

PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada 1999-00 Annual Report

Bringing People and Communities Together

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Terry Allen

The past twelve months has been a most interesting year for the PEI ANC. We have had some highs and a few lows but the year was anything but unexciting. I continue to believe that ANC is the most effective organization to meet the needs of newcomers to our province. We have a clear picture of our mission and who we serve. ANC is a cost effective operation combining effectiveness and efficiency with compassion for our clients. The staff of ANC have done a superior job, sometimes under trying circumstances.

I must also commend the board for their hard work especially during the reorganization of the office in the early

part of the year. After long hours, the board has established a direction and objectives for the organization. All have contributed much to the operation of PEIANC, however, I must pay special tribute to long-time board member Joe Byrne. When most needed, Joe was available with both his guidance and time. ANC owes him much for his long years of dedication. I would also like to thank our partners at HRDC, Immigration Canada and Canadian Heritage for their support. We hope that they are pleased with our performance.

I leave the post of President after two terms with a few triumphs and a couple of regrets. I think the organization is on a more solid footing, from a directional point of view. We have fought pressure to be amalgamated with other multi-cultural entities to create supposed efficiencies when, in fact, we are very different organizations. I regret that we have not been able to get commitments for long term funding or to solicit financial support from either provincial or municipal levels of government, but efforts in these area will continue.

It is my hope that Islanders are becoming even more accepting of newcomers to our community, from both a cultural and economic perspective, thanks in part to the work of PEIANC. We must remember that, except for our native

population, at some generational level all of our families came to this country looking for a better life. Can we deny others that same opportunity?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kevin J. Arsenault

Despite the fact that we have only received approximately 20% of the number of government-sponsored refugees targeted for PEI for the 2000/2001 fiscal year, there has been a tremendous amount of activity at PEI ANC.

Funding Sources

The devolution, restructuring and trimming of key government programs continue to bring uncertainties and concerns about the future security and stability of organizations providing services to newcomers. All of our funding is now project-based or tied to statistical results, as is the case with Human Resource Development Canada's (HRDC) funding to the employment program.

In previous years, the PEI ANC relied on a substantial grant from Canadian Heritage to fund the administrative and community outreach work of the Executive Director. With the shift from 'program' to 'project' funding at Canadian Heritage this year, this

crucial funding is no longer available as an annual grant, but must be linked to specific projects. Three separate project applications were submitted to Canadian Heritage in the Spring, and we have since heard that two of them have been recommended for approval at the federal level (we are still awaiting word on the third project application). As beneficial and appreciated as this funding is for the PEI ANC, our challenge is to secure permanent funding for the management of the organization that is not tied to specific projects. Toward this end, the PEI ANC is pursuing an ongoing strategic planning process.

Strategic Planning Process

In January, 2000, all board and staff participated in a two day Strategic Planning Session held at the Belcourt Centre. The Cooper Institute facilitated. This strategic planning work built on prior work; namely, the *Newcomer's Needs Assessment* undertaken in 1998, and the specific *Strategic Action Plans* undertaken in 1999. The Belcourt Session afforded board members and staff an opportunity to map out a practical plan that would take decisive steps to further professionalize the work of the PEI ANC and increase the long-term viability of the organization. One plan was to invite senior personnel from each of our current funders (CIC, HRDC, and Canadian Heritage) to a strategic planning meeting, which was held on April 25, 2000. Terry, Joe Michelle and I shared information among all participants about our work, especially our need for an increase in our core funding to ensure long-term viability.

We have also opened channels with the provincial government during the past year to explore ways we can assist the province in meeting their obligations to immigrants and newcomers to PEI in exchange for some support from the

province. I met with former minister Hon. Don MacKinnon in the Spring, and more recently Susan Carruthers and I met with Premier Binns and the new minister responsible for Immigration, Hon. Mike Currie. These important discussions and negotiations will continue over the coming year.

Cross-Training Staff

In January, 2000, the PEI ANC received funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to provide cross-training to our Program Support and Office Administrator (PS/OA) staff member, Beti Andrić. The Settlement and Host Coordinators were contracted to provide a total of 60 hrs of training to Beti. Since Beti served as the Employment Assistance Counsellor last year when Michelle Jay acted as Interim Executive Director, she has already received training and experience in this program area. As a result of this cross-training, the PEI ANC can now provide assistance to clients in all program areas in a more continuous manner.

Staff Benefits

The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada has recently implemented a Chamber of Commerce benefits plan which offers dental, health and insurance coverage to all staff.

New Office Equipment

Thanks to CIC for allowing the Association to purchase a much-needed photocopier with some unused money from last year's contracts. A duplex copier was purchased with a built-in three year service contract. Besides lessening the cost of reproducing materials, the copier is also available for use on a 'fee for service' basis (.10 per

copy).

The PEI ANC qualified for purchase of a new computer and Internet account under the terms of the VolNet program, which aims to assist not-for-profit organizations to adopt new technologies.

The PEI ANC was also able to purchase two window-unit air conditioners this past Spring, which made for a much more comfortable working environment in the office during the summer.

New Resource Room

The PEI ANC has set up a Resource Room in the large room across the hall from the Employment Counsellor and Host Coordinator. This room is available for meetings, lunches, or can be booked by Newcomers. A computer with access to the Internet is available, and we have a range of free pamphlets and other resources.

Getting Settled (Revision)

With assistance from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the Association was able to revise the immigrant handbook, *Getting Settled*. The updated English version was then translated into Spanish and Croatian. Maria del Carmen was contracted to do the translation into Spanish, with editing support from Joe Byrne. Beti Andrić translated the English version into Croatian, with editing support from Jasmina Garić. A new format will make subsequent updates much easier and more cost-effective. Copies are available in the office and will be given to all newcomers on arrival.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Since the last annual meeting, there have been a few changes in personnel.

Executive Director

Laura Lee returned full time to the Executive Director position October 4, 1999. She later decided to leave this position, and finished as Executive Director the end of 1999. Kevin Arsenault assumed the position of Interim-Executive Director on January 3rd, 2000 and was later offered the position of executive director following an open hiring process. Appreciation goes out to Laura Lee for her hard work and dedication throughout a long-term commitment with the PEI ANC.

Bookkeeper

The PEIANC had hired Debbie Nicholson as bookkeeper last year. She began August 26, 1999. For the past few months, Debbie had attempted to carry on with her contract with the PEI ANC while working full-time as a maternity leave replacement, but has recently decided to resign this contract. The PEI ANC has just hired another part-time bookkeeper, Victoria Roden-Hancock. We look forward to a long, mutually rewarding relationship with her.

Program Support/Office Administrator

After two consecutive 3-month contracts, Beti Andrić has been offered a permanent position with PEI ANC as Program Support/Office Administrator (PS/OA). Congratulations Beti! Beti is currently working a 30 hr week.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Settlement Program

Aghdas Missaghian

This year the settlement program received 45 government assisted refugees from a variety of countries including Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Yugoslavia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Iraq, Iran, Kosova and Sudan. Five of 45 newcomers have left the province.

Responsibilities that I undertook for newcomers included :

- Receiving newcomers at the air-port;
- Doing paper work for SIN numbers, child tax credit, & hospital cards;
- Arranging for language assessments;
- Meeting with immigration officials;
- Finding accommodations, helping to purchase household items;
- Making appointments and referrals to service providers;
- Finding childcare providers;
- Doing RAP orientations;
- Arranging interpreters as required;
- School registrations;
- Introducing newcomers to English as a second language class at Holland College.

All newcomers now have their own family doctors. This past year I participated in the Atlantic Settlement Conference and took part in several workshops in PEI throughout the year.

Host Program

Lorraine Beck

The Host Program, a friendship program for new immigrants to PEI, continues to be a key component to long-term settlement services provided by the PEIANC.

During the period of September '99 - September '00 the number of matches at any given time has been 15-20. At the writing of this report the number of matches stands at 15.

As tends to be a common occurrence during the summer months, many immigrant families moved off Island.

Highlights from the past year for the Host Program include:

- *Social activities* such as the Trailfest Celebration, Christmas Party at Winsloe United Church, Winter Fun Party, Volunteer Appreciation Night at Basilica Recreation Centre, and Peakes Wharf Seal Watching Tours in August.
- *Volunteer Information Meetings* were held in the fall of '99 and the spring of '00. These sessions serve a dual purpose of introducing new volunteers to the Host Program and hearing the experiences of skilled volunteers, and also giving experienced volunteers the opportunity to share common concerns and information.
- Participation with other PEIANC staff in hosting and attending the *Atlantic Region Settlement Conference* in Charlottetown from October 21-24. This proved to be a valuable sharing of information from a broad community of expertise in settlement issues.
- *The Host Manual*, which is a detailed training and ideas tool for Host Volunteers, went through a major revision this year. Approximately 50 copies were printed and distributed to new and experienced volunteers.
- *The Host Post newsletter* continues to be published quarterly. Approximately 70 newsletters are mailed to newcomers, host volunteers, board members and other interested persons. Another 30 are circulated through the LINC classes at Holland College.
- Participation in the *cross-training project* with Beti Andrić, the Program Assistant. 20 hours were used to provide Cross-training in Host Coordinator responsibilities.

Thank you to all Host Volunteers who invest so much of themselves

in this great program.

Employment Assistance Service *Michelle Jay*

It has been an interesting and challenging year for the Association, including the employment service. The most recent dilemma has been the marked decline in the number of government-sponsored newcomers arriving on the Island, a situation that we hope improves in the months ahead.

The EAS service has maintained an active caseload of nearly 30 clients through most of the past year. Most importantly, we continue to exceed the statistical targets established by the HRDC contract, in terms of the number of new immigrants who start work. The statistics below represent the number of clients who began employment and schooling for the past ten (10) months, from October 1, 1999 - July 31, 2000:

- 33 full time positions
(24 permanent, 9 seasonal/contract)
- 12 part time positions
(10 permanent, 2 seasonal/contract)
- 15 clients started school or a training program.

The real success of the PEIANC employment service lies in the number of newcomers who have secured "good" jobs - full time, permanent, adequately-paid employment in the fields for which they have training and experience. There have been ten (10) such successes in the EAS service this year. I am very pleased and proud of the tenacity and personal skills our clients have shown.

Other highlights of the EAS during this period include:

- Formation of the PEI-CIP (*Career Information Partnership*), an association of employment professionals
- Attendance at national conference in Toronto, *Shaping the Future: Qualification Recognition in the 21st Century*

- Participation in four (4) *Employment Equity Projects*, locally and nationally
- Hiring campaign for Spanish-English speakers at *Watts Communication*

Some notable changes are afoot at Human Resources Development, from whom we receive our employment contract. Laurie Bowers, who has been the EAS Project Officer for the past eighteen months, has moved on to another position. She was a helpful, respectful point person at HRD, and I will miss her support. As well, I am currently using a new version of the HRD statistical software, Contact 4. Thanks to Kevin for his assistance in accessing and loading the new version 2.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to the board for the support and generosity they showed to me during the nine (9) months that I was completing the *Management Development Program for Women* at UPEI. It was a wonderful, enriching experience - thank you.

Program Support and Office Administration (PS/OA) *Beti Andrić*

This year, for the first time, the Association has been able to secure funding for a permanent Program Support and Office Administration position.

Thanks to financial support from CIC, cross-training was provided to the Administrative/Program Assistant by the *Host and Settlement Coordinators*. Now we are able to provide a full-time, year-round service to newcomers and the community in all our programs - Host, Settlement, Employment, and Community Outreach. This setup is extremely useful for the Association, because during hectic

times or staff vacations, there is no need to contract someone from outside of the organization to maintain continuous delivery of services. For example, this month the settlement of five refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia was carried out by PS/OA staff.

The other part of the job, administration, has also been active. Besides everyday administrative activities, we significantly improved the filing systems in the main office, as well as the Employment Service, Host Program and ED offices. We are constantly improving utilization of our computer network, as well.

I would like to thank the Board for their decision to make my position in the Association permanent. I am grateful that I have the opportunity to work in the organization where I can utilize all my skills and my own experience as a newcomer to Canada. I also thank all the staff for their support and friendship.

CLBA Program *Lorraine Beck*

The PEIANC has been administering Canadian Language Benchmark Assessments (CLBA's) since November 1997. The PEIANC continues to administer the CLBA contract through the local CIC office. Lorraine Beck has been the person contracted to perform the CLBA's since the last Annual Report.

During the time period from September'99 - August'00 there have been 26 CLBA's administered at the PEIANC. Of this number, 14 were *Government Sponsored Refugees*, 6 were *Family Sponsored*, 3 were *Group Sponsored*, and 3 were *Independent Class Immigrants*.

Community Support Program

Kevin J. Arsenaault

The PEI ANC is the only organization on the Island which provides direct settlement services to immigrants and refugees. As a result, we have a unique role to play helping other organizations and service-providers increase their ability to understand and assist newcomers. To achieve this aim, we collaborate with a wide range of community organizations, and all levels of government to provide information, resources and training.

This year we collaborated with many organizations in addition to our funders, including: Community Sponsor groups, the Department of Education, Health and Social Services, CHANCES Family Resource Centre, PEI Women's March 2000, Atlantic Regional Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA), the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Women's Network, Volunteer Canada, and the Cooper Institute.

Some activities of particular note in the past six months include:

- Participating on the Diversity Education Standing Committee;
- National Child Alliance initiative;
- contributing to PEI Women's March 2000 Committee;
- Project partnering with Intercultural Health Assembly;
- Participating in ARAISA conference calls & ARAISA Executive meeting;
- Completion of a day-long session on People Oriented Planning (POP) training for Managers;
- Attended two CIC sponsored day-long consultations in Halifax on reporting and accountability frameworks for the ISAP/Host and RAP programs.
- Participation on a National Career Awareness committee of *Volunteer Canada*;
- Attended a *Community Partners Capacity Network* consultation at UPEI.

Immigrant Women's Health Project

The purpose of this research was 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 was conducted by PEIANC, UPEI School of Nursing, and the Intercultural Health Assembly, and was funded by the Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health (MCEWH). The research and report were completed last Fall. Results have since been published in a national newsletter & presented at conferences. We have learned recently that the study will be profiled in a book entitled "*A Portrait of Women's Health in Atlantic Canada*." A final abridged report was reproduced by PEIANC and mailed to various agencies, government departments and organizations.

Sponsor Workshops

The PEIANC has received funding from CIC to facilitate two workshops for Sponsors on PEI. The first workshop was held in Charlottetown on July 16, 2000. The second workshop will be held in Summerside in coming weeks.

Community School

The PEI ANC once again collaborated with Charlottetown Rural Community school in providing a community school course, *The World Out There*. Newcomers from Croatia, Ethiopia, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Estonia and the Dominican Republic delivered classes on their home countries and their experiences as newcomers to PEI.

Atlantic Settlement Conference

Last fall, the PEI ANC hosted the Atlantic Settlement Conference (ASC '99) with participants from the other three Atlantic provinces. The Conference was well attended.

Nova Scotia will be hosting the Atlantic Settlement Conference (ASC '00) in Halifax in November, 2000. All staff at PEIANC will attend. This conference provides an opportunity to meet service providers in other Atlantic provinces, to share ideas, and have time for professional development. This is crucial for us to be able to meet our mandate and long-term goals.

Refugee Claimants

Jackie LeBlanc

Although PEI has not welcomed many refugee claimants of late, I have news of several of our former asylum seekers. Of the 11 men who made refugee claims in November 1995, three are still in contact. Eugene Lebedev finally got his Landed Immigrant Status in the Spring of this year. He lives in Halifax with his girlfriend. Vladimir Purgin moved to Halifax with his wife and two children in January 2000. Edgar Riekstins moved to Japan in Spring 2000 to live with his wife and daughter.

With respect to later arrivals, Sergey Serada (refugee claim made in August 1996) has returned to Canada and is living in Manitoba with his wife and daughter. Slava Zhukalin, who also came to PEI in August 1996, is living in Charlottetown with his wife and son and will be eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship by the end of this year. Vladimir Kuncovic (arrived in November 1996) is living in Liepaja, Latvia. Lazlo and Tibor Peter, who made their refugee claims in October 1998, have moved to Toronto and are still waiting for their cases to be settled.

Finally, some sad news. Genadi Shcherbak, who came to PEI in November 1995, was killed in a car accident on June 26, 2000. He had been landed in 1998 and had gone

on to Holland College's Marine College in Summerside to undertake a Power Engineering course, which he completed in May 2000. He is survived by his wife Natalia, his daughter Victoria and his granddaughter Anna, who live in Riga, Latvia. Thanks to PEIANC staff who attended the funeral and assisted with the arrangements.

THANK YOU FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- ▶ Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- ▶ Department of Canadian Heritage
- ▶ Human Resource Development Canada
- ▶ Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health.

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.

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 year:

Joe Byrne
Zlatibor Momcilović
Marie Arsenault
Erick Silva
Susan Carruthers
Maria del Carmen
Sadeta Garić

Two board members are resigning their positions on the board this year. We would like to thank them for their service to the Association:

Terry Allen
Jackie LeBlanc

OUR STAFF!

The ANC is fortunate to have so many talented people in it's employ. Thanks to our hard working staff:

Kevin Arsenault
Michelle Jay
Aghdas Missaghian
Lorraine Beck
Elizabeta Andrić

FINANCIAL AUDIT

Our financial audit was 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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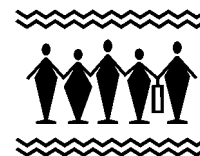
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