



**Alberta Association of Immigrant
Serving Agencies**

Annual Report

2008 – 2009

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Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

Serving Immigrants and the Communities That Welcome Them

Working alongside other community partners, settlement agencies in Alberta assist newcomers in a wide range of services. As a provincial forum, AAISA members collaborate to identify issues and understand the context in which immigrant-serving agencies are working.

Active since 1980 and incorporated in 1987, AAISA is an umbrella organization for 20 immigrant-serving agencies from eight communities across Alberta. AAISA works closely with all levels of government, community agencies, ethno-cultural organizations, and other stakeholders across Alberta.

2008-09 AAISA Areas of Activity

This report will highlight how the work undertaken by AAISA in the areas below from April 2008 to March 2009 have advanced the organization's goal of collaboratively addressing the needs and concerns of immigrants and refugees within Alberta.

- Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation
- Communications
- Research
- Governance
- Funding Advisory Committee
- HOMES Database Development Project
- 2008 Alberta Settlement Conference
- Partnerships
- Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary

MISSION

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies provides an association by and through which the members can work towards addressing the needs of immigrants, the agencies that serve them, and the larger community which welcomes them.

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

With the increasing significance and profile of immigration in our province, the Alberta Association of Immigrant-Serving Agencies has continued to grow and develop. The past year has been one of significant new developments in many of AAISA's areas of involvement.

One very visible change was introduced by the Communications Committee, which completed a re-branding project and in the fall of 2008 rolled out a new look – logo and wordmark – for AAISA. The new brand is bold, with its bright red background, and at the same time modest and dependable, with its lower-case acronym and right-angle format.

AAISA's largest project, the Settlement Practitioners Training and Accreditation program, has in the past year undertaken a major review and evaluation of its program. In 2009-10, AAISA will respond to the recommendations of this review with additional program enhancement.

In the fall of 2008, AAISA served as lead agency to host a provincial Settlement Conference, focused significantly on the modernization of Canada Immigration-funded settlement services, and the introduction of a new and comprehensive CIMC logic model. The conference brought together AAISA members and non-members in immigrant services and language training to learn about new initiatives and issues in immigration.

AAISA continues to host the Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, a locally-based project through which immigrant-serving agencies, multi-cultural organizations, public sector service providers and program funders address immigration and diversity issues in Calgary.

This has also been a year of both growth and transition in our staffing. In addition to the Provincial Co-ordinator and Assistant positions that we had in 2007-08, AAISA in July was able to add a new Project Co-ordinator position. I would like to thank our staff – Amanda Card, Saeid Hassanvand, Leanne Hullick-Reyes, and Krista Taldorf (leave replacement position) – for their competent, dedicated and cheerful hard work through the year.

Dale Taylor
AAISA Chair

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation

Training

AAISA Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation continues to expand in fulfillment of AAISA's long-term commitment to facilitating the recognition of settlement and integration work as a profession. Another four AAISA training modules were selected for delivery in 2008-09 from the AAISA calendar of courses, two of which had never before been offered. This curriculum expansion enables more and more participants to apply for accreditation. In 2008-09, there were 244 participants who completed AAISA training modules.

As this project has been operating for more than ten years, the Settlement Practitioners Training and Accreditation project has become well known across Canada and there is interest from outside agencies to participate in the program.

2008-09 Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation Committee

Christina Nsaliwa, Chairperson

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Veena Chandra

Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.) Committee

Diane Fisher

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

Shokoofeh Moussavi

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Elena Oursou

Immigrant Services Calgary

Bozana Sljuka

Lethbridge Family Services- Immigrant Services

Surinder Uppal

Catholic Social Services

Rowena Zwicker

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

MODULE	FACILITATOR	DATES OF DELIVERY
2C: Immigration Processes	Emily Drzymala	June 9 & 10: Edmonton June 23 & 24: Calgary
2F: Basic Counselling Skills in a Cross-Cultural Context	Derrick Shirley	September 8 & 9: Calgary September 11 & 12: Edmonton
2I: Client Needs Assessment & Action Plans	Toby Rabinovitz	November 24 & 25: Calgary November 27 & 28: Edmonton
3F: Volunteer Management	Linda Wilson	March 3 & 4: Calgary March 12 & 13: Edmonton

Accreditation

Candidates for accreditation received on-going support and consultation from the Training and Accreditation Committee as well as the Provincial Coordinator. The committee met throughout the year to continuously improve the standards, processes, and supporting documents. There were 29 applications submitted and 22 – or 76% of applications – were successful.

AAISA continues its relationship with Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement & Integration Agencies (SAISIA). Two candidates from Saskatchewan were accredited as mentors in this fiscal year.

**AAISA Accredited Settlement
Mentors 2008-09**

Tara Blanchard

Moose Jaw Multicultural Council

Luella Gaultier

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Getachew Woldeyesus

Regina Open Door Society

Project Evaluation

The Training and Accreditation project has grown and evolved since its inception, more than 10 years ago. As settlement has evolved during the years, a review of the project seemed timely. The evaluation process was broad in scope to review the vision, intent, content, delivery, methodology, level of satisfaction, and the overall quality of the project. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with a variety of stakeholders to gather important information.

The project evaluation report provided a summary on the current training and accreditation project and recommendations for future direction and goals based on the current environment and trends in settlement and integration in Alberta. This provides AAISA with useful tools for the Training and Accreditation Committee to manage ongoing work, identify successes and plan effectively for the future training and accreditation.

Operations

The Training & Accreditation Committee convened throughout the year to review project progress, advise on future directions and review accreditation applications. The Committee revisited the accreditation application and the application process to ensure efficiency and transparency.

**AAISA Accredited Settlement
Level 2 Practitioners 2008-09**

Jane Awawias

Catholic Social Services

Shaheda Begum

Centre for Newcomers

Magdalena Czyz

Immigrant Services Calgary

Mohammed Yusuf Idriss

Global Friendship Immigration Center

Najib Mangal

Lethbridge Family Services- Immigrant Services

Margaryta Marion

Immigrant Services Calgary

Juma Naikyar

Catholic Social Services

David Olara

Global Friendship Immigration Center

Mirela Pirvu

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Ebitsam Temraz

Centre for Newcomers

Yosief Ukubalidet

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Payal Verma

Immigrant Services Calgary

Ka Man (Carmen) Yu

Immigrant Services Calgary

**AAISA Accredited Settlement
Level 3 Practitioner 2008-09**

Wendy Chin

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Chinlong Hak

Catholic Social Services

Maria Bella Javier

Centre for Newcomers

Emily Lee

Immigrant Services Calgary

Bukurie Mino

Centre for Newcomers

Asma Saida Sai

Catholic Social Services

The Canadian Council for Refugees in collaboration with settlement umbrella organizations across Canada continues with the National Settlement Sector Professionalization Project. The professionalization task force has been inactive pending further discernment on the way forward at the umbrella level.

Communications Committee

A re-branding initiative was conducted in the 2008-09 fiscal year to increase awareness of AAISA, its activities, and its role in the settlement sector. Improved tools were developed for AAISA to communicate with a broad audience on issues pertaining to the settlement sector.

The Committee’s work culminated in the creation of an effective visual identity that will increase recognition of AAISA as the leading voice for immigration and integration in Alberta. All pertinent AAISA stationary has been updated to reflect this fresh image.

2008-09 Communications Committee

Sarah Amies, Chairperson
Lethbridge Family Services- Immigrant Services

Jim Gurnett
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Lena Bengtsson
Immigrant Settlement Services

Linda Gale
SAAMIS Immigration Services Association

Myra MacKay
YMCA – Immigrant Settlement Office

Jehan Wassef
Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women

The AAISA website layout has also been refreshed, with the opportunity for more immediate updates and new tool development. To build internal communication mechanisms in the sector, AAISA developed and launched its first newsletter, AAISA Connection, with copies distributed to all member agencies as well as key stakeholders.

To emphasize the work and economic investment AAISA member agencies contribute annually to the Alberta economy and community, the Communications Committee collected the following data based on responses from 15 of our 20 members:

NUMBER OF STAFF	NUMBER OF NEWCOMERS SERVED ANNUALLY	COMBINED ANNUAL BUDGET
1029	101,434	\$ 50,531,126

In February 2009, the Committee met for a strategy session to plan next steps in utilizing the refreshed communication items to increase dialogue with all stakeholders, including member agencies, other associations and non-profits, government partners, media and the wider Alberta community. This meeting contributed to a strategic work plan for the coming fiscal year to continue building AAISA’s profile as the major resource of knowledge and experience in settlement and integration of newcomers.

Research Committee

Strong research results can play a large role in implementing positive change. The member agencies of AAISA in all parts of Alberta possess a wealth of knowledge and experience on a variety of settlement and integration issues. By improving the accessibility and effectiveness of research in the sector, as well as supporting collaboration efforts with research institutions and other partners, valuable recommendations for enhancing the settlement and integration processes will be more evident and forthcoming.

2008-09 Research Committee

Fariborz Birjandian, Chairperson*Calgary Catholic Immigration Society***Beba Svirig***Calgary Immigrant Women's Association***AnaMaria Fantino***Catholic Social Services***Anna Steinberg***Jewish Family Services Calgary***Josephine Pallard***Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women*

In November 2008, AAISA conducted focus groups in Calgary and Edmonton to gather input on increasing accessibility and building research capacity in the sector, as well as topics for an AAISA research agenda. It is clear that immigrant serving agencies are conducting and contributing to important research for their own operations and the sector as a whole. However, there are many challenges impeding the ability of agencies to meet their research needs. The focus group participants helped determine a number of ways in which AAISA can help improve the research capacity of the sector for the benefit of all members.

The next step in the process was to develop the recommendations from the focus groups into an action plan and begin the background work on developing research tools, particularly the online research library. A broad investigation of online resources and reports available and relevant to the sector helped build a framework for a preliminary version of the library to be added to AAISA's website.

The research agenda topics brought forward by focus group participants covered a wide range of issues, identifying the need for current, relevant information and analysis covering all aspects of the immigrant-serving sector. From this broad list, the Research Committee has determined a short list of significant issues to communicate to research partners and to be a focal point for the online library.

Governance Committee

In 2008-09, the Governance Committee worked on a number of assignments related to reviewing and updating internal policies and procedures. This work all contributed building a strong foundation for AAISA to operate from.

The Committee held a governance meeting with the entire Board in May 2008 to determine the type of growth AAISA membership favored. A practical organic

2008-09 Governance Committee

Alice Colak, Chairperson*Catholic Social Services***Dale Taylor***Centre for Newcomers***Christina Nsaliwa***Edmonton Immigrant Services Association***Georges Bahaya***Centre d'accueil et d'établissement d'Edmonton*

growth model was elected, providing the Governance Committee with the parameters within which the next phase of their work would be conducted.

The next items on the Governance agenda were creating Terms of Reference for the committee, and updating the AAISA Bylaws. The Governance Committee Terms of Reference was adopted as a template for all AAISA committees to draw up Terms of Reference, a process that was completed this fiscal year. A review of AAISA's Bylaws was conducted by a consultant, and the Governance Committee utilized this review to compile recommended changes for the Bylaws. After presentation to the Board, these recommendations were applied as amendments to the Bylaws, to be voted on at AAISA's 2009 Annual General Meeting on June 12th, 2009.

Funding Advisory Committee

The Funding Advisory Committee was tasked with creating a new membership fee structure, as well as investigating the cost and benefits of AAISA pursuing charitable status. These items were presented to the Board at the Fall Consultation in November 2008.

Additionally, the Committee was directed to determine the appropriate title and purpose of the Committee, to be reflected in its Terms of Reference, for the Board to approve in Spring 2009. A final recommendation on whether or not to pursue charitable status was also prepared for the Board.

2008-09 Funding Advisory Committee

Harry Yee, Chairperson

Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

Salim Sindhu

Calgary Immigrant Educational Society

Din Ladak

Immigrant Services Calgary

HOMES Database Development Project

The creation of a common database tool utilized by agencies in the immigration sector to produce standardized data and reports is the principal objective of this important AAISA initiative. Recognizing the value of such a resource for both agencies and their shared funders, AAISA has partnered with the Canadian Outcomes Research Institute (CORI) to work with member agencies to develop the Hull Outcomes Monitoring and Evaluation System (HOMES) for the settlement sector.

In 2007-08, AAISA determined that the diverse needs and capacities of individual agencies necessitated a one-on-one relationship with the system developer, which would be a more efficient and effective approach to achieving the project objectives than a "one-size fits all" strategy.

CORI conducted individual agency needs assessments, and participating agencies are now moving forward with individualized action plans for the implementation of the database. AAISA continues to provide project oversight to ensure program objectives are fulfilled.

Each agency worked with CORI to create individual work plans, which were then implemented at the pace of the individual agency. Agencies have been able to customize the HOMES database to suite specify agency reporting needs.

2008 Alberta Settlement Conference

In partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Alberta Employment and Immigration, AAISA delivered the 2008 Alberta Settlement Conference on October 28-30th, 2008 in Calgary, Alberta. The conference addressed the CIC modernization of settlement services and Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEI) innovative programming. The conference was also an opportunity for CIC and AEI to respond to issues identified by service providers across the province.

The keynote speaker was Naomi Alboim, who presented *Emerging Trends in Canadian Immigration: Planning for the Future*. The Honourable Norman L. Kwong, Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, provided opening remarks at the banquet. Speakers included Robert Cullum – Acting Director General, Prairies and Northern Territories Region, Citizenship and Immigration, Jean Séguin - Director, Integration Branch, Citizenship and Immigration, and Percy Cummins, Executive Director, Alberta Employment and Immigration. There were 222 people in attendance.

AAISA Partnerships

CISSA-ACSEI

Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance – Alliance Canadienne du Secteur d’Etablissement des Immigrants (CISSA-ACSEI) was created in 2005 in response to the growing need for a distinct national voice to articulate and promote the issues and challenges of Canada’s settlement community. The national body’s mission is to represent the issues and expertise of the immigrant settlement sector to advance public policies and programs that enhance the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in Canada.

AAISA contributes two representatives to the 19-member Board of Directors, whose membership consists of representatives of provincial, regional, and national umbrella associations. Jim Gurnett served on CISSA-ACSEI’s Executive Committee as Chair. Fariborz Birjandian was the chair of CISSA-ACSEI’s Research Committee and the Alberta representative.

New Horizons for Seniors

The New Horizons for Seniors Program provides funding for community-based projects, encouraging seniors to continue to play an important role in their community by helping those in need, providing leadership, and sharing their knowledge and skills with others.

AAISA has been engaged in this program in order to ensure that the specific contributions of immigrant seniors were identified. In September 2008, Linda Gale participated as AAISA’s representative in an intake review of over 100 applicants in competition for funding, providing valuable insight to the team on immigrant-focused seniors programming.



Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary

The Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary has worked on a number of collaborative projects throughout the past year to push forward our Strategic Plan, which is in its final year of implementation. The following describes the ISCC's activities and accomplishments between April 2008 and March 2009.

HR Compensation Strategy: Phase II and Phase III

Phase I of this Strategy was completed in December 2007 with the release of the 'Immigrant Sector Compensation Review: Final Report'. The study found that an average salary gap of 19% exists between immigrant serving agencies and a select market sample made up of non-profit organizations in Alberta¹.

Prior to the commencement of Phase II and Phase III, AAISA and ISCC agreed to co-sponsor the project, to ensure that province-wide representation is adhered to from both funders and agencies. Consultants Pat Rice and Peter Boland kicked off Phase II by engaging funder and service provider stakeholders to work together to address the root causes of the salary gap in a series of consultation sessions. The sessions communicated the results of the Report, facilitated understanding, and generated discussion across the sector about the report's findings. These consultations also allowed stakeholders to relay which action pieces they feel are the most imperative.

Funders were requested to assist agencies in closing the gap by providing funds to make this possible. Representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Alberta Employment and Immigration, United Way of Calgary and Area and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) verbally agreed to follow through on this request. In July 2008, all agencies in Calgary who predominantly focus on services for immigrants and who are funded by FCSS and/or United Way of Calgary and Area were invited to submit requests to these funders to increase their employees' salaries. Those who submitted requests had their salaries made-level with like-positions in the wider non-profit sector based on the 2007 Boland Survey results.

An Implementation Advisory Committee was established to lead the process of translating the sector objectives—identified in the consultation sessions—into the implementation of specific

¹ The select market sample excluded immigrant serving agencies and non-profit organizations that were not seen to focus predominantly on the human services.

strategic plans. The Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) includes representatives from funders and service providers from all parts of the province and reflects the ISCC/AAISA co-sponsorship of the project. On August 8th, 2008, the IAC met to consider all implementation options that had emerged throughout the engagement and consultation process and prioritized the options.

The entire process, including all identified options and details of the four prioritized options, were consolidated into a report by our consultants. The four prioritized options are: formal accreditation of training for sector employees through a recognized educational institution; a position classification structure; a corresponding salary structure; and, a sector-wide communications strategy. The report is entitled ‘Toward Sustainability in Alberta’s Immigrant Serving Sector’ and is attached.

Phase II was complete with the presentation of the report to all ISCC and AAISA members on September 23, 2008 and November 17th, 2008 respectively. Phase III, implementation of the options, began by creating sub-committees on September 15th, 2008.

AAISA members were given the opportunity to provide their feedback to the Phase II report prior to the sub-committees moving forward on the action pieces. The Implementation Advisory Committee received their feedback in mid-February. In March 2009, we requested Peter to develop a plan for developing a position classification and salary structure for the sector. The Accreditation Committee scheduled a meeting with senior executives of the University of Lethbridge, to be held on June 2nd, 2009. The committee hopes to complete the four action pieces by December 2009.

CARE Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families

The CARE Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families is a comprehensive framework which supports a system-wide approach for addressing key areas/issues for children and youth of immigrant families. It provides an assessment tool to identify what is already being accomplished, alternatives for program/service delivery, more effective ways to collaborate, and so forth.

In May 2008, ISCC agreed to house this initiative. Funding for the initiative was secured in September 2008 and a CARE Strategy Manager was hired in February 2009. After commencing the position, the CARE Strategy Standing Committee drafted CARE’s Terms of Reference. In March 2009 ISCC Co-Chairs and staff delivered three presentations at the 11th National Metropolis Conference in Calgary on Calgary’s immigrant sector and the initiatives ISCC is undertaking to address pressing issues.

The CARE Strategy committee has been developing a three-year Logic Model which will be finalized and presented to United Way by June 1st, 2009. CARE has developed partnerships with the Alberta Teacher’s Association (ATA) to support the creation of the ATA Cultural Competency Guide for Teachers, and with Inform Alberta to enhance information and accessibility about services on children and youth of immigrant families.

To build understanding of the Strategy within government, post-secondary, schools and other institutions CARE will continue to meet with local educational representatives, municipal,

provincial and federal government representatives. Together with community partners, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary, McMann Youth Family and Community Services, and Coalition for Equal Access to Education, we will expand a forum of local experts surrounding children and youth of immigrant families' research, learnings, and issues.

ISCC-City of Calgary Partnership Project

The ISCC-City of Calgary Partnership Project was established in 2007 and aims to facilitate the hiring of immigrants by The City of Calgary. In April 2008, the Project committee organized a forum for career practitioners to learn about The City of Calgary's various business units, employment opportunities, job requirements, and the City's hiring process. A similar forum was held in August 2008 for newcomers rather than career practitioners. The August forum gave newcomers an opportunity to engage in short, one-on-one conversations with representatives of The City's business units. The Project intends to hold these forums three times a year. The next forum for newcomers is scheduled for May 28, 2009.

The Project held a Career Fair targeting newcomers on October 21st, 2008 from 10:00am – 8:00pm at The City of Calgary Municipal Building. The Fair showcased the various business units and employment opportunities available at The City of Calgary and was attended by over 4800 people. Immigrant serving agencies promoted their services at booths set up around the Atrium. Four accreditation institutions held information sessions at the Fair, and agency career practitioners held workshops on interviewing and resume critiquing. Over 200 people had their resumes critiqued. OMNI television conducted interviews with ISCC Co-Chair Jason Luan and agency volunteer Jean Wang. George McLaughlin, Director of Human Resources, was the Master of Ceremonies for the Opening Ceremonies. Guest speakers included Deputy Mayor Brian Pincott, Chris Good, General Manager of Corporate Services and CFO, Erika Hargesheimer, General Manager of Community Services and Protective Services, and Beba Svigir, Co-Chair of the Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary. They spoke to the many issues hindering the employment of newcomers and the need to address these issues in a timely manner.

The Project finalized its Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan in March. Strategic directions for 2009 include:

- ❖ Support The City of Calgary to become a leader among employers in the area of immigrant employment
- ❖ Work with The City of Calgary to review recruitment policies, procedures and practices
- ❖ Work with The City of Calgary to promote internships, work experience, and other employment bridging programs

Provincial Election Strategy 2008

In February 2008, a consultant led ISCC members in a workshop to strategize raising awareness of immigrant issues during the 2008 provincial election. A key message—"Let's secure Alberta's future by investing in immigrants"—was delivered in a media release and in letters to candidates of all four major parties. Fariborz Birjandian, the designated spokesperson for the provincial election strategy, represented ISCC in an interview with CBC Radio Canada.

Connect, Share, Celebrate: ISCC Conference

Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary held the ‘Connect, Share, Celebrate: ISCC Conference on May 23, 2008. Just under 250 people were in attendance with representatives from government, education, business, immigrant agencies and the broader non-profit sector.

The conference Master of Ceremonies was Nirmala Naidoo, News Anchor for Global Television Calgary. The Honourable Norman L. Kwong, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta and Deputy Mayor Andre Chabot provided welcome speeches. Cheryl Knight, CEO of the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada (PHRCC), provided the Keynote Address. Ms. Knight spoke to PHRCC’s commitment to addressing the unemployment and underemployment of immigrants and to embracing diversity and eliminating discrimination within the petroleum sector. The morning session included presentations on ISCC’s projects and the work of our external partnerships, specifically:

- ❖ The Immigrant Sector HR Compensation Strategy
- ❖ ISCC-City of Calgary Immigrant Employment Partnership
- ❖ Immigrant Housing Sector
- ❖ CARE Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families
- ❖ Calgary Coalition for Meaningful Employment of Skilled Immigrants

The afternoon session consisted of a community café, in which participants discussed their feedback and related issues surrounding each of the above areas. The café was followed by a speaker panel. The panel discussed how they are addressing immigrant issues within their own sectors or organizations. Guest speakers included:

Hadassah Ksienski – Former Co-Chair of the Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary and Former CEO of Immigrant Services Calgary

Pamela Vamplew – Senior Manager of Finance & Operations, TD Canada Trust, Retail Distribution

Dr. David Watt – Co-Creator, Medical Communications Assessment Project

Maria Steinborn – Supervisor, English as a Second Language Program, Calgary Catholic School District

Dr. Darren Lund – Domain Leader, Prairie Metropolis Centre

Lana Wells – Senior Director of Community Investments and Collaborations, United Way of Calgary and Area

Emerging Issues and Communications

The Emerging Issues Committee has carried out its work by becoming involved with external coalitions who were focusing on issues ISCC had identified as priorities. However, the committee could not respond to a number of pertinent issues to the sector throughout the year because of a lack of set protocol for responding on behalf of the Council in a timely and efficient manner. In September 2008, the ISCC agreed that the Emerging Issues Committee and the Communications Committee should merge, and that set protocols should be put into place for the committee to be able to respond to urgent issues.

In September 2008, the committee distributed a questionnaire to ISCC members asking them to identify the issues they would most like this committee to focus on over the next six months. Council also confirmed that an issue facing Refugee Claimant is a priority issue that the committee should address: the increasingly long period of time between Refugee Claimants arriving in Canada and being eligible for social and health services. A taskforce was established as a result of this decision, who subsequently met with key stakeholders to discuss the issue, notably Rob Ferguson of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Sharon Blackwell of Alberta Employment and Immigration. As a result of these meetings and encouraging AEI and CIC to coordinate their processes, the wait time to receive Interim Federal Health has been significantly decreased. Refugee Claimants are now given an Interim Federal Health document as soon as they make their claim. Prior to our consultations with AEI and CIC refugee claimants were waiting six to eight weeks after making a claim before they would receive this document. AEI is also working to streamline their process of approving individuals for Alberta Works, and we have been keeping in close contact with them to ensure this action is moving forward. In 2009, ISCC will hold a Symposium to address solutions to this issue with stakeholders.

Governance

In January 2008, the Governance Committee began to seriously explore options for becoming an independent entity. The impetus came from the committee's agreement that the ISCC must put in place a structure that reflects and supports the growth of the Council since its creation as a project under the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA). Furthermore, it was agreed upon that such a development might open the door to opportunities for further growth. In March 2008, the Governance Committee brought their recommendation to the Council, which subsequently mandated the Governance Committee to find resources to develop a model for an independent structure and draft bylaws for review with the goal of becoming independent. A consultant was hired to lead ISCC through this process in June 2008. However, a decision around incorporation was not finalized. On March 31st, 2009, ISCC met to discuss an improved Terms of Reference, including a revised staffing structure and decision-making process. These pieces will be finalized in the coming months.

Operations

In September 2008, ISCC secured funding from United Way of Calgary and Area to hire additional staff to support its activities. As of March 2009, ISCC staff is made-up of an Administrative Assistant, a CARE Strategy Manager, and an ISCC Project Manager.

ISCC also worked with AASA to find office space that would accommodate the additional staff. In November 2008, staff moved into temporary office space at Prospect Human Services until construction is completed on their permanent office space at the same location. Construction of the space is expected to be completed by September 1, 2009.

The ISCC has been involved in a number of external initiatives. The following describes the ISCC's role in their activities:

Calgary Coalition for Meaningful Employment

In 2007, the Emerging Issues Committee identified foreign credential recognition as a priority issue. The committee learned that an external coalition— the Calgary Coalition for

Meaningful Employment (CCME)—was already focusing on this issue. The committee agreed that the best way for ISCC to address this issue would be to join forces and sit as a member of the coalition. Members from immigrant serving agencies, mainstream agencies, government, funders, and internationally trained professionals make-up the membership of the Coalition. In 2008, CCME finalized its Terms of Reference, Action Plan, and Vision: to create a seamless process for the integration of skilled immigrants. While foreign credential recognition is a key focus area of the Coalition, broader employment issues are also being addressed. CCME works to support the activities of its member organizations, coordinate the identification of key policy issues through research, and engage key stakeholders to collectively work towards foreign credential recognition and equitable access to employment for skilled immigrants.

Immigrant Housing Sector

As a result of ISCC's influence, the Immigrant Housing Sector has been added as the ninth sector of the Calgary Homeless Foundation's funding priorities. In 2008, a representative of ISCC attended Immigrant Housing Sector meetings to develop goals and strategies. The Immigrant Housing Sector held a Service Symposium on Immigrant Housing on March 5th, 2009 to fulfill their strategic objectives of enhancing cultural and language competence in services and systems and improving collaboration and knowledge sharing processes between homeless/housing agencies and immigrant serving agencies. The Symposium received positive evaluations.

Community Development Conference 2009

The Community Development Society of Calgary and Area held its 6th annual conference in January 2009. ISCC agreed to sit on the planning committee for this event and was also asked to lead a breakout session. The theme of the conference is leadership in community development. ISCC Co-Chairs, Beba Svigir and Jason Luan, and Charla Vall, ISCC Project Manager, presented a two-hour session on the challenge of balancing collaboration and agency autonomy.

Adult Immigrant Community Impact Plan

In May 2008, United Way of Calgary and Area gathered together ISCC and several other stakeholders to discuss building an adult immigrant community impact plan. The proposed goals and strategies included: enhance employment opportunities for adult immigrants; enhance settlement services for adult immigrants and their families; build community connections for adult immigrants and their families; increase public awareness and support for diversity; and increase organizational and individual capacity. ISCC volunteered to sit on the Design Group for this plan and met with other members of the Design Group in June 2008 and November 2008 to discuss how the plan should be rolled out. In November 2008 the Design Group agreed that an umbrella body, rather than an individual agency, should work to gain support from The City of Calgary to develop a municipal immigration strategy, such as the ISCC. Spurred by the release of The City of Calgary's March 2009 briefing entitled 'Changes in Migration: Economic and Municipal Implications', ISCC met to discuss taking on this action item.

AAISA MEMBER AGENCIES, DIRECTORS, & STAFF

AAISA Members & Directors 2008 – 2009

Edmonton	Calgary
ASSIST Community Services Centre Simon Wang	Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth Harry Yee
Catholic Social Services Alice Colak	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Fariborz Birjandian
Centre d'accueil et d'établissement d'Edmonton Georges Bahaya	Calgary Immigrant Educational Society Salim Sindhu
Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women Josephine Pallard	Calgary Immigrant Women's Association Beba Svirg
Edmonton Immigrant Services Association Christina Nsaliwa	Centre for Newcomers Dale Taylor
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers Jim Gurnett	Immigrant Services Calgary Din Ladak
Indo Canadian Women's Association Miriam Thomas	Jewish Family Service Calgary Bev Sheckter
Brooks	Lethbridge
Global Friendship Immigration Center Doreen Medway	Lethbridge Family Services – Immigrant Services Sarah Amies
Fort McMurray	Grande Prairie
YMCA – Immigrant Settlement Office Myra MacKay	Immigrant Settlement Services Lena Bengtsson
Medicine Hat	Red Deer
SAAMIS Immigration Services Association Linda Gale	Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.) Committee Veena Chandra

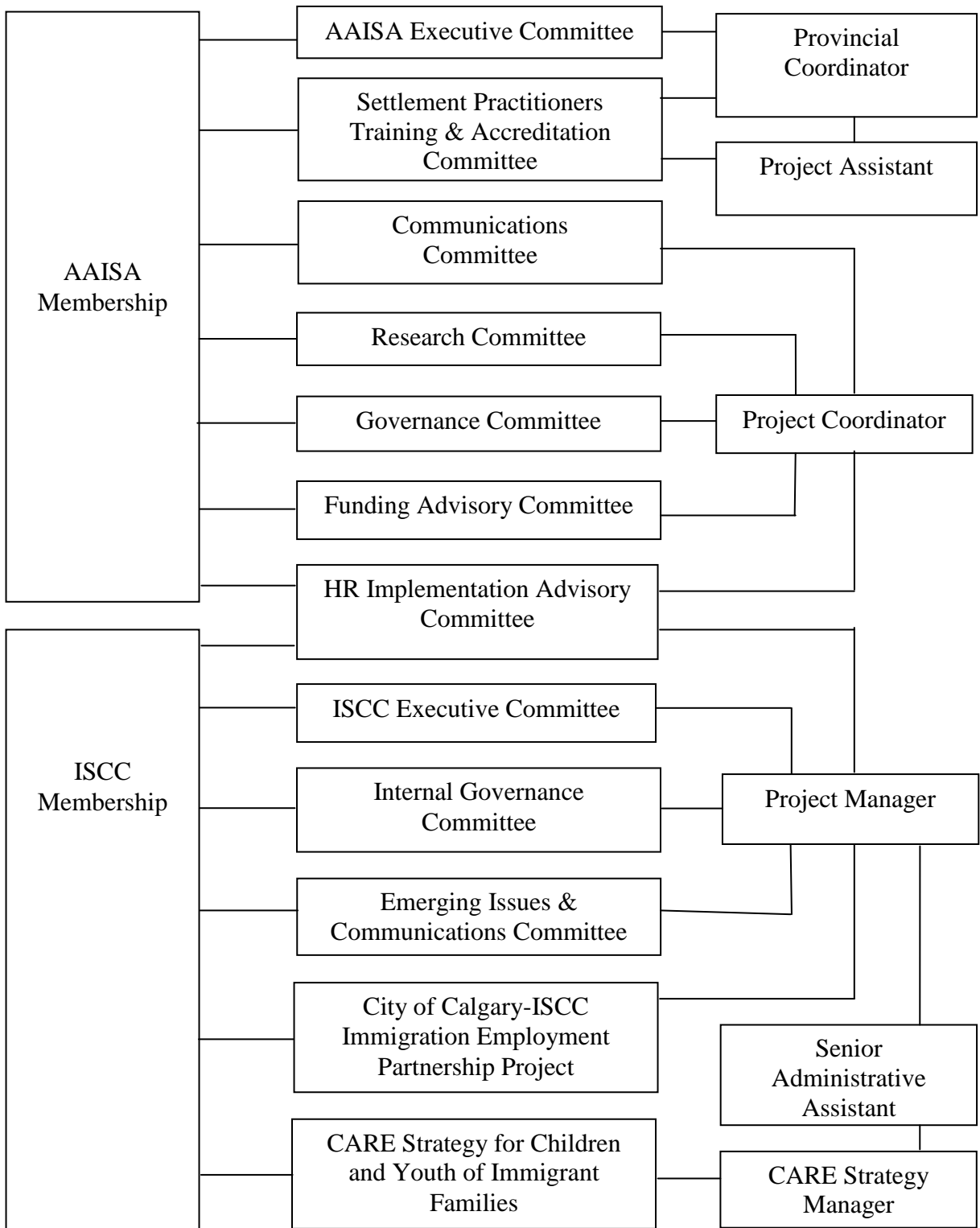
AAISA Executive Committee

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