

*bringing
people and
communities
together*



2022—2023 Annual Report

Immigrant & Refugee Services Association PEI

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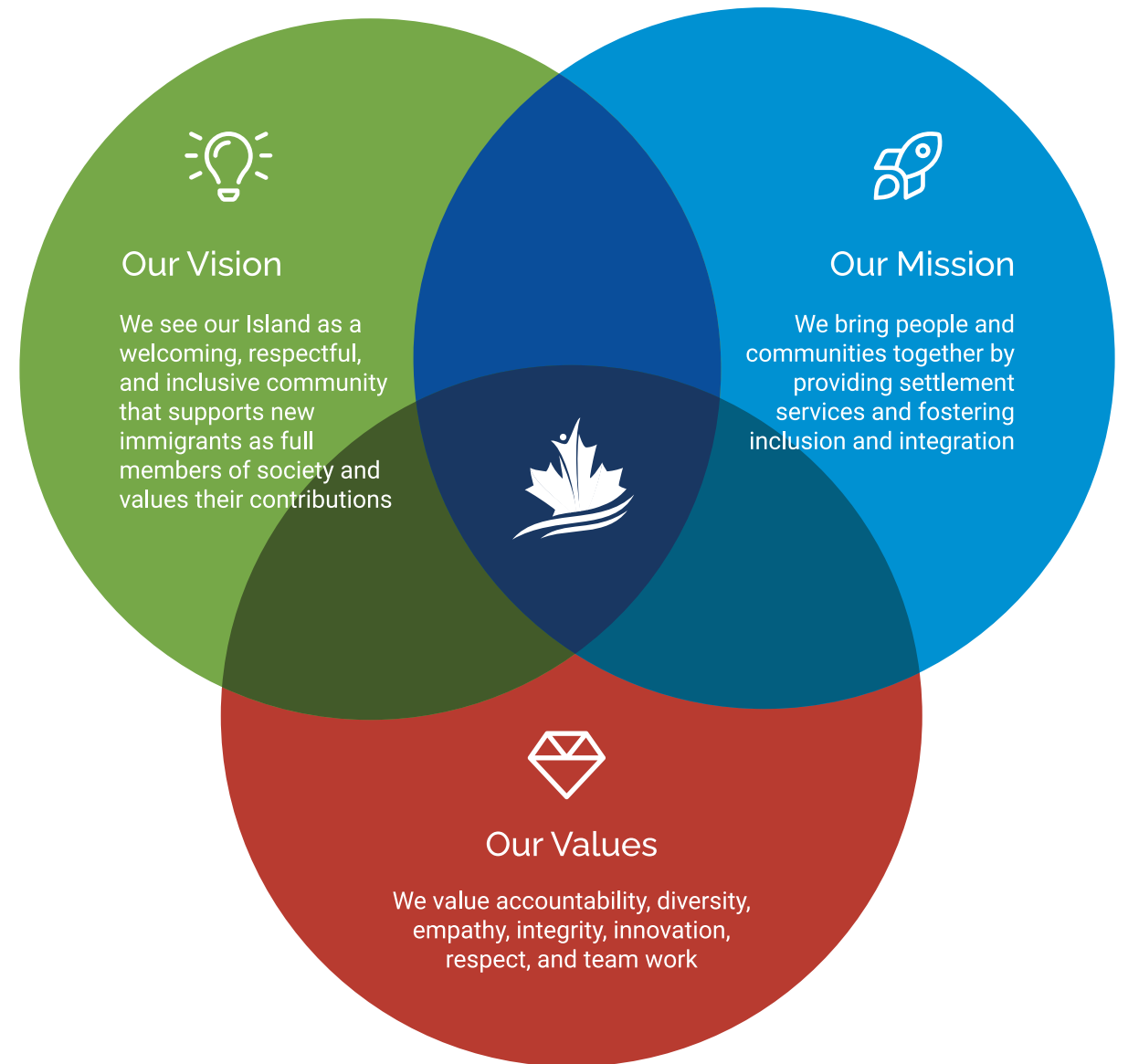
Sandy Irwin

Trung Ngo

Table of contents

President’s message	2	DiverseCity multicultural festival	16
A note from the Executive Director	3	Community engagement	17
Farewell to Craig Mackie	4	Volunteers	20
General settlement services	6	Provincial Immigration Partnership	22
A new satellite office in Summerside	10	Community partners	24
Youth settlement services	12	Website and social media	25
Employment services	14	Funders and finance	26

This report covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023



President's message

Tina Saksida



The 2022-2023 fiscal year marked my fourth year as President of IRSA's Board of Directors. In some ways, this year felt like a return to the pre-pandemic normal at IRSA, with increasing numbers of new arrivals and client interactions, as well as large community gatherings, including the incredibly popular DiverseCity festival.

Among the Association's many successes, I would particularly like to highlight IRSA's advocacy and key role in helping settle Ukrainians fleeing their war-torn country. IRSA's swift and impactful response to this crisis speaks to the professionalism and dedication of our staff, whose incredible work ethic and team spirit continue to amaze me. I am also truly inspired by the visionary leadership of Bernadette Reynolds, our Executive Director. Thank you, all, for your outstanding work and commitment to IRSA's clients and the greater good.

Further, I would like to thank my fellow Board Directors – Selvi Roy (Vice President), Rachel Murphy (Treasurer), Vanessa Wachuku (Secretary), Ali Assadi, Gary Demeulenaere, Chera-Lee Gomez, Jim Hornby, Sandy Irwin, Trung Ngo, Julius Patkai, and Matt Totten – for their generosity in giving their time and expertise to this important organization. Julius and Matt joined the Board in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, while Arnold Croken, who had served on the Board since 2016, including as Vice President, stepped down from his role after six years. Thank you, Arnold, for your dedicated service to IRSA.

Finally, on behalf of the IRSA Board, I would like to express our deep gratitude to our funding partners, particularly the Federal and Provincial Govern-

ments, our volunteers, and the local community for their continued trust and support.

As I reflect on IRSA's accomplishments over this past year, I am reminded of the lasting impact of Craig Mackie, our previous Executive Director, who passed away in November 2022. Before retiring in late 2021, Craig had served 12 years in that role and was beloved by his team, colleagues, and the newcomer community. I am glad that we were able to honour Craig in his final weeks by renaming the IRSA scholarship in his name; he was incredibly touched when he found out. Towards the end of his life, Craig wrote movingly about his experiences with living with a terminal illness and his decision to pursue medical assistance in dying. Craig was an advocate to the very end, and we will continue to honour his legacy by serving our communities and helping newcomers thrive here and make PEI their home. ■



A note from the Executive Director

Bernadette Reynolds



As I look back on my second year serving as the Executive Director of the Immigrant & Refugee Services Association PEI (IRSA), I continue to be amazed by the commitment, enthusiasm, and strength I witness in our organization's employees, our partners, clients, and all members of the community.

While restrictions eased and borders continued to open across the globe, we signed up 2,246 new arrivals and provided services to 5,463 unique clients through 33,546 recorded interactions and interventions.

Our response to the situation in Ukraine was one of our most significant accomplishments. We advocated for our Ukrainian community to access provincial and federal government services. The Association became an active member of the National Secretariat for displaced Ukrainians coming to Canada, a body designed to craft a federal and provincial response to the ongoing crisis where we continue to play an important role.

Another major highlight was the return of our DiverseCity Multicultural Festival in full swing after two years of a limited format. This time, we were proud to celebrate it live in five Island communities: Charlottetown, Abrams-Village, Three Rivers (Montague), Alberton, and Summerside.

In January 2023, we hosted our biggest post-pandemic gathering at the Rodd Hotel in Charlottetown. The event, titled *New Year, Next Steps 2023*, brought together partners and stakeholders from across the Island to discuss the key priorities identified through the work of our Provincial Immigration Partnership program.

Further, I am thrilled to share that we secured a lease for a new office space in Summerside, allowing us to expand our services and better serve our clients. The new facility is just a start for us, as we aim to grow our programming in Summerside and partner with other established organizations to expand our reach.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to Craig Mackie who sadly passed away in November 2022. Craig, my predecessor in the ED role, was an unwavering advocate for newcomers to the province. He worked tirelessly to promote the inclusion aspect of the Association's mission, and the well-being of the newcomer community was a guiding principle in his work with IRSA. In his memory, we renamed the IRSA-sponsored scholarship established a few years back and now call it *Craig Mackie Memorial Scholarship* and created the *Craig Mackie Memorial Award* to be awarded every year to a first-generation immigrant who exemplifies the community and togetherness spirit that was an integral part of Craig's life and work.

At IRSA, we draw our strength from our devoted and dedicated staff, who inspire me every day with their passion and commitment. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our Board of Directors, both past and present, for their valuable input and unique perspective, which enable us to serve our community with enthusiasm and confidence. I am also grateful to our funders and community partners for their support of our mission. It is an honour to be a part of such a formidable team, and I look forward to the year ahead. ■





Craig Mackie (1950 - 2022) served as the Association's Executive Director for twelve years. As an avid practitioner, he would regularly join in at the DiverseCity's tai chi demonstrations.

Farewell to Craig Mackie

The employees and Board of Directors of the Immigrant & Refugee Services Association PEI were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of former Executive Director Craig Mackie on 2 November 2022. The courage Craig displayed during his illness was exemplified by how he approached life, recognizing it as part of his journey through this world.

Craig joined the Association in early 2010 as the Executive Director and remained in that role until his retirement in late 2021. It was during his tenure and stewardship that the Association continued to grow in the number of staff and the number of clients it served. Immigration to Prince Edward Island increased during Craig's time at the organization, and he worked tirelessly to ensure that it was ready to meet the growing demand for services. Despite numerous bumps in the road as the Association

grew, Craig never lost his passion for what he was doing and always cared about staff, clients, and the work.

In the office, Craig was friendly and approachable, developing individual friendships with staff over common experiences and taking the time to learn a little about everyone he worked with. His colleagues cite his wisdom, insight, kindness and support as motivational factors to bring their best efforts to their work as he constantly led by example. His sense of fairness, curiosity, and above all, humour, inspired those who worked with him, as did his strength and a heart as big as the world.

Clients recall his smile and curiosity, asking about their families, their homes, their culture, and their experiences coming to Canada. That curiosity came naturally to Craig. Before joining IRSA, he

spent much of his professional life as a journalist, producer, and manager, primarily with CBC. That career allowed him to live in cities and communities throughout Canada. Craig was especially proud of his time spent in Canada's north, helping to connect remote centres to the rest of the nation and seeing firsthand what communities can achieve when they come together.

Craig's passions in life included his family, nature, tai chi, reading, and especially curling. He was introduced to the sport as a child and spent parts of the next six decades competing locally, regionally, and nationally. He loved to drop pearls of wisdom he borrowed from different sources, particularly *Star Trek* and *Monty Python*, and if someone didn't get the reference, he would happily take the time to fill in the details.

At IRSA, we are proud that we can continue recognizing the work and the thousands of intangibles he brought with him with a scholarship in his name for immigrant students at UPEI and Holland College who share the same ideas of giving back to the community. As well, this year, the Association honoured a client who is an example of the traits Craig demonstrated.

Craig poured his heart and soul into building IRSA as a wonderful example of what can be done when people of various origins come together to work for a common cause and goal. It is only fitting that we continue to honour his work and his memory through our own striving for excellence in everything we do.

CRAIG MACKIE MEMORIAL AWARD

In honour of Craig, IRSA introduced the Craig Mackie Memorial Award. Each year, we will recognize a first-generation immigrant who embodies the spirit of community and togetherness that was very much a part of Craig's life and work. This year, the first-ever recipient of this award was Farahnaz Rezaei.

Read about Farahnaz on page 21 ►

SCHOLARSHIP RENAMED IN HONOUR OF CRAIG

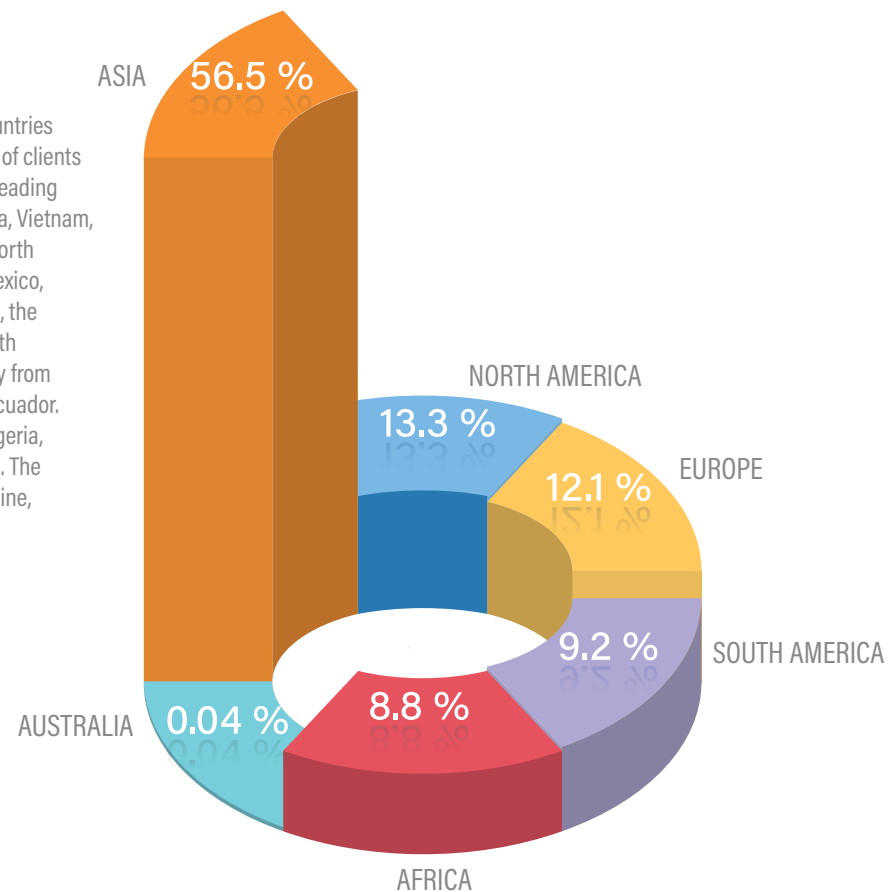
In 2019, the Association established a scholarship to be awarded annually to exemplary Holland College and UPEI students. This year, it was named The Craig Mackie Memorial Scholarship, and the amount was increased to \$1,000 each in honour of the former Executive Director of IRSA.

The Craig Mackie Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to two eligible students enrolled in programs at the two participating educational institutions. Recipients are first-generation immigrants who are current students in good academic standing and positively contribute to the community.

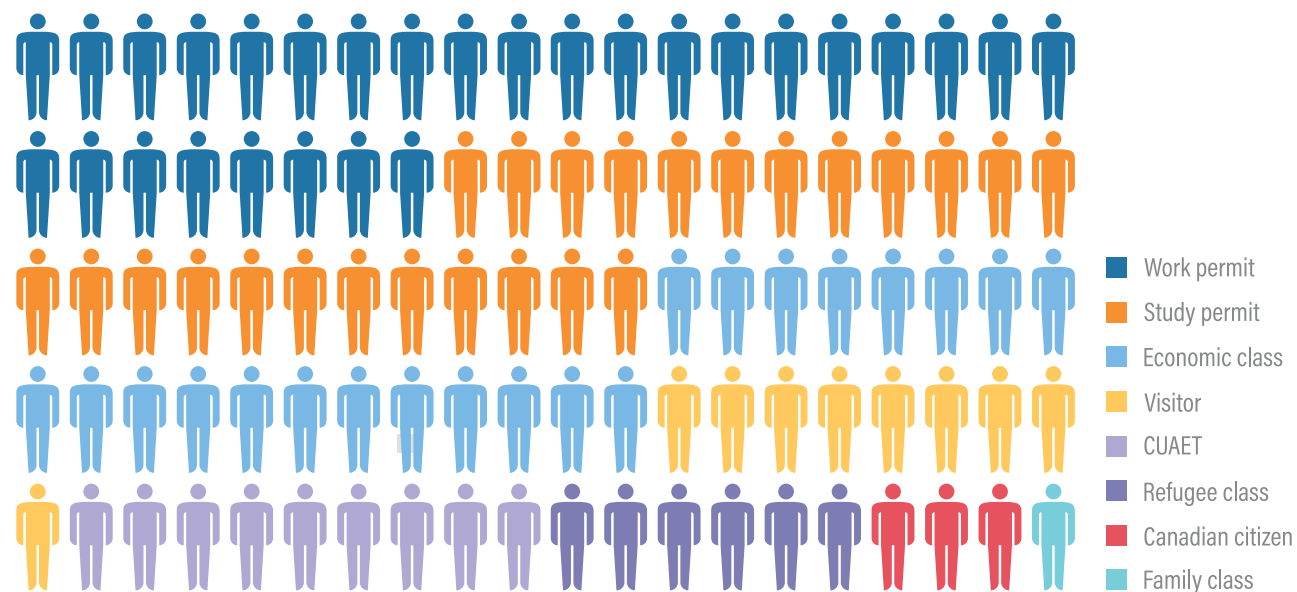
CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS: OVERVIEW

Clients by place of origin

In the fiscal year 2022/2023, 2,246 new immigrants from 85 countries registered with IRSA. The majority of clients came from Asia (56.5%), with the leading source countries being India, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The leading North American country of origin was Mexico, followed by the Bahamas, Jamaica, the United States and El Salvador. South American immigrants came mostly from Colombia, Chile, Peru, Brazil and Ecuador. Most African clients came from Nigeria, Sudan, Ghana, Somalia, and Kenya. The Europeans mostly came from Ukraine, Albania and Germany.



Clients by immigration class



Settlement Services

Settlement workers at IRSA deliver direct services to newly-arrived immigrants—intake, orientation, translation, interpretation, referral to community resources, para-professional counselling, and providing general information.

These services continue to play a crucial role in helping individuals and families on their journey to achieve their full potential in their new environment. Settlement services encompass a wide range of support mechanisms designed to address the various challenges newcomers face.

Assistance often begins with orientation programs, providing essential information about Canadian society, culture, and available resources.

Referrals to language assessments and classes are a key component, aiding immigrants in acquiring or enhancing their English language skills, while fostering effective communication and community engagement.

CASE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

In employing a case management approach when working with clients, individuals or families, settlement workers adopt a systematic and client-centered methodology to address diverse needs and challenges. This approach involves the comprehensive assessment of a client's situation, identifying specific needs and goals, and collaboratively developing a tailored settlement plan.

Case managers serve as liaisons between clients and various internal and external service providers, ensuring seamless coordination of resources and support. Through regular monitoring and reassessment, the case management process remains dynamic, allowing for adjustments to the plan as the client's circumstances evolve.

This client-focused methodology promotes empowerment, self-determination, and holistic well-being, fostering a collaborative relationship between the client and the case manager to achieve optimal outcomes. ■





Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

This program is crafted to address the immediate settlement needs of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), and it is delivered within 6 to 8 weeks of their arrival in Prince Edward Island. During this crucial period, the program extends essential services pivotal to a smooth transition for the newcomers. Services include temporary accommodation, an initial assessment of the refugees' unique needs, skills, and aspirations, the delivery of orientation and information needed to begin the resettlement process, and connection to other programs and services provided by IRSA.

HIPPY Program

The *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)* program empowers parents to actively participate in Canadian society and prepare their children for success in school and in life. Through home visits and personalized educational sessions, the HIPPY program team ensures each parent is equipped with the proper tools to adjust to life in Canada with children.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS: HIPPY PROGRAM'S FIRST GRADUATION

As the inaugural HIPPY cohort completed the first program cycle, a momentous occasion awaited participants at a heartwarming 'graduation' ceremony. This event symbolized the culmination of a 30-week-long journey for parents and their preschoolers who actively engaged in the program.

The graduation was a testament to the collective dedication and hard work put forth by the families involved—it fostered a sense of accomplishment, creating a shared sentiment of pride and achievement among the parents and children alike. The ceremony became a poignant celebration of the collaborative efforts made to enhance early childhood education at home and beyond.

The event marked the completion of the HIPPY program's first cycle and served as a joyous occasion for reflection and festivity. The ceremony highlighted the development of a strong bond between parents and preschoolers, emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in early learning.

Overall, the graduation became a memorable chapter in the HIPPY program, reinforcing the program's positive impact on educational outcomes and the sense of community among the participating families.

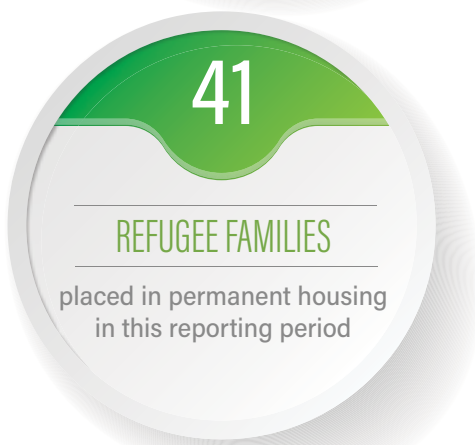


June 29, 2022 – Participants and their families joyfully commemorate the end of the HIPPY program's first term with a heartwarming graduation ceremony, celebrating accomplishments in early childhood education and the strong bonds forged among the participants and the HIPPY program team.

HOUSING SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES

Housing coordinators deliver support for refugee clients while they search for permanent accommodation. This involves facilitating the initial housing setup, and building and sustaining positive relationships with all stakeholders in the process. This approach is grounded in an understanding of all settlement factors, including family size, preferences, and financial constraints.

Acting as advocates, the coordinators engage with landlords and utilities. Their work extends beyond logistics to encompass providing information and educational support to GAR clients regarding housing in Canada. This approach ensures that each individual's unique requirements are met, fostering a smoother and more tailored transition for refugees as they embark on their resettlement journey.



A NEW SATELLITE OFFICE IN SUMMERSIDE



In early 2023, we opened a new IRSA office in Summerside, located at 30 Greenwood Drive. The official opening event was graced by esteemed guests, including Keptin James Bernard from Lennox Island, Summerside Mayor Dan Kutcher, Deputy Mayor Cory Snow, and the City of Summerside councillors and staff. The opening also saw the presence of various immigration partners, including Li Feng, Farahnaz Rezaei and their colleagues from the Prince Edward Island Government; representatives of Greater Summerside Chamber of Commerce and PEI Connectors; and members of the newcomer community from Summerside and across PEI. The sun-kissed day added to the festivities of the occasion.

The Summerside office of IRSA is committed to providing essential services to the many new immigrants settling in the western region of Prince Edward Island. A dedicated team of specialists operates from the Summerside office with support from the head office in Charlottetown, delivering the

same range of services, from essential settlement services to employment assistance and community engagement. The office is more than just a service provider—it actively organizes or takes part in the coordination of various community events such as Christmas in Canada and DiverseCity Multicultural Festival, fostering a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. ■



Summerside Mayor Dan Kutcher accompanied by the IRSA Executive Director Bernadette Reynolds takes the first slice of the celebratory cake at the grand opening event

IRSA office in Summerside

Several IRSA team members work full-time out of the new office in Summerside. With support from their Charlottetown colleagues, they operate the following programs and services:

- General settlement services
- Youth settlement services
- Employment assistance services
- Community engagement programs
- Provincial Immigration Partnership program

About twelve percent of the total number of new clients in this reporting period were settling in Prince County and registered with IRSA through the Summerside office.



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YOUTH SETTLEMENT SERVICES – 2022/2023 PROGRAMING HIGHLIGHTS

Summer Camps

The first week-long Summer Camp in Summerside marked a successful expansion for YSS programming, attracting 23 elementary school-aged participants.

Packed with diverse activities and field trips, the program garnered enthusiastic feedback from parents who appreciated the YSS presence in Summerside.

The extension beyond Charlottetown broadened the program's reach and showcased the community's eagerness to support such initiatives.

Girls Circle

The 2022-2023 Girls Circle term concluded in March, culminating in a delightful last-day stay at a hotel. This experience proved enjoyable for facilitators and participants, cultivating stronger connections among the girls and the program team, and creating lasting memories. Positive feedback from parents and participating girls helped extend the program's success—numerous parents and students expressed interest in enrolling in future Girls Circles. This emphasized the program's impact and its importance to new immigrants.

“ On behalf of our family, we thank you very much for being so special, for dedicating wonderful spaces to such important topics for our daughters, for allowing them to be themselves, and for leaving a mark that will surely transcend. Thank you, Youth Settlement Services Staff, thanks IRSA!

~ a Girls Circle participant's parent ”

Youth Settlement Services (YSS)

The YSS team supports immigrant students (Kindergarten through Grade 12) and their families in Charlottetown and Summerside.

The team members assist newcomer children to achieve their full potential within the Canadian school system, provide guidance and skills transfer to help youth adapt to Canadian culture, and support students in coping with social, emotional, and family or other relationship-related challenges.

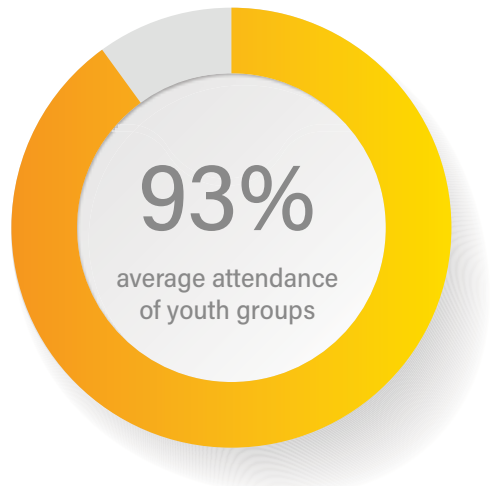
The team also advocates on behalf of newcomer children and families as needed.

Supporting students who face challenges

YSS provided crucial support for a student who arrived in June 2022 and was facing a developmental delay. Due to the specific requirements for school assistance, administrators mandated a formal diagnosis through a doctor's assessment to ensure the provision of Educational Assistant support. Despite the extended timeframe to integrate the student into the school system, a comprehensive plan has been established.

This involved collaborative efforts among the school, doctor, EAL staff, Public Schools Branch, and the YSS team. The positive outcome of this collaboration manifested as the young boy commenced his school journey in October, eliciting immense gratitude from both him and his mother.

The joint efforts underscore the commitment to addressing individual needs and facilitating a supportive environment for students with unique challenges. ■





IRSA's first Job Fair

On July 21, 2022, the employment services team organized and hosted its first-ever Job Fair for IRSA clients seeking employment assistance.

The event was held at Beaconsfield Carriage House. With eleven employers on site and around fifty attending clients, the event received positive feedback. Post-event surveys revealed that both employers and clients found the fair beneficial and expressed interest in attending similar events in the future. The successful exchange and networking opportunities created a mutually rewarding environment, highlighting the value of such initiatives in connecting job seekers with employment opportunities.



SHEBA VARGHESE — A SUCCESS STORY

Meet Sheba Varghese, a skilled biotechnology professional with a background in the medical field.

Upon relocating to Canada, Sheba initially found herself working in a call center, but her true passion lay in returning to her medical roots. Fortunately, her journey took a transformative turn when she connected with Vicky Ding, an employment services specialist at IRSA.

Through Vicky's guidance, Sheba discovered the Canadian Alliance for Skills and Training in Life Sciences (CASTL) program. This unique initiative, formed through a collaboration between academia, industry, and government, aims to address the future skills needs of the Canadian life sciences sector. Sheba aced the CASTL interviews and tests and secured a full-time position as a Production Technician at Biovectra, a prominent biotech company based in Charlottetown.

In her role at Biovectra, Sheba thrives, and her success serves as a testament to the transformative impact of programs like CASTL in facilitating individuals' transition back into their chosen fields. Sheba's journey is a shining example of how our

IRSA's employment support services play a pivotal role in assisting newcomers as they navigate the complexities of the job market in their new community. The comprehensive support includes guidance on crucial aspects such as resume building, effective job searching strategies, and the development of professional networking skills. Beyond these fundamental elements, IRSA goes a step further in fostering social and cultural integration through a range of employment-related community events and workshops. These initiatives serve as platforms where immigrants can connect with potential employers and other local residents, facilitating meaningful interactions and friendships.

By creating an environment that encourages social and professional connections, IRSA aims to instill a sense of belonging among newcomers. This holistic approach recognizes the importance of finding employment and building a supportive community network that contributes to the overall well-being and successful integration of immigrants into their new home.

employment services programs can empower and support professionals, enabling them to find fulfilling and rewarding careers.

As we celebrate Sheba's achievements, we look forward to witnessing her continued success and the positive impact she makes in the field of biotechnology.

Congratulations, Sheba! ■



DiverseCity multicultural festival

The festival events were held in five Island communities—Charlottetown, Alberton, Abram-Village, Summerside, and Three Rivers (Montague)—in June and July 2022. The festival also produced four one-hour shows that aired on the national Eastlink Community TV network in the fall of 2022, and streamed online on the DiverseCity website. The combined live, broadcast, and streamed estimated audience was over 160,000 (20,000 in person, 140,000 virtual).

Background

The first DiverseCity took place on Victoria Row in Charlottetown in 2007. The Association's community outreach team wanted to bring new and old Islanders together in a meaningful, celebratory way to mark Canadian Multiculturalism Day, and the idea of a street festival was born. The event ended with a live music performance and street dance.

From then on, DiverseCity grew larger every year. In 2014, DiverseCity became a multi-event fair held in all three counties of the province and is now an essential part of the Prince Edward Island summer festival line-up. To mark the festival's 10th anniversary in 2016, we added a citizenship ceremony to kick off the events in Charlottetown. Celebrating the newest Canadians at the Festival has now become a tradition.

DiverseCity Now

The annual DiverseCity Multicultural Festival continues to take place in multiple Island locations over the summer months. Performers, vendors, artisans, community groups, and activity leaders represent about eighty different cultures each year. The Festival is an occasion for everyone to celebrate the Island's diverse community that is continuously becoming culturally richer thanks to immigration.

BOOK CLUB GOES DIGITAL

Our tech-savvy team set up a number of devices with an e-reader app to be used by newcomers attending a newly-formed book club organized by Suna Houghton, the volunteer coordinator at IRSA. Participants received their devices, and a fun online training session took place in June 2022.

The first digital book club meeting was held in July to discuss "Murder at the Lighthouse," a mystery written by Frances Evesham. The volunteer engaged to lead the book club had some great questions for readers and a vibrant discussion followed.

Since the start, the digital book club has been a hit! Participants are excited to pick the next book after finishing one, making our literary adventure full of joy and discovery. ■

CITIZENSHIP TEST PREPARATION CLASSES

IRSA offers Citizenship Test Preparation classes to permanent residents who have applied for Canadian citizenship and have been accepted to write the test. Classes cover the material from the book *Discover Canada* and provide sample tests, study aids, and complementary resources. ■

” Greetings from Joseph, it has been a pleasure talking to you on the phone and I truly appreciate your great concern and wonderful encouragement to put my heart and soul in order to obtain my Canadian citizenship. You are the right person doing the right service with so much zeal to give time and energy to welcome and encourage people like me, I did feel something special from your conversation and I thank you very much for all that concern and for the arrangements you made for the book and material you emailed me.

Thanking you, Joseph

”

Canada School

Canada School program is designed for immigrants who are new to PEI or have lived here for under two years, but all newcomers are welcome to participate. The program offers presentations on various topics, delivered online or in person.

Each topic is presented by the orientation coordinator or experts on the subject, and participants can ask questions in a supportive, friendly environment





IRSA's Cultural Inclusion Trainer Lisa Dollar speaking at one of the events organized through the Provincial Immigration Partnership program (page 22)

CULTURAL INCLUSION TRAINING

IRSA's Cultural Inclusion Training (CIT) has been working with UPEI's Office of Continuing Education and Professional Development to design and implement a course for its New Managers Certificate program. The program is designed for those new to the manager role or who aspire to be a manager. Ours is one of eight courses that comprise this program.

The *Cultural Awareness in the Workplace* course enhances cultural awareness and explains inclusion through experiential methods by covering valuable information, engaging in individual and group exercises, and drawing on participants' experiences. The course develops participants' skills, knowledge, and awareness in their interactions with others, assisting them to recognize what they can do to become more effective in working and living in a culturally diverse environment. It is important that—for businesses and organizations to thrive—managers are culturally aware and agile to support employees from all cultures so they can perform at their highest potential while feeling validated and included. ■



”
Really enjoyed the session! I loved all the stories and pictures in the slideshow – it helped me understand and put into perspective the information during the session.

The session was great. It provided lots of great, relevant information that is applicable to all workplaces!

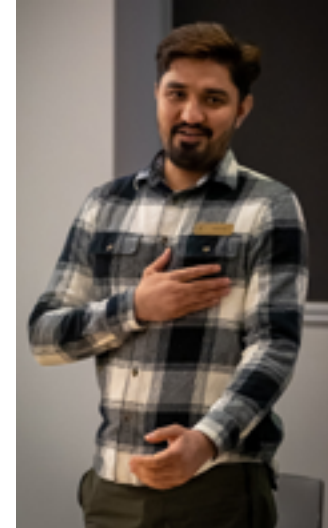
Really enjoyed this course; really opened my eyes.

I found this course to be so beneficial. It made me think of things I take for granted every day.

I felt this topic covered a lot of interesting perspectives that I wasn't already familiar with.”

CULTURAL SPOTLIGHTS

In January 2023, IRSA started a series of Cultural Spotlight sessions—public cultural awareness presentations featuring new immigrants talking about their culture, current situations in their home countries, reasons why they decided to leave, and their immigration experiences. The presentations' goal is to provide opportunities for Prince Edward Islanders to learn and become inspired to help make the Island a welcoming and inclusive place to live, work and thrive for everyone. The series began with presentations on Afghanistan and Ukraine.



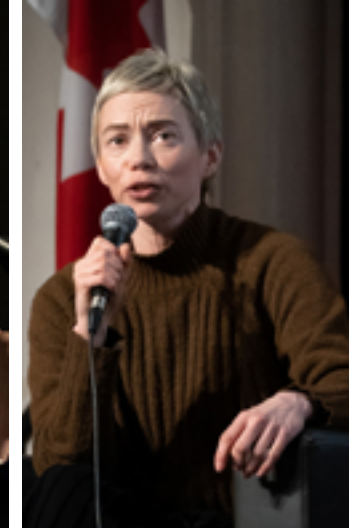
Khaled Salar



Freshta Hemmati



Valeriia Shokota



Tetiana Lysak

Afghanistan

The Spotlight on Afghanistan event took place in January 2023, at the Charlottetown Library Learning Centre and drew an audience of more than fifty individuals.

Guest speakers Freshta Hemmati and Khaled Salar shared their insights on Afghan culture, recounting their immigration journey to Canada, and shedding light on the current situation in their home country.

Freshta and Khaled highlighted the impact Prince Edward Islanders had on their own lives and provided guidance on how established residents could support newcomers and the role they could play in making a difference.

The discussion touched upon the significance of celebrating diversity in PEI and why it holds such importance in the smallest Canadian province.

Ukraine

The second in the series, Spotlight on Ukraine, was held in February at Holland College's Florence Simmons Hall and marked the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. More than seventy people attended the event.

The guest speakers were Tetiana Lysak, Valeriia Shokota, and Mykyta Shupov. The three Ukrainians shared their stories of fleeing their homes and challenging immigration experiences.

Elina Lialiuk, a settlement worker with IRSA, shared information on how Islanders can host Ukrainian families or individuals after they arrive in PEI. Elina explained the difference between the special permit granted by Canadian authorities to people escaping the conflict in Ukraine giving them limited permission to stay and work in Canada, and the permanent resident status granted to convention refugees. ■

CATHY AND MIKE — CHAMPION VOLUNTEERS



Cathy and Mike Salter are a dynamic sibling duo who dedicated their time to making a real impact as volunteers at IRSA. Cathy and Mike took English-as-an-additional language (EAL) tutoring to the next level—beyond one-to-one sessions, they organized a vibrant weekly conversation circle from October 2022 to May 2023.

Cathy and Mike also organized fun activities with newcomers, like attending the Illumination Festival and playing board games. Then they went the extra mile by bringing hands-on experiences and showcasing cross-country skiing and snowshoes during talks on winter sports and recreation. As avid hikers and members of the Island Trail, they shared their passion by leading an informative winter hike session for IRSA's Canada School program. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Island Trail, the sib-

lings led a five-week hiking series, encouraging new immigrants to explore the great Island outdoors.

The Community Engagement team at IRSA extends a heartfelt thank-you to Cathy and Mike Salter for their dedication and enriching our community with their many contributions and outstanding service. ■



CRAIG MACKIE MEMORIAL AWARD 2022



Bernadette Reynolds, IRSA's Executive Director and the first recipient of the Craig Mackie Memorial Award, Farahnaz Rezaei, after the award ceremony at the Association's holiday open house in December 2022

The annual Craig Mackie Memorial Award, introduced in 2022, recognizes a first-generation immigrant who embodies the spirit of community and togetherness that was very much a part of Craig's life and work. The first-ever recipient of this award was Farahnaz Rezaei.

Farahnaz Rezaei has a passion for making a difference in the lives of others, which lies at the foundation of everything she has done throughout her career. She proudly advocates for the advancement of human rights, particularly women and immigrants, and has promoted diversity and multiculturalism in PEI and around the world.

Farahnaz and her family immigrated in 2012 and immediately became actively involved in the Island community. Only two months after arriving in Canada, she began volunteering as an English tutor through the Association's English as an Additional Language Tutoring Program—she believed that the Program not only helped newcomers improve their English but also alleviated loneliness and isolation.

Her work with IRSA includes Persian and Arabic interpretation and translation, and giving cultural presentations to promote inclusion, education, and empathy.

Farahnaz emceed many DiverseCity Festival events. She had the pleasure of being alongside Craig Mackie during citizenship ceremonies held at those events and enjoyed being part of immigrants' journey as they celebrated becoming proud Canadians.

As a volunteer, Farahnaz is a member of the steering committee of IRSA's Women's Group which brings women together to socialize and share meaningful experiences and helps them with the struggles and challenges of being an immigrant.

Other groups that benefit from Farahnaz's generosity and wisdom are the Island Bahá'í community, Women's Network PEI, Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Family Violence Prevention Services, the International Women's Day organizing committee, the Town of Stratford's Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee, the Town of Stratford's Recreation, Culture and Event Committee, the Community Legal Information's Advisory Committee on Family Law, the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence, Canadian Cancer Society, the Peace Table Initiative to promote global equality and inclusivity, *la Centre d'Integration Francophone*, and PEI Connectors.

Farahnaz feels honored to have worked closely with Craig Mackie, whom she considered her mentor. Craig provided her with guidance, advice and support, and served as her role model, teacher, counsellor, and advocate for all their common goals.

Consciously practicing active understanding and empathy, Farahnaz is putting herself in another person's shoes, and seeing things from the perspectives of others. She is gifted with the ability to work with people of different ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, worldviews, and experiences—and she encourages everyone to do the same. ■



2022/2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Response to the crisis in Ukraine continues

The collaborative efforts of the Province, IRSA, and Provincial Immigration Partnership (PIP) have played a pivotal role in spearheading the PEI response to the Ukraine crisis. PIP, in particular, acted proactively by coordinating an event in April 2022 featuring the participation of the PEI Minister of Health and Wellness Ernie Hudson, various partners, and members of PEI's Ukrainian community. Concurrently, a PEI Ukrainian working group has been initiated, reflecting a concerted commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by the situation. The working group has been expanded to include first-stop settlement service providers and facilitate a comprehensive approach to support those affected by the crisis.

This and the following gatherings have been bringing together both new and established members of the Ukrainian community on the Island and served as a platform for meaningful interactions, fostering a sense of unity and support among the attendees. By organizing such gatherings, PIP not only highlights its commitment to community engagement

but also provides an essential space for dialogue between the local government and the Ukrainian community members. These events contributed to building stronger ties, promoting cultural exchange, and ensuring that the concerns and needs of the Ukrainian community were acknowledged and addressed.

Annual Showcase

The annual showcase held in May 2022 proved to be a significant gathering, drawing the participation of more than sixty partners from various corners of Prince Edward Island.

The event provided a comprehensive overview of the past year, offering insights into achievements and challenges, while also shedding light on the upcoming priorities.

Distinguished guest speakers contributed to the informative sessions, adding depth to the discussions. Notably, PIP took the opportunity to present research findings to Charlottetown's Mayor, Councillors, and committee members, specifically addressing current and emerging needs within the newcomer population. The focus on sports infrastructure underscored PIP's commitment to understanding and enhancing the well-being of newcomers in the community. The hope of this engagement was that it would serve as a crucial step in aligning policies and initiatives with the identified needs of the diverse and growing population.

A national research network partnership

In a strategic move, PIP took the initiative to establish an exploratory partnership with a national

research network, reflecting a proactive approach towards collaboration on a broader scale. This marked the beginning of an expansion phase for the national network, supported by the peer-to-peer working group and a national research working group.

PIP actively joined the national research working group, demonstrating a commitment to contributing our expertise and insights to the broader research community. This collaborative effort laid the foundation for an intensified exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices among partners at the national level.

Housing Working Group

The Housing Working Group successfully transitioned from a pilot phase to an established status, achieving a significant milestone in collaboration with PIP's municipal partners, which secured an impressive \$1.1 million in funding through the CMHC for an Island municipality.

Following this session, the Town of Stratford, spurred by the insights gained, promptly submitted a funding application that received approval. This accomplishment stands out as one out of only fourteen applications across Canada that were met with success.

Other activities

Here are some examples of PIP's many activities in this reporting period:

- Organized information sessions with newcomer leaders and partners, to thank them and update them on research results, recommendations, and action
- Continued to refer newcomers seeking support to partners within our network
- Chaired a national workshop and joined activities in support of provincial partners and national information-sharing
- Joined the national planning committee for Canada's second annual Small Centers Conference coming to PEI in 2023, led by ARAISA ■



Participants discussing in groups at the *New Year, Next Steps* event held in January 2023.

A BIG THANK-YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS!

Acive Communities Lending, Inc.
 Anderson House
 ARAISA
 Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)
 Atlantic Council for International Cooperation (ACIC-CACI)
 Atlantic Lottery Corporation
 Bell Aliant Centre
 Bienvenue Évangéline
 Big Brothers and Big Sisters of PEI
 Boys and Girls Club
 Black Cultural Society of PEI
 Canada Microcredit Educators Group (CMEG)
 Canadian Association for Advancement of Women in Sport
 Canadian Lebanese Association of PEI
 Canadian Mental Health Association PEI
 Canadian Vietnamese Association on PEI
 Canadian Women's Foundation
 Carrefour de L'Isle-Saint-Jean
 CBDC West Prince Ventures Limited
 CHANCES
 Charlottetown City Police
 Chinese-Canadian Association of PEI
 Charlottetown Farmer's Market
 CIBC Community Investment
 College de l'île
 Community Legal Information
 Confederation Centre of the Arts
 Construction Association of PEI
 Cornerstone Baptist Church
 Creative PEI
 Credit Union Place
 Culture Summerside
 Dalmac Print
 Diocese of Charlottetown
 Discover Charlottetown
 Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce
 Efficiency PEI
 Engineers PEI
 Family Service PEI
 Family Violence Prevention
 Farm Centre Legacy Garden
 French Language School Board
 Friends of Montague Summer Days
 Girls Action Foundation
 Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce
 Greater Summerside Chamber of Commerce
 Halifax Refugee Clinic
 Harmony House Theatre
 Health Care Human Resource Sector Council
 Health PEI
 Hockey PEI (in partnership with UPEI)
 Holland College
 Indo-Canadian Association of PEI
 Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
 Island Media Arts Cooperative

Jumpstart (Canadian Tire)
 Justice Options for Women
 Kerala Association of PEI
 KidSport PEI
 Kinsmen
 La Commission scolaire de langue française
 La Coopérative d'intégration francophone de l'Î.P.É.
 Latinos Association of PEI
 Maritime Electric
 Markham Centre Financial
 Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI
 MRSB Group
 Native Council of Prince Edward Island
 Parks Canada
 PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women
 PEI Business Women's Association
 PEI Career Development Association
 PEI Connectors
 PEI Human Rights Commission
 PEI International Business Centre
 PEI Literary Alliance
 PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation
 PEI Public Health
 PEI Public Library Service
 PEI Public School Branch
 PEI Soccer Association
 Persian/Iranian Community
 Provincial Addictions Treatment Facility
 Provincial Credit Union
 RBC Royal Bank of Canada
 RCMP of Prince Edward Island
 RDÉE Î.P.É.
 Recruitment and Retention Secretariat
 Resource Abilities
 Rural Action Centres
 Seniors Active Living Centre
 Sobey's, Inc.
 Social Services and Seniors
 Special Events Reserve Fund (SERF)
 St. Paul's Anglican Church
 Stratford Community Gardens
 Study Abroad Canada
 Summerside Lobster Festival
 Tennis PEI
 The Rotary Club of Charlottetown
 Tourism Accommodation Levy - Summerside
 Tourism Industry Association of PEI
 Trinity United Church
 United Way of PEI
 UPEI | UPEI International Student Office
 Wake Up Dance Studio
 Winter Love PEI
 Women's Network PEI
 YMCA of Greater Toronto

irsapei.ca/guide

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA



In this reporting period, IRSA's website had an average of 15,000 unique visitors monthly. Typically, more than 900 visitors browsed the website for longer than 30 minutes during their visit each month.

In our Online Guide, newcomers can access essential information needed to settle on PEI. The Guide, and most of the rest of the IRSA website, is available in eight languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Persian, Chinese (Simplified), Korean and Vietnamese.

Welcome to Canada and PEI	First things to do when you arrive
Important documents	Money and finances
Housing	Food
Shopping	Transportation
Communication	Health
Information for parents and youth	Adult education
Employment	Law and order
Culture and social life	Canadian citizenship

Federal

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC/CIC)
Canadian Heritage

Provincial

Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture
Island Investment Development Inc.
PEI Department of Agriculture & Land
PEI Office of Immigration
Skills PEI
Workforce and Advanced Learning

Municipal

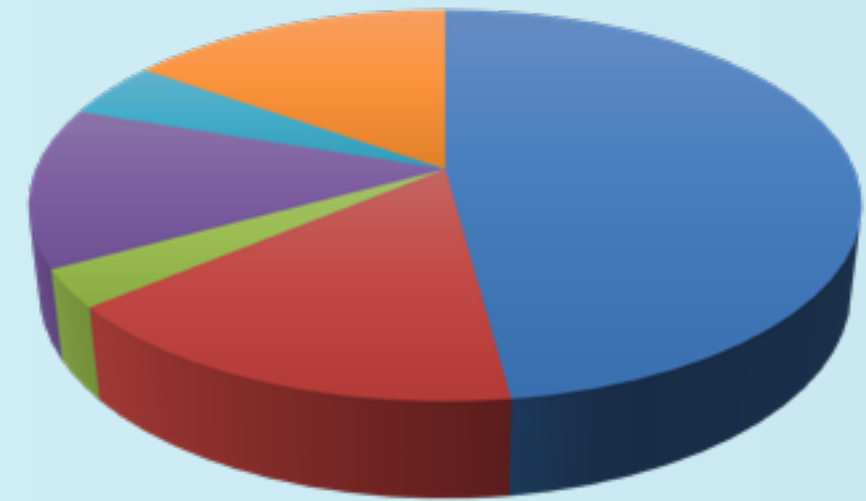
City of Charlottetown
City of Summerside
Town of Alberton
Town of Cornwall
Town of O'Leary
Town of Souris
Town of Stratford
Town of Tignish
Town of Three Rivers

Grants and donations

2023 Canada Games Host Society
Active Communities Inc.
Atlantic Lottery Corporation
Bienvenue Évangéline
Black Cultural Society of PEI
Canadian Race Relations Foundation
Cavendish Farms
CHANCES
Charlottetown Lions Club
Commonwealth Sport Canada
Community Outreach Centre
Confederation Centre of the Arts
Consolidated Credit Union
Culture Summerside
Dairy Farmers of Canada
Downtown Charlottetown Inc
Eastlink - Marketing
Holland College
ISANS Immigrant Services
Key Murray Law
Maritime Electric
National Bank of Canada
ParticipAction - Community Challenge
Patkai & Son Financial Services Inc.
PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being
PEI Connectors
PEI Dept Agriculture & Land
PEI Public Service Commission
PEI Real Estate Association
PEI UPSE
Physical & Health Education Canada (PHE Canada)
RBC Foundation
Standard Aero
TD Bank Group
Telus Community Board
Tourism Industry Association of PEI
Township Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd
UNA-Canada Building Young Entrepreneurs
United Way of PEI
UPEI Atlantic Veterinary College
UPEI Office of Continuing Education
YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth

REVENUE

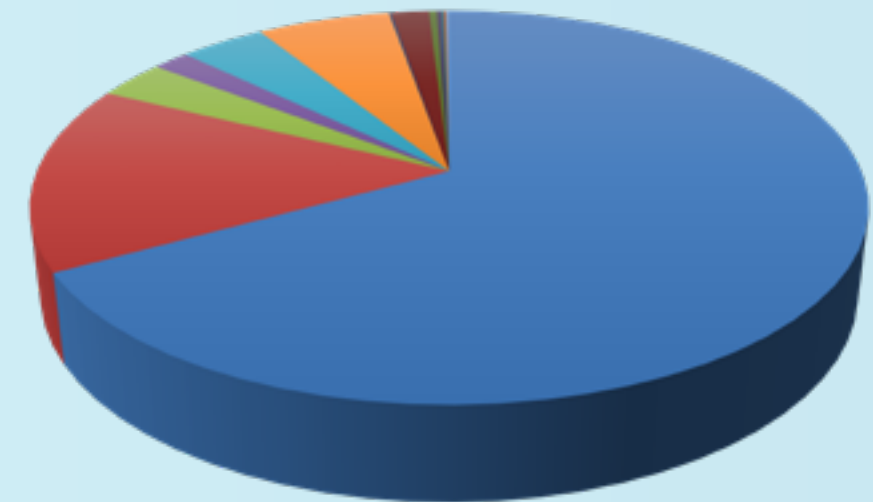
	2022-2023	2021-2022
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - Settlement	2,279,193	2,026,219
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - RAP	759,251	390,334
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - LIP	148,376	129,998
Province of Prince Edward Island	629,427	479,736
Skills PEI	222,058	222,841
Other revenue	720,075	375,723
Total	4,758,380	3,624,851



- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - Settlement
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - RAP
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - LIP
- Province of Prince Edward Island
- Skills PEI
- Other revenue

EXPENSES

	2022-2023	2021-2022
Wages and wage levies	3,184,473	2,590,826
Program activities	733,169	486,706
Operating expenses	151,173	112,096
Website, intranet development, and translation	80,668	52,461
Rent	187,218	122,232
Client expenses	291,137	141,941
Office	5,039	4,547
Travel	83,065	30,542
Professional development	17,198	23,265
Miscellaneous	9,718	4,981
Advertising	6,137	1,739
Professional fees	4,365	3,390
Amortization	6,903	6,904
Total	4,760,263	3,581,630



- Wages and wage levies
- Program activities
- Operating expenses
- Website, intranet development, and translation
- Rent
- Client expenses
- Office
- Travel
- Professional development
- Miscellaneous
- Advertising
- Professional fees
- Amortization

	2022-2023	2021-2022
Excess of revenue over expenses	-1,883	43,221



Special thanks to IRSA clients whose stories and photographs are featured in this 2021-2022 Annual Report. Your stories are inspirational and show in a tangible way the true benefits immigration brings to Prince Edward Island.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this report is accurate.

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