

PATHWAYS TO

EMP OWER MENT

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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We acknowledge that we are on unceded, traditional Mi'kmaq territory, and we are grateful for the Peace and Friendship treaties. At ISANS, as we work to settle newcomers to Nova Scotia, we honour and respect the Indigenous people of this land.

Our Mission

Helping immigrants build a future in Nova Scotia.

Our Vision

A community where all can belong and grow.

Our Values

Collaboration

We demonstrate collaboration by building relationships in which we can share responsibilities and ideas, and work together to enhance opportunities for all.

Respect

We demonstrate respect by encouraging an environment of fairness, honesty, and integrity for all clients, partners, and colleagues.

Inclusion

We demonstrate inclusion by welcoming and respecting the diversity in our community and fostering a sense of belonging in all.

Diversity

We demonstrate diversity by valuing and respecting differences in experiences and perspectives, believing in everyone's ability to enrich Canadian society through their unique contributions.

Innovation

We demonstrate innovation through service excellence by being creative and flexible, by being responsive to clients and partners, and by continually seeking new opportunities.

Accountability

We demonstrate accountability by acknowledging responsibility for our services, tools, actions, and decisions by being transparent and principled in our approach to people and situations.

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Lilani Kumaranayake
Chair, Board of Directors

“ISANS knows that with the right support and belief in themselves, immigrants not only overcome the challenges of settling in a new country, but they also contribute immensely to our communities, to our province, and to Canadian society.”

I am delighted, once again, to celebrate all that is ISANS and what our staff have accomplished. I personally know what it's like to step 'ashore' into a new country, which is now meant to be home. Yet this new home is different, unfamiliar, and challenging.

This is why the work of ISANS is so integral. But it is not just what ISANS does, it is also how it works. As I can express from my own lived experience – and as ISANS has come to know so well in our work – empowerment is integral for immigrants' successful integration and wellbeing.

Empowerment is the very opposite of powerlessness: when we are empowered, we feel confident, and we take control of the course of our lives, even when circumstances around us are challenging and ever-changing. In place of barriers, we see possibilities. Being empowered encourages us to exercise our rights, make independent decisions, and shape our own paths in our new communities. It gives us confidence to navigate unfamiliar systems and cultures and pursue opportunities aligned with the hopes that we brought with us.

This is why, every day, ISANS strives to empower immigrants in Nova Scotia. ISANS knows that with the right support and belief in themselves, newcomers not only overcome the challenges of settling in a new country, but they also contribute immensely to our communities, to our province, and to Canadian society.

It is not a coincidence that ISANS refers to our core services as pathways. The real key to our pathways is that they are not prescriptive. Our programs are designed to give newcomers to Nova Scotia choice and freedom while supporting them in the ways they need most. In our program delivery, we understand that our clients are also our collaborators, and we lean on their lived experiences to help us guide them and show them how to leverage their strengths.

As the Chair of ISANS' Board of Directors, I can attest to ISANS' commitment to empowerment, as the many examples in this report will illustrate. To build on this commitment, the Board's focus this year was ensuring ISANS is positioned for the future to continue empowering immigrants, our staff team, and members of our community for years to come.

In preparation for Jennifer Watts's well-deserved retirement after six years as ISANS CEO, we undertook a rigorous recruitment process to find her successor, and I am delighted that we found one in Paula Knight.

The mark Jennifer has made on ISANS and the lives of countless immigrants is indelible. It has been an honour and a pleasure to work alongside her. I am excited for what her future has in store, but I am also excited for ISANS' future. Jennifer's legacy has contributed profoundly to ISANS' approach to empowering others, and I look forward to the way the organization continues to evolve, shape, and encourage immigrant empowerment in Nova Scotia.

The key to ISANS's success is our staff – simply the best! My Board colleagues and I would like to acknowledge their tremendous dedication in a year of transition. As always, thank you!

MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTGOING CEO



Jennifer Watts
Outgoing Chief Executive Officer

“Through our empowerment approach, we recognize and promote client, staff, and community resilience, skills, knowledge, and contributions, as well as our collective ability to build a community where all can belong and grow.”

I am filled with gratitude as I write this introduction for our annual report this year. As I retire from ISANS, I can say one of the greatest joys of working here has been seeing the incredible contributions that immigrants are making in our communities across the province and the commitment our staff have helping immigrants build a future here.

Our report this year focuses on empowerment, and I couldn't think of a more appropriate theme for what we've accomplished throughout 2023 and early 2024 and how my time with the organization has drawn to a close. Empowerment at ISANS is defined by a collaborative effort to learn and grow together as an organization and with the immigrants we're so proud to serve. Through our empowerment approach, we recognize and promote client, staff, and community resilience, skills, knowledge, and contributions, as well as our collective ability to build a community where all can belong and grow.

As always, our staff team has done an incredible job empowering and supporting immigrants in Nova Scotia throughout the '23 - '24 fiscal year. Their work has been expansive, from launching two new business programs – The Market-Ready Project and Business Acquisition Support Project – which empower immigrant entrepreneurs to test their products at marketplaces all across the province and support them to move onto new and exciting prospects through business buying and selling, to encouraging independence in young adult students learning to speak English by mastering transit and participating in fun Halifax activities like Jazz Fest. (As our instructors say, “ISANS puts the F-U-N in the fundamentals of learning English!”)

Meanwhile, our Early Childhood Education (ECE) Supervisors participated in the Atlantic Fireside Chat at Mount Saint

Vincent University for a discussion about equity and diversity within ECEs across the Atlantic region. As an organization, we also deepened our understanding and commitment to Truth and Reconciliation through a series of Courageous Conversations with Mi'kmaw Elders and knowledge keepers.

Supporting and empowering refugees continued to be a priority for us as well. The Refugee Resettlement and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) teams welcomed hundreds more refugees from Afghanistan at the Halifax airport, supporting them with their immediate needs and helping them to their next destinations. They also empowered local Afghan families to sponsor 75 at-risk family members under the special Operation Afghan Safety program while continuing to support many Ukrainian nationals in our community as they settle and begin to rebuild their lives here.

Lastly, I would be remiss not to mention the significant work done internally over the last year on building a culture of evaluation at ISANS to promote learning, collaboration, improvement, and empowerment, to build capacity, and to support sustainable development. This work has been led by our Strategic Initiatives Advisor, Nabiha Atallah, for whom 2024 is also a retirement year after nearly 30 years of dedicated service.

It has been wonderful to work with ISANS' new CEO, Paula Knight, as I have transitioned into retirement. She brings a rich combination of experience, skills, compassion, and joy that will lead this organization into a vibrant and exciting future.

ISANS' commitment to empowerment is a recognition of our history and the practices that have informed our journey, and of our vision of a community where all can belong and grow.

Thank you all for your support helping immigrants build a future here in Nova Scotia.

STATEMENT FROM OUR INCOMING CEO



It is with great excitement and humility that I step into the role of CEO of ISANS. I am eager to work alongside each of you, harnessing our collective dedication to fostering a welcoming environment for newcomers.

Being empowered has been the foundation of my journey as an immigrant in Canada, and it's inspiring to lead an organization where empowerment is at the core of our commitment to newcomers in Nova Scotia.

Immigrants bring so many benefits to our province, and they contribute in meaningful ways to our economic prosperity. This includes filling gaps in our workforce in areas such as healthcare, trades, and construction, fueling the growth that is needed if we are to thrive as a province. Our province is richer because of the cultural vibrancy that is created when people from different countries call Nova Scotia home.

Together, we will continue to uphold ISANS' noble mission of empowering immigrants, enriching our communities, and promoting diversity and inclusivity. With a commitment to innovation and collaboration, I look forward to building upon ISANS' solid foundation, striving to reach new heights while remaining steadfast in our values. Let's embark on this journey together, creating a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Paula Knight
Chief Executive Officer

Learn English

Our comprehensive Language Services help immigrants learn to speak English to ensure their settlement is as smooth and successful as possible. Through personalized language assessments, classes, and conversation groups, we empower our learners to enhance their language skills in the best ways for them, enabling them to thrive in their new communities and pursue their dreams with confidence and clarity.

In our 2023-24 fiscal year, ISANS' Language Services proudly introduced the Integrated Sight Loss Program (ISLP). This innovative program caters to clients with varying degrees of sight loss, ensuring they can fully participate in a range of language classes, whether in-person, online, blended, or through personalized one-on-one sessions.

Developed by Accessibility Coordinator Jessica Leslie and Inclusion Consultant Anu Pala, the program exemplifies ISANS' commitment to EDIA (equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility). By actively involving individuals with sight loss in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes and other English language programs, our language teams are breaking down barriers and fostering a truly inclusive learning environment.

Central to the program's success is its personalized approach. Each client undergoes a thorough assessment to identify their unique abilities, needs, and goals, enabling instructors to tailor lesson materials and plans accordingly. Jessica and Anu have trained Language Services staff with their Integrated Sight Loss Teacher Toolkit, equipping them with essential tools and insights to effectively support clients with sight loss.

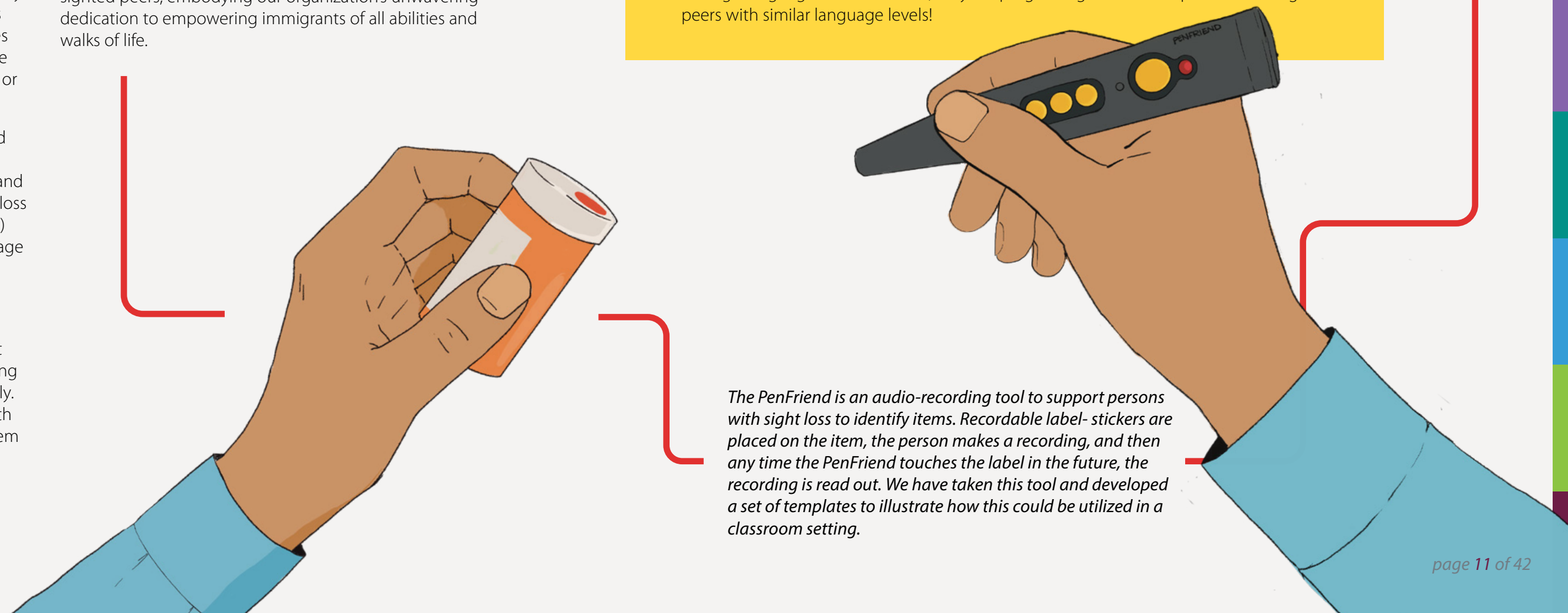
The results of the Integrated Sight Loss Program on the lives of new immigrants with visual impairments have been profound. Five clients have already been integrated into language classes across all delivery methods, marking a significant milestone in ISANS' journey toward accessibility and inclusivity.

Through this program, individuals with sight loss now enjoy the same opportunities for language learning as their sighted peers, embodying our organization's unwavering dedication to empowering immigrants of all abilities and walks of life.

PROGRAM INSIGHTS

ISLP learners in our blended classes have a combined attendance of 95% compared to the class average of 72%, and our online ISLP learner has an attendance average of 98% compared to the class average of 86%. This data tells us that ISLP language learners are very committed, have a genuine need for this kind of programming, and they're eager to take advantage of it.

Before the ISLP, learners with sight loss could only take one-on-one classes. With fewer contact hours than regular classes, these learners could sometimes take years to progress through language levels. But now, they are progressing at the same pace as their sighted peers with similar language levels!



The PenFriend is an audio-recording tool to support persons with sight loss to identify items. Recordable label- stickers are placed on the item, the person makes a recording, and then any time the PenFriend touches the label in the future, the recording is read out. We have taken this tool and developed a set of templates to illustrate how this could be utilized in a classroom setting.

Get Settled

ISANS delivers comprehensive and tailored settlement- and refugee-resettlement services, providing essential and immediate support to newcomers as they embark on their journey in Canada. From housing assistance to cultural orientation programs, we empower individuals and families to build fulfilling lives, fostering a sense of inclusion, belonging, and community cohesion.

One such initiative, the Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY) Program, not only prepares children for school but also transforms their parents' lives by giving them a deep sense of purpose in nurturing their children's education.

Take Omnia (whose story you can read on the next page), a mother who initially felt

isolated after immigrating to Nova Scotia but who now thrives as a HIPPY Home Visitor. In this role, she provides personalized support and guidance to families through home-based sessions to enhance children's school-readiness and empower parents with essential skills and resources. Through the program, she has gained Canadian work experience while supporting her child's development and helping other mothers who feel as isolated as she once did.

Omnia's journey is a testament to the program's success. HIPPY doesn't just offer school readiness: it provides comprehensive support in employment, parenting, and settlement. Families build networks and strengthen bonds while improving English skills through free resources. Flexibility is key, empowering single parents like Omnia to balance work and integration seamlessly. Now employed by ISANS, Omnia aspires to become an Early Childhood Education (ECE) instructor, directly addressing the growing demand for ECE professionals in our province.

Meanwhile, our Refugee Resettlement and Resettlement Assistance Program teams continue to be instrumental in welcoming and supporting government-assisted refugees. In a single fiscal year, they aided over 3,300 individuals, including Afghan nationals. The collaboration with ISANS teams and external partners such as Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA); Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); Transport Canada; Halifax Airport Authority; Public Health; and the larger Afghan community ensured both a smooth transition for refugees and opportunities for them to give back. From community leadership roles to becoming ISANS employees, refugees we support make tangible contributions and embody the spirit of resilience and reciprocity.

As we and our community continue to empower immigrants, it cultivates a cycle of support and contribution in which newcomers become active participants in shaping the future of Nova Scotia. Through their diverse talents and experiences, they enrich their own lives and strengthen the fabric of the province they now call home.

HIPPY Program

40 parents (37 moms and 3 dads) and **44** children were supported through the HIPPY Program

Parents have spent **650** hours doing HIPPY curriculum with their children

HIPPY parents come from **13** countries and speak over **12** languages

Resettlement Assistance Program

922 newly arrived government-assisted refugees were welcomed by ISANS' Resettlement Assistance Program team in 2023

1,525 Afghan nationals via six charter flights were welcomed every month from May - December of 2023





What is so cool about HIPPY is that it covers everything – literacy, math, science, motor skills, language – all wrapped up in playful activities. As a mom, I like those family moments, bonding with my kids while secretly boosting their self-esteem and learning confidence.

Omnia Abdelazim Ali Mohamed
former HIPPY client (now ISANS staff)

MORE → Read Omnia's full story **here**.

Connect with Community

Championing and fostering community integration and enriching the lives of all members of society is crucial to our work at ISANS. From cultural exchange events to volunteer opportunities and civic engagement programs, our Community Integration Services build connections and mutual understanding among newcomers and local residents, creating vibrant, inclusive communities where diversity is valued and celebrated.

This year, we're excited to highlight our New to Hockey Program, which is part of our broader Community Connections programming. This program is specifically designed to provide immigrant youth access to hockey and other sports they might not have been exposed to in their home countries. Fostering integration, physical activity, and community engagement among immigrant families, "New to Hockey" teaches the fundamentals of hockey and emphasizes teamwork, sportsmanship, and leadership skills.

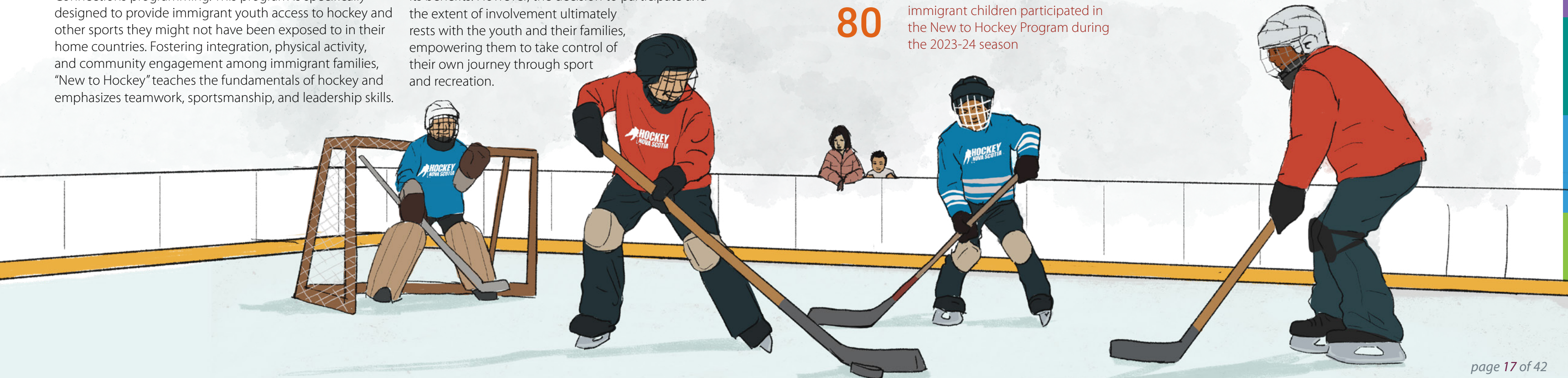
Collaboration lies at the heart of the program's success. Our Community Integration Services team partners with Hockey Nova Scotia, community volunteers, and other stakeholders like Sport Nova Scotia – who enabled us to purchase 20 new sets of hockey gear this year – to give participants a supportive environment where they can learn and grow.

One of the unique aspects of the program is its focus on addressing systemic barriers. We ensure families have the required equipment and access to the information and resources they need to understand the game and its benefits. However, the decision to participate and the extent of involvement ultimately rests with the youth and their families, empowering them to take control of their own journey through sport and recreation.

The outcomes are compelling: participants integrate successfully, gain confidence, develop skills, and build a robust support network within their new community. The story of Mahmoud and his family, on the following page, is an excellent example of the power of programs like "New to Hockey," helping immigrants overcome hurdles while embracing the Canadian way of life.

546 immigrants, including many families, were supported with our Community Connections programming

80 immigrant children participated in the New to Hockey Program during the 2023-24 season





Mahmoud (back left) and family who took our New to Hockey Program



I like hockey because you get to meet new people and play with them . . . I like learning new tricks and playing games. And you get to skate and race people.

Abdalrohman Almsalama

MORE

[Click here](#) to read the Almsalama family's story.

Find Employment

ISANS employment services empower newcomers by providing specialized support and resources to help them thrive in the Canadian workforce. From personalized career counselling to job-readiness workshops and networking opportunities, we're dedicated to helping immigrants achieve their professional goals and contribute positively to Nova Scotia's economy.

For healthcare professionals, in particular, our Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHP) Bridging Program serves as a crucial pathway for immigrants to navigate the licensure process and secure employment, in turn addressing critical labour shortages, especially in rural communities across Nova Scotia.

Our IEHP Bridging Program adopts a strengths-based approach to meet participants' identified needs and competencies. Throughout 2023 and early 2024, 355 immigrant healthcare practitioners participated in this program, which offers a blend of educational sessions, study groups, clinical-skills assessments, and guidance from subject-matter experts. The program helps participants better understand the licensure process, acquire necessary skills, and build the confidence and cultural competence essential for their integration into the healthcare workforce.

IEHP's communication workshops are particularly impactful, addressing the diverse cultural landscape of Nova Scotia, including considerations for the health and accessibility of Indigenous, African-Nova Scotian, 2SLGBTQIA+, and other marginalized communities. Participants of these workshops now better understand that communicating effectively with patients of diverse cultures, abilities, and lived experiences promotes trust and inclusivity, ensures personalized care, and addresses health disparities – critical knowledge for any healthcare practitioner in Canada.

Building on program success, we further empower IEHP participants by eliminating barriers through wrap-around support that extends to their families. With support from all ISANS staff teams, we advocate for the professional recognition of prior learning in the recruitment process. We also provide appropriate services to help their families flourish, such as our Immigrant Youth Employability Project, which you can learn more about by watching the video linked next to the yellow flag on the right..

As a result of our comprehensive, empowering approach, employers increasingly refer employed IEHPs to ISANS, recognizing the program's effectiveness in building a diverse and inclusive healthcare workforce as essential for the well-being of Nova Scotia's communities.

355

internationally educated
healthcare professionals
received employment
services

248

internationally educated
healthcare professionals
found employment

100%

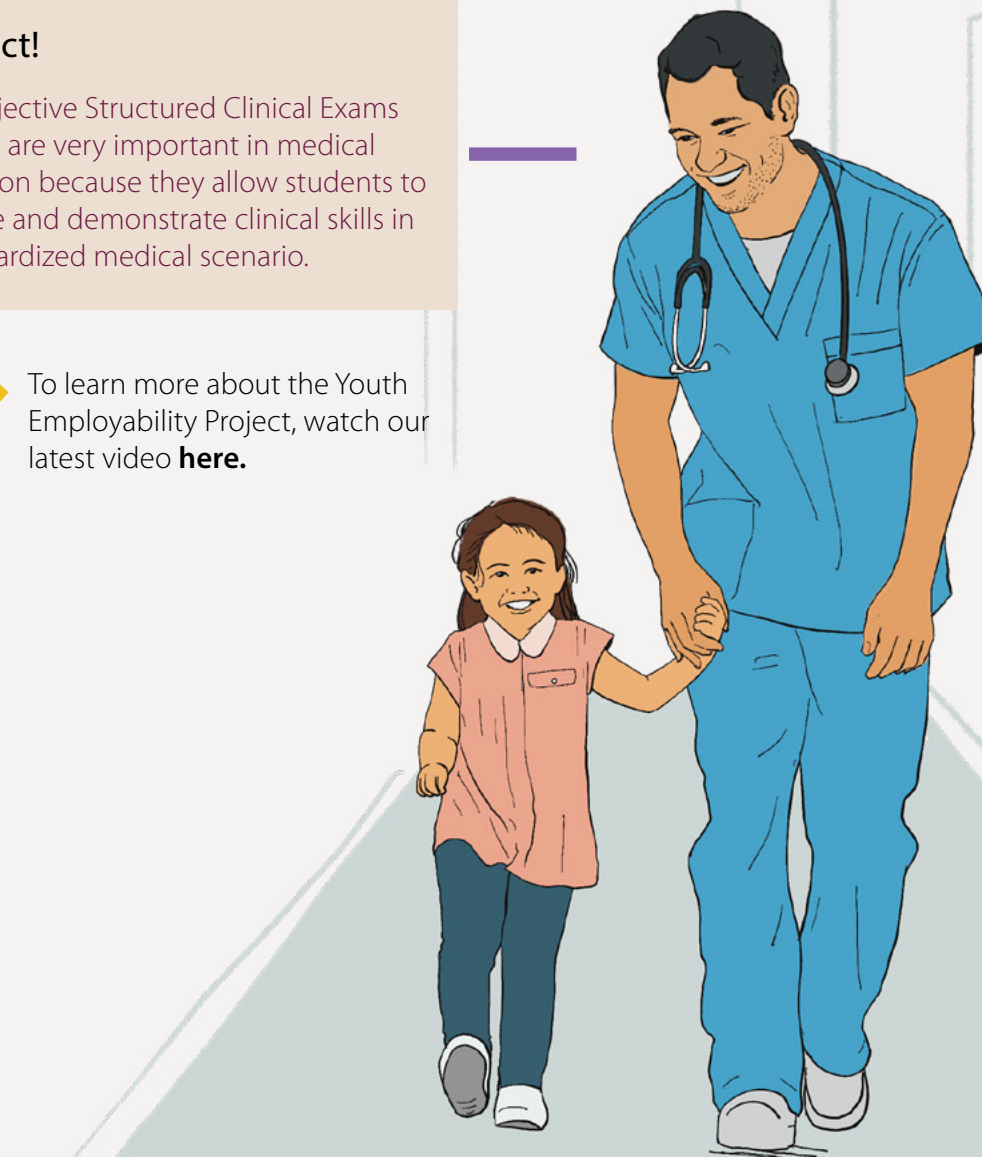
passing rate among international medical
graduates and international pharmacy
graduates on the Objective Structured
Clinical Examination (OSCE)

Fun fact!

The Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs) are very important in medical education because they allow students to practice and demonstrate clinical skills in a standardized medical scenario.

MORE

To learn more about the Youth Employability Project, watch our latest video **here**.



Did you know?

Nova Scotia's need for healthcare workers is well-documented, but it's not the only industry in our province for which demand is outpacing supply. Over the next nine years, Nova Scotia's construction industry will need to recruit over 10,000 workers to "keep pace with labour force growth and replace approximately 8,200 retiring workers, or 22% of the current labour force" (BuildForce Canada, "Construction and Maintenance Industry: Nova Scotia Highlights 2024-2033").

Hiring immigrants with training in skilled trades and/or construction experience will become a key strategy for our province's employers, and we're proud to play a role in it. To help immigrants find employment in this industry, we offer many programs such as Work-Based Trades Practical Assessment, Engineering Competency Assessment, Bridge to Construction, and more.

In the last year alone, over 250 of our clients were hired in construction as carpenters, labourers, structural engineers, electrical engineers, and project managers, among other positions.

"DORA Construction Ltd. has been a proud partner with the trades programs at ISANS for the last 10 months. During that time, we have had the opportunity to recruit, hire, and retain six new Apprentice Carpenters. This increase in the workforce is very helpful during this current challenging market . . . I believe that the trades programs at ISANS gave these wonderful candidates the skills they needed to succeed in the workforce here in Canada."

— **Betsy Sisco**, Head of Immigration & Recruitment, DORA Construction

"I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for helping me secure a job at Dora Construction. I have been working here for 9 months now, and I am truly enjoying my time at this wonderful company. Prior to this opportunity, I was struggling to find employment on my own as a newcomer to Canada with limited English language skills. Your assistance and support have made a significant difference in my life, and I am incredibly grateful for your guidance and kindness.

I also want to extend my thanks to ISANS for providing me with the initial tools I needed for work. Thanks to your support, I was able to start my job well-equipped and ready to succeed."

— **Andrii Buhai**, Apprentice Carpenter

Do Business

Many immigrants arrive in Nova Scotia with aspirations to start a business or rebuild a thriving one they once had, while others come with nothing more than a spark and the drive to bring it to life.

Whatever the motivation, our Business Development Services nurture the goals of immigrant entrepreneurs and foster their growth. Through personalized mentorship, workshops, and networking events, we empower entrepreneurs and stoke their enterprising spirit to turn their innovative ideas into successful ventures that drive economic prosperity.

Our team of experienced business counsellors and trainers delivered an astounding 1,077 counselling sessions this year to coach on business practices such as financial planning, marketing strategies, and legal requirements. These sessions not only equip immigrant entrepreneurs with essential skills, but also boost their confidence: critical ingredients for success, financial stability, and integration into the community.

Because we recognize the diverse backgrounds of our business clients, we strongly emphasize cultural competence in our training and support, ensuring all sessions are inclusive and adaptable to different needs. Additionally, we facilitate networking opportunities, mentor-matching, and access to resources through platforms like ISANS' Immigrant Business Hub, further supporting entrepreneurs on their business journey. Through 2023 and early 2024, we delivered nearly 40 workshops to over 700 attendees, and over 200 of our business clients attended networking events.

All of our business clients feel the positive impact of ISANS' empowerment approach. They not only acquire essential business skills, but they also develop resilience, adaptability, and a positive mindset, all of which are crucial for overcoming the challenges that accompany entrepreneurship.

By celebrating achievements, fostering connections, and providing mentorship, our Business Development Services cultivate a vibrant, diverse, and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem that drives economic growth and social inclusion throughout Nova Scotia.

1,020

immigrant entrepreneurs participated in Business Development workshops

1,077

business Counselling sessions were delivered to immigrant entrepreneurs

250

business clients engaged in networking events

26

new immigrant-owned businesses launched



Distance and Online

ISANS clients come from all over the world, each with differing abilities and strengths, and they settle throughout the entire province of Nova Scotia. Some even start their journeys here before they arrive.

To ensure everyone can access our services in the ways that work best for them, ISANS proudly supplements our in-person programming with technological support and digital learning. From virtual counselling sessions to interactive workshops and digital resources, we empower all immigrants to embark on their journeys with convenience, flexibility, and unwavering support.

Settlement Online, our flagship learning platform, delivers programs and services remotely to meet clients' needs anytime, anywhere. Designed to accommodate diverse circumstances such as mobility constraints and rural residency,

Settlement Online continues to be a significant resource for our clients, offering more than 60 online courses and resources to choose from. Relying on principles of adult education, courses range from facilitated, self-guided, and practice-oriented. They are consistently updated with relevant content to equip immigrants with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive and integrate into their new communities, from sector-specific employment training to general orientations on life in Canada.

We continue to recognize that in today's digital age, many essential services and resources are primarily accessible online. Immigrants need digital literacy to effectively navigate government services, job portals, educational platforms, and healthcare systems – even social connections. Technological skill development is therefore critical for equitable access to essential services for daily living, which is why we have introduced drop-in options for Digital Skills Support Sessions. Clients who need more time and practice learning to use digital tools can receive additional, direct support from our Digital Navigators.

As important as digital skills are, immigrants also need access to modern technology, which can be cost-prohibitive for many individuals and families. To further ensure equitable participation and access, we've grown our Tech-Lending Library, adding hundreds of new devices throughout 2023 and early 2024.

Enriching immigrant experiences, illuminating their inherent strengths and skills, and creating opportunities for them to excel underpins our work at ISANS, which importantly extends to distance and online services. Through continuous improvement and client feedback, we remain committed to advancing our programming to keep pace with the modern world while promoting empowerment for all.

1,700+

digital skills sessions were delivered to 1,550+ clients by Digital Navigators

300+

Chromebooks loaned to clients through ISANS Tech-lending Library, which has more than 400 digital devices available for borrowing

Fun fact!

Settlement Online users hail from countries all over the world, such as the United States, Nigeria, China, India, Morocco, United Kingdom, Jordan, Philippines, and Iran





One of the things that interactions with SOPA did for me was tell me that I had a lot of transferrable skills. It helped me to get to thinking about presenting my skills in a way that would be useful for Canadian employers and shift my mind from 'I hope I can get work' to 'How do I sell myself to Canadian employers in a way that they recognize that these skills I have are useful for them?' It made the whole move a little less scary and a little less daunting.

Ayomide Charles

Certified Project Management Professional (PMP) from Nigeria and client of the Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA) Program

MORE

Click here to hear more from Ayomide.

Diversify your Workforce

Our Employer Support Services offer invaluable support to employers seeking to diversify and strengthen their workforce. Through customized training programs, cultural competency workshops, and recruitment assistance, we help businesses tap into the rich talent pool of newcomers, fostering inclusive workplaces that drive innovation and growth while celebrating diversity and mutual success.

One of the primary goals of our Employer Support Services is to empower employers to harness the skills and talents of immigrants. Central to this empowerment is the role of the Employer Engager, who acts as a vital link between employers and relevant programs and services at ISANS and in the community, especially in rural areas. In these areas, immigrant retention is necessary for sustaining economic growth, revitalizing local economies, addressing demographic shifts, and fostering vibrant, inclusive communities with diverse perspectives and talents.

We're thrilled that our rural reach this year was substantial. Throughout 2023 and early 2024, over 240 employers from rural areas participated in informational webinars to learn about the ISANS and community services available to help them support immigrants in their workplaces and retain their talent. We also facilitated over 400 community connections for employers in rural areas.

By delivering this kind of tailored support and maintaining close communication with local organizations, our Employer Engagers – and Employer Support Services overall – ensure that employers effectively integrate immigrant employees

in ways that equitably balance their business needs with those of their immigrant employees. Ultimately, this balance contributes to long-term sustainability and prosperity for employers and their communities.

While we always strive to support employers in as many ways as possible, a central tenet in our employer support is prioritizing employers' autonomy through diverse options and customized solutions to suit their needs. Whether boosting capacity by hosting placements through our Professional Practice Program or addressing sector-specific or skill-related labour shortages with the Atlantic Immigration Program, our goal is to guide employers through these options, empowering them to make confident, informed choices that are right for them.

With the help of ISANS' Employer Support Services, employers not only effectively integrate immigrant talent, but also contribute to building a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous Nova Scotian society.

549

employers received employer support, 387 of whom are from rural areas

403

community connections were facilitated for employers in rural areas

167

employers engaged in the Atlantic Immigration Program, 41 of whom are from rural areas

32

employers hosted Professional Practice placements





It enhances everything when you have diverse cultures on staff, when you have somebody coming in from outside of Canada with outside skills, bringing you ideas that you just never thought of . . . they become very successful in the community. These are people that want to go further in life. These are people that want to achieve, and they're just making things better.

Stephanie Jones

Owner of MacDonald's franchises and client of ISANS' Employer Support Services

MORE

Watch the video on the left or **click this link** to hear more from Stephanie.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

2,363

participants took part in our equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility workshops throughout the year

ISANS is deeply committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility to create welcoming environments where everyone's unique identity is celebrated and respected. Through advocacy, customized programs, and workshops, we strive to champion equity and empower diverse voices to create a vibrant and inclusive community where each of us can thrive.

Our Welcome Ambassador Program (WAP) is a beacon of this empowerment.

The program aims to foster inclusive, diverse, and welcoming communities across Nova Scotia through poignant, experiential learning. Participants learn to support refugee and newcomers' rights, and acquire essential skills in trauma-informed approaches, cultural humility, communication, and empathy. This approach creates a safe environment for self-reflection and learning, enabling participants to play a pivotal role in community building when they finish their training.

The program's collaborative approach treats participants as partners rather than passive recipients, empowering them to shape their own learning journey. Through individual reflection and discussion, participants articulate their understanding of a safe space, emphasizing themes such as validation, active listening, respect, non-judgment, and authenticity. By establishing this foundation of mutual agreement, participants become equipped with knowledge and a replicable process that resonates deeply and encourages lasting impact.

The outcomes speak volumes: in the last year, two Welcome Ambassadors organized a multicultural event in Digby with great success. Roughly 100 people attended, creating space for cultural exchange, community connections, and celebration. By volunteering their time and skills, these Welcome Ambassadors have become agents of change, inspiring others to participate in similar initiatives.

One empowered Ambassador at a time, we're committed to working with our community members to build the future we want to see for all people who call this beautiful province home.

71

participants in 7 cohorts took part in Welcome Ambassador Training

146

workshops on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility and building welcoming communities were delivered to community organizations and employers





I hope some friendships were made that day that continue on, and that participants got to try some cultural cuisine that they will continue to indulge in and share with others.

Nancy Whalley

Community Navigator for Digby Area Healthcare Engagement

MORE

Read Nancy's story and learn about her experience in the Welcome Ambassador Program.

Our year in Numbers

Overall / Organization

16,921 immigrants received ISANS services
180 countries of origin among ISANS clients covering 141 languages
414 community members volunteered at ISANS for a total of **9,321 hours**
111 ISANS clients volunteered in the community for a total of 416 hours

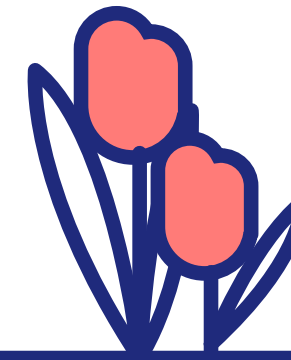
Family, Children, and Specialized Settlement Services

14,300 interpretations facilitated for **1,743** clients
967 personal documents translated
194 children were cared for in our long-term care, early childhood education centres
356 children were cared for in our short-term care, early childhood education centres



Community Integration Services

56 families participated in community gardens
52 community partners and organizations
546 immigrants took part in 73 Community Connections activities
545 ISANS clients were registered for 990 recreational and social activities in the community



Employment and Bridging

2,539 new clients received employment counselling
1,306 ISANS clients gained employment
70% of all employed clients gained employment in their field or a related one



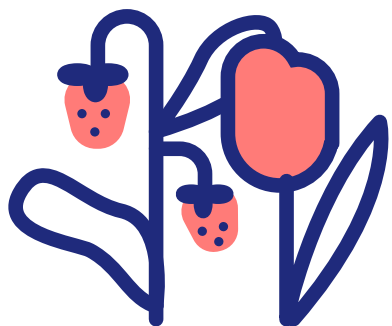
Business Development Services

1,725 ISANS clients received business services
1,020 ISANS clients participated in business training
26 ISANS clients started a business



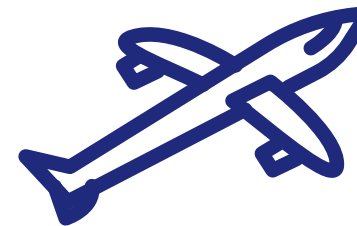
Employer Support Services

549 Nova Scotian employers were engaged in ISANS employer supports
387 employers in rural Nova Scotia and small centres were engaged in ISANS employer supports
167 employers were engaged in the Atlantic Immigration Program



Refugee Resettlement

922 government-assisted refugees and 1,556 Afghan nationals arrived through 6 Charter flights in 2023
213 individuals were sponsored to come to Nova Scotia through our Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program



Distance and Online

756 ISANS clients in Nova Scotia live outside of Halifax Regional Municipality
ISANS pre-arrival clients live in over 310 international cities
2,200 clients from 126 different countries accessed our Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA) Program. Nigeria, India, and the Philippines were the top three countries.



Language Services

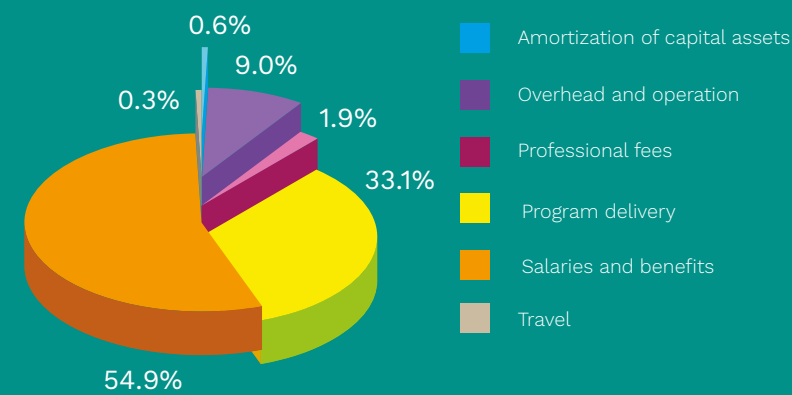
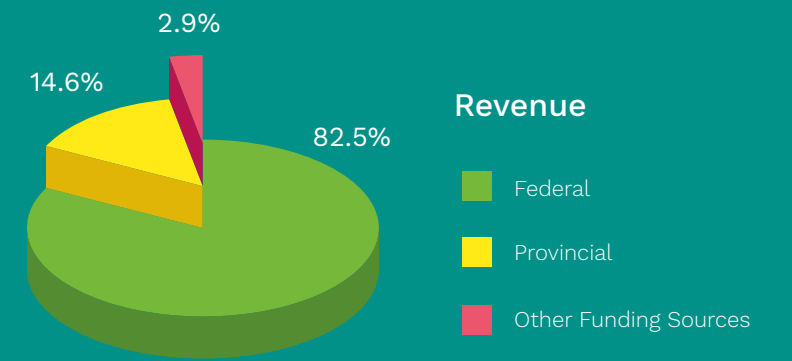
3,823 language learners in **168** active classes
1,531 ISANS clients were supported through language advising
32 specialized language programs for vulnerable populations, skills in the workplace, and specific career sectors



Highlight from the 2023-2024 Financial Report

Revenue	2023 - 2024	2022 - 2023	% CHANGE
Federal	\$34,858,027	\$29,172,059	19.5%
Provincial - Nova Scotia	\$6,173,258	\$6,192,997	-0.3%
Other funding sources	\$1,220,913	\$1,485,316	-17.8%
TOTAL	\$42,252,198	\$36,850,372	14.7%

Expenses	2023 - 2024	2022 - 2023	% CHANGE
Amortization of capital assets	\$302,898	\$303,810	-0.3%
Overhead and operation	\$3,708,835	\$3,745,414	-1.0%
Professional fees	\$778,190	\$619,434	25.6%
Program delivery	\$13,582,175	\$11,388,693	19.3%
Salaries and benefits	\$22,516,322	\$19,288,304	16.7%
Travel	\$117,128	\$87,785	33.4%
TOTAL	\$41,005,548	\$35,433,440	15.7%



2023/24 Funding partners

- Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services (ACCES Employment)
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)
- Colleges and Institutions Canada (CiCan)
- Dalhousie University
- Elections Canada
- Emera Inc.
- Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- J & W Murphy Foundation
- Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia
- Minister of Health and Wellness
- MOSAIC
- Mothers Matter Centre
- Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency
- Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration
- Ottawa Community Immigrant Service Organization (OCISO)
- Pier Labs
- RBC Royal Bank
- Sport Fund
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. AEIP
- Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)
- World Skills Employment Centre

Thank you

