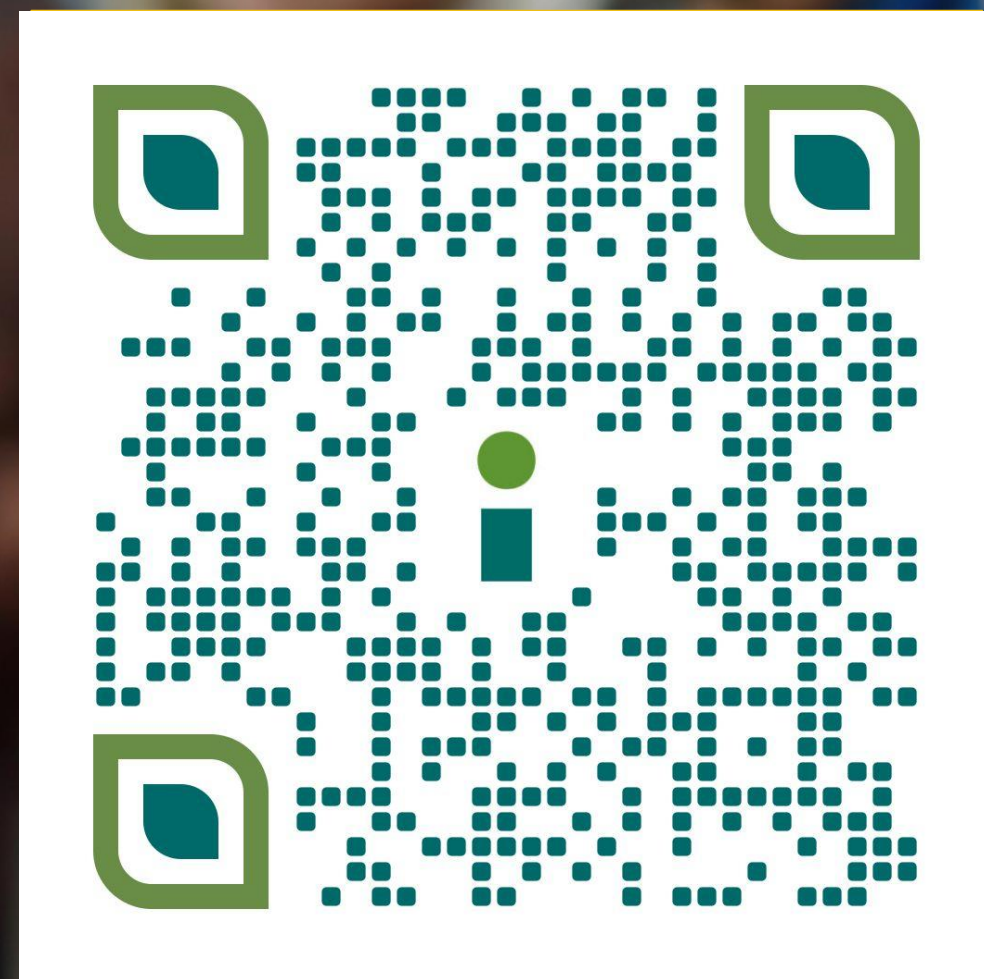




Reimagining Employer Engagement: Insights from Employer Support Initiative

November 2025

Clifford MacDonald (He/Him)
Coordinator, Employer Engagement

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

Vision

A community where all can belong
and grow

Mission

Helping immigrants build a future in
Nova Scotia





17,540

Immigrants received
ISANS services



186

Countries of origin
among ISANS clients



376

Rural Employers



120

Community Partners

ISANS is Atlantic Canada's leading immigrant settlement agency, empowering immigrants and refugees to build their futures in Nova Scotia.

With over 45 years of experience, ISANS supports newcomers through services in **language learning**, **settlement**, **employment**, **business development**, and **community integration** — delivered both in person and online.

Employer Experience



Employer Support

ISANS provides the tools for you to cultivate a welcoming and supportive environment for your immigrant employees, through either group one-on-one settings.



Employer Engagement for rural Nova Scotia



Helping rural employers with recruitment and retention. How?



By online and in person delivery, we liaison between employers and ISANS Employer Support programs and services



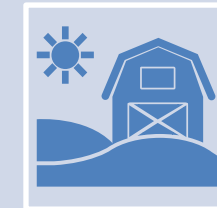
Opportunity to develop strategies to best assist rural businesses



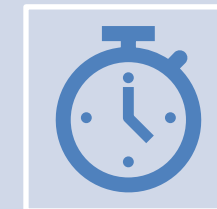
Building partnerships with community partners



ISANS recruitment and retention strategies



Rural employers may have little to no human resources available.



Being able to deliver services in a timely manner no matter they're location



Having knowledge of external programming. This can eliminate duplication and raise awareness of supports available

Understanding the numbers and why



Building partnerships and collaborating can lead to a more inclusive way of thinking

- **55** Networking Events attend this past year
- Worked with **376** rural employers
Worked in Partnership with **120** community organizations

Rural Engagement Activities

- Information sessions
- Attend job/resource fairs
- Collaborative events
- AGMs
- Chamber of Commerce memberships throughout Nova Scotia
- 3rd Annual Employer Forum in May 2026



Networking

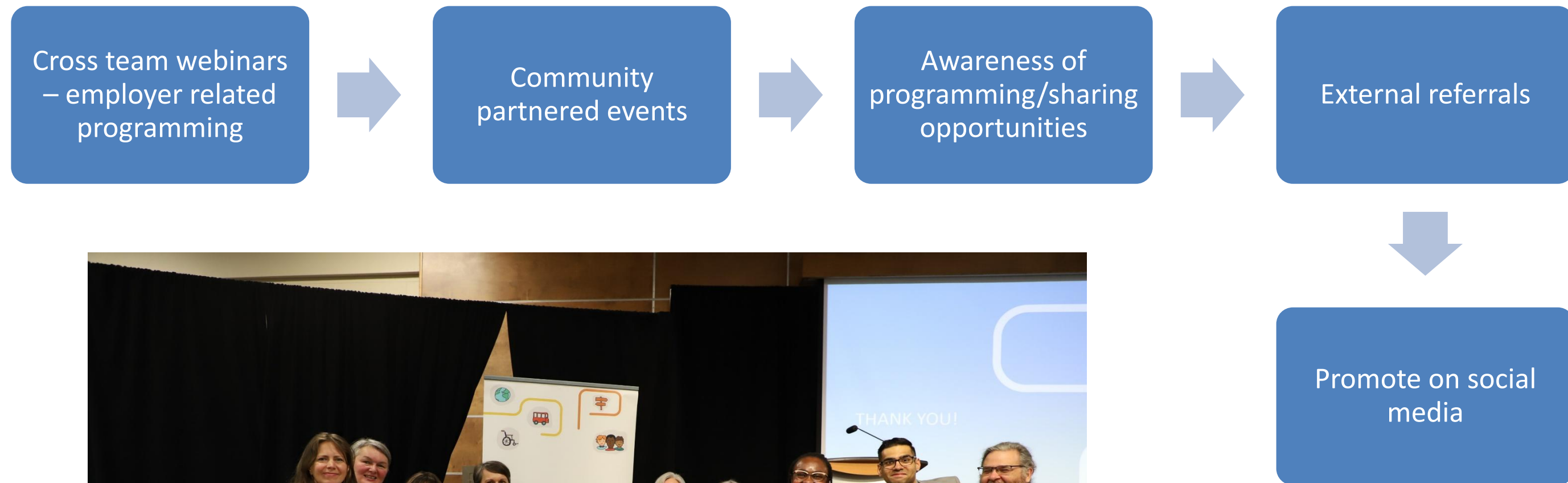


Attract, Retain & Support

[Welcome to Attract, Retain & Support](#)



Collaboration

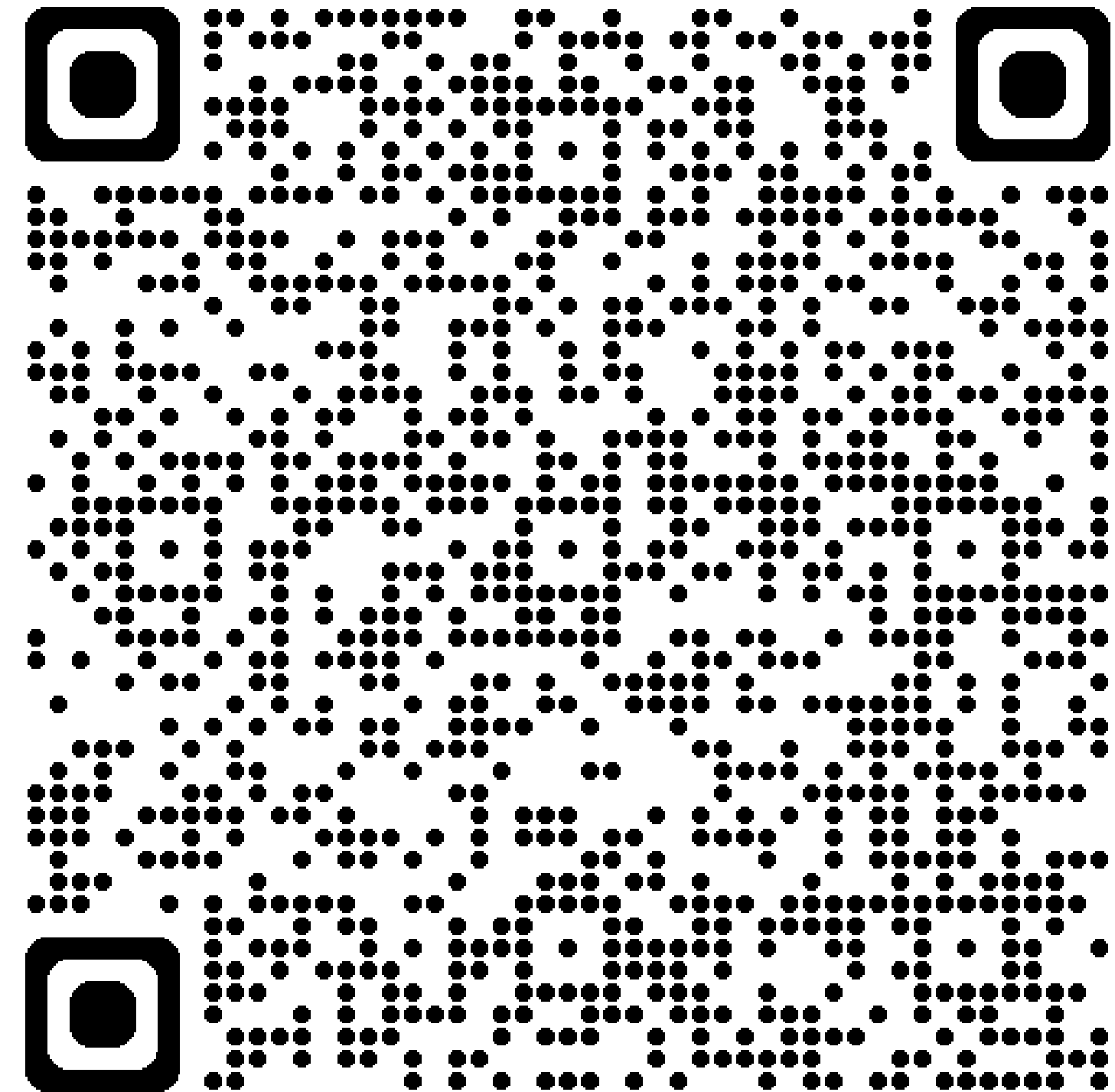


Employer Check-In

We would like your input in order to help us plan for our upcoming Spring Employer Forum.

Mark **Tuesday, May 12, 2026**, in your calendar. We hope you can join us!

Please take two minutes to answer two questions about hiring and retention.





Small Communities, Big Impact: Adapting Intercultural Support to Rural Realities

November 2025

Paul Pickering, Coordinator (He/Him)
Intercultural Workplace Program

What is the Intercultural Workplace Program?

Funded by: Nova Scotia Department of Immigration and Population Growth (NSIPG)

For: Any employer with a presence in Nova Scotia, in any part of Nova Scotia

Objective: Provide intercultural services to support employers who are expanding immigrant presence in their workplaces.

Key Challenges: Miscommunication, stereotypes about immigrants, newcomer's unfamiliarity with Canadian work culture, lack of awareness of intercultural benefits, varying work and interpersonal styles, differences in communication.

Our Commitments: Champion immigrant contributions; provide expert guidance; support productive, resilient and psychologically safe workplaces; contribute to higher retention and stronger employers!



Intercultural Workplace Program

**Intercultural Awareness
& Skills Development**

**Materials developed with a
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion &
Accessibility Foundation**

**Employer & workplace
focused; balancing
organizational & individual
priorities**

**In-person & virtual workshops,
consultation, collaborative
customization**

Intercultural Workplace Program (IWP)

Since 2013, IWP has supported employers throughout Nova Scotia, delivering in-person, online and blended learning, along with additional services. Focusing on :

- **Workplace Culture**
- **Intercultural Competencies**
- **Cultural Dimensions**
- **Business Development**
- **Interpersonal Communication**

In 2024, here are our workshops delivered:



76

Workshops Delivered



1386

Attending workshops

The Rural Difference

1. Working with “umbrella organizations” – membership driven and funded
 - a. Providing province-wide virtual workshops
 - b. Attending regionally themed events
 - c. Raising awareness of this topic and program
 - d. Raising awareness of the differences between small and large employers in rural areas



The Rural Difference

2. Relationships

- a. Getting in front of people –
Dynamic is better than virtual
- b. Delivering in small towns
- c. Repeated presence
- d. Not “the city”



The Rural Difference

3. Distinct Issues

- a. Size and Resilience
- b. Limitations, such as transportation
- c. Resources
- d. Addressing isolation and support
- e. Adapting to uniqueness



The Impact

As a direct result of our workshops and broader support we have been told of:

1. Overhauls of interviewing and recruitment processes
2. Each phase of hiring and retention becoming more inclusive
3. Creation of mentoring and buddy programs
4. Creation of internal and external training and upskilling programs



The Impact

As a direct result of our workshops and broader support we have been told of:

5. Improved support by managers for staff situations and challenges
6. Shifts in workplace culture to be more positive and accepting of diverse cultural and religious practices
7. Increased flexibility with policies and procedures
8. Celebrations of additional religious and cultural days



The Impact

As a direct result of our workshops and broader support we have been told of:

9. Encouragement of all staff to increase connections and develop trust among shifts, teams and departments
10. Departments working more in alignment
11. Collaboration with others in the sector and streamlining professional pathways
12. Engagement with additional ISANS services both for employers and clients



How do we know what to do?

- Greetings
- What time to arrive at work
- How to correct a behavior
- How to encourage a behavior
- Gender expectations
- How to encourage a positive work culture
- Learning the “unwritten rules”



How do we get to an intercultural workplace? Step by step:

Fully engaging and developing our:

- ✓ **Recruitment**
- ✓ **Interviewing**
- ✓ **Onboarding**
- ✓ **Retention**



How do we get to an intercultural workplace? Step by step: (cont.)

Create and run innovative and flexible programs

- ✓ **Mentorship / Buddy Programs**
- ✓ **“Cultural Benefits” Programs**
- ✓ **Public Displays of Inclusion – keep them current!**



Winter 2026

- Everyone is encouraged to try out our 3 Core Workshops
- Attend any or all of the 4 focused workshops, according to your areas of interest.
- Ask about our customized services and “next steps”

IWP VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS



Core:

Gateway to an Intercultural Workplace

Intercultural Skills for a Resilient Workforce

Intercultural Aspects for a Resilient Workforce

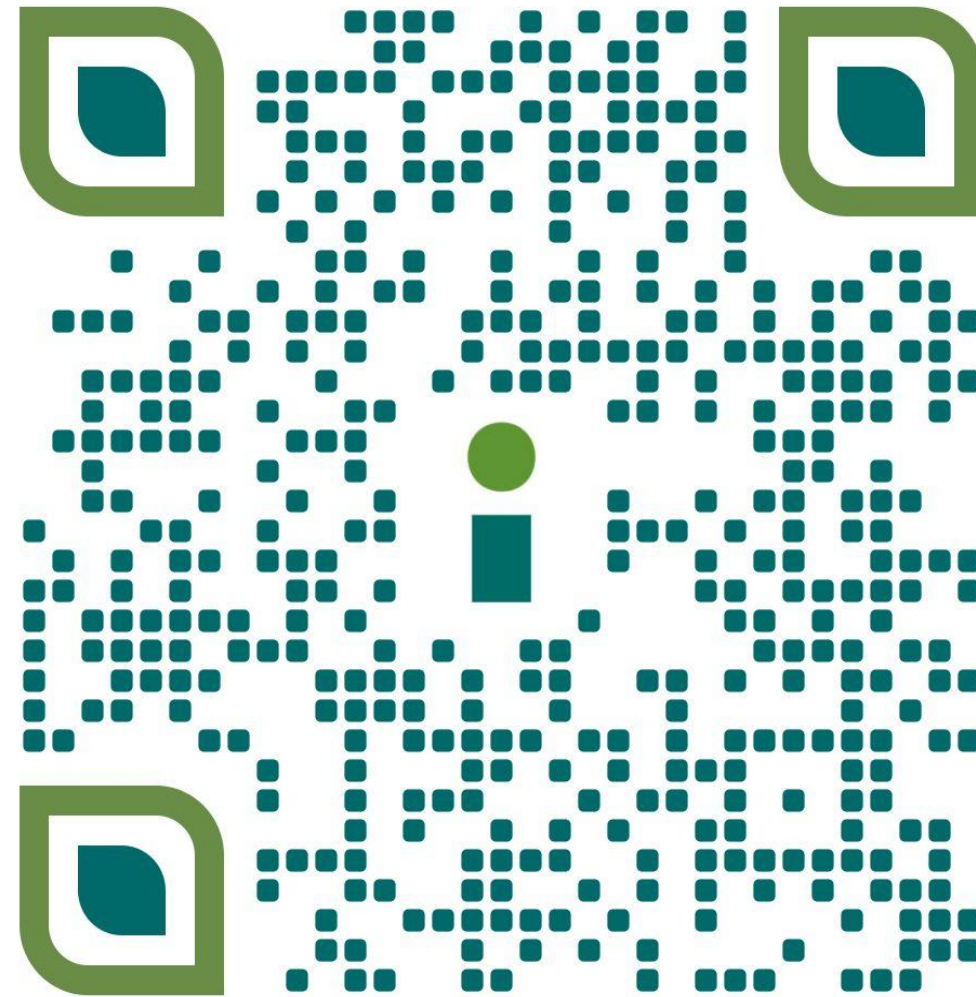
Focused:

Improving Recruitment for a Resilient Workforce

Interviewing with Intercultural Aspects and Skills

Onboarding with Intercultural Aspects and Skills

Retention with Intercultural Aspects and Skills



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THANK YOU!

isans | Immigrant Services
Association of Nova Scotia

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NOVA SCOTIA