



VICTORIA IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT **2009**

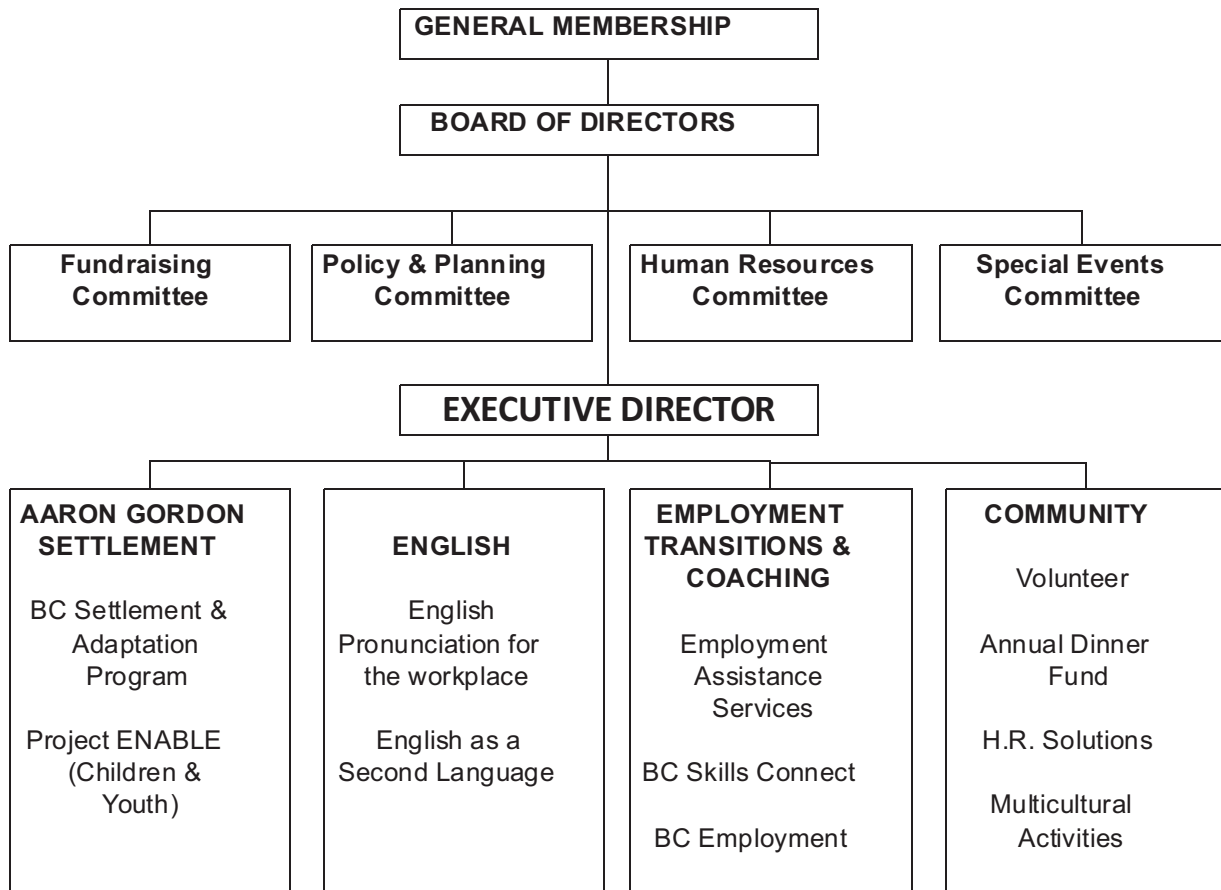
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Organizational Chart

Mission Statement

“To assist in the settlement and adjustment of immigrants and refugees in Canada and to provide services designed to increase the newcomer’s participation in Canadian society by assisting the newcomer to overcome barriers.”



FOUNDERS



Carlos A. Gaete



Hereity Hadgu



Viet Quoc Tran

2009 VIRCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Malcolm Zoraik - Vice President
Ben Andersen - Treasurer
Ron Millard - Secretary
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President Report

Michael Deakin-Macey, President of the Board of Directors



Our goal at the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) is to make it easier for newcomers to settle into their new lives and communities, and become productive members of Canadian society. VIRCS welcomes newcomers and refers them to the numerous programs

we offer, all strategically designed to help immigrants prepare for the Canadian labour market. Our highly skilled and dedicated staff and volunteers ensure all newcomers are matched with the programs they need. I encourage you to review their summaries in the pages that follow.

This year, several VIRCS staff members and the Executive Director formed a strategic planning committee that researched and analyzed the Society's strengths and weaknesses and gave an overview of where the organization currently stands. We are now at the stage where the Board will take the results and help determine the strategic direction that VIRCS will take in the next five to 10 years. This process will also result in the creation of a permanent committee that will implement the new strategic direction.

But it's not all work at VIRCS. The Society also organizes a number of special events that are effective ways of bringing newcomers together and linking them with their new communities. In the summer VIRCS' Human Solutions Team organized and hosted the Summer Intercultural Gathering. The event was a great success and the HR Solutions research team provided valuable feedback on how we can maximize our resources in the years to come. More than 200 local businesses attended the event and enjoyed the multicultural food and educational multicultural labour play produced by "Puente Theater."

The VIRCS Open House during Multicultural Week, held every year in February, once again drew more than 300 guests who enjoyed a large sampling of both food and cultures.

VIRCS staff and board members feel it is important to get together on a regular basis outside of the work environment in order to build more productive

working relationships. So, in December, everyone gathered at a local restaurant to celebrate the holiday season and share fabulous food and conversations.

Of course we wouldn't be able to do all we do without our volunteers. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for their countless hours helping with everything from language training, child minding and mentoring, to answering the telephones. I would also like to thank the members of the Board, the founders, the Executive Director, the staff, the Society members, and of course, all our donors and sponsors. Your invaluable support is noticed by all - thank you very much.

VIRCS is one of a kind. It is striving to be the best and most unique immigrant and refugee organization in British Columbia. I believe in many ways we already are already there. It's because all of you, the people, make us so. It has been a privilege to work with all of you over the past year, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM.

Executive Director's Report

Carlos Gaete, Executive Director



2009 was a year of adaptation in our great and attractive new offices for our staff, board of directors, clients, volunteers and friends of the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society.

VIRCS is a society where the staff cares for their clients and their needs. Even though we don't always have the economic means to help our clients, we are used to fulfilling all the needs of the newcomers with whatever means we have. After all, most of us went through the same adaptation process and we know how to do the job with few resources. You will see through this 2009 Annual Report the programs we have to help our clients, especially those who are more vulnerable, who need a job, who want to be involved with the environment, who want his or her family to meet a Canadian family, etc...

VIRCS is a good model of a "One Stop Shop Centre for Newcomers," providing a full range of different "in-house" services to 3,000 immigrants annually, including 200 refugees. Services range from Settlement to English training to Employment.

The society is also aware that newcomers usually find adapting to a new city difficult and confusing, where the language and customs are unknown and sometimes frightening. That's why VIRCS offers most of their services in one location, a one-stop-shop centre for newcomers.

VIRCS has become the place for immigrants and new Canadians who are looking for work. Our two programs, Employment Transition and Coaching and Skills Connect, look after all the needs of the clients in Greater Victoria. Our programs have helped place hundreds of clients in stable jobs and also provide the necessary training to help them find a job. One statistic important to mention is that in the last twenty years, we have placed more than 8,000 clients in steady jobs in Greater Victoria.

The most difficult part of my report is to thank everybody and to not leave anybody out. I am going to start with the staff who prove year after year how much they care for their clients. I also want to mention that we have a new breed of young and enthusiastic employees who have brought new

energy to VIRCS. Thanks to our board of directors who are planning already for the coming year. Thanks to our hundreds of volunteers who donate thousands hours helping the newcomers learn English, find a home, file the Income Tax return, work at the reception or conduct research, etc, etc. Thanks to our funders, Federal and Provincial governments, the City of Victoria, foundations, members of the society, etc, etc. Please see the complete list at the end of the AR.

Employment Transitions and Coaching

Viet Tran, Director, Employment Transitions and Coaching Program

2009 was a remarkable year, as VIRCS had its Employment Assistance Services (EAS) agreement transferred to BC Government in February after nearly twenty years with the Federal government. The society has also become the only service provider in the Greater Victoria area for the Skills Connect for Immigrants after the society secured the two-year contract with ASPECT in September.

VIRCS' Employment Transitions and Coaching Program (ETCP) provided its employment assistance services to help a total of 624 immigrant job seekers in their search for employment with the result of 465 clients becoming employed and six becoming self-employed. The society also offered its skills connect for immigrant services to a total of 71 clients with the outcome of 55 clients successfully obtaining meaningful employment in their professional field.

The economic downturn sharply increased unemployment rates and dramatically changed the labour market in the Capital Regional District in 2009. Most of new jobs were part time and entry level positions. Consequently, immigrants were pushed back to the former environment where systemic barriers to employment and workplace prejudice against immigrants have become less likely to be addressed and to be dealt with.

To help its clients effectively deal with the highly competitive labour market, the Employment Transitions and Coaching Program (ETCP) provided different venues for its clients to network with local employers. We organized six Employer Visit sessions at VIRCS' office for 14 businesses such as BC Ferries, BC Transit, CFB Esquimalt, Custom House, Fairmont Empress, Home Depot, Safeway, Swans Hotel, The Bay, Wal-Mart, etc. These businesses provided 158 immigrant job seekers with insider's information about their job prospects and hiring practices. The ETCP organized three special recruitment sessions for local businesses including the Diversity Celebration event with the participation of local 25 employers and over 300 immigrant job seekers. We conducted and moderated six Employer Roundtable discussions for 104 clients. Besides networking opportunities, participants were also able to submit their resumes and job applications to attending employers at these sessions and events.

The ETCP conducted 50 two-and-half hour employability and employment maintenance workshops on every Friday morning to provide 558 job seekers with labour market information, job search techniques such as networking, contacting employers, cover letters & resumes, and interviews, etc. 48 Practical Job Search Coaching Workshops were organized with 244 participants. These workshops were originally designed for small group of difficult clients who were in need of more personal attention. Yet, the workshop format was modified to meet the need of a broader clientele as more clients have become interested in the practical approach of this type of workshops.

VIRCS provided 114 clients with four series of a total 117 two-hour Spoken English Pronunciation and Intonation for Job search workshops. Each participant attended 28 to 30 workshops from each series. Workshop participants learned Canadian styles in communication and speaking English with a smooth accent for their job search and employment maintenance. The workshop series have become very popular in the local immigrant community.

VIRCS has encouraged its immigrant job seekers taking advantage of new job search technique online. Its ETCP offered Career Cruising workshop every Thursday afternoon. 53 clients created and managed their portfolios on the Career Cruising website. We also provided 204 job seekers with 37 two-hour Basic Computer Skills for Employment Workshops to help the participants acquire basic computer skills such as keyboarding and mousing, MS Word for resumes and cover letters, Internet Explorer and other browsers for labour market information, job search, and job application online.

The ETCP also provided financial assistance and helped 54 Skill Connect clients with their academic upgrading, membership fees, exam fees, technical skills upgrading, credential evaluation, translation assistance, and English language upgrading. In addition to one-on-one services and the mentoring service, we also organized several workshops for specific professions, including an information session for "green" jobs and training. The timing Response to Economic Downturn initiative (RED) from the BC Ministry of Housing and Social Development has had a very positive impact on immigrant job seekers as it provides different measures such as short training courses, basic tools and transportation supports, etc. to practically help job seekers during the economic hard time. 19 immigrant clients received short course trainings and found employment in the last quarter of 2009.

VIRCS would like to acknowledge the funding contributed by the Government of British Columbia and Federal Government of Canada to its Employment Transitions and Coaching Program. The society also appreciates the valuable support and the good work relationship of local employers and other community partners, especially ASPECT.

The Program Director would like to thank his caring program staff and appreciate their dedication, hard work, and excellent services providing to the clients. He also would like to express his respect for immigrant job seekers for their strong commitment and trust in the ETCP that led to the achievement of the program and the success of their employment search in 2009.

Human Resource Solutions Project

Viet Tran, Director, Human Resources Solutions Project



The Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) completed its three-phase Human Resource Solutions Project (HRSP) in October 2009. HRSP was initiated in response to the critical labour and skills shortages during 2007 and 2008 in the Capital Regional

District. VIRCS studied possible impacts of a multicultural workforce on the local labour market and found potential solutions to help employers successfully recruit and retain immigrant workers.

Phase I and Phase II of the project focused on potential impacts of the labour and skills shortages on the local businesses' HR practices and policies in recruiting and retaining immigrant workers. 106 immigrants and 96 employers participated in surveys and forums in Phase I from June 2007 to March 2008. Phase II took place from March 2008 to December 2008. It attracted 36 employers and 37 immigrants to research activities such as pre-interviews, interviews, or focus groups. It also provided 953 local businesses with human resource rack cards. The HR team worked with these employers to test and evaluate basic multicultural information and HR tips in hiring and retaining immigrant workers.

Phase III of the project was conducted during a very difficult time from January to October 2009. The global stock market meltdown in the last quarter of 2008 led to the economic downturn that has sharply increased unemployment rates and dramatically changed the local labour market. Consequently, most local employers had to practically put all their efforts into their business survival and virtually ignored the fading hiring and retaining issues.

VIRCS used recommendations, inputs, and data collected from two former phases to create, test, and evaluate different HR tools for employers:

- Ten issues of monthly electronic newsletters - an outreach tool - were distributed to over 1,000 local businesses;
- Twelve workshops were provided to 98 HR practitioners and small businesses. Workshop topics related to intercultural communication and interactions with workers from different cultural

backgrounds as well as other HR issues relating to immigrant workers;

- Two employer/employee diversity events - the Workplace Diversity Celebration and the Summer Intercultural Gathering - were organized with the participation of 103 businesses and 424 multicultural workers; and
- More than 900 hard copies and 956 electronic copies of the 68-page Resource Guide were published and distributed to local employers and HR practitioners.

VIRCS analyzed research data and evaluated the impacts of the above HR tools in a detailed final report. Practical recommendations were provided for local employers who were interested in creating a multicultural HR policy or having HR practices with an intercultural perspective.

We would like to acknowledge the funding through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. We would like to thank all businesses, community partners, and multicultural workers for their participation in the project. We appreciate the meaningful contributions of all volunteers and members of the Employer Employee Steering Committee and Multicultural Advisory Committee.

Immigrant Settlement Services

Meghan Mergaert, Director, Enhanced Settlement and Adaptation Program



2009 proved to be another busy year in the settlement program. With 3 staff and a few practicum students, we assisted more than 1,800 immigrants and refugees by providing them with information, orientation, adjustment, support, referrals, and links to community resources.

As this program has been without provincial settlement funds since September 2008, it has been another challenging year. As the economy became more strained, other community partners had a challenging year and unfortunately some had to close their doors. This has resulted in an increased need of services such as supporting women with domestic abuse, legal support, income assistance and counselling.



We have continued to provide one-on-one support, as well as offer group workshops.

Our workshop programs have included:

- The Healthy Women Healthy Community Program that helped immigrant and refugee women increase awareness of breast health and healthy living. Activities included nutrition tours, dental workshops, mammogram tour, and stress reduction workshops.
- The Financial Wellbeing Workshop Series that increased the financial knowledge and capacity of 120 newcomers. Topics included the Canadian Bank System, Basic Banking, Credit, Employment Standards, Income Tax, Home Buying, Social Benefits and How to Avoid Fraud. More than 700 individual services were related to financial topics. Our weekly Law Clinic helped 124 clients with law

advice ranging from immigration to family law. Thank you to Windsor Law Group (Andrew Rafuse and Joshua Weizner) and Roger Batchelor Law Group (Zhillia Alizadeh-Borji and Roger Bachelor) who donated their time for the weekly immigration and family law clinics.



We had a great team of volunteers that provided one to one service with clients, support for staff, translations and much more. Program staff wish to send their gratitude to the practicum students from the University of Victoria in the Intercultural Education and Training (IET) Program and Social Work Program, as well as a social work student from Denmark. I want to recognize the dedication and commitment of the settlement staff who continue to give and give and give - not only to their clients, but to the organization as a whole.

The program received funding from VanCity Foundation, BC Gaming Policy Enforcement, Settlement Workers in School (SWIS) District 61, and the Breast Cancer Foundation.



Project Enable

Meghan Mergaert, Director, Enhanced Settlement and Adaptation Program



In 2009, the Enable Program provided settlement services for more than 300 immigrant and refugee children and youth. These services focus on academic, social and emotional support in both in-school and out-of-school settings.

Our program includes weekly homework clubs, one-on-one tutoring matches, weekly youth activity nights, in-school arttherapy programs, and an annual Youth Strides summer camp for youth ages 13-18.

2009 has also included the addition of the Sparks ESL program for children, an Applied Theatre Project and a community mural service project by our "Sense of Place" youth. In addition to these exciting new initiatives, Enable has continued to deliver its core programs to an ever-growing number of children, youth and families.

The "Sense of Place" program included field trips, educational workshops and art based self-expression projects. The aim of this project was to



connect youth to organizations, and provide opportunities and information that help foster a sense of connection and involvement to Victoria. The project was a big success, culminating in the creation of a community mural during the summer of 2009. The mural was designed with the intent of celebrating diversity and was painted by a group of 20 youth who worked as a team to help beautify their new community.

The Sparks Program started out as an activity

session for newcomer children ages 6-11, with the goal of providing a culturally welcoming space to practice English and share experiences. In consultation with parents, settlement workers in schools and VIRCS staff, it became clear that there was a need for addition ESL support for elementary school children.

One of the most exciting additions to the Enable Program has been the Enable Theatre Project for Youth. This project uses theatre as a tool for newcomer youth to explore issues of diversity and multiculturalism while increasing social awareness and involvement through a series of interactive community performances. The group is composed of 11 youth from over six different cultures who have titled their performance "Here I Stand."

Enable would like to acknowledge the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, Coast Capital Savings Foundation, TELUS Victoria Community Board, TLC Fund for Kids radio stations 100.3 the Q & the Zone, the Sarah Spencer Foundation and the City of Victoria for their financial support of our programs. We would also like to thank the many volunteers who have donated their time and energy to ensure the success of these services. On behalf of the children, youth and staff, we are grateful for your support.



English as a Second Language

Christianne O'Carroll, Coordinator, English as a Second Language Program



The English as a Second Language (ESL) program at VIRCS offers ESL classes Monday through Thursday, all year-round. We cater to immigrants, refugees, Canadian citizens and visitors to

Canada. One of our objectives is

to celebrate multicultural diversity by providing a warm, welcoming class environment that promotes acceptance and inclusion. Students are ethnically and culturally diverse and come from a wide range of countries. In 2009, we had students from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Eastern and Western Europe, Latin America and the usual handful of French speakers from Quebec. We even had one from Australia!

In the summer of 2009, we experienced a decrease in the number of students from Mexico, which was a result of Canada's new requirement that all Mexicans traveling to Canada obtain a Temporary Resident Visa. Our classes were smaller overall in 2009 than they were in 2008, particularly in the second half of the year. In the first half of 2009, we had an average of twelve students per class, but in the second half of the year, it dropped to ten.

One of the main reasons for the decrease in class size was because so many of our students found it necessary to work part-time. Therefore, we responded to their needs by making changes to our enrolment and attendance guidelines. We developed a punch-card system that allowed students to attend when their work schedules allowed them to.

An excellent way to make new friends and learn about other cultures is to share food and talk about different cuisines. In 2009, we had 13 in-class potluck parties, as well as several at different locations, including Beacon Hill Park and Willows Beach.

Workshops and field trips expose our students to community resources and allow them to learn important skills for daily life. Workshops in 2009 included First Aid, Diabetes, the parks of the Capital Regional District, Finances and Banking, Personal Safety, and a series of workshops on cancer prevention. We went on field trips to the Greater Victoria Public Library, Beaver Lake for educational canoeing sessions put on by the Capital Regional District, Government House for a tour of its interior, and also to the Parliament buildings. We joined the annual Gallery Walk tour of the art galleries of downtown Victoria, which was a lot of fun.

Volunteers are an enormous help to the ESL Program throughout the year. They assist the teachers by marking homework, leading small group discussions, working one-on-one with struggling or new students, and accompanying us on field trips. Their presence helps us deliver our program more effectively. In 2009, VIRCS benefited from the assistance of 125 volunteers.

In closing, we would like to extend our thanks to the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch for the funding we received through their Direct Access Program Grant. We are very grateful for their backing.



Volunteering

Chris Geater, Coordinator, Volunteer Program



In 2009, the Volunteer Program grew to more than 500 volunteers! Thanks to such overwhelming support from the community, VIRCS has been able to expand its resources, test new service models, and continue to provide extensive volunteer-led support to our clients through existing

programs. Volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours during the year; the equivalent of five full-time staff!



Of our program-based volunteer positions, Homework Club in particular has had one of the best years on record in terms of the number of children helped, volunteer hours, and the great level of energy in the room every Tuesday afternoon. Great job, team! Also, VIRCS's new I-Plan-It Program

for young adults began in the summer, providing new ways of helping young people arriving in Canada, and new ways to volunteer. I-Plan-It is now going into its second phase.

Also in 2009, volunteers helped VIRCS through the creation of two development-focused teams: the Volunteer Research and Volunteer Marketing Teams. The Volunteer Research Team worked hard over the year to develop an in-depth guidebook for people with temporary status in Canada; people who are often unable to access mainstream resources. Thanks to the



Research Team, this guidebook has already helped dozens of temporary workers understand where they can get help about health care, employment rights, housing, and more.

Also, the Volunteer Marketing Team donated skills in marketing, communications, business planning, and finance in order to help VIRCS improve overall cross-program co-ordination, create better awareness for VIRCS's free services through events and materials, and started the VIRCS Spotlight - a monthly newsletter that helps clients learn about upcoming events and services.

In the Volunteer Program itself, we had overwhelming support from practicum students from the University of Victoria and abroad. These students helped deliver key client services, as well as developed our new modular volunteer training system, the Volunteer Settlement Clinic pilot project and our on-line VIRCS Volunteer Bulletin:

www.vircsvolunteers.blogspot.com. If you volunteer with us, be sure to check this site monthly for program news, events, and opportunities for training.

To all of our volunteers, thank you so much for your help! You are a tremendous force that helps VIRCS work!



Multicultural Environmental Education Program

Gagan Leekha, Coordinator, Multicultural Environmental Education Program



Our Multicultural Environmental Education Program (MEEP) has had a great year of growth and action! Some of the highlights from 2009 include:

Project Launch – In January, we hosted our MEEP launch where we had the opportunity to give away eco-friendly prizes that both met newcomers' basic settlement needs and supported their commitment to environmental action. Seven families were the lucky recipients of prizes such as a new bicycle (with helmet, lights and lock), free organic food delivery for six months, and healthy backyard, healthy home and healthy baby packages. Each prize came with a free educational workshop from the program's community partners, including The Good Planet Company, The Mothering Touch and the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre.

Workshops and Outings – We had a number of educational workshops where we learned how to make affordable non-toxic cleaning products for our homes, grow our own food, fix our bicycles and look at the benefits of reducing waste, conserving energy and buying local food.



We went on a number of nature outings where we explored the forests, marine and swamp life on Galiano Island, visited the creatures that live in and along Elk and Beaver Lakes, and sat with some of the biggest trees in Francis King Regional Park. These outings were very popular and clients had the opportunity to enjoy the new natural areas, get fresh air, and meet new people.

Green is for Everyone Eco-Tips –To promote eco-friendly practices we created our Green is for Everyone campaign where we promoted eco-tips offering ideas on how people can be more environmentally friendly while saving money and

making healthier choices for their families. These tips were translated into Spanish, Punjabi, Chinese and French and printed as pamphlets. The tips were also made into catchy radio ads that were recorded and aired on Camosun College's Village 900 and UVic's CFUV radio stations. They also aired on Chinese and Punjabi radio stations in the Lower Mainland.

Green is for Everyone Diversity Training – Our community partners want to engage more newcomers in their work so we created a diversity training program also called Green is for Everyone specifically for environmental groups. This project was done in partnership with the Community Council and we worked closely with five local environmental agencies on how they could make their work more welcoming and inclusive.

VIRCS Green Team – The office Green Team continued to have many successes with our office sustainability goals with activities such as reducing paper consumption, creating better recycling systems, conserving energy and water and drastically reducing the amount of disposable cups, plates or cutlery in the office. Our Open House was a huge success as a Zero Waste event for the 2nd year in a row.

It has been an incredible year of learning and growth and we look forward to 2010 when we will focus on spending more time outside, connecting newcomers with their new natural environments and a special eco-film training project in partnership with MediaNet.



The Multicultural Environmental Education Program is generously funded by Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program, Vancouver Foundation, Victoria

Foundation, Catherine Donnelly Foundation, City of Victoria and the Ministry of Attorney General, Settlement and Multiculturalism Division.

I Plan It Program

Meghan Mergaert, Director, I Plan It Program for Young Adults



In April 2009, VIRCS welcomed an exciting new demonstration project called I Plan It. This program helps young immigrants and refugees between the ages of 15-25 years old adjust to life in Canada. Over the last few years, immigrant agencies in

BC successfully advocated the need for more support for newcomer youth. This new project funding is the provincial government's response.

The overall goal is to help young immigrants find long term work, or enrol in an education or a training program that will help them succeed in their new life in Canada.



Young people can face many challenges when they first arrive in Canada, including not being able to meet BC graduation requirements, social isolation, and the financial need to work before they are ready. Often they have ambitious goals when they arrive, then they face many obstacles and

frustrations. **I Plan It helps young newcomers find solutions to these challenges so they can effectively plan their future.**

Young newcomers receive one on one support from staff with employment and settlement issues. Along with one on one support we also offer group activities such as:

Social Nights: young people aged 19-25 meet once a week to have fun and meet other youth.

Life Skills Course is a 10-week course. Participants can get paid up to \$300 to learn skills such as career planning, managing stress, financial planning, nutrition, how to be assertive and many more. English activities include a Weekly Conversation Club and Weekly English Workshops.

We have helped young newcomers enrol in education and training programs, get better connected to the community and feel able to reach their goals. Here is what a couple of people have

said:

“Before, my son had no hope in his future, whereas after the program, he believes again that he is not alone and lost somewhere in the time and in the space.”

“You can learn about life, and knowing my challenges and skills.”

Through this first year demonstration project we have learned better ways to help young people as they transition into Canadian culture and we look forward to the success in the second year of I Plan It.

Thank you to all the staff, practicum students and volunteers that have put so much effort in to this new program. This program was made possible through funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



Cultural Bridging Host Program

Aviva Shtull, Coordinator, Cultural Bridging Host Program



The Cultural Bridging Host Program for young adults, parents and families had a great and successful year filled with many new connections between volunteer hosts and clients. The program helps newcomer adults connect

with local community members on an informal basis for friendship, cross cultural learning, support and networking. In this last year, approximately 80 newcomer clients were matched with 80 volunteer hosts, making 160 matches! Clients and hosts have come together to learn from each other and develop some great, long lasting friendships.

The program is divided in two different groups: The Family Friendship Host Group for parents and families of all different ages, and the Be-Friends Host Group for young adults between 19 and 30 years of age.

In 2009, each client and respective host participated in the program for three months at a time and met once a week during the three months to develop their friendship and to learn from each other. Many of our clients have remained friends with their hosts even though they are no longer in the program. Below is a quote from one of our volunteer hosts:

“Things have been going really great with my buddy! He is the nicest guy. We’ve often been meeting more than once a week, often at each other’s apartments, but sometimes we go hiking, or go out to eat, or meet up with my friends. I am learning a lot from him, and I think I’ve been able to help him out in some good ways, too. We’ll definitely keep hanging out after the program is over.” –Kirk, volunteer host, Canadian resident.

This year, the variety of events and workshops was very diverse and received great feedback! They included learning cooking skills, nutrition, fitness and health, Capoeira (a Brazilian martial arts and dance), creative writing workshops, Salsa dancing lessons, ice skating, hikes, canoeing, tours of community facilities, cross cultural communication workshops, culture shock seminars and much more.

Another exciting opportunity for some of the Host program clients was their participation in a fantastic program called Food Skills for Families. This

program was sponsored by the Canadian Diabetes Association and facilitated by Victoria’s Community Kitchens. It gave many of our clients an opportunity to learn cooking skills, nutritional information and come together for 7 weekends in a row in a fun and social setting and cook delicious food together while practicing their English, making friends and having a great feast together each time.

The Cultural Bridging Host programs are run through the Community Bridging Services and are funded by the Ministry of Settlement and Multiculturalism Division of the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism. Thank you to our caring and dedicated volunteer hosts and to the brave and lovely nature of our newcomer participants who have made this program what it is today.



STATEMENT OF FINANCE POSITION

STATEMENT OF OPERATION

Special Thanks

Canadian Forces CFB Esquimalt
Environment Canada's Eco Action
Service Canada/HRSDC

Gaming Policy & Enforcement Branch
Ministry of the Attorney General
Settlement & Multiculturalism Branch
Ministry of Advance Education
Labour Market Dev. Branch
Ministry of Housing & Social Development

Catherine Donnelly Foundation
Catholic Foundation of Vancouver Island
Coast Capital Foundation
London Drugs Foundation
Provincial Employees Comm. Services Fund
The United Way of Greater Victoria
Vancouver Foundation
Victoria Foundation

The City of Victoria,
ASPECT

Bingo Esquimalt
Positive Living Centre
Rotary Club of Victoria
St. Andrew's Refugee Association
The Law Centre
TLC Funds
Work Source Wage Subsidy
Bill Hartley Insurance
Cox Taylor Law Firm
Future Shop
Kelly Services
Safeway
Swans Suite Hotel
Vancouver City Savings Credit Union
Windsor Law Firm
Zoraik Law Offices Barristers & Solicitors
100,3 The "Q" & The Zone
George Jay. Elementary School
School District #61
Central Baptist Church
Church of St. John the Divine
First Metropolitan United Church

Thanks

CRD (Capital Regional District)
Down Town Public Library
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
Saanich Community Services
B.C. Society
Boys & Girls Club
Francophone Society
Legal Services Society
Saanich Neighborhood House
St. John's Ambulance
Volunteer Victoria
Akai Airporter
Bee Clean
Benson Industries
Best Western
BC Ferries Corp
Boston Pizza
Classisc Caregivers
Delta Ocean Point Hotel
DFH the Real Leader
Executive House Hotel
HBC (Hudson's Bay company)
Home Instead Senior Care
India Canada Cultural Assoc.
The Khala Diwan Society Sikh Temple
Komal S. Dodd
Laurel Point Inn
Nando's Chicken
Nurse Next Door
Peter Golden Barrister & Solicitor
R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd
Salsa Palace

Sears
Seven/Eleven (7/11)
Shoppers Drug Mart
Six Mile Furniture
Subway
Sunrise Senior Living
Superior Steam Cleaning
The Butchard Gardens
The Fairmont Empress
The Home Depot
Thrifty Foods
Tim Hortons
VIATEC
The Victoria Hindu Temple
Victoria Lamp Shade Shop
Victorian Epicure
Walmart
Whites Manufacturing
Zellers Hillside Centre

A-Channel Victoria/Vancouver
CBC Victoria
CFUV Q FM 101.9 (Postales Musicales)
Kids in Victoria
Shaw TV
Times Colonist
Victoria News

Camosun College
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