



**Altered  
Minds  
Inc.**

learning, changing, growing

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

**Altered Minds Inc.  
June 7, 2018**

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## Executive Summary

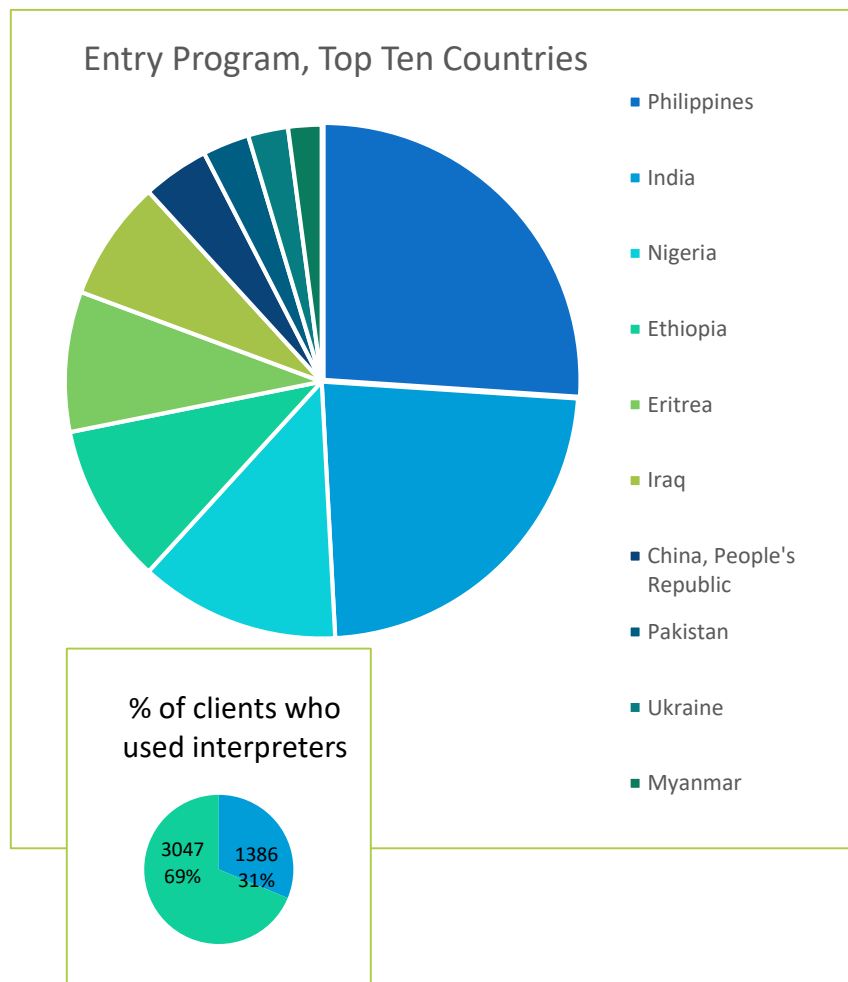
In 2017-2018, Altered Minds Inc. provided orientation, language training and pre-arrival employment services to 3,813 immigrants, with contributions from the following funders.

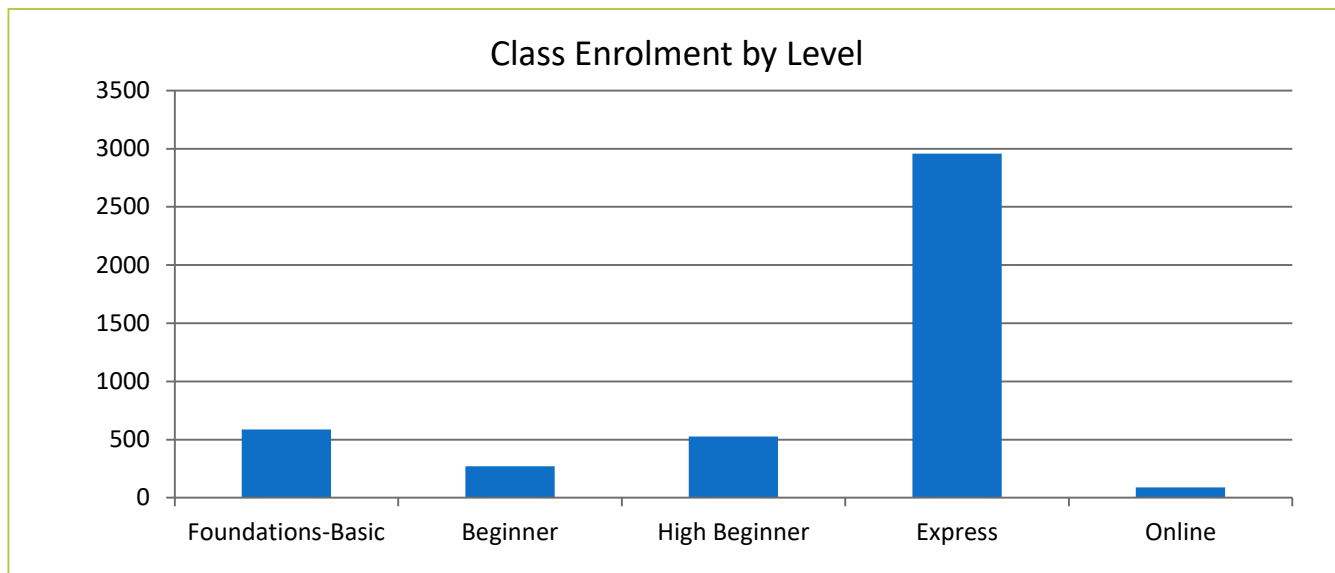
Funding Source	Program or Service	Amount
Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry Program (&amp; Entry Program Online): Orientation &amp; Language for Newcomers</li> <li>Living English summer English language classes</li> </ul>	\$1,333,894
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA): settlement planning and employment services for immigrants destined to Manitoba</li> </ul>	225,009
	Total:	<b>\$1,558,903</b>

## Entry Program

The Entry Program (EP) provided orientation and language practice for 4,433 newcomers from 104 different countries through in-person and online classes.

- 53% were female and 47% were male
- 46% attended classes in the morning, 30% in the afternoon, 22% in the evening, and 2% online
- 67% were proficient English speakers who attended the 1-week 'Express Orientation'
- 33% attended the 4-week program for learners with more limited English
- 1,386 (31%) participants benefitted from interpretation services
- 21% were referred to WELARC for CLB assessments
- 67% were Economic immigrants, 15% were Refugees, and 15% were Family Class





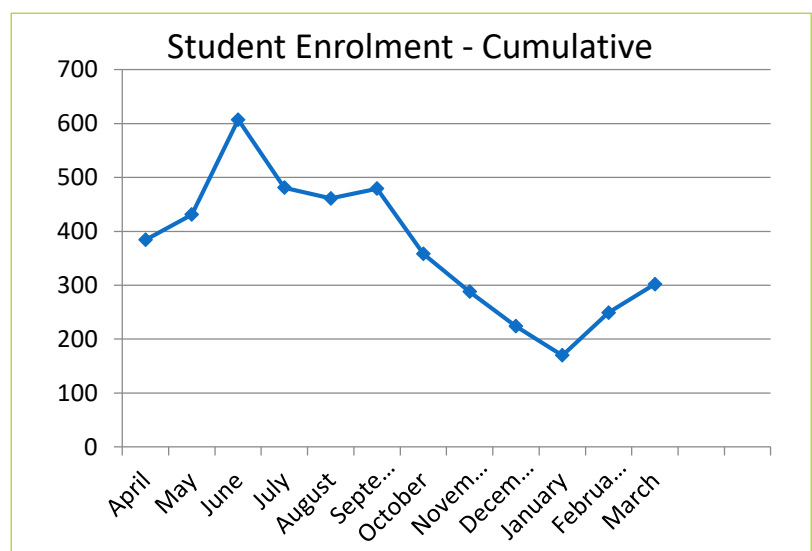
Newcomers acquire Canadian experience from volunteer and employment opportunities at the Entry Program. They gain valuable knowledge through weekly guest speakers from government agencies, community and immigrant-serving organizations, and a few private businesses.

- 591 newcomers got their first volunteer work experience while attending EP, and received letters of reference to use in their job search
- 71 of the 148 freelance interpreters we paid last year were former clients
- 64 speakers from 29 agencies delivered presentations as part of our Wednesday Guest Speaker Day series.

## Challenges

**Enrolment fluctuations:** With the number of students ranging from 170-607 in any given month, it was difficult to keep full-time staff gainfully employed. When numbers decline, we lose excellent teachers. According to provincial government stats, more prospective immigrants are coming to Manitoba on temporary visas - as international students, or temporary workers – before applying for permanent residence. They are not eligible for IRCC

funded services for their first 4 years in Canada. We have applied for funding from Manitoba Education & Training to allow us to expand our services to 'non-eligible clients'.



**Childcare:** Although the need for onsite childminding has been recognized for many years, we have not been able to secure a steady source of funding to provide it. Our current space is too far from a park to meet provincial regulations, and we have not been successful at securing federal funding. We continue to seek private funding that would allow us to provide childminding services that are flexible enough to respond to the ebbs and flows of enrolment in the Entry Program.

### Living English

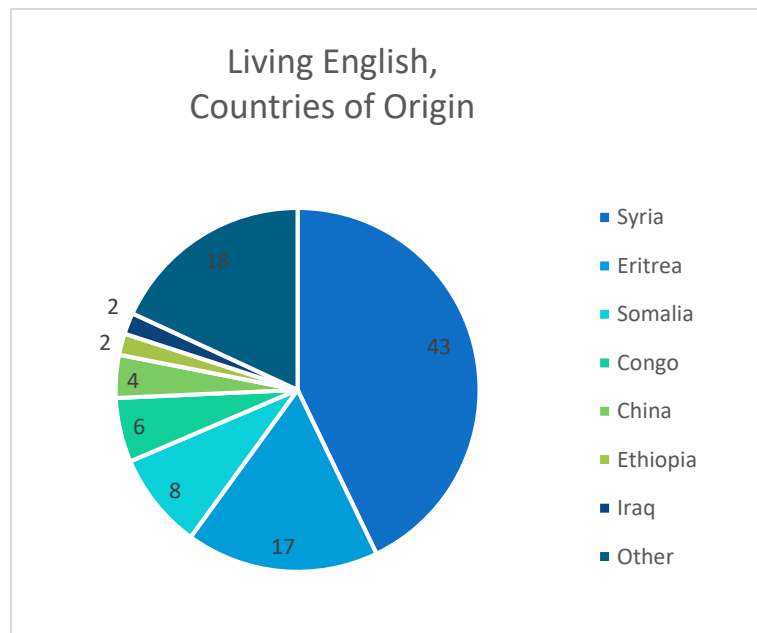
This year marked the 10th anniversary of Living English – an activity-based summer EAL program for newcomers with the most limited English language and literacy skills. Due to delays in funding approval, the program was condensed to 6 weeks with only 6 classes, rather than the usual 7 weeks with 12-14 classes. Forty (40) weekly outings were planned at 13 different locations, so that students could practice English outside the classroom and connect with the community. Of the 127 students who started classes in July, 105 completed the program in August. Sixty-one (61) were male and 44 were female, ages 18-70. The top source countries were:



- Syria 43%
- Eritrea 17%
- Somalia 8%
- Congo 6%
- China 4%
- Ethiopia 2%
- Iraq 2%
- Others 18%

Canadian Language Benchmarks levels of students who completed the program:

- Foundations = 39
- Literacy Phase 1 = 17
- Literacy Phase 2 = 16
- CLB1 = 15
- CLB2 = 18



## Challenges

**Delayed approval:** Although we received approval in May, our funding agreement was not officially signed till the end of June. We did not know until 1 day before classes were to begin, whether we'd be teaching classes or telling students to go home.

**New coordinators:** Because our experienced LE coordinators were both on maternity leave, we hired 2 relatively new staff to run the program. Despite the stress of last minute funding approval and only 3 weeks to hire teachers and register students, the coordinators did a great job!

## Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA)

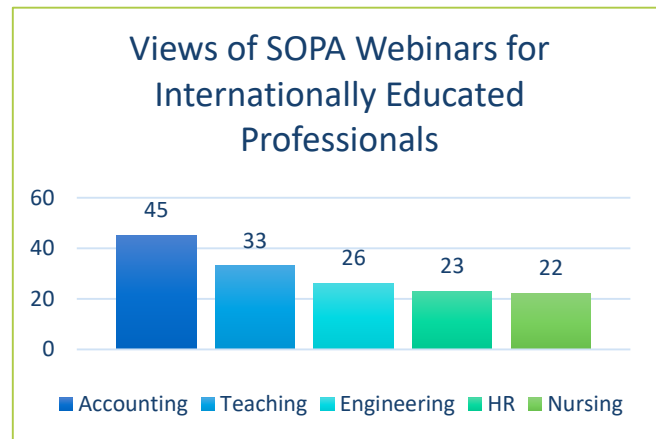
AMI has delivered pre-arrival employment services since 2014 through the national SOPA program, managed by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS). SOPA partners in each region provide services for permanent residents destined to their province. Our SOPA Manitoba team consists of 1 Intake Counsellor, a Soft Skills Facilitator, and a Job Search Strategies Facilitator.

Two hundred and sixty-three (263) clients registered for SOPA Manitoba in 2017-18, and 203 completed the intake process and enrolled in online courses. Fifteen (15) clients settled outside of Winnipeg and were referred to settlement services in Brandon (5), Thompson (5), Morden (3), Portage La Prairie (1) and Steinbach (1).

Our SOPA team has initiated partnerships with regulatory bodies and professional associations to develop 5 webinars to help skilled workers find the correct re-entry path to their chosen professions. This year we completed informational webinars for human resource and accounting specialists, in addition to the previous webinars developed for teachers, engineers and nurses.

## Challenges

**Technology:** Despite technological advances, face to face meetings with clients around the world pose an on-going challenge. Our SOPA facilitators primarily use Big Blue Button, but poor audio and video connections often force them to switch to Skype and other apps, or abandon the effort and revert to email communication.



## Program Evaluation

We put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) in April 2017 for an independent consultant to evaluate the Entry Program and work with staff to develop evaluation tools and a monitoring framework for AMI's current Programs. Health in Common was contracted to create a Student Feedback Survey, which was translated into 18 languages. The survey was completed by over 200 Entry Program 'graduates' and a cohort of about 200 from other organizations that also provide IRCC-funded information and orientation services. Results are being analyzed to compare the experiences of the Entry Program and cohort group.

## Data Management

Since the 'repatriation' of settlement services from the Provincial to the Federal government in 2012-2013, we have been dealing with the challenge of how to collect client data and share it securely with our sister agencies, Manitoba Start and WELARC. When the provincially mandated Correlate system became too expensive to maintain, we looked for a data management system (DMS) that would better serve our needs in the new federal funding and reporting environment. Both AMI and WELARC implemented the new Microsoft-based iSTEDY system in 2017-18, and Manitoba Start will begin using it to register participants for the Entry Program in the new fiscal year.

## Strategic & Operational Planning

AMI held its first strategic planning session on January 13, facilitated by an organizational development specialist recommended to us by Spark. Prior to the event, staff and board members gathered for a morning of team-building, to create rapport and synergy. The strategic planning session led to the development of a 1-year Operational Plan.

## Marketing & Rebranding

To raise public awareness that Altered Minds is more than just the Entry Program, we finally completed 3 years of work on a new Altered Minds Inc. website that highlights all of our programs and services. With the help of a marketing expert who completed a 2-month work placement with us, we are in the process of rebranding our organization.

## Looking Ahead

We have signed an MOU with ISANS to continue delivering pre-arrival employment services till March 2018, and hope to continue our partnership for 3 more years, pending approval of ISANS' application for funding.

Our proposal to IRCC for Service Delivery Improvements has been approved, pending negotiations. This summer's Living English program will combine language and volunteer work experience for learners at Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) Stage 1, from basic literacy to CLB 4.

We are waiting for decisions on proposals recently submitted to the following funders:

- IRCC for Pre-Arrival Services
- Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada (ISED) for Digital Literacy classes for newcomers
- Manitoba Education & Training (MET) to expand eligibility in our current programs.

## Statement of Operations

	Year ended March 31,	
	2018	2017
<b>Revenues:</b>		
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	1,314,754	1,597,052
Settlement Online Pre-Arrival program funding	225,009	225,009
Red Cross grant	-	9,997
Spence Neighborhood grant	-	1,018
Interest income	-	792
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	44,216	46,421
Other income	765	7,380
	<b>1,584,744</b>	<b>1,887,669</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Amortization	44,216	46,421
Bank charges	1,138	1,055
Communication	8,613	11,946
Festivities and events	-	6,032
Insurance	5,215	5,937
Living English expenses	64,160	87,743
Office expenses	82,066	69,495
Professional fees	5,445	4,500
Red Cross expenses	-	9,996
Rent	239,420	227,348
Repair and maintenance	25,851	13,668
Salaries and contractor payments	868,583	1,062,436
Settlement Online Pre-Arrival program	196,228	239,789
Spence Neighborhood expenses	-	1,018
Syrian Initiative projects	-	77,662
Training and conferences	7,224	6,159
	<b>1,548,159</b>	<b>1,871,205</b>
<b>Difference between revenues and expenses</b>	<b>\$ 36,585</b>	<b>\$ 16,464</b>



## Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is comprised of individuals who support our mission statement, represent the demographics of the people we serve, and have skills and experience that assist the agency in achieving its goals.

Chair	Adrian Ong
Vice Chair	Gonzalo Agrimbau
Treasurer	Minh Hoang Nguyen
Secretary	Judianne Jayme
Member at Large	Bobby Varghese
Member	Sijian “Sylvia” Peng
Member	Idris Knapp
Member	Margarida Demarchi

Incorporating Directors/Founders: Grace Eidse, Deborah Spear



*AMI welcomes refugees and immigrants to Manitoba and promotes the well-being of their families and communities, locally and overseas, by harnessing resources and providing responsive programs and services that assist individuals in adapting to change and overcoming barriers to a good quality of life.*