

# 2021-2022 Annual Report

# GROWTH



**THE IMMIGRANT  
EDUCATION SOCIETY**



# A Year of Growth

**This report is a time capsule.** It records how TIES has adapted and persevered through an uncertain time of lockdowns and isolation to achieve growth, connections, creativity, mindfulness, and teamwork. The year ahead will bring new opportunities and challenges, and TIES is planning to better anticipate change through a new three-year strategic plan that we will roll out this year. We are excited to look at how we can better help our community, achieve higher financial sustainability, grow our public profile, empower our team, and incorporate more research initiatives to address the changing needs of new immigrants in Canada. These are the building blocks on the road to achieving our vision. This moment in time is full of hope and excitement; a keepsake to look back on years in the future.

**OUR VISION**  
An inclusive and pluralistic society.

**OUR MISSION**  
To provide innovative language education, customized employment training and placement, and integration services to newcomers and Canadians based on best practices.

**OUR VALUES**  
**Togetherness** | We prioritize relationships and respect for each other  
**Inclusion** | We welcome and embrace pluralism  
**Empowerment** | We instill confidence and strength in ourselves and others  
**Service** | We serve and build our community

## OUR IMPACT THIS YEAR



**18,391+**  
Clients Served



**117**  
Staff



**7,000+**  
Volunteer Hours



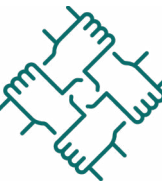
**42**  
Programs



**114**  
Volunteers



**75**  
Countries of Origin



**201+**  
Collaborations with Partner Organizations

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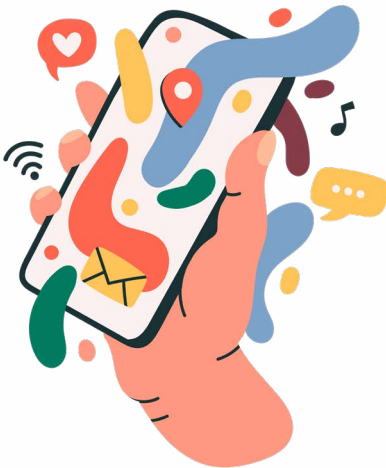
## BOARD & MANAGEMENT

Meet the dedicated Board of Directors and Management Team leading our organization.

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## FUNDERS & DONORS

Recognition of the funders & donors that make our work possible.



## Web Outreach

**378,889**  
Website Pageviews  
(30% Increase)

**10,252**  
Newsletter Subscribers  
(47% Increase)

**4,596**  
Facebook Followers  
(29% Increase)

**3,040**  
LinkedIn Followers  
(40% Increase)

**1,241**  
Twitter Followers  
(11% Increase)

**248**  
Instagram Followers  
(100% Increase)

# Our Growth During 2021-22

2021-22 was a year of growth at The Immigrant Education Society (TIES). We have developed as a team and individuals in many ways, despite the continuous challenges we faced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to our research efforts identifying best practices and service gaps, our service offerings have grown to accommodate our clients' changing and emerging needs and the needs of our stakeholders. Below are a few examples.

## RESEARCH

Our Research & Program Development Department is growing, thanks to the funding support of IRCC SDI and other stable funding sources. Some recent projects include: researching service delivery modes for literacy learners through our HELLO (Hybrid Education Literacy Learning Optimization) project, and exploring innovative ways to improve service delivery for advanced language level learners through our ROSPI (Remote and Online Services for Professional Immigrants) project. Thanks to the trust placed in us by our partner organizations, we have also begun conducting program evaluations for other service providers.

## TIES HEALTHY MINDS

To acknowledge an increasing need for emotional well-being support, TIES took the lead role alongside other mental health support providers in Calgary to offer a series of mental health services, including free individual and family counselling in multiple languages, educational workshops, and professional development opportunities. Thanks to funding support from provincial and municipal governments, the TIES Healthy Minds program has provided much-needed support for our clients' emotional well-being.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

To leverage our experience and capacity running entrepreneurship programs on a small scale (with funding support from First Calgary Financial), we took a bold step to scale up our entrepreneurship development program with financial support from the provincial

government. Through the NIWBE (New Immigrant Women Becoming Entrepreneurs) program, TIES will work to empower women entrepreneurs, starting locally and potentially expanding nationally via our collaborative partners across Canada.

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

To create a long-lasting impact, we explored ways of expanding our social enterprise-based initiatives and began putting them into practice. We participated in the THRIVING NON-PROFITS program, a golden opportunity which helped us explore comprehensive methods for further implementation of social enterprise-based programming in the coming years.

## E-LEARNING

While celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of e-Learning services at TIES, we are determined to do more in this area so a greater population will benefit from our expertise. With a solid foundation previously established in online language, employment and settlement programs, TIES sees potential to provide online services to a national and international audience, such as pre-arrival services.

## ADULT LITERACY

A significant population of our learners are adult literacy students. This is an area of continuous growth at TIES, both in terms of ESL language literacy and digital literacy. Our Literacy Centre of Expertise provides a platform for passionate literacy professionals to exchange ideas and best practices, help each other address issues and overcome challenges. This past year, TIES was honoured as the recipient of the Council of the Federation Literacy Award in Alberta. This award recognizes outstanding achievement, innovative practice and excellence in literacy.



In addition to these recent initiatives, TIES also experienced increased enrolment and **steady growth in our established language, employment and settlement programming**. Our outstanding team of staff and volunteers remain enthusiastically committed to serving our clients.

Besides the ongoing development of our service offerings, TIES has been growing as an organization in other ways, both externally and internally. Below are a few examples.

## COLLABORATIVES

TIES continues to uphold a strong reputation in the community as a sought-after collaborator. Through the proven collaborative model of the Calgary East Zone Newcomers Collaborative (CENC), we have partnered with like-minded service providers to support Afghan refugees, Ukrainian temporary residents, and other clients in need.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is critical to accommodate our expansion of services. 2021-22 saw many infrastructure upgrades, including our online portal, website, and physical facilities. Most notably, we leased a new, spacious office in Westwinds, walking distance from the LRT station. Another highlight is the extensive renovations to our Forest Lawn childcare facility. To our delight, we moved the childcare space from the basement to the main floor, enabling our children to learn and play in natural light. The new space, with its colourful walls, large windows, and outdoor play area brings huge smiles to the children, parents and educators (see photos on page 6).

## EMPOWERING STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

To empower our staff and volunteers to lead in their positions, this year saw continuous efforts in professional development and leadership team re-structuring.

## VISIONARY STRATEGIC PLANNING

Thanks to funding support from the Calgary Foundation and partnership with IntegralOrg, we were able to start the process of upgrading our strategic planning. This process empowers our Board of Directors and leadership team to make informed decisions for the future of the organization, resulting in a long-lasting impact.

Personally, 2021-22 was a year of growth in gratitude for me. I am so grateful for the guidance, trust, confidence and great support from our dedicated and compassionate Board of Directors. I cannot thank them enough for the blessings of working alongside our competent leadership team and hardworking staff and volunteers. I appreciate our clients, who share their experiences with us and allow us to walk alongside them in their settlement journey. I thank our generous funders and donors for providing the financial means for us to make a positive impact in so many people's lives.

Last but not least, I am incredibly grateful to my sector CEO friends for collaboratively practicing a client-centric approach and sharing their wisdom, experience, and resources, so we can learn together and grow with the organizations and the sector we lead.

-Dr. Sally Zhao  
PRESIDENT & CEO



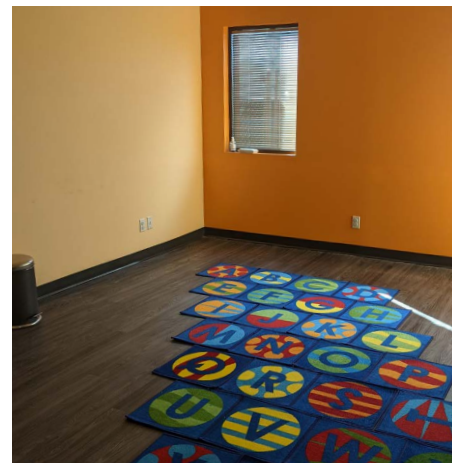
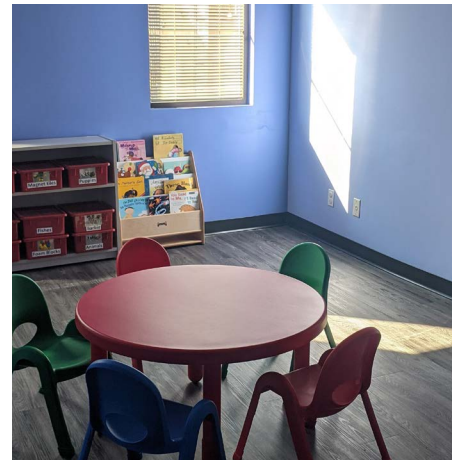
With a special thank you to my Executive Communications Support, Colleen Cory.





## New Westwinds Location

After a long search this past year to find a more suitable space in the deep NE with more room and better public access, we are very pleased to settle into a new third facility at our Westwinds campus, 3675 - 63 Avenue NE, Calgary, Alberta. We are on the entire second floor of the building that faces the overpass on Metis Trail, right across from the McKnight/ Westwinds LRT station. Our new facility is 12,400 sq ft of new office and classroom space with easy access to parking and transit. We are in the process of renovating the space to accommodate hundreds of new clients in seven large new classrooms, and offices/ workstations for over 35 staff. We look forward to welcoming all of our new clients from the NE communities located North of McKnight Boulevard and beyond. We will be showcasing the new space at our Grand Opening and Multicultural Festival on September 8th, 2022.



## TIES Forest Lawn Renovations

Another major renovation project that TIES tackled this past year was the refurbishment of the SE offices in Forest Lawn. This was the first building that TIES owned and has served hundreds of thousands of clients over the past 20 years since it opened in 2003.

With the expansion of our childminding program benefitting a growing number of parents taking classes at the facility, there was a need for a more welcoming space for their children, who would be actively engaged in learning and socializing while their parents were in class.

The new renovations in the SE have created expanded areas for the childminding team to engage with young children, now on the main level of the building. Previously, the rooms were in the basement and did not provide as much natural light for children. The new, open, bright spaces are much more conducive to active play and fun learning. The renovations also freshened up the classrooms and connected new hybrid learning technology in each of the rooms. We encourage you to visit and see the new and improved "old" building in Forest Lawn.







Healthy Minds is a multi-cultural mental health strategy designed to support the wellbeing of newcomers and other vulnerable Calgarians. Despite the stresses of settlement, newcomers underutilize mental health services compared to other Canadians. A host of social, cultural, linguistic and economic factors create significant barriers to service uptake. Healthy Minds provides certified counselling, mental health information, and workshops that address these barriers to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services that are accessible to all.

What sets Healthy Minds apart is its low barrier approach. This year, TIES had 10 counsellors offering free, unlimited counselling in 8 different languages. We also formed a partnership with Immigrant Services Calgary (ISC) that allows us to offer interpretive services in other languages by request. Counselling is available 7 days a week, during the daytime and evening. Participants can access services by phone, video, or in-person.

Healthy Minds also encourages personal practices that improve mental wellbeing. Topics such as mindfulness, life skills, relationship skills, stress management, and parenting are addressed through workshops, PD and online resources.

### International Mindfulness Conference

On June 23-25 2021, TIES virtually hosted an International Mindfulness Conference, “Building our Strengths through Mindfulness.” 723 participants, including mindfulness practitioners and specialists, gathered together for a critical examination of mindfulness as a potential assistance mechanism for mental health amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The keynote speaker, Dr. Willem Kuyken, Director of Oxford University’s Mindfulness Centre, was joined by 11 other experts over the 3-day event.



**6500+**  
Connections through  
website & e-mail

**944**  
Counselling  
Sessions

**723**  
Conference  
Participants

**545**  
Workshop /  
Presentation  
Participants

## COVID Initiatives

In 2021, the Calgary East Zone Newcomers Collaborative (CENC) pivoted to focus on addressing the barriers immigrants face in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. The most prevalent barriers include transportation, language and lack of internet access.



### Vaccination Clinics

In June 2021, CENC worked with Mosaic Primary Care Network and the Alberta International Medical Graduates Association (AIMGA) to hold the first-of-its-kind walk-in vaccination clinic at Village Square Leisure Centre in Northeast Calgary. The success of this two-day clinic resulted in the creation of the City of Calgary’s Mobile Vaccination program, which ran from August 2021 to December 2021; TIES hosted three clinics at its Forest Lawn and Whitehorn locations. By November 2021, 99% of eligible participants in Northeast Calgary had received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, making Northeast Calgary the **number-one ranked area** for first doses across Alberta!

### Other Outreach

With the help of AIMGA, we facilitated online vaccination information sessions in eight different languages: Arabic, Urdu, English, Punjabi, Somali, Tagalog, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese, and ran a social media campaign to relay the information to different ethnocultural communities. Thanks to 7-Eleven, we received \$70,000 worth of hand sanitizer, which we provided to local organizations in need. TIES distributed over 33,000 units of hand sanitizer, masks and care packages to over 30 organizations.



## Literacy Centre of Expertise

The Literacy Centre of Expertise (LCE) is a collaborative hub and information centre supporting LINC/ESL literacy service providers in Calgary, Alberta and beyond. Through collaboration, we serve students and teachers by sharing research-based best practices, resulting in a consistent and client-centered approach to literacy.

In 2021-22, the LCE released three interactive modules for LINC Literacy, a set of Foundation Readers for low-level literacy learners, plus podcasts and blog posts featuring literacy professionals from the community. The modules are PBLA-compliant, contain interactive activities, and are suitable for multiple methods of delivery (in class, online, and hybrid). The LCE team gave presentations at conferences across the country, including ATESL, TESL Ontario, and Metropolis, plus professional development opportunities for local service providers (including “Let’s Talk About” sessions in partnership with ATESL Advocacy). 223 literacy professionals are part of the LCE Facebook group.



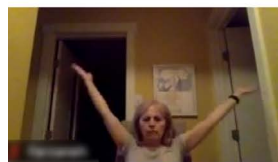


82

Clients  
Served

32

Topics of  
Discussion



## E-SCAPE Seniors Program

E-SCAPE (English for Senior Conversations and Personal Empowerment) was an online initiative created by seniors, for seniors during 2021-2022. It provided immigrants with a supportive online space to practice English and expand their social networks while receiving guidance on emotional and physical health, COVID-19, and connecting to front-line community services.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, seniors in the new immigrant community were impacted disproportionately due to language barriers, social isolation, living in multi-generational homes, dependence on transit and susceptibility to more severe cases of COVID-19. E-SCAPE engaged individuals in social activities, building inter-cultural relationships, coaching and mentoring, practicing English, and developing healthy habits.

To engage the demographic in the development and implementation of this program, a Seniors Advisory Committee was established through community liaisons with TIES volunteers, The Calgary Seniors' Resource Society, and the

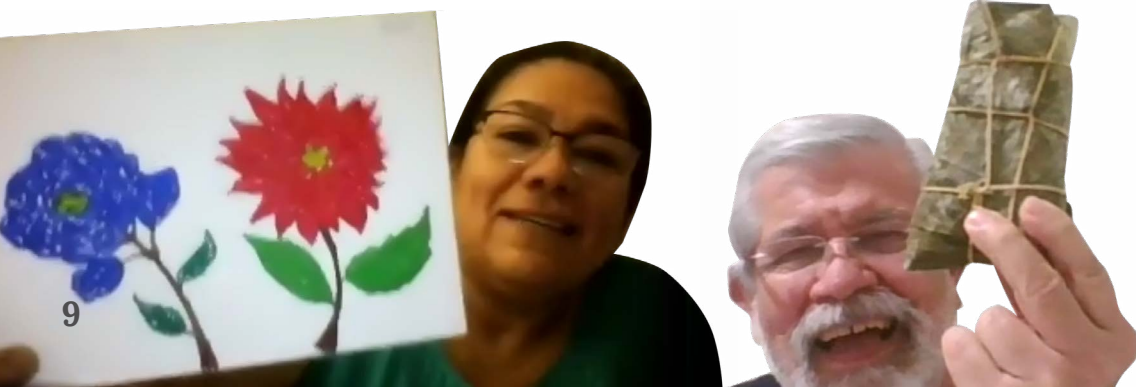
MPC Foundation for Seniors. Program facilitators, also seniors, hosted the online classes and provided conversation prompts. 32 different topics were discussed, including Family Traditions and Gatherings, the Art of Small Talk, and Colours in our Lives. A few sessions were hosted by special guests: Financial Security with Victor Olayioye, Reducing Stress / Yoga and Meditation with Amy Martin, Art Class with Bethany Vanderputten, and Mental Health with Dr. Rose Joudi.

One of the class topics was food. Participants talked about their favourite meals and presented dishes from their home countries. Since an in-person potluck was not possible, the E-SCAPE class decided to compile their traditional recipes into a cookbook. Hard copies of the cookbook were distributed to participants.



“ I really enjoyed all the time at your class and the method you presented the topics, which were fun, and I learned a lot at the same time. Thank you for your great help and effort.

-Bijan Heidari  
E-SCAPE PARTICIPANT



## Founder's Scholarship

This past year, TIES sponsored two \$1,000 scholarships to financially assist two university students pursuing education in a field which will empower them to support newcomers to Canada. The 2021 TIES Founder's Scholarships were proudly awarded to Hanson Feng and Thomas Tri. Each applicant was asked to write an essay describing a specific barrier that immigrants face.

Hanson wrote his essay on the lack of support services available to the LGBTQIA2S+ immigrant youth community in Calgary. He proposed more social services which include: transitional housing for racialized youth who are not welcome at home due to their sexual or gender identity, mental health supports to show youth that they are valued, and training within the settlement sector to implement inclusive language.

Thomas' essay focused on barriers for immigrants in finding employment due to lack of recognition of foreign credentials, language barriers, difficulty networking and the prevalence of racism and discrimination. Thomas proposed a mentorship program that pairs new immigrants with established immigrants who have similar work backgrounds.

## Staff Engagement

During 2021-22, staying connected as a team during intermittent periods of remote work required some creativity. Our close-knit staff team was up to the challenge! On September 17, we joyfully reunited in-person for an outdoor picnic and friendly kickball game. In December, we prepared handmade gifts for each staff member, including a TIES mug with a custom design. This year, we also ordered new TIES branded apparel, which many of our staff now wear around the office with pride.





# Giving each English learner the unique tools they need for success

During the past year, our Language stream was very excited to develop a Hybrid/Hyflex method of delivery, which offers in-person and online learning simultaneously. Students who were not finding success solely online were able to fully engage with their studies once the option of learning in a physical space was made available again. 244 clients participated in hybrid classes: 80 attended in-person, 164 attended online, and 67 attended both. With COVID-19 remaining a prevalent issue, TIES refined our tri-modal method of content delivery: via Zoom, in-person, and Hybrid/HyFlex. This change facilitated recording and storing videos of key learning for students who wished to stay home, while also strengthening clients' knowledge and skills in the classroom.

We were pleased to share our expertise in tri-modal content delivery this past year. Through informational presentations at ATESL 2021, MANSO Lead Teacher Networking & Training, AAISA HyFlex Collaboration & Discussion, AMSSA Exploring HyFlex and Blended Synchronous Program Delivery, and other local PD workshops,

industry colleagues were able to learn the ways TIES connected with clients. We also hosted special events to share the best practices of teaching with partners and other stakeholders. Over 107 service providers attended our virtual Literacy Day Celebration on International Literacy Day (Sept 8).

The hard work and sacrifice from everyone in the Language department and on the Literacy Team was recognized by the Council of the Federation Literacy Award, which was awarded to TIES during the 2021 Literacy and Learning Symposium. Although accolades like this are not the end goal, they highlight the impact that our programs are making, and showcase TIES' innovative practices.

LINC and the many programs in the language department create meaningful impact for clients. As depicted in Reading Room and CALL statistics, 94% and 95% of participants, respectively, reported that they used their newly developed skills outside of class. With that in mind, students were able to build a newfound level of confidence in their language abilities.



## LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)

TIES has offered LINC classes since 1992 to prepare newcomers for life in Canada. In these classes, clients learn reading, writing, listening and speaking, plus Canadian culture and life skills.

**989**  
Clients Served

**43%**  
Refugee Clients

## LINC LITERACY

LINC Literacy is designed for beginner English learners and students with limited or disrupted formal education. LINC Literacy students learn the basics, including letters, numbers and grammar.

**70%**  
Improved CLB

**202**  
CLB 4 Graduates

## DROP-IN ESL

Drop-In ESL offers flexible, affordable English classes convenient for adult learners who have to schedule their classes around childcare needs and work commitments.

**232**  
Clients Served

**3,327**  
Volunteer Hours

## LITERACY & BASIC ENGLISH

Literacy & Basic English offers literacy-level classes to beginner English learners. Unlike LINC Literacy, this program is available to Canadian Citizens, Work Permit holders and Refugee Claimants.

**29**  
Clients Served

**100%**  
of clients reported improvement of their English skills

## READING ROOM

Reading Room provides one-on-one tutoring support for adult foundational learners struggling with reading and writing in English. Sessions are run by volunteers.

**76**  
Clients Served

**100%**  
found that Reading Room was a safe and welcoming place

## COMPUTER ACCESS FOR LITERACY LEARNERS (CALL)

CALL equips literacy-level learners with the basics of using a computer. Classes are beginner-friendly, hands-on, and easy to follow.

**131**  
Clients Served

**95%**  
of clients reported using learned skills outside of class







## Josseline Dayana Sagastume

Josseline landed in Canada from Guatemala on May 17, 2021 as a family-sponsored immigrant. However, due to the limited education (7 years) she had in her native country and limited English, it was very hard for her to start a new life in Canada. She was a very determined student, and she set a goal to work as an early childhood teacher in the future. Josseline started in the LINC Literacy program in the summer of 2021. With her continued perseverance and relentless help from the LINC instructors, she advanced

quickly. Now, she is working on her Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 2/3. Besides LINC classes, Josseline also helps her mother with her work after school. She feels very appreciative for what the LINC program has done for her. As a result, her confidence soared.

The LINC program enabled Josseline to understand Canadian society and love her new home. More importantly, it has made her life easier and set her on a path towards her future career.

“When I started LINC class here at TIES, my English was zero. Now I can do a lot of things with the help of LINC. I can use a computer, a smartphone, use an ATM and make an appointment with a doctor. The instructors at TIES are really nice.

-Josseline Dayana Sagastume

LINC STUDENT

## Abdelrahman Hamad



Abdelrahman came to Canada with his wife and young daughter in October 2019. He immigrated from South Sudan, but before arriving in Canada, he had lived in Lebanon for about 6 years. Now a Permanent Resident of Canada, he has adapted well to life in Calgary. He and his wife, also a TIES student, have welcomed another family member, a baby boy, in June 2021.

Although he had worked as a plumber in Lebanon, he has not been successful in finding a job in Calgary so far. His main reason for taking English classes is he plans to further his education at a vocational institution, in order to become a qualified plumber, thereby furthering the career he started years ago.

### LINC HOME STUDY

LINC Home Study offers online, one-on-one English classes for newcomers unable to attend class in person due to disability, family commitments or conflicting schedules.

**198** Clients Served  
**91%** Progression Rate

### LINC BLENDED

LINC Blended is a part-time English class delivered 50% online and 50% in-class. Because classes are held every Saturday, it's a good option for clients who can't attend classes during the week.

**65** Clients Served  
**100%** find LINC Blended helped them reach language goals

### NEWCOMER INTRODUCTION TO CLASSES ONLINE (NICO)

NICO is a self-driven digital literacy training course that introduces participants to the principles of studying online.

**11** Service Providers  
**87** Individual Participants

### ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYMENT: JOB SEARCH (EEJS)

EEJS is a self-driven online course hosted on our learning management system, TIES|Learn, which helps newcomers and pre-arrival candidates improve their English and job search skills.

**100** Clients Served

### ENGLISH CONVERSATION: CONNECT ONLINE (ECCO)

ECCO provided newcomers with a supportive online space to practice their English conversation and connect with other learners while receiving support throughout the pandemic.

**441** Clients Served  
**360** Volunteer Hours



Abdelrahman started studying in the LINC program at TIES, in a CLB 1 / Foundation Literacy class, shortly before the pandemic required students to study online in March 2020. Since then, he has improved his English skills commendably. He is currently in a CLB 3/4 hybrid class and has achieved CLB 4 in speaking, listening and writing.

Abdelrahman finds reading and writing in English more challenging than listening and speaking: "Sometimes writing is difficult because of spelling, and sometimes reading is difficult because of many new words." Nevertheless, he is satisfied with the progress he has made and happy with the learning he has gained at TIES.

“ECCO is literally one of the best English classes that I have ever attended, and I will keep my fingers crossed that this class will continue in the future.

-Betsa  
ECCO STUDENT



# Preparing jobseekers for meaningful work

New immigrants to Canada often feel isolated and vulnerable when first arriving in the country, especially while settling into a new career. Challenges in learning the language, culture, labour market, networking skills, and receiving foreign credential recognition all contribute to the obstacles of finding employment. The objective of TIES' employment programs is to help alleviate the anxiety that our clients face when navigating the Canadian job market, and help them secure a job relevant to their field of expertise.

TIES' flourishing employment programs have helped clients achieve success this year through an expanding network in our community, and partnerships with non-for-profit and governmental bodies. Strong support from the Alberta Government and local community organizations like Columbia College and Bow Valley College have helped to develop more comprehensive programs in childcare and security training. Additionally, partners like Making Changes Association, Scope Safety and Security, Alberta Health Services, and Alberta Justice and Solicitor General have also contributed tremendously

towards helping clients achieve successful outcomes.

Although COVID-19 restrictions presented an obstacle for clients in their career integration, TIES programs were able to grow enrolment and employment target numbers. To help clients succeed during COVID, TIES provided laptops, childcare reimbursements, PPE and worked with practicum partners to make accomodations. Online training opportunities offered clients in Strathmore, Edmonton, Edson, and Grand Prairie a chance to develop their occupational skills. This expanded service offering solidifies TIES' commitment to our client's success, no matter where they are located.

TIES also served a growing population of clients through its one-on-one employment counselling services. In September, TIES held a virtual networking event that saw over 20 employers from various industries, such as childcare, hospitality, warehouse, banking, HR, freight and logistics, post-secondary institutions, and real estate connect with our clients and assist them in their transition to a new career path.



## EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH EMPLOYMENT (EYE)

EYE empowers youth ages 15-30 to break barriers to employment through in-class training and practicum at a local employer. Participants are paid for the duration of the program.

47

Clients Served

95%

Found Work

## ENHANCING YOUTH POSSIBILITIES (EYP)

EYP is a fast-track program for young professionals ages 18-29. Participants attend a two-week group session with an instructor and career coach, followed by four weeks of paid practicum at a local employer.

24

Clients Served

70%

Found Work

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING (EDT)

Many newcomers arrive in Canada with a dream to start their own business. EDT helps participants establish a business plan and make their dream a reality.

14

Clients Served

100%

Completed a Business Plan

## RETURN TO WORK IN ALBERTA (ROWA)

ROWA provides customized support, advocacy, and mentorship to help EI recipients return to work. Financial help is provided to participants to assist with courses, job equipment & daycare.

65

Clients Served

60%

Found Work  
(Still supporting remaining 40%)

## ACCOUNTING PROGRAMS

TIES offers four different accounting courses: Basic Accounting, Advanced Accounting, Quickbooks & Sage 50. Participants develop their skills in accounting principles and software.

375

Clients Served

98%

of Basic Accounting graduates joined a higher level program

## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR A DIGITAL ALBERTA (ASDA)

ASDA is an online program that equips participants with computer skills, workplace soft skills & job search skills to begin a career as a administrative professional. Includes volunteer practicum.

37

Clients Served

89%

Found work or received promotion

## CLERICAL & COMPUTER SKILLS TRAINING

Clerical & Computer Skills Training helps participants prepare for a job in a Canadian office. Includes 15 weeks of in-class training and an 80-hour volunteer job placement.

78

Clients Served

72%

Found work in related field

## IMMIGRANT CODING ONLINE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN EMPLOYMENT (iCODE)

iCODE provides an avenue for newcomers to enter the IT industry with in-demand coding skills. The program consists of online technical / language training & an unpaid practicum placement.

67

Clients Served

100%

Found that iCode helped them connect with the IT industry





# Paul Emerson Almontero

“Dearest TIES - EYE Program Family,

Thank you so much for all the support and motivation you’ve given me. Last year, 2021, was one of the lowest times of my life, but through the EYE Program I found hope and the drive to persevere and work hard again.

I can’t believe how the time flew by so swiftly; from being accepted by Ms. Zenobia in the EYE program, to the welcome speech by Ms. Mayssoun, to my very informative and helpful online sessions with Ms. Safia and my EYE Program classmates, to my memorable practicum with ABHI - coordinated by Ms. Safia, Ms. Zenobia, Ms. Menbere and Ms. Katia; I feel so grateful and blessed. I experienced a lot of wonderful experiences and learned a lot.

In fact, learning and hard work never ends... even if my practicum work experience with ABHI (Alberta Business and Health Institute) ended yesterday (March 31, 2022), I am so happy that I have been duly absorbed by ABHI to continue working with them. Thus, starting today I am in the ABHI Calgary campus, officially working with them as a regular Admin Staff and Marketing Consultant. I am so grateful to the EYE Program for this wonderful and life-changing opportunity. Here at ABHI, I feel at home and valued. I value them so much as well! Lastly, TIES... continue inspiring, supporting, and changing lives! Your work matters! Sail on! We shall keep in touch, and I shall forever be grateful for your help in my life.”

“Last year, 2021, was one of the lowest times of my life, but through the EYE Program I found hope and the drive to persevere and work hard again. I feel so grateful and blessed. I experienced a lot of wonderful experiences and learned a lot.

-Paul Emerson Almontero  
EYE PROGRAM GRADUATE

# Employment Support Programs (ESP)

We offer three streams of programming under the ESP banner: Employment Skills Training (EST), Occupation Specific Training (OST), and Job Search Support Sessions.

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS TRAINING (EST)	OCCUPATION SPECIFIC TRAINING (OST)	JOB SEARCH SUPPORT SESSIONS
EST equips newcomers with the skills to find meaningful work in Canada through business communication, job search, and computer skills plus networking opportunities. Offered full-time, part-time and online.	OST offers job-specific language and skills training courses in three fields: Government-certified Alberta Basic Security Training, Government-certified Level 1 Childcare, and Warehouse / Logistics.	TIES employment counsellors offer one-on-one sessions to provide job search guidance, encouragement and referral to helpful programs.
123 Clients Served	135 Clients Served	84 Clients Served
86% Found Work	84% Found Work	80% Found Work

# Angeline Yu

“I was particularly interested in learning computer and office skills because I wanted to change careers. That’s why when I saw the TIES ads on Facebook, I immediately enrolled in the class. I work full time with long hours as a childcare worker, so there were days that I was really tired, but the online course was a big advantage for me because it helped me save time and energy in going back and forth from school.

I benefitted from Employment Skills Training. It helped me enhance my computer and emailing skills that are vital to my current job. The mock interview category helped me to gain confidence in answering the questions in my actual interview. I want to thank our good instructor Mr. Birhane, Ms. Annegirl for being accommodating, all the staff, and the management of TIES for giving this kind of program to immigrants like me for free.

Without the skills I learned from this school, I might not have been able to change careers as fast. Without the training of our instructor, it might still be a struggle for me to go for an interview. I wish for more power to your program and may you help more immigrants to change careers eventually.”





## Supporting new immigrants as they build a home in Canada

TIES provides comprehensive support, not only in employment and language training, but also in childcare, transportation, settlement, mental health, and many other areas. As a result, our clients feel that they are valued and well taken care of in many aspects of their integration journey. With a growing need in the community, our Settlement services have been able to flourish both geographically and demographically.

The client base of our Money Smart program tripled this year. Being able to offer Tax Clinics both virtually and in-person gave TIES the flexibility to serve more individuals who needed financial coaching. In addition, funding from other supporters such as TD Bank Group meant that TIES could remove eligibility requirements and open its services to the broader Calgary community. Money Smart was also able to provide sessions to work permit holders in other cities in Canada such as Montreal.

TIES offered a two week, virtual RESP event this year, and assisted 116 clients to open RESP accounts, which was close to a 50% increase from the previous year. 210 tax returns were completed during our Tax Clinics.

Additionally, we hosted the virtual platform for CLIP's Financial Literacy Fair, a one-day event that offered 6 financial literacy sessions targeted towards the needs of newcomers.

In 2021-22, the Care for Newcomer Children (CNC) Team was able to host Professional Development opportunities and attend conferences such as Early Year Conference 2022, Alberta Resource Center for Quality Enhancement Conference, Share the Magic Workshop, and Childhood Anxiety - Helping Children Heal from the Institute of Child Psychology. At each event, our child educators learned new and effective approaches in establishing a nurturing environment based on children's needs and interests.

Other Settlement programs, like the Welcome Resources Information Program (WRIP), were better able to meet the needs of newcomers in five areas, including: Basic/Emergency Needs, Employment, Managing Finances, School and Education, and Learning English. In doing so, TIES continues to develop a better understanding of our clients' key needs and tailor programs that have a positive impact in the community.

<h3>WELCOME RESOURCES INFORMATION PROGRAM</h3> <p>WRIP connects newcomers to the services, supports, and communities that will help them thrive as they settle in Calgary. WRIP's individual approach ensures that our services are built around each newcomer's unique needs.</p> <p><b>130</b> Clients Served</p>	<h3>CARE FOR NEWCOMER CHILDREN</h3> <p>Care for Newcomer Children (CNC) provides childcare for children whose parents are attending LINC. Children participate in age-appropriate activities designed to help them understand life in Canada.</p> <p><b>128</b> Children Served</p>	
<h3>MONEY SMART FINANCIAL LITERACY</h3> <p>Money Smart provides financial literacy education to newcomers and vulnerable people to help them acquire the knowledge and skills to manage money effectively. Through group instruction, one-to-one coaching, and hands-on support, Money Smart helps newcomers work towards a stable financial future.</p> <p><b>1200</b> Clients Served <b>94%</b> Completed their financial goals <b>210</b> Tax Returns Completed</p>	<p><b>990</b> Volunteer Hours <b>116</b> RESP Accounts Opened <b>300</b> Transit Passes Distributed</p>	
<h3>SETTLEMENT CHAT</h3> <p>Settlement Chat provides live chat support and counselling via the TIES website. This service refers clients to programs and services based on their needs.</p> <p><b>796</b> Clients Served</p>		



## Newcomer Community Cookbook



Newcomers to Canada, who often struggle with adapting to their new home and language, can find community, connection and empowerment through food: growing fresh ingredients, making traditional recipes, and sharing them with others.

This year, TIES launched a campaign and fundraiser to create a new instalment of the Newcomer Community Cookbook. As part of the campaign, we produced 3 documentary-style videos featuring immigrant-owned restaurants in Calgary (pictured: EC Fusion Restaurant & Lounge).



## Remote and Online Services for Professional Immigrants (ROSPI)

ROSPI aims to assess the potential for online and mobile-friendly delivery of settlement programming for professionalized newcomers. It will examine the unmet needs of such clients through leveraging the existing technologies settlement agencies utilized during the transition to remote delivery of services during COVID-19.

A previous TIES study of online service users found that over 70% of respondents, contacting TIES remotely and digitally, were highly educated, with at least a university degree or higher.

- 40% indicated they needed help to obtain work (69% of women selected this).
- 28% wanted help with government or community resources (44% of men selected this).
- 24% wanted to improve their English.
- Caring for family and work commitments were indicated as the most significant obstacles to using in-person services.

There is limited research on (1) the impact and effectiveness of technology use in service delivery in the context of professionalized newcomers' settlement and integration;

and (2) digital capacity of settlement service organizations to deliver services to professional clients using technology. ROSPI aims to identify these gaps in services and determine the new/best practices to address them; as well as developing a new service to test via pilot program.

ROSPI is still in the preliminary research stage, as the team is conducting both (1) an environmental scan of the existing programs and services for professionalized newcomers, and (2) an integrative review of literature focusing on digital behaviours and how the digital space meets the needs of professionalized newcomers.

### Outcomes will include:

- Increased number of professionalized newcomers accessing online settlement services.
- Professional clients improve their knowledge about Canadian labour market and employment opportunities.
- Professional clients' needs are met through successful access of online settlement services.

## Empowering Communities Anti-Racism Project

To contribute to the growing number of anti-racism initiatives in Calgary, three organizations - Immigrant Services Calgary (ISC), the Centre for Newcomers (CFN), and TIES came together to continue the conversation and work on anti-racism efforts in the city. The organizations introduced two events that shed light on race and racism in the city. The first was a series of self-defence sessions organized by CFN and facilitated by martial arts experts in the community. The second was the Empowering Communities Unconference organized by ISC and facilitated by members of the ISC and TIES team.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased incidences of racism and discrimination have been documented across the media, leaving community

members feeling fearful and insecure. Through these experiences, the program sought to understand immigrant and newcomer experiences with racism in the city of Calgary. It was the joint effort between CFN, ISC, and TIES that made the program unique in the city. This collaborative work not only demonstrated the ability for different organizations to work together on a common goal, but it also offered spaces for racialized communities to gather, learn, reflect, and discuss racism and how best to tackle it in the community.

**206**  
Surveys  
Collected

**26**  
Interview  
Participants

**14**  
Self-Defense  
Sessions

## Language Brokering Initiative

Language brokering is when parents with limited English proficiency utilize their children as interpreters in complex life situations. The Language Brokering Initiative used workshops and training informed by interviews and surveys to equip immigrant parents and youth with skills to mitigate the negative effects of language brokering and maximize the benefits. Interviews were conducted in English, French, and Arabic.

Although child language brokering is a common practice among most newcomer families, it is an under-researched topic. Our research study is the first in the prairies to explore the psychosocial impacts of language brokering on children and parents individually and as a family unit. Additionally, our pilot intervention is the first

in Canada to explore this topic and help families. We received additional funds from the City of Calgary in their 'Change Can't Wait' campaign to run staff workshops in late 2020, as a response to expanded need during the pandemic. This is indicative of the importance of language brokering as an area of future development for settlement and integration sector. Settlement practitioners were informed about the topic and were given materials to incorporate in their LINC curriculum to provide awareness and emotional wellness support to clients that practice language brokering. Toolkits of best practices for newcomer families and settlement practitioners are made available on TIES website for free use by any settlement agency interested in the intervention.

**310**  
Adults  
Surveyed

**23**  
Workshop  
Participants

**15**  
Parent-Child  
Pairs Interviewed

**92%**  
of child participants felt  
more comfortable with  
language brokering

**82%**  
of parent participants  
felt more comfortable  
with language brokering



# Hybrid Education Literacy Learning Optimization (HELLO)

HELLO aims to explore the viability of hybrid learning for newcomer adult literacy learners. The goal of this study is to address the challenges faced by literacy learners in the digital space, and determine optimal approaches in order to ensure literacy learners can benefit from Hybrid delivery.

HELLO is still in the preliminary research stage as the team is conducting both (1) an environmental scan of the existing programs and services for newcomer adult literacy learners; and (2) an integrative review of literature focusing on the benefits and challenges of hybrid and online learning for newcomer adult literacy learners.

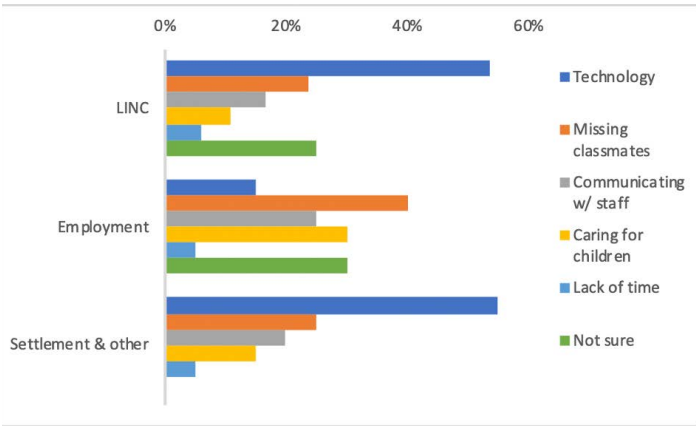
Low digital literacy is one of the major challenges literacy learners face. It not only impacts their capacity to learn, but also their daily lives in this current COVID-19 era. Instructors have questioned how digital literacy can be taught when they must focus on formal assessments. Moreover, it is a challenge for literacy instructors to remotely teach at the most basic literacy foundation level. For example, ensuring each student has the basic computer skills to log on, access virtual classrooms, and other online learning tools.

In addition to these challenges, language barriers place digital literacy learners at a disadvantage when there is no translator available to assist or not being able to translate language on the computer. Similarly, online learning means that the learner is without in-person guidance from their instructor, therefore lacking the hands-on experience that is needed for success in literacy education. Also, the online learner may lack having immediate tech support when experiencing technical problems from in-person settlement staff, or even when tech savvy children of literacy learner parents may be away at school during literacy classes. These are the challenges expressed by TIES literacy instructors and found in the literature that HELLO will aim to address to improve the hybrid learning experience.

The research team hosted an in-person panel at the 2022 Metropolis Canada Conference in Vancouver. The session stimulated discussion about the challenges of hybrid and online delivery for literacy learning. The project is also taking a structured environmental scan and literature review to ensure the consideration of existing approaches and services is comprehensive.

## Client challenges with the transition to remote program delivery

(from an internal study conducted in mid-2020, which surveyed 124 TIES clients):



# Growing with Seniors

The Growing with Seniors project will provide newcomer seniors a space to meet with other seniors, community members and youth volunteers to combat the social isolation many of them face during their adaptation to Canadian society and the COVID-19 pandemic. This program will involve a community garden and workshops. Through this project, refugee and immigrant seniors will feel a greater sense of belonging, a more connected settlement experience, and improve their physical and mental well-being. This project builds upon the success of a previous program at TIES, Gardens for Refugees and Others Welcome (GROW).

Established community gardens may not be as accessible, inclusive and welcoming to newcomer seniors because of differences and norms with respect to farming and gardening, as well as physical accessibility and languages. Immigrant focused elderly-accessible gardens can create opportunities for newcomer seniors to contribute their time and expertise to grow nutritious food, socialize with other

people, pass on cross-generational and cross-cultural knowledge to each other as well as younger community members, increasing their social participation.

The workshops component of this program will create an interactive environment where refugee and immigrant seniors can socialize, engage, gain and share knowledge and wisdom to youth, university students, local residents and other newcomers. Proposed topics include: environmental education, food security, nutrition education, indoor planting, plant care, and Indigenous medicinal gardening.

To ensure that the garden will be inclusive, welcoming and accessible to seniors, and other social and technical barriers are being looked after, we will form a seniors committee which will consist of individuals aged 55+. The committee will lead the planning, designing and development of the garden alongside student volunteers from the University of Calgary, all facilitated and coordinated by TIES staff.





# Message from the Board Chair

Reflecting on our 34<sup>th</sup> year of operations, it seems fitting that our theme this year is “growing”. I have a couple of favourite quotes about growth that capture the essence of what we have come through this past year and where we are headed in the future. The first quote is from John Maxwell: “Growth equals change. If you want to get better, you have to keep changing and improving.”

It’s not enough just to be a strong and stable not-for-profit organization in these evolving times. We continually have to grow in leadership and as a strong governance Board. I’m happy to welcome new members to the Board Executive Team, including Gita Boyd as Vice President, Nalini Plesche as Treasurer, and Marilynne Smith as Secretary. It is with dedicated support and strong guidance that we can continually improve and help TIES explore new opportunities to expand our services. Our Board development process is ongoing as we learn new ways to be of value to TIES. I would like to thank our outgoing Board Members this year: John Li, Philip Baker, Gerry Robitaille, and Ray Kristinson for their many years of dedicated service on the TIES Board.



Thank you Ray Kristinson, past TIES Board Member and longtime supporter, for creating this beautiful woodcraft of our logo.

Notable progress at TIES includes the creation of new programs such as entrepreneurship support for new immigrant women, coding skills training to meet the changing employment needs in the community, and growing awareness and focus on mental health resources to assist a vulnerable population. Utilizing technology like hybrid learning has also elevated the standard of service to our clients this past year.

As we grow in the future, we must remain adaptable and flexible. I would like to thank our dedicated CEO, Sally, for her tireless efforts to steer the organization toward positive growth and to all the staff and volunteers at TIES for your flexibility and dedication to continuous improvement and outstanding service to all of our clients. I am heartened to hear all of the positive messages throughout this report from satisfied and happy clients. This validates that our success has a measurable impact on the lives of our students. This gives meaning to what we do.

Growing in service with all of you,  
  
M’Liss Edwards,  
TIES Board Chair

<div>M’LISS EDWARDS</div> <div>Board Chair</div> <div>33</div> <div>Years at TIES</div> <div></div>	<div>GITA BOYD</div> <div>Vice Board Chair</div> <div>5</div> <div>Years at TIES</div> <div></div>
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<div>NALINI PLESCHÉ</div> <div>Treasurer</div> <div>7</div> <div>Years at TIES</div> <div></div>	<div>MARILYNNE SMITH</div> <div>Secretary</div> <div>4</div> <div>Years at TIES</div> <div></div>
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# Management Team

**RONNI ABRAHAM**

Manager,  
Settlement &  
Mental Health  
Programs

**1**  
Year at TIES



**JANA CIOBANU**

Senior Manager,  
LINC Program

**14**  
Years at TIES



**IRINA COPIL**

Manager,  
Drop-In ESL &  
Volunteer Programs

**9**  
Years at TIES



**WEI DANG**

Chief Financial  
Officer

**6**  
Years at TIES



**RACINE DIALLO**

Manager,  
IT & Training  
Programs

**9**  
Years at TIES



**MAYSSOUN HNIEDI**

Manager,  
Employment &  
Career Development  
Programs

**5**  
Years at TIES



**KERRY HOWARD**

Manager,  
LINC Program

**9**  
Years at TIES



**SUMAN KHANAL**

Chief Program  
Officer

**8**  
Years at TIES



**WHITNEY LOEWEN**

Manager,  
e-Learning &  
Special Projects

**6**  
Years at TIES



**CLIFFORD MCGUIRE**

Manager,  
Facility &  
Operations

**6**  
Years at TIES



**EVA SU**

Manager,  
HR & Office  
Operations

**17**  
Years at TIES



**CESAR SUVA**

Vice President,  
Research  
& Program  
Development

**6**  
Years at TIES



**ROBERT TOTH**

Vice President,  
Communications  
& Community  
Engagement

**2**  
Years at TIES



**WEI WANG**

Financial  
Controller

**1**  
Year at TIES





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Report designed by Alison Unger, Communications Coordinator





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