



P.E.I. Association for Newcomers to Canada 1998-99 Annual Report

Bringing People and Communities Together

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Terry Allen*

It has been a most exciting year for the PEIANC. We have been able to deliver our services to newcomers, to our community and, at the same time, conduct a comprehensive review of our operation and set direction for the future.

We started the year with Florence Larkin as our Interim Executive Director. Midway through the year Laura Lee Howard returned from maternity leave. In the spring of 1999, her family kept growing, and Laura Lee started her second maternity leave during my time as President.

We had to look no further than our own office to find a worthy

replacement! Michelle Jay has moved from her work as Employment Assistance Counsellor to the Executive Director role and has done an outstanding job! I am very thankful to Michelle, Laura Lee and Florence for the smooth transitions. Also to the other staff members - Lorraine, Aghdas, Trudy and Beti for their continued efforts during these times of change.

Program delivery continues to be our reason for being and I feel we have performed very well. Throughout the year we wrestled with how we could deliver more programming while looking for support other than our traditional funding agencies at the Federal level. So far our efforts have not yielded substantial additional funding from either the provincial or municipal levels of government. The process toward that end has begun and I am sure politicians at both levels of government are now aware of the contribution newcomers make to our developing community and the role played by PEIANC. During the year we were able to take two related major leaps forward in the development of the PEIANC. The first was the delivery of an assessment of newcomers needs, conducted by Florence Larkin and funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage. The second was the development

of a strategic plan for the Association, given the results of that needs assessment. It was a most interesting exercise for both the board and staff. It has lead to new and achievable short-term and long term objectives for the Association. It also made all of us reflect on the reason for the existence of the Association for Newcomers.

The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada does not work in a vacuum when dealing with the immigrant population of this province. This past year, three organizations that deal with newcomers to Canada, The PEI Race Relations Committee, The PEI Multicultural Council and ourselves, have discussed how we operate, our purpose, and if there is any duplication of services or lost efficiencies. Those discussions have only solidified, in my mind, the fact that all 3 organizations serve a special and unique purpose and little would be gained by any level of amalgamation.

Let me finally say how honoured I am to be involved with an association such as the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada. It is, in my opinion, a program delivery service that combines efficiency and

effectiveness with caring and compassion. I salute the board for their direction and advice, our funding partners for their support, and most of all the staff for their dedication.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Michelle Jay, Interim ED

My term with the Association has been interesting, challenging, and ultimately very satisfying. The past six months have been a particularly busy time for the ANC, due to a variety of circumstances, highlighted below:

Kosovar Refugees

In the spring of this year, the arrival of 100 Kosovar refugees to our province was exciting and engrossing. The situation was unique in that volunteer sponsors from the community were primarily responsible for providing settlement and host services to these newcomers. Our role was to supply information, to support, and to share our knowledge and resources with the sponsors. A lot of additional media / public relations work was necessary, and we used the interest in the Kosovars as an opportunity to highlight the issues facing all refugees who come here.

It was very positive to have the involvement of hundreds of people in sponsor groups, but certainly more work was required of us as an association. To date, 61 Kosovars remain in PEI, scattered throughout the province in the communities of Charlottetown, Summerside and Alberton. Their integration was a marked learning experience for ourselves, Citizenship & Immigration (CIC), sponsors, and the community at large. In future, we expect that sponsorship arrangements such as these will increase, and the ANC needs to be prepared to support them in this changing milieu created

by Citizenship & Immigration.

Funding Adjustments

The devolution, restructuring and trimming of key government programs continue to bring uncertainties and concerns over the future security and stability of organizations providing services to newcomers. Within the year, all our funding will be project-based or dependent on statistical results, as is the case with Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) funding to the employment program. Our other two major funders, Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) and Canadian Heritage (CH), are also moving in this direction.

The next few years will be critical. The PEIANC's response to all the changes taking place within government departments will determine its future direction and success. There is an increased urgency for alternate provincial and municipal resources dedicated toward newcomer adaptation. And a need to secure additional staff and contracts.

Certainly, I believe that the Association as a whole has the skill, the drive and the commitment necessary to thrive. We can be a strong, viable and prominent organization in the Island community. And we can continue to provide excellent services and advocacy for newcomers to PEI. What is required is strong leadership, hard work, vision and creativity.

Atlantic Settlement Conference

Every four years, the PEIANC has the opportunity to host a settlement conference for the Atlantic region, and this is our year! It is a wonderful chance to network with colleagues and funders regarding the joys and challenges of working with

newcomers.

Vicky Willson is coordinating the ANC efforts and has been very dedicated to that task. The organization of a regional conference has meant increased work from the Executive Director, the board, and the organization as a whole. Your energy is acknowledged and appreciated everyone. The steering committees' contribution is especially welcome. The full board will be called on to participate as much as they are able, during the conference. I am confident that the 1999 conference will be a success.

Workloads

A word here about the workloads that have been placed on staff, in the past six months specifically. With Laura Lee on maternity leave since April of 1999, and the staff changes that ensued, the ANC was left without an Administrative Assistant. The loss of that position, at an extremely busy time, has been very difficult to absorb.

Fortunately, the staff pulled together and was able to maintain services and a sense of humour. However, stress levels are high. There is a critical need for another position in the office - a combination of administrative assistance to the Executive Director, and program support to settlement, host and employment coordinators. Discussions have begun with CIC and we hope for support in this area soon.

Personnel Turnover

Although I will go into the specifics of personnel issues in the next section of this report, I note it here because it is significant in the amount of time

and energy that personnel changes demand. Continuity during times of transition is very valuable. Particular thanks due to Aggie and Lorraine for continuing in their positions throughout the changes and providing stability to us all.

I am especially grateful to the staff and board for their hard work in the past six months. Their support to me personally has been invaluable, as I was in the process of learning how to manage our association. I learned a lot. And I am proud that we have maintained a level of service excellence despite the many new challenges in our workplace and community. We have strengthened our respect and kindness to each other during a hectic few months. Thank you all.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Once again, a year of many personnel changes at the ANC, with the past few months being very busy in this regard.

Executive Director Position

Florence Larkin served as Interim Executive Director for 7 months, February - September, 1998, replacing Laura Lee who was on maternity leave. Heartfelt appreciation to Florence for her hard work and leadership at that time. She is currently working in Toronto. We wish her every success.

In September 1998, Laura Lee returned as Executive Director of the organization. She left for a second maternity leave on April 16, 1999. Congratulations to Laura Lee and David on the birth of their second child, Simon! From April 19 to present, Michelle Jay has been serving as Interim Executive Director for the PEIANC. She has enjoyed the challenge and appreciated the confidence of the board. Michelle has proved to be a capable Director,

during a very busy period for the organization. Laura Lee will return full time to the Executive Director position October 4, 1999.

Employment Assistance Service (EAS)

In April, when Michelle Jay moved from the position of Employment Assistance Counsellor to the Executive Director position, Elizabeta Andrić became the Employment Counsellor. She had been previously working as an Office Administrator on an Employment Enhancement placement. Elizabeta (Beti) has been a wonderful addition to the staff - she is very caring, has a diversity of skills, and is the resident computer expert! Her language abilities have also been invaluable. At the time of writing, we are attempting to secure funding so that Beti can continue to contribute to the ANC. Thanks so much for everything that you do, Beti.

Settlement Coordinator

The international response to the crisis in Kosovo meant the arrival of thousands of refugees in the Maritimes in the spring of 1999. Our longest-term employee, Aghdas Missaghian, was seconded by the Fredericton Multicultural Association to work in a refugee camp in Gagetown, New Brunswick. Aggie put in many long and emotional hours for 7 weeks and was a well respected leader of the settlement team. As an association, we were proud to send such a compassionate and experienced staffperson to represent us. We were very pleased that Serbo-Croatian interpreter, Began Garić, went to Gagetown to work as well. He did us proud. While Aggie was away, Iren Gyori, former board member, very capably stepped in to maintain the Settlement Coordinator

function for the ANC. Thank you, Iren, for being so adaptable and for learning the ropes quickly.

Bookkeeper

Trudy MacDonald, who was with the PEIANC for 5 years as the bookkeeper, resigned her contract position in June, 1999. She was a steadfast worker and committed volunteer to this organization, and she will be missed. We wish Trudy all the best. The PEIANC has recently hired Debbie Nicholson as bookkeeper. She began August 26, 1999. Debbie brings with her plenty of non-governmental experience and a calm confidence that is a real addition to the office. Welcome, Debbie.

Atlantic Settlement Conference (ASC-99) Coordinator

In October this year, the PEIANC will be hosting the Atlantic Settlement Conference (ASC-99) for the region. Vicky Willson, who has been a volunteer and contractee with ANC in the past, has been hired as Conference Coordinator. She has formed a steering committee and is working hard to make our conference a real success. By hosting the conference, we have an opportunity to take part in many interesting workshops and meet people from all over the Atlantic region working with newcomers. Contact Vicky at the office or at 892-7241 for a detailed agenda. Plan to attend as much of the conference as possible.

UPEI Nursing Preceptorship

The ANC is delighted to have Amy Tanner, fourth year nursing student, in the office for ten (10) weeks. She will be using our association as a context for her course on community health. Her major project will be to assess the pregnancy and childbirth

needs of newcomers on PEI, and to share those results with healthcare providers. She is also assisting with general office management at present. We really appreciate Amy's energy and enthusiasm in our office environment.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Settlement Program Aghdas Missaghian

This year the Settlement program received 46 Government assisted refugees from a variety of countries including: former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Burma and Kosovo.

10 of the 46 arrivals have left the province. Most decided to settle in Ontario and a few in Calgary.

Responsibilities that I undertook for newcomers include the following:

- Receiving newcomers at the airport with an interpreter
- Doing paper work for Social insurance number, child tax credit, hospital card, etc.
- Arranging for language assessment
- Doing RAP orientation
- Finding accommodations
- Arranging meetings with the immigration officer to have living allowance benefits
- Helping them to buy household items
- Making appointment referrals to doctor, optometrist, social worker, family counsellor, etc.
- Arranging an interpreter as required
- Finding babysitters and day care facilities
- School registration
- Introducing newcomers to English class

Newcomers focus on getting used to their surroundings, language training and their children's welfare and adjustment. Most newcomers are cooperative and

willing to begin the long process of social integration.

I had the opportunity to work in a Kosovar refugee camp for 7 weeks, it was hard but with all the support, love and encouragement from Michelle Jay and the staff, I could keep working. They supported me and helped me to perform my duties. During the worst of times they have been the best of friends and I am very grateful for their support and friendship.

Host Program Lorraine Beck

The Host Program continues to play a vital role in the integration of newcomers to PEI. During the period from June '98-September '99 the Host Program at any given time has been working with approximately 15 matches.

During this time period there has been a great deal of secondary migration within the newcomer community, most often for employment purposes. There has also been a steady influx of new immigrants, however, which accounts for the consistency in the number of host matches.

Highlights of the past year include:

- Social activities such as Orwell Corner Harvest Festival and apple picking, Charlottetown Winter Carnival festivities, Volunteer Appreciation Night at St. Peter's Hall, Summer Beach Party at John and Shelly Todd's house, and looking ahead to October 2 for participation in the local Trailfest activities.
- Host Volunteer Information Sessions were held in the spring and fall, one on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder with special guests Karen Mair and Myrta Rivera-Sahas, and one with Elizabeta Andrić sharing

her experiences as a newcomer in the Host Program.

- Strategic Planning sessions in January with other staff and Board members to plan future goals and activities for the PEIANC.
- Participation in the National Host Conference "Host in the New Millennium" in Toronto March 22-24. Came away with lots of new ideas and insights.
- The Host Post newsletter continues to be published quarterly. This year the circulation broadened to include newcomers as well as host matches.

Thank you to all Host participants for their continued support and commitment to this very worthwhile program.

Employment Assistance Service Elizabeta Andrić

Employment is one of the most important issues for newcomers. That is why the Employment Assistance Service (EAS) is always a very active part of our Association. I replaced Michelle Jay as EAS Counsellor in April 1999, and am passing it back to her in October. It has been a challenging but extremely rewarding time for me. The response from newcomers was great, and I developed an excellent relationship with all of my clients. As a newcomer myself I was able to use not only my skills, but also my own experience looking for work in Canada, to help with employment. Here are highlights of the activities during this period:

- ongoing support and help for newcomers around making resumes, job search strategies, interview techniques, etc.;

- educating employers and the community about the value new immigrants bring to our country, through individual and public presentations;
- advocating on behalf of newcomers with employers, educators, and organizations such as the Metro Credit Union, HRDC or CIC ;
- professional development (workshops and training sessions on enhancing the employment counselling process, qualifications, and computer software at the CCR Spring Consultation in Halifax);
- active involvement in the PEI Women's March 2000, as part of an international women's event with a focus on violence and poverty.

At the moment, EAS has 52 active cases, 27 of which are new since April alone. Unfortunately, ten EAS clients have moved away to other provinces during this period. Since July 1998, 62 clients became employed, 5 received voluntary placements, and 25 were or are in school/training.

I am very grateful to the Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to work as Employment Counsellor for Newcomers - this has been a wonderful experience for me. I would also like to thank Lorraine for being a great listener, Aggie for her wonderful smile that brightens up every working day, and Michelle for being a great leader and having confidence in me. Thanks gals, I'll miss you!

Community Support Program
Michelle Jay

One of the roles of the Association is to maintain its profile in the community and act as an advocate on behalf of newcomers. We help organizations and service-providers increase their ability to understand and assist newcomers. We collaborate with a wide range of

immigrant and community organizations, and all levels of government, to provide information, resources and training.

This year we worked in a number of areas, including: cross-cultural sensitivity; legislative review; family and mental health; language training; employment; and banking reform. We also collaborated with many organizations, in addition to our funders, including: CIC sponsor groups, Department of Education, Intercultural Health Assembly, Health and Social Services, CHANCES Family Resource Centre, PEI Women's March 2000, Atlantic Regional Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies, Canadian Council for Refugees, Women's Network, and Cooper Institute.

Activities of particular note in the past six months include:

- attending Peace Circle for the Balkans gatherings;
- conducting a day-long cultural competency workshop with CHANCES;
- contributing to PEI Women's March 2000 Committee;
- project partnering with Intercultural Health Assembly;
- attending the Spring Consultation for Canadian Council for Refugees;
- contributing to Kosovar Sponsorship Orientation sessions;
- negotiating with CH regarding 1999/2000 ANC proposal, two other funding proposals;
- negotiating staffing and amendments to CIC contracts;
- assisting with Atlantic Settlement Conference;
- securing/preparing a UPEI Nursing student preceptor
- completing a four-day People Oriented Planning training;
- submitting a presentation and paper to the Premier's Population Strategy Hearings.

CLBA
Lorraine Beck

The PEIANC has been administering Canadian Language Benchmark Assessments (CLBA's) since November 1997. Previously, Laura Lee Howard was the only assessor. In June 1998, Lorraine Beck was trained and now administers the majority of the assessments. Since April 1998, 51 regular language assessments have been conducted at the PEIANC. In addition, 48 language assessments were conducted in the months of July/August for the Kosovar refugees who moved to PEI.

Getting Settled (Revision)
With assistance from the Department of Canadian Heritage, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Association was able to revise the immigrant handbook, *Getting Settled*. The handbook has been very useful to newcomers because the topics provide information essential for the first months of life in Canada and PEI.

Jadranka Rodic was contracted to do the interviews and research necessary to update the handbook. She completed a large portion of the work necessary to bring the handbook to completion. The remainder of the update, including a labourious Serbo-Croatian translation, was completed by PEIANC staff, Elizabeta Andrić, with editing support from Michelle Jay.

Citizenship & Immigration Canada kindly stepped in with funds to print the booklets - our thanks to them. Copies are available in the office in both Serbo-Croatian and English.

***Immigrant Women's Health
Laura Lee Howard***

The purpose of this research, conducted by PEIANC, UPEI School of Nursing, and the Intercultural Health Assembly, and funded by the Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health (MCEWH), is to increase cultural awareness among health care providers about health beliefs, health maintenance, and health system usage patterns of PEI immigrant and refugee women. The research and report have been completed. Results have been published in a national newsletter & presented at conferences and recommendations will be shared with the local community at our fall settlement conference.

***Qualification Recognition
Conference
Elizabeta Andrić***

This is the first national conference on the issues of recognition of foreign credentials and inter-provincial mobility. The objective is to ensure that Canada fully benefits from the education, experience and training of all skilled workers. It will take place in Toronto, October 12-15/99.

I am very pleased to offer my time to participate in this event on behalf of PEIANC. It gives us the opportunity to learn and contribute ideas relating to this important issue which we confront in our work with newcomers to Canada. Costs for participation are being shared by CIC, Canadian Heritage, the Provincial Department of Development and the PEIANC. A full report will follow attendance to the Conference.

***Atlantic Settlement Conference
Vicky Willson***

PEIANC will be hosting the Atlantic Settlement Conference (ASC '99) at the Charlottetown Hotel, Oct. 21-24. Service providers in the region are

excited about this opportunity to meet, share ideas, and have time for professional development. This is crucial to our ability to meet our mandate and long-term goals. We welcome the participation of community groups, individuals, & government. The conference offers insight into the issues facing newcomers and concrete tools to develop stronger relationships in our communities. We hope to see you at the conference! If you would like more details, please call Vicky at 892-7241.

***Refugee Claimants
Jackie LeBlanc***

To my knowledge only two new refugee claims have been filed in PEI since June 1998, both now being at the PDRCC stage. For claimants whose cases were pending, one has received permission to file for Landed Immigrant Status from within Canada and is waiting for an answer, while another received his Landed Immigrant Status in Sept. 1998 and has since been reunited with his family. In total, 5 former claimants are still residing in PEI.

**THANK YOU FOR FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE**

- ▶ Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- ▶ Department of Canadian Heritage
- ▶ Human Resource Development Canada
- ▶ Department of Health and Community Services Queens Region
- ▶ Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health
- ▶ PEI Department of Development: Immigration, Investment & Trade Policy

OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteers are the backbone of our Association. Without their time, energy and commitment, we would not be able to do the work that we do. The ANC relies on the contribution of volunteers, that translates in thousands of dollars of time. A sincere thank you to the many volunteers who worked for the Association this year.

I would like to mention a few individuals who were especially generous with their assistance:
Guillermo Valle
Nina Sikić
Maria del Carmen Montpeller
Trudy MacDonald
David Wright
Jan Devine
Began Garić

OUR BOARD MEMBERS!

The ANC also relies on volunteers in the capacity of board leadership. Our board of directors is made up of many dedicated people, all with different skills. Some members take on a more policy-oriented role for the association, while others provide primarily hands-on assistance. The combination works very well for the PEIANC. We appreciate very much the skills, commitment and enthusiasm that each board member contributes. A big Thank-you.

The following board members are staying on for another year. We would like to thank them for their excellent service this year, and look forward to working with them in the next millennium:
*Terry Allen
Jackie LeBlanc
Joe Byrne
Zlatibor Momcilović
Marie Arsenault*

Erick Silva

To mention some areas in which the above members contribute:

- Transportation 2000 Committee
- Refugee Claimants Ctte
- Representing ANC at public functions/events
- Creating Personnel Policy, conducting evaluations
- ASC-99 Steering Ctte
- advocacy regarding credit and newcomer financial access
- attendance and assistance with newcomer events
- support to Executive Director and other staff
- signing officers for ANC
- policy/decision-making at monthly board meetings

A number of our board members have either resigned or are resigning their positions on the board this year. We would like to thank the following for their service to the Association:

Luna Henderson

Iren Gyori

Jadranka Rodić

Damir Causević

Irina Vasichko

A special thank you to Luna Henderson who resigned her position on the board to move to Halifax this month. She was a compassionate and enthusiastic board member, always willing to lend a hand when needed. We know she will continue her interest and commitment to newcomers.

OUR STAFF!

The ANC is fortunate to have so many talented people in it's employ. Thanks to our hard working full-time, part-time, and project staff:

Laura Lee Howard

Michelle Jay

Aghdas Missaghian

Lorraine Beck

Elizabeta Andrić

Debbie Nicholson

Vicky Willson

Amy Tanner

FINANCIAL AUDIT

Our financial audit completed by Palmer & Shea, Chartered Accountants, Charlottetown. Copies are available at our office, 179 Queen St. or by calling 628-6009.

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**PEI Association for
Newcomers to Canada**