

isis | Immigrant Settlement
& Integration Services

**TOGETHER CREATING A COMMUNITY
WHERE ALL CAN BELONG AND GROW**

Annual Report 2011

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.

Message from Chair of ISIS Board

This year ISIS solidly established itself as the primary provider of immigrant settlement and language services in Nova Scotia. We now deliver the most comprehensive range of integrated services to help attract and retain immigrants to our province and to enable them to participate fully in Canadian life.

The board's focus this year was on strengthening our governance practices and on formalizing our structure and processes, including the establishment of audit and governance committees. A highlight was seeing the board approve an initiative for ISIS to become a sponsorship agreement holder (SAH) for privately sponsored refugees. I would like to offer my personal thanks to our board for their many contributions and support of these changes and for the excellent advice and guidance they provide to ISIS.

Our innovative programs and services delivered by our dedicated and talented staff and volunteers provide an invaluable resource to newcomers throughout Nova Scotia and make a real difference in their lives. The depth of our expertise and the synergies of our many partnerships allow us to deliver some of the best settlement and integration services in the country. On behalf of the board I would like to thank our funders and partners, all the volunteers, our staff, and their leaders for their passionate commitment to our vision of creating a community where all can belong and grow.

Joe Malek

This year's annual report highlights the critical role that partners play in helping ISIS to meet its mandate. These partners, often invisible, are vital in helping to provide services and to create opportunities for immigrants so they can participate fully in Canadian life.

Over the past year, ISIS staff has nurtured a wide range of partnerships with businesses, community groups, organizations and individuals. We have partnered with museums to tell refugee stories, and with the Halifax Market to introduce international foods and products. Law students have helped clients with immigrations forms; hospital libraries have shared resource materials with internationally educated physicians; and swimming instructors have offered "Swim to Survive" courses to refugees.

Employers in every sector have provided advice and guidance to our programming.

We want to acknowledge and thank our many partners and funders in helping us to welcome newcomers into our community and in working with us to meet the challenges of integration. To the hundreds of volunteers who have contributed to ISIS's success this year through your skills, time and resources, we offer our sincerest thanks. You have helped us to be more than we could ever be on our own.

Claudette Legault, Director of Programs and Services
Gerry Mills, Director of Operations

Message from ISIS Directors





Growing Business Venture

International Market Day at the new, beautiful Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market is a celebration of global food cultures, a business opportunity for newcomers and an effective partnership between ISIS and the community.

Sonia Menendez, ISIS Manager of Immigrant Business Development Services, says the idea had been around for a while but really blossomed when



ISIS provides services and support to immigrants at all stages of business start-up and development.

she was approached by Gordon Michael, now Coordinator of the Friday International Market. "We developed sessions to teach vendors how to market and price, and we hosted training for their food handlers' license," says Menendez, adding that ISIS provides on-going assistance.

Each Friday between 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Most serve food, although some sell crafts and other products. For some it's an opportunity to understand the retail business before committing to opening their own establishment. Because the food must be made in a commercial kitchen, vendors cook in restaurants, church halls and even curling clubs.

Michael hopes vendors promote items such as packaged take-out dinners. Although the Seaport Market is focused on local products, Michael realizes that's not always possible with international cuisine. "We encourage them to use fair trade, authentic foodstuffs from their homeland."

Menendez finds it's excellent for the community to learn about different cultures. "Integration is good for the newcomers too."

For Michael, the international market is part of his overall vision for a vibrant community-focused market. "ISIS brought all these people together. It's a great partnership."

In 2010, Nova Scotia welcomed **2,408** new immigrants and 75% of them came to Halifax.



The excited squeals of four-year-olds fill the Fairview Family Resource Centre. Four children play hopscotch while nine others are busy making crafts. Some are new immigrants whose parents are here learning literacy skills. The Fairview Centre is 25 years old, but because of a five-year partnership with ISIS, an infusion of new immigrants frequents the centre.

These immigrant families delight Executive Director Natalie Brown. "They meet people from their own community and make friendships. It has worked out really well." Parents are enrolled in the Family Learning Program taught by an ISIS instructor. They attend each morning and spend the first half-hour learning language and literacy skills with their children.

"Parents love learning with their children," says Jayne Geldart, ISIS Manager of Language and Skills Development. "They use puzzles, games, rhymes and songs. We want them to be equipped to help their children at home." Increasing numbers of families who don't read and write in their first language have been coming to ISIS, so the organization obtained funding, hired a teacher and connected with the Fairview Centre.

ISIS is the primary contact in Nova Scotia on refugee, settlement and immigration issues for 2,000+ organizations, employers, government departments and individuals annually.

"Parents tell me they teach their children at home," says teacher Huiling Zhuang. "I feel very happy with their progress." Fairview has a child learning centre and a pre-school readiness program. The new immigrants also attend centre activities such as health and wellness workshops.

For the new immigrants and the Resource Centre community, a partnership created to teach ESL literacy continues to offer much more.



ISIS offers a variety of language programs for immigrants to Nova Scotia.

An Effective Partnership



Distance Learning

New immigrants in smaller centres in Nova Scotia can take advanced English language training from ISIS, thanks to state-of-the-art technology and a partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC).

"We wanted to attract and welcome more newcomers," says Kathy Burnett, ISIS Manager of Online Learning. "We think video-conferencing is the next best thing to face to face." Clients in smaller centres outside metro, including Truro, Kentville and Bridgewater, go to their local NSCC campus and communicate with a teacher in Halifax who has a screen split so he or she can see each student.

ISIS provides opportunities to develop language, employment and business skills online and at a distance.

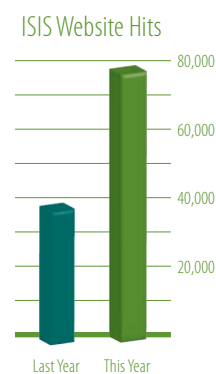


These "Communication for the Workplace" classes have given NSCC an additional opportunity to use technology to deliver curriculum, a method they also use for their own courses. "The partnership is a natural fit," says Lech Krzywonos, NSCC Academic Chair, Access. "We're a community college and we want to serve our rural communities." When it doesn't make sense to allocate resources for an entire class, it is efficient to bring a few students together electronically.

Krzywonos acknowledges the partnership has another benefit in that it introduces NSCC to the new immigrants and their children.

To identify students, ISIS works with immigration navigators at the province's Regional Development Authorities and the Metro Immigrant Language Services who assess language needs outside HRM.

NSCC's partnership has included training for ISIS, schedule accommodation, and attendance at an Ottawa conference where this unique partnership was highlighted for a national audience.



A quarterly breakfast meeting at ISIS brings together some of the brightest business minds in town. Representatives of 21 organizations as diverse as Precision Biologic, the Shaw Group Ltd. and HRM, meet for thought-provoking, engaging and useful discussions about the needs of employers and the immigrant labour force.

The Employer Advisory Council (EAC) provides current labour market information for ISIS and is also a "think tank" that considers employment strategies, and offers practical advice and solutions. "This direct employer engagement assists tremendously with the successful integration of immigrants in the local economy," says Jan Sheppard Kutcher, ISIS Manager of Employment Services and Workforce Integration.

The EAC represents all sectors—voluntary, not-for-profit, government and private. "They are employer champions of immigration in the workplace," says Kutcher. "They have walked the walk. And now they are talking the talk."

Bruce Smith, Scotia Bank Senior Manager, Staffing and Planning, is an enthusiastic member. "I've been

part of it since day one. It's a great opportunity to work with many good people," says Bruce. "At the end of the day it's all about finding talent. Any net growth in workforce is going to be through immigration."

As a former ISIS client, Burcu Kaptan, HR Consultant, IWK Health Centre, appreciates her EAC membership. "The committee is a two-way stream to tell what we expect, and for ISIS to teach us about their services and the latest findings about newcomers. This group inspires and influences how we work."

Working Together to Succeed



ISIS helps immigrants to be independent and effective in their job search, and helps employers build strong and diverse workplaces.

ISIS online services has **731** users.



Understanding the System

Finding healthcare information can be overwhelming, especially for newcomers. The Multicultural Health and Wellness Network makes this easier by bringing them together with healthcare providers to share vital information.

The Network has hosted three popular Health and Wellness Fairs since 2008, modeled on a 2006 fair hosted by ISIS. "It's a great atmosphere with special, positive energy," says Wenche Gausdal, ISIS Interim Manager of Settlement Services. The most recent featured 43 booths, over 20 interpreters and 10 information sessions. More than 300 immigrants attended, including ESL students on a class outing.

ISIS helps immigrants to settle and gives orientation to living in Nova Scotia.

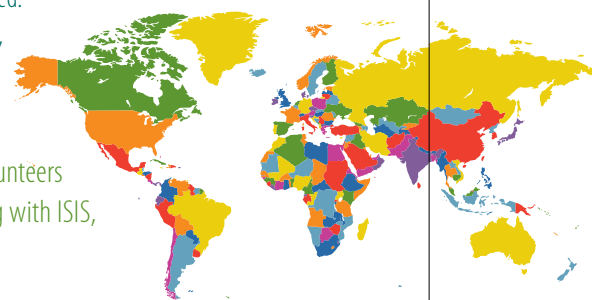
More than 80% of ISIS staff have lived and worked internationally as well as in Canada; many began their connection with the organization as clients and/or volunteers.

The Network meets every three weeks and includes IWK, Public Health, Capital Health, Community Health Board, Canadian Red Cross, YMCA, Cancer Care NS, Canadian Diabetes Association, Halifax Refugee Clinic, Bayers Westwood Family Resource Centre and HRM Recreation. Members discuss ideas such as how to further collaborate on issues and reach out to immigrant communities and service providers.

Andrea Cochrane of the Community Health Board is co-chair. "We deal with mental, emotional and physical health needs, even housing and transportation," she explains. "We are continually trying to engage the new arrivals and immigrant population to tailor our services to meet their needs. It's a tremendous benefit to have this network."

Susan Mogae, Public Health Diversity Coordinator, understands the challenges new immigrants face. She says the network has been successful and will continue to work hard to get primary healthcare workers involved. "In terms of a partnership, it's a hit for us."

Of the **632** active volunteers currently working with ISIS, **192** are immigrants.



It's SupperNOVA at St. Andrew's Recreation Centre. Volunteers place seemingly endless dishes of fabulous food on the long serving tables; musicians lead the crowd in drumbeats; children delight in games, books and face-painting provided by Frontier College.

This entertaining venture is a collaboration between ISIS and several partners—Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs, Frontier College, La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (NS Acadian Federation), and Grace Communion International.

The first multicultural potluck took place—significantly—just following the events of September 11, 2001. Grace Communion Pastor Owen Willis has been involved since the beginning. "I thought it was important to bring the immigrant community together with more established citizens," recalls Willis. The successful event is now held quarterly, attracting between 200 and 300 people, including original participants who continue to return with new friends.

Soulafa Al-Abbasi, ISIS Coordinator of Community Capacity Building, recruits volunteers. "It's challenging to find volunteers and keep the event creative and interesting, but we make sure they have a good time."

HRM Community Developer Kasia Tota says it's great that SupperNOVA is a family event, open to anyone. "Everyone hopefully learns a little bit about one another. The event builds a sense of community and inclusion."

Partners gain valuable insight into the immigrant community and Al-Abbasi says she is always looking for new partnerships. "We ask what they can bring to the table. How can we work collaboratively to continue to make SupperNOVA a true community event?"

A Community Success Story

Percentage of volunteers new to ISIS since April 2010 (31%)



ISIS connects immigrants with volunteers and the community.



Highlights from the ISIS Financial Report

for the Year Ending March 31, 2011

REVENUE

	2010-11	2009-10	Increase/Decrease
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	\$3,765,086	\$3,324,524	13.25%
Health Canada	\$115,000	\$192,720	-40.33%
Service Canada	\$476,414	\$517,044	-7.86%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – LMA Funding	\$1,586,813	\$1,120,152	41.66%
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – Settlement Funding	\$1,261,907	\$1,080,597	16.78%
Nova Scotia Department of Labor and Workforce Development	\$257,113	\$424,573	-39.44%
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	\$158,423	\$158,799	-0.24%
Other Funding Sources	\$254,248	\$285,974	-11.09%
TOTAL	\$7,875,004	\$7,104,383	10.85%

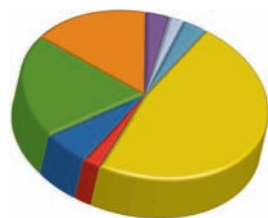
EXPENSES

	2010	2009	Increase/Decrease
Language and Skills Development Services	\$2,996,343	\$2,519,880	18.91%
Employment Services	\$2,279,234	\$2,052,553	11.04%
Business Development Services	\$464,509	\$450,780	3.05%
Settlement and Community Outreach Services	\$1,859,450	\$1,813,869	2.51%
Amortization and Others	-\$12,517	-\$18,750	-33%
TOTAL	\$7,587,019	\$6,818,332	11.27%

Excess of Revenue over Expenses	\$287,985	\$286,051	
---------------------------------	------------------	------------------	--

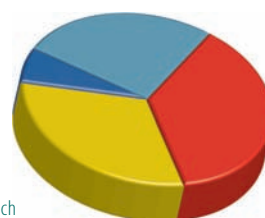
REVENUE \$7,875,004

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (48%)
- Health Canada (2%)
- Service Canada (6%)
- Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – LMA Funding (20%)
- Nova Scotia Office of Immigration – Settlement Funding (16%)
- Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development (3%)
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (2%)
- Other Funding Sources (3%)



EXPENSES \$7,587,019

- Language and Skills Development Services (39%)
- Employment Services (30%)
- Business Development Services (6%)
- Settlement and Community Outreach Services (25%)



Joe Malek, Chair
Olaf Berghaus, Vice-Chair
Catharine Penney, Treasurer-Secretary

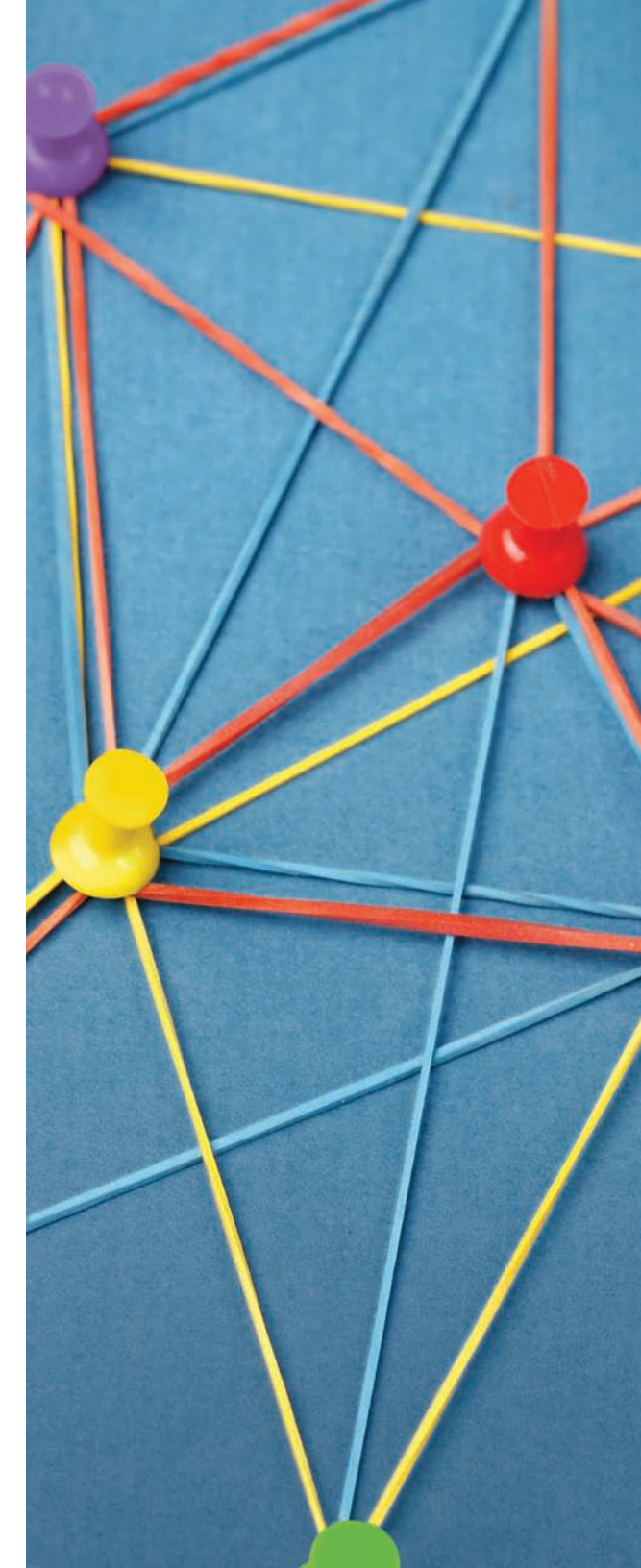
Colin MacLean
Jim Donovan
Paul Schwartz
Ross Mitchell
Russell Walker

Erin McDonald
Arleigh Hood
Claudette Legault
Gerry Mills

ISIS Board Members 2010-11

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Health Canada
Service Canada
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development
United Way
Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund

Thank You to Our Funding Partners





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

www.isisns.ca

