



Centre for
Newcomers

Annual Report

2008-09

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Rooted in Mennonite Experience

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Report from the Chairperson

The AGM provides an opportunity to update the membership on Board activities. As always, there are changes to the Board membership. In 2008, our Board was strengthened with the addition of Dilan Perera, a well-known HR professional, but lost two committed and experienced Directors: Alanna Wall was unable to continue because of family commitments, and Ken Doerksen, because his work required frequent travel. Ken's replacement from the Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church is Susanne Barr, and the Board has appointed Lisa Tan as Interim Director, to be nominated at the 2009 AGM. The Board appreciates the commitment, skills, and energy that these new Directors bring; please see Board biographies document, attached. We are pleased with the Board's balance of new and experienced Directors.

Last year, we noted that a significant amount of Board and management energy had been devoted to responding to opportunities for the Centre to increase its services by acquiring more space. The fruits of that effort were seen in the past year: in July we moved into a new bay of more than 7,000 square feet at the Pacific Place mall. This meant that we had, for a while, adequate space, and could again devote our attention to providing services.

In November, the Board held a comprehensive planning session, to review the agency's mission and priorities, and to set our agenda for the year. One of the decisions at that meeting was to revise the agency's statement of vision to better reflect our core purpose. The vision statement, which gives a picture of the world we want and are working towards, is revised with the addition of the phrase in bold: *our vision is **a community in which people of diverse backgrounds** find and create opportunities to fulfill their dreams and participate fully as citizens.* The Board discussed but did not revise the agency's statement of mission, which is how we contribute to the realization of our vision. Our mission is: *to work in partnership with newcomer communities to provide opportunities for individuals to adjust, succeed and contribute as citizens in Canada, and in partnership with Calgary communities to affirm and value diversity.*

The Board provides governance to the Society, establishing policies and ensuring that management achieves the goals we jointly set. This includes both long-term visioning and regular monitoring. One long-range project is the question of whether to own our own building in the future, or to continue to operate from rented space. The Board has a busy agenda, trying to look forward while keeping a close eye on the services being provided today.

John L. Townley, Chairperson

Board of Directors: 2008-09

Vice-Chairperson: Jude Udedibia Treasurer: Allan Hiebert
Secretary: Harvey Wiehler

Directors

Susanne Barr	Dolly Castillo	Ken Friesen
Hieu Van Ngo	Dilan Perera	Lisa Tan
Ken Doerksen (to December 08)	Alanna Wall (to December 08)	

Report from the Executive Director

Every year, in March or April, the Centre for Newcomers closes the office for at least half a day, to hold a special all-staff meeting acknowledging the end of the business year, and to say thank you to each other for the many successes we have enjoyed together. One of our typical activities at this meeting is to look back together over the past twelve months, and to remember and celebrate the milestones of the year.

The results of that exercise this year were unusual: we couldn't remember many milestones in April, or May, or June – then we remembered that in July we completed renovations, introduced a 60% increase in the LINC program, posted a number of new positions, and moved into an additional 7,000 square feet at Pacific Place. No wonder the preceding three months were a blur! Then, beyond making many new staff appointments, there were no major highlights until October – when we hosted 300 guests to acknowledge our Anniversary at the Celebrating Connections event. Though very different from each other, both of these events have made extraordinary demands on the entire staff of the Centre: I would like to thank all my staff colleagues for their hard work, enthusiasm, and patience, and especially for carrying on with the provision of excellent services in the midst of these major, unusual, time-consuming and ultimately satisfying activities.

As I think back over the themes that have engaged us, I note that there have been three persistent issues in my reports to the AGM in recent years: our growth in services, budget, staff and space; our activities to continue to mature and develop as an organization, and the need to address the situation that Canada's policies are creating for those who come to this country under the Temporary Foreign Worker immigration category.

First, then, the service issue. The good news is that in the past year the provincial government has introduced, on a pilot basis, funding for services to TFWs: the Centre is one of a number of agencies in the province that now

receive funding to provide settlement services to these workers. This is certainly timely, as the recent economic downturn has hit these workers especially hard. While there is still much to be done to improve the TFW program, both at the policy level and in services to individuals, we are grateful to Alberta Employment and Immigration for a realistic and compassionate approach to this dilemma.

With this and other services, the Centre has continued to grow. Our income has grown by over \$1.8 M, or about 38% over 2007-08 -- an even greater increase than in each of the past two years. This has, again, been largely because of the increased investment by our federal and provincial government funders. We would like to thank our government partners, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada and Alberta Employment and Immigration, for their support and commitment. This growth is also possible only because of our Board of Directors, and their courage in approving the acquisition of new space for increased services. Making the commitment to a new lease is a major decision, and generally needs to be taken many months before funding requests are approved, and for a longer term than any of our funding agreements.

And while we have continued to grow, we have also experienced losses. Due to changes in the funding regimes, we found it necessary to discontinue the Family Development Program in December 2008. I would like to thank the many individuals who have served in this program over the years, and especially those colleagues who could not continue with us after December. With some upcoming initiatives in, we hope to be able to continue some of the good work done by this program across the City, in a revised format.

As an agency we do not assume that increasing in size means that we inevitably develop and mature as an organization. Instead, we continue to be intentional about our development. New initiatives in the past year have included a facilitated process to revise the agency's Code of Ethics for all services, and to develop a Code of Service for use by both staff and clients. Another initiative has been the creation of a full-time role in Human Resources, to ensure that the agency has and follows sound policies and best practices with regard to employment, and that employees across the agency have a similarly positive employment experience.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues, the staff of the agency. They have served our clients faithfully and professionally in the past year, and have adapted graciously to the agency's growth, with all the inconveniences, as well as the joys, of continual change. Thank you for another great year.

Dale Taylor, Executive Director

Programs and Personnel

The list of personnel for each program includes those who have worked at the Centre for Newcomers between April 2008 and March 2009.

Community Development: Marichu Antonio, Manager

Colour Our World: Children's Settlement

Overview: *Colour Our World* is a settlement service for immigrant and refugee children aged two to twelve, helping them adjust to life and school in Canada through educational and fun activities.

The program activities address children's settlement issues such as social and emotional isolation, coping with the changing weather, preparing for school in Canada. Children also learn about sports, food and customs in Canada. Parents and other family members are encouraged to participate to support the growth of the children participants, especially in the four major skill areas of child development: language, cognitive, social and motor skills.

Personnel: Zainab Qaiser Khan, Co-ordinator
Arab Alotaibi, Settlement Assistant (to July 2008)
Amy Wilson, Children's Settlement Practitioner (to January 2009)
Meenakshi Singhal, Children's Settlement Practitioner
Maria Aurora Gan, Children's Settlement Practitioner
Merrillii Pinaroc, Settlement Assistant

This service receives financial support from Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada.

EthniCity Catering

Overview: This social enterprise provides transitional employment experience to immigrant women, and multi-ethnic food to Calgary customers.

Demand continues to grow, with over 20,600 servings prepared and \$200,000 in sales revenue, an increase of 11% over the previous year. Forty-four participants from 17 countries received over 7,600 hours of paid employment experience and 960 hours of classroom training. This year, the training curriculum was revised to include Workplace Essential Skills training, increasing the ability of clients to secure mainstream employment and training opportunities after exiting EthniCity.

In August 2008, EthniCity for the first time participated as a food vendor in Calgary's Globalfest, increasing awareness of the program and providing valuable customer service experience to EthniCity trainees. A customer satisfaction survey research concluded that customers are highly impressed with both the quality of EthniCity's food and its social mission.

Personnel: Sherry Choma, Training Co-ordinator
Linh Bui, Business Co-ordinator
Ebtisam Temraz, Kitchen Manager; Angelica Augilar, Customer Relations;
Afaf Mohammed, Asmiei Rabei, Cooks; Osama Osaf, Delivery.

This service receives financial support from the United Way of Calgary and Area, Alberta Employment and Immigration and Calgary Learns.

Family Development (to December 2008)

Overview: In first-language peer support groups, families get together to cook healthy, delicious meals; share experiences; improve communication and leadership skills; problem-solve together around family and settlement issues.

Over the last year, more neighbourhood-based learning opportunities were conducted where participants live, especially in subsidized housing units in Ranchlands, Dalhousie, Edgemont, Shaganappi and in areas where there are concentrations of low-income immigrants. New groups were formed among the Somali and Nepali communities.

Personnel: Susan Mercer-Thornhill, Co-ordinator
Shaheda (Dolly) Begum
Saadia Jabeen
Irene (Quingxue) Yi
Fatma Ashmad
Rina Poudyal
Nelly Arboleda
Mary Kuek
Samsam Omar
Carmen Rodriguez
Mercedes Peralta

This service received financial support from the United Way of Calgary and Area, Calgary Learns, and Alberta Food Bank Network Association.

Temporary Foreign Workers

Overview: The Temporary Foreign Workers Settlement Services is a two-year pilot project to assist Temporary Foreign Workers in adapting to living and working in Alberta and integrating into Canadian society.

The project started in July and served 1,249 clients in its first year, surpassing its annual target of 240 in just eight months. The needs of the

foreign workers are complex. Issues include: housing; employment; illegal placement fees; isolation; depression. There is also the personal struggle and challenge of living away from their families and working in a new country.

The economic slowdown had an adverse effect on the temporary foreign workers. Thousands of foreign workers were laid off across Alberta, resulting in increased number of TFWs coming for assistance. Foreign workers, especially those who lost their jobs, were dealing with the painful challenge of providing continued income to their families in their home countries, and had to set their personal problems aside. The Centre's services to this group are supplemented by a strong volunteer corps that provides additional support.

Personnel: Renato Abanto, Co-ordinator
Koli Agbing, Settlement Practitioner
Camilo Torres, Settlement Practitioner

The TFW Program is funded by Alberta Employment and Immigration.

Welcoming Communities

Overview: Welcoming Communities encourages new immigrants to participate in community activities, and helps established communities and institutions to be more inclusive and welcoming. The program helps communities and institutions to take advantage of the benefits of diversity and improve the participation of newcomers. For newcomers, this helps to improve their economic and social situation.

The program works with "mainstream" institutions such as Calgary's Ten Year Plan to end Homelessness and the East Calgary Health Action Committee, as well as with ethno-cultural organizations and communities, to increase immigrant participation in community initiatives.

Personnel: Victorino S. Lantion, Co-ordinator

This service receives financial support from Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada.

Immigrant Settlement

Overview: Newcomers find assistance in meeting their settlement needs: the service provides information and orientation; links to resources, services and people in the community; and settlement action plans to help newcomers to participate fully as active citizens in Canada.

Group-based services -- including income tax workshops, newcomer orientation, workshops on financial issues, , mentorship for professionals -- continue to grow.

Personnel: Jason Klinck, Co-ordinator

Settlement Practitioners:

Maria Mora	Mario Ayudo	Dolly Begum
Xiaoye Zhang	Teresita Lim	Bukurie Mino
Issa Mosa	Dario Ontolan	Helen Negre
Trina Rahimi	Jie Shao	Neelam Madan

Deniz Cabarcas (to October 2008)

This service receives financial support from Alberta Employment and Immigration and Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada.

Volunteer Development

Overview: Newcomers find ways to reduce their isolation and settle in Canada through volunteer and leadership development opportunities. Settled Canadians volunteer to help newcomers settle, and to learn more about the contributions of new Canadians.

Through the Volunteer program, newcomers participated in leadership training sessions. This year, in partnership with *Toastmasters International*, volunteers from ethno-cultural associations attended *Speechcraft*, a short course to improve public speaking skills.

Due to the high demand in the walk-in Volunteer-led ESL classes, it was reorganized in January 2009 to give priority to individuals who are not eligible for government funded programs, i.e. for temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers and refugee claimants. In this new format, 4 sessions, each lasting 3 months, will be delivered - with 2 groups of 15 regular participants being registered per session.

Personnel: Maribel Javier, Co-ordinator

Hayat Amer, Community Outreach Worker

Alexander Nader, International Volunteer

Anousone Phimmachanh, International Volunteer (to July 2008)

This service receives financial support from Family and Community Support Services, City of Calgary.

Employment Services: Carol Simpson, Manager

Business Communication for Professionals

Overview: The Business Communication for Professionals program provides newcomers with training in Business Communication skills, enhanced language instruction, orientation to Canadian and workplace culture, job readiness, job search skills and a work experience placement.

After three sessions for accounting and management professionals in previous years, immigrant professionals in Engineering, IT, Chemistry, Geology, and Geophysics graduated from the program, and entered the Work Experience component.

Personnel: E. V. J. Pulak, Co-ordinator
Xiaoye Zhang (to Oct. 2008) Maria Dumitrescu (to Nov. 2008)
Sharon Horne, Career Practitioner

This service receives financial support from Alberta Employment and Immigration and Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada.

Career Development & Job Search

Overview: Immigrants to Canada, especially skilled workers and professionals, develop and address their employment goals. They use the self-directed Career & Business Information Hub for job search, and attend workshops to learn local job search skills, plan their educational and career path, and understand the Alberta labour market and employment standards. Many clients of this service meet one-on-one with Career Practitioners for more extensive career and employment coaching and counselling. Services are offered in several languages and in English.

The Service Canada Community Office assists with EI applications and requests to learn how to access other government services.

The program has grown in the past year, with increases in staffing and a wider range of services to help clients reach their employment goals sooner, through assistance with some aspects of qualification recognition and increased access to training and employment opportunities.

In response to the economic recession and the growing number of laid-off professionals and other workers, the program now offers a regular weekly workshop, Accessing Employers, and organizes support groups as needed.

Personnel: Mayra Castro and Lorraine Moulding, Co-ordinators
Paul Atanya Sukhmani Brar Laura Conrado
Marwan Diab Slavica Denda Tim Haley
Shirley Huang Ammarah Imran Ying Ma
Linh Nguyen Marivic Prospero Gurpreet Sidhu
Bernice Shukairat Lidia Bomba-Sorbo Vesna Stikic
Jean Wang Victorino Lantion (to Aug. 2008)
Shirley Lush (to Aug. 2008)

This service receives financial support from Alberta Employment and Immigration and Service Canada.

Skills Investment

Overview: Newcomers develop life management and leadership skills along with academic upgrading. Occupational training is provided by Bow Valley College, for Health Care Aides, and SAIT, for Trowel Trades.

Health Care Aide graduates from this program are valued in the continuing care sector of Health Care because of the personal management and communication skills gained in the program. Many Health Care Aide graduates are upgrading their training to meet the entrance criteria for LPN, or medical or dental assistant programs.

Personnel: Anand Manickaraj, Co-ordinator
Debby Jones, Assistant Co-ordinator Michael Belostotsky, Instructor

Youth Services

Youth 1•2•1

Overview: Youth receive career counselling and job search support, in one-on-one and small group settings, assisting them to work towards their goals. Youth 1•2•1 works closely with the Calgary public high schools; for instance, staff have been attending the Forest Lawn High School Wellness Centre, offering one-to-one services to immigrant students needing career support.

Personnel: Sara Clark, Co-ordinator
Liz Rees, Co-ordinator (to May 2008)
Jesse Sturk Davinder Minhas (to February 2008)
Ellen Bandelow-Chung (to December 2008 – maternity leave)

This service receives financial support from Alberta Employment and Immigration.

Youth Possibilities Program

Overview: In a full-time program consisting of two 12-week modules, participants develop increased self-understanding, clearer goals, and confidence in their ability to meet their personal and professional goals.

This year YPP is proud to celebrate 10 years of highly successful programming to immigrant youth. Family members of past participants indicate high levels of satisfaction and past participants refer their friends to the programs. Many family members have mentioned that all immigrant youth should be given the opportunity to attend this program.

Personnel: Sara Clark, Co-ordinator
Liz Rees, Coordinator (to May 2008)
Ashley Tedham Makara DeLorey
Cynthia Goddard (to March 2009)
Karina Ramdath (to June 2008)
Lamont Nimchuk (to September 2008)
Carmel Hill (to May 2008)

This service receives financial support from Service Canada.

English as a Second Language Fariba Mohammadi, Manager (leave replacement)

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

Overview: In LINC classes, students develop the necessary language and life skills to participate actively in Canadian society and to exercise the freedom, rights and responsibilities of a citizen of Canada.

The LINC program increased from 22 classes at the beginning of the year to 31 classes – morning, afternoon, full-day and evening -- by September 2008, providing language instruction to 447 adult newcomers every session. The Childcare program also offers 18 seats for each of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Personnel: Charlie Wang, Evening LINC Co-ordinator; John Castro, Student Support Specialist; Qun Guan, Daytime Program Assistant; Rais Ahmed, Evening Program Assistant 1; Osama Sofan, Evening Program Assistant 2, Ramazan Nasser, Evening Program Assistant (to August 2008).

Childcare Personnel: Malika Rahman, Maria Siddiqui, Nahilah Abbas, Taghrid Jalil (to October 2008).

LINC Instructors:	Gord Benedict	Lesley Trussler
Jane Whitman	Kathy Chu	Lilly Lee
Mary Cummins	Lois Douglas	Shahram Ersali
Mary Friesen	Santosh Pulikkal	Nancy Hayne
Carol Johnson	Linda Wu	Aurang Zeb
Farkhanda Jabeen	Anca Roman	Tammy Stuhr
Leslie Willocks	Gayle Wurzer	Nadia Punja
Rekha Watts	Danijela Latinovic	Johnson Kunnel
Joel Leavitt	Gurpreet Dara	Donna Paskall

Cristina Constantinescu; John Castro (to Spring 2008)
 Arron Warner; Kayla Yang; Rosanna Quintieri; Amber Lipsett; Jeanette
 Thiessen; Qadeer Raza; Susan Liu (to Summer 2008)
 Okema Oyet (to December 2008)

This service receives financial support from Citizenship, Immigration and
 Multiculturalism Canada.

Executive Office: Dale Taylor, Executive Director

Overview: The Executive Office serves the Board of Directors in ensuring
 that the agency fulfills its vision, mandate, obligations and organizational
 outcomes, and in ensuring that the agency’s vision and services are
 communicated to relevant audiences.

Communications

The Centre for Newcomers continues to grow in response to needs and
 opportunities. With the growth in services comes an increased public
 profile, as the Centre builds stronger relationships across the community.
 Since the launch of the Centre’s new look in April 2006, our media and public
 exposure has increased significantly. Please continue to visit our website:
www.centrefornewcomers.ca

The Centre has been actively engaged in providing information about the
 agency, its clients, and their successes and challenges. Staff have presented
 agency information at job fairs, resource fairs, conferences, and at various
 other meetings by invitation. Over 40 presentations, in communities
 including Forest Lawn, Rundle, Edgemont, Ranchlands, and more than 12
 presentations to businesses, helped to develop the agency’s profile across
 Calgary. The agency also received public exposure through program
 activities such as the Forum Theatre presentations of the Youth Possibilities
 Program, Employer Forums, and through serving as the Community
 Organizer for the national initiative, *Safe Harbour, Respect for All*.

EthniCity Catering continues to be featured in various media for its great food, and its social mission. The Centre's Stampede Breakfast and its Anniversary Celebration received coverage in broadcast media. The Centre responded to media requests to address issues including temporary foreign workers, changes to immigration regulations, and the economic downturn, as well as to feature the agency's services. Thanks to CTV, CBC, OMNI, Calgary Herald, various ethno-cultural media and all others for their support.

Personnel: Barbara Malagueno
Estelita Novakovic

Finance & Administration: Robin Randers, Manager

Overview: This department ensures the effective use of our shared facility and resources and provides equitable support to all programs and clients.

What's New: The administration department increased in size during the year, mainly because of our expansion in services and increased space at Pacific Place Mall. We are pleased to welcome Corallyn Bargayo to our team filling the position of Client Information Administration Assistant. With over 120 employees, we are also delighted to have filled the position of Human Resources Co-ordinator this year. Marjorie MacRae has competently taken on this challenge and is working to improve HR policies and processes and help sustain and develop our most valuable resource.

Personnel: Ana Bince, Administration Co-ordinator
Marjorie MacRae, Human Resources Co-ordinator
Aaron Notland, Facilities Co-ordinator
Kaniz Alam Moushmi Khanna Corallyn Bargayo
Marjorie MacRae Lily Shen Cattaleya Hill
Melujean Antazo Soyoung Kim (through February 2009)

Finance Report: April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009

Revenue by Source		
Federal Government	\$ 3,126,699	47 %
Provincial Government	2,650,457	40 %
Community Agencies	295,931	5%
Donations	23,863	1%
Catering Sales	203,499	3 %
Other Revenue	83,413	1 %
Designated Grants	229,968	3%
	\$ 6,613,830	100 %

Expenses		
Personnel Costs	\$ 4,186,563	65%
Direct Program Costs	759,097	12 %
Facility Costs	626,475	10 %
Amortization	234,710	4 %
Other Operating Costs	413,283	6 %
Designated Grants Disbursed	229,968	3%
	\$ 6,450,096	100 %

The Centre gratefully acknowledges the following donors and funders:

For on-going services:

- Alberta Employment and Immigration
- Calgary Learns
- Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada
- City of Calgary, Community & Neighbourhood Services
- Service Canada
- United Way of Calgary and Area

For special projects in 2008-09:

- The Calgary Foundation – *Project Beat*, in partnership with United Sudanese-Canadian Enhancement Society
- City of Calgary, Community & Neighbourhood Services – *Workplace Culture, Code of Ethics* (Professional Development)
- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. – *Safe Harbour: Respect for All*
- Burns Memorial Fund – *Diaper Sewing Business Project*

Summary of Services: 2008-09

Community Development Department

Program	2008 - 09	2007 - 08	2008 - 09 Highlights
EthniCity Catering Sales Revenue # of Clients Served # of Meals Served	\$203,000 49 20,650	\$180,000	EthniCity provided more than 7600 hours of paid employment and training.
<i>Family Development</i> # of Families Served # of Individuals Served	210 630	150 450	92 peer support meetings and 5 field trips were held with immigrant and refugee parents. Through the collective kitchens (31 sessions), meals were served to 662 adults and 121 children.
<i>Colour Our World</i> # of Child Participants # of Adult Participants	377 224	103 60	.349 innovative settlement activities were facilitated for newcomer children
<i>Immigrant Settlement</i> # of Clients Served	2,165	1,970	Clients came from 78 countries. New workshops were offered for Live-in Caregivers. Over 100 Volunteers helped 1,764 people to prepare their Income Tax Returns in March and April.
<i>Welcoming Communities</i> # of Collaborations # of Ethnic community partners	5 4		Service providers, ethnic communities, neighbourhood association, businesses, and institutions become involved in settlement outcomes
<i>Volunteer Development</i> # of Volunteers # of Volunteer Hours	985 10,674	1,083 11,767	through 48 Information Sessions, new volunteers were signed up as ESL Facilitators, or provided support for special events, settlement service and office work

English as a Second Language Department

Program	2008 – 09	2007 - 08	2008 -09 Highlights
# of LINC Students	1385	870	706 new students entered the program; with the addition of 9 more classes, services increased by 59.2%
# of Child Care Participants	87	56	With the additional LINC classes, 18 childcare seats are available for morning and afternoon sessions

Employment Services Department

Program	2008 - 09	2007 - 08	2008 – 09 Highlights
<i>Career & Business Information Hub</i> # of Client Contacts	24,381	23,034	One full-time equivalent position was added to the Career Hub
<i>Career Development Workshops</i> # of Sessions	337	330	More cultural competency content added for newcomers dealing with the transition to a different workplace culture
<i>Career Planning Assessments</i> # of Clients	744	746	Now able to assist clients with IQAS, and application and referral to Short Term Exposure Courses.
<i>Job Placements</i>	59	7	A Recruitment Specialist was added to the job placement service to assist job-ready clients.
<i>Service Canada Community Office</i> # of inquiries	7,255 (includes EI-related service)	835 EI Applications	Provides access to a full range of government on-line services; services are provided in several languages.
<i>Business Communication for Professionals</i> # of participants who completed training	17	24	learners pursue job opportunities through networking, submitting applications and career fairs, despite a declining job market
<i>Skills Investment Program</i> # of participants who completed training	50	28	Trowel trades training was offered for the first time Health Care workers are still in demand.
<i>Youth Services</i> Youth Possibilities	100	51	YPP is now in its year.
Youth 1.2.1 New clients	272	174	