through our doors. It was also a year of looking forward and preparing for the future.

This year we established a new organizational structure; we invested in new technology and opened new locations to assist an increasing number of clients. We provided service to 1,979 refugees; we taught English to 1,249 clients; we helped immigrants to secure 769 jobs and to open 109 businesses; just a few of our many achievements this year.

ISANS' reputation as a strong and influential leader in the area of immigrant settlement continues to grow but we cannot do this work alone and we thank our many community partners, funders and volunteers for their generosity and support in helping us to carry out our mission. We also thank each of the 4,972 immigrants whom we supported this year, for the trust they placed in us to help them on their settlement journey.

Our leadership and resourcefulness, together with our spirit of collaboration, were recognized this year with a number of awards - a *Now! Nova Scotia Good News Award*, *Nova Scotia Human Rights Award* and *IRCC Syrian Initiative Award*. In addition, some of our innovative approaches in service delivery were both successful in integrating our clients and recognized as best practices and replicated across the country. This recognition shone a light on the outstanding work and achievements of ISANS and our incredible staff, who, once again, demonstrated excellence in both service provision and resiliency in adapting to the many and constant changes we faced.

As we move into the future, with a new strategic plan in place, we will continue to wear that mantle of leadership with strong resolve, acknowledging that we have a responsibility to maximize the impact of our knowledge and experience and recognizing that what we do - helping immigrants build a future in Nova Scotia - is now more critical than ever.

Gerry Mills
Executive Director



MIN LI

Min Li's voyage to Nova Scotia from China was different than most new arrivals—she came by car. She and husband, Shiyuan, son Jack, now 10, and daughter Ryann, 3, had lived a short time in Seattle, Washington, and drove across the continent to arrive here in December 2016.

Min had been accepted through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. She had studied accounting and international finance in France, having earned her Master's of Business Administration in 2003. Back in Beijing, she worked in a state-owned international finance company, and often travelled throughout Southeast Asia. She spent eight years as a data analyst at the American Embassy, which included two trips to the United States.

Min was ready for yet another change. "Recognition of Nova Scotia in China is very little," she explains. "I looked at the map and got to know Halifax is the largest city; I thought it won't be too bad because it's near the sea."

Min says ISANS was helpful to both her and her husband. They enrolled upon arrival and received a language assessment. She attended job search strategies workshops, and Shiyuan, a former CEO in information technology, continues to attend English classes. Min's employment specialist at ISANS identified the job she now has as an airline planning analyst at Halifax Stanfield

Airport. "First day we met, I said I was good at analysis and she said there might be a job for you."

Min helps air carriers determine their future in terms of capacity, types of flights and business plans. Although she was new to the airline industry, she was instrumental in getting a cargo flight to Halifax that can deliver 700 tons of fresh lobster direct to China in 14 hours. "I started from scratch, but I can see opportunities in China."

Her personal life is also satisfying and she appreciates the work/life balance here. "Especially for husbands," she says. "There is much more pressure on the male in China. Here men and women are more equal." She is thrilled that her son has time for activities—cello, swimming and basketball—as school is not as demanding as in China. "There, everyone takes extra classes, even in English."

She has found it easy to make friends but has no spare time beyond work and family. She hopes to study drawing once her daughter is older. Min is committed to staying in Nova Scotia, especially if her son remains here after high school.

For now, her focus is connecting her new home with her old one, including attracting a commercial airline to fly direct from Halifax to Beijing. It's an exciting challenge—all part of Min's future in Nova Scotia.





SAMSON WOIDGBERIEL

“Uncle Samson, do this. Uncle Samson, do that.” Those are magical words to Samson Woidgberiel, who arrived in Halifax as a refugee in 2016 to live with his sister and her family. She had already been living here for several years and she and her husband and four daughters, from 6 to 11, welcomed Samson into their home.

Samson, 27, came here from Kenya, where he had fled from his native Ethiopia in 2009 for political reasons. It was a painful journey. “I bussed and walked across the border; it wasn’t easy.” He worked in community cafes in Kenya but when his sister visited, they discussed her plans to sponsor him in Canada. “When the day came, it was very nice. You have a lot of dreams and arriving in Canada was a great moment.”

He enrolled at ISANS and met with a settlement counsellor. “They really helped me a lot. It was amazing.” He could function in English as he had studied it in school and also had opportunities to use it in Kenya. But Samson, whose first language is Amharic, has been taking courses to improve, including an online course he works on late in the evenings.

He also took part in the Immigrant Youth Employability Program that includes job information, job search techniques and interview skills. “They helped with my resume, cover letters; I learned about Canada work

culture. Everyone helped us like a family, they gave us support.” Through this program, he received a 24-week work placement at the Canadian Tire service centre in Cole Harbour, which has been extended.

Samson appreciates the job despite a 1½-hour commute each way. He says he has learned the basic skills a car mechanic needs to know—changing oil, tires, batteries and bulbs. “The more I learn, the more I like it,” says Samson. “They are interested in me and have given me a job; it’s not easy getting a job as a newcomer.” He is also on the waiting list to attend Nova Scotia Community College to study electronics.

Samson misses his family and friends at home, and his own culture, but he believes his age makes it easier to adapt. Also, living with his sister means he doesn’t feel as lonely. He enjoys bike riding with his nieces, hiking, and going to malls and downtown. And he says he is getting used to the weather although he’s still sometimes surprised to see the sun shining brightly on very cold days.

“For me life here is positive. I live in peace; I have work; my family is here. I have no reason to complain. ISANS’ program gave me everything to go smoothly. I am thankful for everything.”

ISANS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017

VALUES

VISION A community where all can belong and grow.

MISSION Helping immigrants build a future in Nova Scotia.

Diversity

Inclusion

Respect

Collaboration

Innovation

Accountability

PRIORITIES

INITIATIVES

RESULTS



EMPOWER IMMIGRANTS

Immigrants have the skills, knowledge and confidence to succeed.

We will develop and implement innovative approaches to respond to ISANS current and potential client profile.

We will undertake a redesign of ISANS Programs and Services, including a review of results and trends, to promote client autonomy and increase cross-team communication.

There is measured evidence that client autonomy has improved.

Immigrants have integrated and holistic service delivery pathways.



VALUE AND SUPPORT OUR STAFF

Staff has the resources and information to excel.

We embrace and live our values.

We will create a workplace that focuses on staff engagement, learning, flexibility and wellness.

We will ground our everyday actions and decision-making in our values.

We will review internal processes and invest in both communication and information management systems to ensure we have the tools and resources we need to do our work.

There is measured evidence that staff feel valued and are engaged.

There is increased operational effectiveness through improved processes and systems.



ENGAGE PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY

Our partners and the community have skills, knowledge and commitment to support immigrants.

We will redefine strategic alliances that directly increase and improve immigrant settlement support and outcomes.

We will improve tools, resources and approaches that increase the capacity of organizations, employers and volunteers to support immigrant integration.

Defined partnership agreements exist that lead to beneficial changes for immigrants.

Our partners and community have increased capacity to support immigrant integration.



CHAMPION A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE PROVINCE

More immigrants come and choose to stay in Nova Scotia.

We will enhance the public dialogue on immigration through a proactive communication strategy that includes research and story-telling.

We will capitalize on opportunities to influence immigration policy.

We will develop a comprehensive approach in support of Atlantic immigration initiatives.

We will collaborate to address systemic issues facing immigrants such as affordable housing, accessible healthcare and poverty.

An increased number of immigrants arrive in Nova Scotia.

The retention rate of immigrants increases.



AIDA SAIRAWAN

When Aida Sairawan arrived in Montreal in February 2016, the Syria native was so captivated by the snow that she played outdoors for three days. It was -35 and despite wearing warm clothing she got sick. "I was excited," she says, "but I was also scared."

Five years earlier, Aida, her husband, Mohamed, and sons Fadi and Shadi, had fled to Jordan in a rented car, telling border officials they were just visiting. "We left Syria because two times police arrested my sons. They were taking them to work in the army." Her brother, one of several family members still in Syria, was recruited. They had owned two houses there—one eventually burned down and another was bombed.

Canada offered hope. "We had no choice; we were desperate," says Aida. "I knew nothing about Canada. I knew only where it was on the map." They spent 20 days in a Montreal hotel and then 25 in a Toronto hotel. They knew no English, but felt safe. "To be honest, when I received the confirmation of permanent residence I felt fine and comfortable, not like Jordan where we were unsettled."

In late March, Immigration told them housing in Toronto would be prohibitively expensive but they could go to Halifax. They were happy to do so. After only three days in a hotel here, ISANS helped them move. "We shopped one day for my house, and in one day we

moved—finished!" The family enrolled at ISANS for English classes and employment support. Aida worked briefly at a Herring Cove hair salon and then, at a friend's suggestion, visited Beauty Supply Outlet and was quickly hired. She has a growing, satisfied clientele, including Muslim women, who appreciate her many beauty skills. Aida is from a family of hairdressers—grandmother, mother, and three sisters.

She has weekends off to shop, clean, visit the beach and spend time with friends and family. Husband Mohamed is a chef at Jack Astor's, while Fadi, 21, works as a mechanic having completed studies at Nova Scotia Community College. Shadi, 19, attends Citadel High School as well as the Immigrant Youth Employability Program at ISANS that is helping him plan his future.

Aida says that her future includes Nova Scotia. "I can't imagine leaving. I love ocean, weather, I even volunteer for shovelling. You need help? My family will help!" The high-spirited and outgoing Aida has made many friends. "I have a friend I met at the bus, the cashier at the Superstore, anywhere. I am very happy!"

They miss their family in Syria and hope they can come to visit one day. But this is home now, a place where they can help each other build a new life.



AMARDEEP SHARMA

When Amardeep Sharma speaks, enthusiasm about his new life in Canada is palpable. Living in Nova Scotia only since December 2016, he has already found a rewarding job as a human resources project coordinator at Delta Halifax hotel.

Amardeep came here from Delhi, India, with his wife, Prajjalita, and their 3-year-old son, Kaven. He was enrolled in ISANS' Settlement Online Pre-Arrival services allowing him to take courses and get ready for life in Nova Scotia before he left home. He also connected with Greater Halifax Partnership to learn about the city. Once here, Amardeep met with an employment specialist at ISANS who referred him to jobs in his area of expertise. "She helped me with my resume, connected me with a mentor, helped me project myself. It was so good working with her."

Amardeep has a Master's in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Technology in Information Technology, and had mostly worked with electrical companies. "I was looking for good international exposure and opportunities," he says. He visited his younger brother in Saskatchewan in 2015 and found Canada appealing. "When I saw that my brother was fully settled, I saw that I could do that." He took his human resources exams there and learned that Nova Scotia had positions available. "I was motivated to stay in Canada. I like the people."

Amardeep returned to India and applied through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. Making connections was slower than anticipated because he arrived near Christmas, but he found work for a month with Feed Nova Scotia as a process administrator. He started his current job soon after.

Prajjalita, a teacher in India, has a BA and MA in Education and a PhD in Sanskrit, but will likely work in childcare. She is taking communication skills workshops at ISANS.

Amardeep says Halifax suits them. "In India it's a rat race for everything. Here I have more time for my family and to relax." Having played badminton and table tennis competitively in India, he was thrilled to enroll in the Badminton Society of Nova Scotia. And while they do miss family, they have made friends through the Indian temple. An added bonus is that his son Kaven, who suffered from allergies in India, is healthier here.

Amardeep and his family are committed to Nova Scotia. "I like the people and the culture, not a negative point I can think of. I am getting more than expected." He has already joined Fusion, an organization for young professionals, and has volunteered with a breast cancer organization.

"Wherever I am I make myself fully engrossed in the place. Once you settle somewhere, you need to learn the culture inside and out."



Community Connections participants visited **Ross Museum Farm** for *Wonders of Maple Syrup* where they sampled pancakes, decorated cookies, learned about the trees and fed the animals



ISANS hosted a **Thank You to Nova Scotians & Update on Welcoming Syrian Refugees to our Communities** at Halifax Central Library to acknowledge the many ways Nova Scotians support Syrians and make them feel at home



Inter-Action Youth Project Retreat at Brigadoon Village



LEFT **Community Language** end of summer party

RIGHT ISANS receives a **Now! Nova Scotia Good News Award**



ISANS Staff PD Day was our biggest ever and through interactive staff feedback we began our strategic planning journey



ISANS clients and volunteers passed out water at the **Blue Nose Marathon** finish line!



Bridge to Work Program automotive installer class and first aid training participants



ABOVE **Networking in Motion Business Crawl** participants

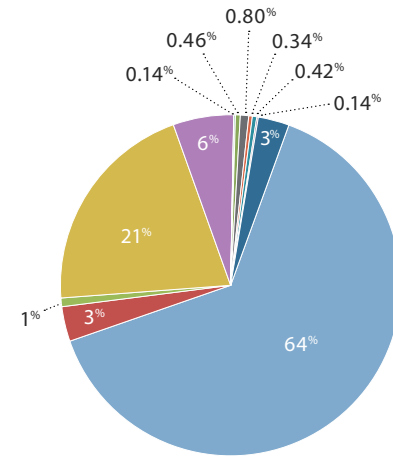


LEFT 200+ people took part in the 3rd annual **Walk with Refugees for a Stronger Canada**

Highlights from the ISANS Financial Report for the year ended March 31, 2017

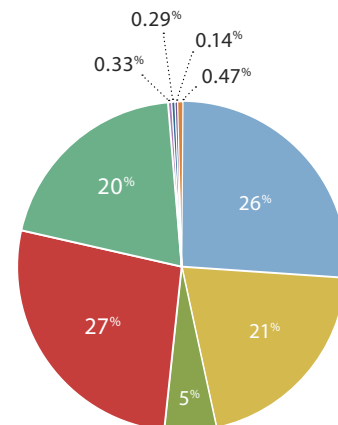
REVENUE

	2016-2017	2015-2016	Increase/Decrease
Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada	\$8,519,648	\$6,263,902	36.01%
Employment & Social Development Canada	\$439,122	\$22,134	1883.93%
Status of Women Canada	\$108,930	\$77,947	39.75%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration	\$2,753,265	\$2,794,847	-1.49%
Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education	\$765,724	\$544,885	40.53%
Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness	\$2,305	\$90,960	-97.47%
Nova Scotia Department of Education	\$18,000	\$18,000	0%
Nova Scotia Department of Community Services	\$60,684	\$0	New
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency	\$105,703	\$0	New
United Way	\$45,073	\$44,154	2.08%
J&W Murphy Foundation	\$55,518	\$0	New
Community Foundation Welcome Fund	\$19,086	\$0	New
Other Funding Sources	\$391,826	\$345,824	13.30%
Total	\$13,284,884	\$10,202,653	30.21%



EXPENSES

	2016-2017	2015-2016	Increase/Decrease
Language & Skills Development	\$3,437,405	\$2,268,584	51.52%
Employment & Bridging Services	\$2,704,305	\$2,333,275	15.90%
Business & Workforce Integration	\$672,773	\$558,051	20.56%
Settlement & Community, Communications & Outreach	\$3,538,001	\$3,228,037	9.07%
Settlement Online Pre-arrival	\$2,664,645	\$1,568,485	69.89%
Strategy Implementation	\$43,947	\$14,367	205.89%
Refugee Emergency	\$38,190	\$19,641	94.44%
Community Foundation Welcome Fund	\$19,086	\$0	New
Amortization & Others	\$62,345	\$55,501	12.33%
Total	\$13,180,696	\$10,061,787	31.00%



Excess of revenue over expenses	\$104,188	\$140,866	-26.04%
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ISANS BOARD MEMBERS

2016-2017

Catharine Penney - *Chair*
 Basia Dzierzanowska - *Vice Chair*
 Lilani Kumaranayake - *Secretary/Treasurer*
 Alan Blyth
 Amanda Whitewood
 Brenda Rowe
 Catherine Woodman
 Dianne Taylor-Gearing
 Dick Miller
 Maya Churbaji
 Gerry Mills
 Kristy Read

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

Association of Canadian Community Colleges
 Bank of Nova Scotia
 Community Foundation of Nova Scotia
 Department of Community Services
 Employment and Social Development Canada
 Employment Nova Scotia
 Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund
 Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada
 J & W Murphy Foundation
 Newcomers Employment and Development Services (NEEDS) Inc
 Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency
 Nova Scotia Department of Education
 Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness
 Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education
 Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
 Royal Bank of Canada Foundation
 Status of Women Canada
 SUCCESS
 Toronto Dominion Bank
 United Way

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