

# Information Practices of Immigrants to Canada – A Review of the Literature

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) provides settlement-related information to immigrants throughout the immigration process (i.e. before, during, and after arrival to Canada) through a number of channels, including: print, in-person, and online mediums. Other resources such as information services, settlement services, and language courses are made available to newcomers at no cost. Local community and ethno-cultural organizations also provide multiple services to immigrants including resources for information, integration, and support. Additionally, immigrants are a primary source of information for each other.

Despite the vast array of resources and services available to them, there is little research that examines the extent to which immigrants are able to adequately access and make use of government, settlement, and ethno-cultural information and services available to them. Relatively little research documents the ways in which newcomers and longer-established immigrants locate and access content in forms that are understandable and usable to them.

The purpose of this study is to examine the information needs, sources, and barriers to accessing information experienced by those who immigrate to Canada. In particular, we examine how both information needs and strategies for finding information change during the settlement process. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we synthesize and critically review a wide range of studies in the areas of Information Studies, Communications, Sociology, Social Work, Immigration and Settlement studies. We examine academic, community-based, and “grey” literature.

This paper contains a review of relevant literature in the area of immigrant information needs; it highlights gaps found within this research; and finally, it makes information service provision recommendations for policy makers and information service providers.

“Information practices” is a well known concept within Information Studies that suggests that individuals locate and use information in complex ways to address a variety of “information needs”. We frame our literature review of information practices by describing immigrants’ information needs in terms of immigrants’ stages of settlement (including pre-migration, immediate, intermediate, and long-term). There is tremendous value in structuring information practices around these stages because they enable settlement and information providers to more precisely design and target services to new and longer-established immigrants.

Our findings point to the heterogeneous nature of the literature on immigrants’ information practices. We make sense of the literature by organizing it according to several themes: information needs; information sources used by immigrants; and, barriers to finding information. The top settlement information needs of new

immigrants include language information (including information about training, translation, and interpretation services); pre-migration information; employment information (including job searching skills and special services to foreign trained professionals); housing information; information about making connections in the community (including connections to professional associations, volunteer opportunities, mentoring, and community organizations); and, information about the new culture and orientation to "Canadian life".

The top information needs for longer established immigrants include health information; employment information; educational information; political information and current events (especially news about the country of origin); language learning information (including information about ESL programs and materials); information about transportation; information about identity construction (including how to position themselves vis-à-vis Canadian society); and, information about cultural or religious events.

Barriers to accessing information for both newcomers and longer established immigrants include language (including fear of speaking in English); suspicion or mistrust of authority (including government and other institutions); isolation and the sense of being an outsider; using children to find information (who may have poor information finding skills); lack of familiarity with many Canadian information sources; cultural differences; and, not knowing how to ask for services.

In almost every case, family and friends were identified as the number one information source consulted by all immigrants. Media sources, such as the newspaper and the Internet were identified as the second most popular information source. In particular, respondents in many of the studies identified other-language material as preferred. Organizations such as community centres, settlement agencies, and government were also identified as significant information sources for immigrants.

To supplement these findings, we examine particular types of settlement needs and associated information including, employment, housing, and health care services. Findings reveal that employment needs cut across all stages of settlement and the literature consistently points to the foreign credentials recognition issue, the lack of Canadian job experience, and issues around familiarity with the workplace/occupation-specific language.

Within the realm of health care, different cultural understandings of health, illness, and treatment can lead to communication problems and immigrants' dissatisfaction with or under utilization of the health care system. In health as in other domains, we found evidence to suggest that redundancy and multiple forms of communication (including the use of one's first language and popular media) may contribute to an improved provision of health information and services.

Several other findings of note are identified. For example, the role played by “gatekeepers” (individuals who are considered to be knowledgeable within communities, and can “monitor” flows of information) is emphasized repeatedly within the literature. Additionally, we found significant evidence of the importance of social networks (both local and transnational) as a means to facilitate the settlement and inclusion process, possibly leading to more opportunities for employment, but also in other areas of immigrants’ lives. An increasing body of research examines the use that immigrants are making of transnational network ties to access information. Technology is one of the main impetuses enabling transnational practices, but in more general terms, technology does not always benefit all immigrants; online interfaces and services are found to be difficult for new users to navigate.

Best practices of settlement and information provision were also investigated. The literature provides few examples of initiatives or model programs that are replicable and that will create sustainable, innovative, positive implications for the issues of immigration-related information provision. We provide examples of several projects, such as Collingwood Neighbourhood House in Vancouver and the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council project’s very successful internship project for well-qualified immigrants.

A number of gaps were identified in the literature. In general we find that more research is needed in a number of areas, including research on the relationship between information practices and settlement stages; research that highlights the relationship between information practices and immigrant demographics such as source country, age, gender, and income etc.; research on immigrants’ use of ICTs (including cross-cultural usability); research on transnational information practices; research that distinguishes between task based vs. more expressive forms of information seeking; research that compares best practices in information provision across organizations; and research that incorporates more non-English language materials.

We conclude with a number of recommendations, chief among them the fact that the social exclusion of immigrants ought to be considered an information problem, caused in part by the significant barriers immigrants face as they navigate the Canadian information environment. In order to understand the information practices of immigrants and cater to their needs, a holistic approach is advocated that encompasses a closer examination of the relationship between social inclusion, the role of immigrant social networks (social capital), and information practices.

There is no one size fits all model when it comes to addressing information needs; we therefore need multiple strategies to inform and empower the individuals who have chosen to immigrate to Canada. Improving immigrants’ information literacy skills, language skills, community engagement, and social networks should be seen as a complement to providing sound government

information. This is itself complemented by the important role of mediators, facilitators, and “translators” played by ISAs, ethno-culturally specific agencies, and libraries.

Concluding recommendations include:

- more research is needed in the various areas identified in this review to address the gaps in the literature that compromise our understanding of the issues faced by immigrants;
- we should expand our notions of “information needs” to include vital settlement information as well as leisure material, media consumption, and the maintenance and development of social networks;
- we should expand our notions of service delivery to account for barriers to finding information such as language and trust (for example by delivering information through word of mouth);
- increase knowledge transfer between various actors, including more fluidity between research and practice (the work of Metropolis, for instance, is to be commended);
- increase funding and resources for collaborative processes;
- assess various agencies’ own information environments, (including the process of producing and disseminating information to immigrants);
- increase collaboration and communication between various actors around best practices and strategies for information provision and access;
- ensure that the voices of immigrants are heard by including them as active participants rather than recipients in the design of information strategies and tools.

In order to attract and successfully “include” new immigrants to Canada, our hope is that Canada becomes known for its excellent immigration and settlement information infrastructure. After all, it is increasingly clear from the literature that the implications of social exclusion hurt not only those whom are excluded, but also the broader society.

## INTRODUCTION

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) provides settlement-related information to immigrants throughout the immigration process (i.e. before, during, and after arrival to Canada) through a number of channels, including: print, in-person, and online mediums. Other resources such as information services, settlement services, and language courses are made available to newcomers at no cost (CIC, 2005). Local community and ethno-cultural organizations also provide multiple services to immigrants including resources for information, inclusion, and support.

Despite the vast array of resources and services available to them, there is little research that examines the extent to which newcomers are able to adequately access and make use of government, settlement, and ethno-cultural information and services available to them. Relatively little research exists about the ways in which newcomers and longer established immigrants locate and access content in forms that are understandable and usable to them.

We do know that in addition to using formal information sources such as government and settlement agencies, immigrants are a common source of information for each other, providing one another with “traditional” settlement information as well as leisure information, cultural information, and support. In order to comprehend how best to provide information services to immigrants, it is necessary to look at the multiple ways that information travels to and from immigrants, as well as the myriad of information needs encountered by newcomers and longer established immigrants. Understanding immigrants’ information practices –both their needs and the ways in which they access and absorb information– is crucial to our capacity to successfully provide settlement-related information to immigrants.

In this review, we examine the following question: **what are the information needs, sources, and barriers to information experienced by immigrants throughout the immigration and settlement process?** As part of this, we address how immigrant information needs change over time and explore the notion of a continuum of settlement-related information needs. Whenever possible, we examine cultural and demographic traits that might shape immigrants’ information seeking behaviour and use, including their use of information resources at different stages of settlement. We also examine the literature for evidence of best practices on providing settlement-related information to immigrants, focusing on Canadian as well as international literature.

In compiling this review and synthesis of the literature on immigrants’ information practices, we take an inclusive and interdisciplinary approach. The researchers’ collective backgrounds are in Information Studies (formerly Library and Information Science) and Communications, so we pay close attention to the

literature in these disciplines. But we have also expanded our scope to include other relevant disciplines such as Sociology, Social Work, Immigration and Settlement studies. Finally, we have complemented the academic literature with practitioner- based literature produced by the settlement and NGO sectors, and the so-called “grey literature” (including best practices) whenever possible.

Given the complex nature of this topic, and the lack of empirical and in-depth studies, there are several limitations with which we contend. A chief limitation is that we focus on English-language studies only. Although it was not possible to include them, this review would have been tremendously enriched by studies and literature written from a variety of other viewpoints and languages. Another limitation is that this literature review will not be exhaustive, largely because the cross-disciplinary approach and the relative newness of this specific focus area (i.e., immigrant information practices), means that the potential areas for review are substantial, and some areas are still unknown. Instead, this document maps out the general terrain that represents the information needs, sources, and barriers to finding information experienced by immigrants to Canada. It does so by putting disciplines and domains of knowledge in dialogue with each other, producing a rich understanding of the current landscape and potential for future research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **I. Information Practices and Everyday life information seeking**

Within Information Studies, “information practices” is an umbrella term used to capture active information seeking as well as less-directed practices (McKenzie, P, 2002). Active information practices include the recognition of an information need (or gap in one’s knowledge about a subject) as well as information seeking (or attempting to resolve that gap). Less-directed practices included browsing the Internet or gaining unanticipated but useful information from chatting with a friend. Information practices capture subtle activities such as recognizing an information need but choosing to ignore it or not recognizing the need for information at all. Information practices also accounts for the myriad of creative ways that individuals attempt to work around barriers that limit their information seeking. However, information practices are not strictly strategic but are tied up in our understandings of the world and everyday habits.

The notion of everyday life information seeking (ELIS) sheds further light on the complexity of information practices. ELIS posits that individuals require and seek information on a daily basis in complex ways and from a variety of sources in order to manage their lives (Savolainen, 1995). In other words, the everyday life context out of which an information need arises contributes significantly to how that need is made sense of and addressed. Both the personal attributes and the societal structures and values in which an individual lives inform the way one

organizes, prioritizes, and lives their life. Thus ELIS is often habitual, non rational, and has multiple goals for its outcome.

For newcomers who may not yet have established patterns or information sources, everyday life information seeking may be incredibly daunting and a very complex process. Mehra and Papajohn refer to this as a “culturally alien information environment” (2007). Both information needs and barriers to accessing adequate information are high. During the immigration process, how individuals make sense of the values and patterns in their lives is in flux. New patterns and networks must be established; all of this has an impact on information practices and the ability to find relevant and needed information.

## **II. Social Inclusion and Information Poverty**

Research within Information Studies points to the importance that identifying information needs and barriers have on individual lives. For example, Caidi & Allard (2005) argue that access to information that is relevant and personally meaningful is one of the necessary dimensions required for improved social inclusion of immigrants. When the particular information needs of newcomers such as information about settlement services, housing, employment opportunities, health or education are not easily available to them, navigation through the Canadian information environment and inclusion into a new country becomes a daunting and difficult process. Because immigrants often lack the basic information, as well as social, civic, and economic capital to function fully in their new country, Omidvar and Richmond argue that theirs is more often a matter of survival than full participation and inclusion (2003).

Chatman argues that information seeking may be problematic for vulnerable populations in economic poverty who also tend to be in “information poverty” (1996). Information poverty is characterized as lacking necessary resources such as adequate social networks and information finding skills that enable everyday life information seeking. It has been argued that new immigrants can be characterized as information poor (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez, & Ramirez, 2004) because they have not had time to develop adequate local networks (in terms of both network size and access to resources) and they may not yet know how to navigate the Canadian information environment. However, very little research exists that systematically explores how new immigrants seek information, including both the barriers and resources available to them.

## **III. Settlement Stages & Life Course Lens**

It is well understood that immigrants’ needs (information and otherwise) vary not only from one individual to another, but also over the course of one’s settlement.

Here, three ways of articulating settlement in its diversity and dynamism are discussed in order to determine a useful framework for examining the literature in the various sections of this document.

### *Life-course Lens*

The theory of life-course lens depicts immigration as “a significant and often disruptive transition in life, affecting major life-course trajectories” (Kunz, 2003, p. 41). Immigrants are seen as diverse; attributes including age, gender, family status, category of admission, and socio-economic status are noted as having implications for how well individuals fare in society (Kunz, p. 41). Applying the life-course lens to the context of immigrant settlement is beneficial in at least two ways. First, it recognizes that the act of immigrating to another country is a major event that may create new trajectories for the directions of immigrants’ lives (Kunz, p. 41). As well, it acknowledges the heterogeneity of people who have migrated to Canada. Effective use of the life-course lens requires longitudinal data, such as that available through Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s Immigration Data Base (IMDB). Using series’ of data collected at pre-determined intervals, the life-course lens allows us to see immigration as a process beginning prior to migration and continuing beyond the initial settlement stage (Kunz, 2003, p. 41).

### *Mwarigha’s Three Stages of Settlement*

As an alternate perspective, Mwarigha (2002) describes the settlement of immigrants in three stages: immediate, intermediate and long-term. In terms of information needs, Caidi and Allard define these as (2005):

- *Immediate* includes essential matters such as where to find food and shelter, how to get around geographically, and ways of dealing with language barriers.
- *Intermediate* includes how to access and use various systems including municipal and legal services, long-term housing, employment, and health services.
- *Integration* needs are more diverse and individualized; meeting them contributes to social inclusion through cultural, political and economic terms.

Each of these stages has its particular challenges. The outcome of the third stage is vital to successful settlement, and is dependent on individual motivation (Mwarigha, p.9). Settlement programs tend to focus on the first stage of settlement, yet significant barriers (i.e. credential recognition, systemic racism) are most pronounced in the second stage. Omidvar and Richmond (2003) support Mwarigha’s description; they argue that “settlement policy in Canada is

currently in a state of crisis, due largely to the lack of a pan-Canadian and long-term perspective that takes into account all three stages of settlement” (p. 8).

Because this framework does not impose timelines on the process of settlement, it is flexible and dynamic. Another of its strengths is its use as a tool for understanding and addressing the varying activities—hence, barriers and needs—particular to each stage. In terms of information needs, carefully prepared materials that are available in immigrants’ first languages and made available through print and online resources, as well as from settlement counsellors can benefit in the first stage, and perhaps in some activities of the second stage. However, recent immigrants at later stages of settlement may be in need of more tacit types of information, gained only by interacting socially with other members of their geographic community. This is a time when strong social networks are of great benefit (Granovetter 1973).

### *George et al.’s Settlement Services Model*

George, Fong, Da, and Chang (2004) describe a model of settlement services that includes:

- Pre-immigration Information (provided via websites and embassies)
- Information Provision upon Arrival at the Airport/Port Entry (regional and national guide sheets in appropriate languages including language-appropriate media and warnings)
- Settlement Information Services – Three Components
  - 1) information on basic settlement needs including accommodation, health care, transportation, education, language specific services & organizations
  - 2) occupational information and resources for highly educated immigrants in all occupations and professions
  - 3) information related to family issues, such as parenting, child care, sponsoring family members, elder care, violence against women and children, and legal agencies to deal with these issues.

This model touches on many of the same points as Mwarigha’s model, but it is less comprehensive and focuses on the provision of settlement services at the beginning of the settlement process.

For the purposes of this literature review, the pre-migration stage that is described in George et al.’s model, as well as the life course lens, will be combined to create an adapted form of Mwarigha’s stages of settlement. This is particularly beneficial for thinking about pre-emptive information provision to

newcomers. While ‘pre-migration’ can only be theoretically considered a stage of settlement, preparations made and information gained during this period can have significant implications for later settlement stage outcomes.

Pre-migration	Immediate	Intermediate	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current information about credential recognition and average salaries</li> <li>• up-to-date average costs for housing and utilities</li> <li>• success stories that articulate the benefits of having a patient mindset</li> <li>• awareness of the forms of racism within Canada, especially for people who will be ‘visible minorities’ in Canada</li> <li>• knowledge about particular areas of residence and neighbourhoods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• essential reception matters including               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ where to find food, clothing and shelter</li> <li>○ how to get around geographically</li> <li>○ ways of dealing with language barriers</li> <li>○ meet like-minded people and build or broaden social support networks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to access and use various systems including municipal and legal services</li> <li>• long-term housing</li> <li>• employment</li> <li>• health services</li> <li>• education</li> <li>• how to bridge cultural and lifestyle differences</li> <li>• maintain or extend social networks</li> <li>• explore new information grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more diverse needs</li> <li>• individual endeavours for equality in cultural, political and economic terms may continue for a lifetime</li> <li>• broaden social networks</li> <li>• act as mentor for newcomers providing assistance and guidance</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Stages of Settlement Framework**

In this literature review, the adapted form of Mwarigha’s stages of settlement (above) is the framework we use for understanding specific settlement barriers and the information needs associated with them.

#### **IV. Information Needs of Immigrants**

Within the Information Studies literature, required or sought after information is described as “information need.” This portion of the literature review will focus on the information needs of immigrants, including the relationship between information needs, immigrant demographics, and the settlement stages identified above. It will conclude with an in-depth examination of three areas where information needs for newcomers are particularly high: housing, employment, and health information.

Data from the *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada* reveals that immigrants identify a number of difficulties within their first four years of immigrating to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2007). The most often cited

difficulties include: finding a job; learning a new language; adapting to a new culture; Canadian weather; and, developing social support networks and making friends (p. 7). Often settlement challenges are closely associated with difficulties finding specific information.

The above survey also focuses on four areas where immigrants identify struggling to find information. These include: information about employment opportunities; where and how to access language courses; how to find adequate housing; and, information about health care services (Statistics Canada, 2007). Often these information needs occur because immigrants do not have other relevant information needed to address these issues, such as information about public transportation, city geography, or the Canadian health care system. Immigrants must navigate multiple complicated levels of information within the Canadian information environment.

Information needs are further explored in this literature review through a close examination of twelve studies that focus on the information practices and settlement needs of various immigrant groups. The studies were drawn from the Information Studies (both academic and community-based), settlement, and government literature. The studies focus on immigrants to Canada, the US, and parts of Northern Europe (i.e., Finland). Studies were included if they focused on the day-to-day settlement or information practices of immigrant groups<sup>1</sup>. When examined together they offer a picture of some of the most common immigrant information needs, sources, and barriers across the stages of settlement. For a full summary of the studies see appendix I.

### *Information Needs across Stages of Settlement*

In comparing all twelve studies, some differences were observed across the “stages of immigration”. However, although most studies collected data about length of time spent in the host country, they did not distinguish between time spent in the host country when they identified information needs. Therefore differences were determined by comparing studies that focus strictly on settlement to studies that focus on the information needs of immigrants more generally.

The “top” settlement information needs<sup>2</sup> of new immigrants include language information (including information about training, translation, and interpretation services); pre-migration information; employment information (including job

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<sup>1</sup> This literature review also supplements the findings from the twelve studies identified above with many more studies that do not focus specifically on the general information practices of immigrants, but have a great deal to contribute to the topic. For example, research on the health, employment, media or Internet information practices of immigrants is not included here but included in other sections of this review.

<sup>2</sup> “Top” needs were determined by counting the number of times each concept appeared in the 12 studies under review. Due to the small sample size of article and the different “focus” of each article, these findings are meant to shed light on the issues; they can not be considered the final word on this issue.

searching skills and special services to foreign trained professionals); housing information; information about making connections in the community (including connections to professional associations, volunteer opportunities, mentoring, and community organizations); and, information about the new culture and orientation to "Canadian life".

The top information needs for longer established immigrants include health information; employment information; educational information; political information and current events (especially news about the country of origin); language learning information (including information about ESL programs and materials); information about transportation; information about identity construction (including how to position themselves vis-à-vis Canadian society); and, information about cultural or religious events.

There is a significant amount of overlap between both "sets" of needs. However, settlement needs tend to include more time sensitive and critical information such as housing information while non-settlement needs are more expansive including access to leisure material. The fact that language information needs is number one for newcomers should also be noted. This reiterates what is already a clear priority area for information services providers.

It should also be noted that information needs range from instrumental to expressive. In other words, a number of needs such as finding employment and education information focus on addressing task based or instrumental activities. Conversely, we also see evidence of need for information about identity, and both local and source country culture – so called expressive needs. Although they are less time sensitive, expressive needs should not be undervalued because they contribute to a sense of overall well being and belonging for immigrants. And this is imperative for immigrants' inclusion to Canada.

Additionally, Cuesta (1990), To (1995), and Flythe (2001) all identify differences in reading patterns across the settlement process. Upon arrival, newcomers are significantly busier and are most likely to read instructional materials such as material on learning English, the local community, and finding employment (To, 1995). At this stage their reading practices are instrumental, designed to help them settle in a new country. As they adjust to their new life, they are more likely to read novels, "self-help", "how-to" and other leisure material. Magazines and newspapers from the source country and in their mother-tongue are read at all stages of the immigrant process as are documents written in immigrants' first language. More research in this area is needed.

	<b>Top Settlement Information Needs</b>	<b>Top "Non-Settlement" Needs</b>
	language information (including information about training, translation, and interpretation services)	health information (including how to find a family doctor, treatment issues, information on condom use, needle sharing, AIDS information, and mental health information)
	pre-migration information	employment information (including how to find employment, job training, how to write resume and cover letters, work safety, labour practices)
	employment information (including job searching skills; special services to foreign trained professionals)	educational information (including literacy information, media literacy, GED information, scholarships and bursaries, career prospects, counselling, adult education, and continuing education)
	housing information	political information and current events (especially news about the country of origin)
	information about making connections in the community (including connections to professional associations, volunteer opportunities, mentoring, and community organizations)	language learning information (including information about ESL programs and materials)
	information about the new culture and orientation to "Canadian life"	recreational information (including information about hobbies, entertainment and travel)
	family support such as counselling and social services	information about transportation
	education information	legal information
	information about local institutions and services	information about identity construction (including how to position themselves vis-a-vis Canadian society)
	information about obtaining essential documents (SIN and health card)	information about cultural or religious events
	business information	computer help
	information provision in first language	getting help with English (reading documents, correct pronunciation; translation)
		home repair
		tax/government information
		immigration information
		business opportunities
		banking information
		car/car repair information

**Table 2: Top Immigrant Information Needs**

### *Barriers to Finding Information*

It is well known that immigrants face multiple barriers to finding information in their new homes. In order to determine the barriers to accessing information faced by immigrants during settlement, differences were determined by comparing studies that focus strictly on settlement to studies that focus on the information practices of immigrants more generally. Unfortunately, few of the settlement studies explicitly described barriers to finding information.

Despite this, the top identified barriers are important to acknowledge. They include: language; cultural differences; isolation and small networks; and not accessing local news sources. All of these barriers point to the vulnerability of immigrant newcomers. They also have significant implications for service delivery models. Information provision in the first language of immigrants is crucial, especially at the beginning of the settlement process. Additionally, aiding newcomers to develop social networks can also be considered a long term strategy to their information access.

<b>Top barriers to finding information for newcomers (in country less than 5 years)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• language (including inadequate bilingual services)</li><li>• cultural differences</li><li>• isolation and small "ethnic" social networks (gatekeeper that withholds and provided inaccurate information)</li><li>• don't read local newspaper or watch TV</li></ul>

**Table 3: Newcomer Top Barriers to Accessing Information**

More generally, barriers to accessing information for both newcomers and longer established immigrants include: language (including fear of speaking in English); suspicion or mistrust of authority (including government and other institutions); isolation and the sense of being an outsider; using children to find information (who may have poor information finding skills); lack of familiarity with many Canadian information sources; cultural differences; and, not knowing how to ask for services.

It should be noted however, that most studies examined, focus on the information practices of low income groups. Therefore, these barriers may not be entirely representative of "less vulnerable" immigrants such as those immigrating to Canada in the economic class.

Again these are significant barriers. They also have far reaching implications for the delivery of information services. In particular, mistrust of authority creates particular challenges for service delivery. These challenges are discussed at length when we provide recommendations for providing health care information.

<b>Top Barriers to finding information for longer established immigrants</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language (including fear of speaking in English and non-"ethnic" environments)</li> <li>• suspicion or mistrust of authority</li> <li>• isolation and the sense of being an outsider</li> <li>• using children to find information</li> <li>• unfamiliarity with many information sources</li> <li>• cultural differences</li> <li>• poor social networks</li> <li>• don't know how to ask for services</li> <li>• perception of media bias and lack of relevant information</li> <li>• family poverty</li> <li>• legal status</li> <li>• suspicion from others</li> <li>• lack of dialogue and public education</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Longer Established Immigrant Top Barriers to Accessing Information**

*Source Country*

In general the information needs of immigrants remained relatively similar across both immigrant source country and host country. This point is reiterated by George et al. who suggest that the needs and barriers faced by newcomer immigrant groups in the process of settlement are not greatly distinct from each other (George & Mwarigha, 1999; George, 2002; George, Fong, Da and Chang, 2004). George et al. does suggest that moving to a culture that is dissimilar to one's own will increase the cultural barriers and isolation that one faces. They identify this as a particular challenge for the Chinese, former Yugoslavian, and African newcomers in their studies and call for cultural and linguistic sensitivity when providing services.

*Age*

Differences in information needs were observable across age categories. Younger immigrants and students had overlapping but also significantly different information needs and sources than working and older immigrants. For example,

Caidi and MacDonald (2008) highlight the sophistication of South Asian youth with information sources and new media. In particular, they were heavy users of the Internet, online newspapers, and television. According to Silvio (2006), the most commonly cited information needs of Sudanese to Canada include: educational information; health information; employment information; information about how to deal with racism; and, political information (2006, p. 263).

Older Chinese immigrants on the other hand, are significantly less interested in finding employment or language training according to a study by Su and Conaway (1995). Instead, they seek information about leisure and recreation activities. They are also particularly interested in world news, especially from China. They are heavy consumers of “ethnic” newspapers in their first language. In Su and Conaway’s study, the availability of time to dedicate to recreational activities is a function of both retirement and longer settlement.

### *Gender*

Few gender differences were identified largely because study data was not collected on this issue. However, Caidi and MacDonald (2008) note that Muslim or Arab women in their sample population were more likely than men to use personal sources and institutions while men preferred to seek information independently. George (2002) also points out that women are more likely to require settlement services for a longer time period because new immigrant women may remain at home with young children for the first few years of the immigration process. They may require settlement and employment information after their children are grown.

Research within other areas also suggests that there may be differences in information needs between women and men (Hagan, 1998; Preston, Kobayashi & Man, 2006; VanderPlaat, 2007). For example Preston, Kobayashi, and Man (2006) argue that women tend to focus on family issues during settlement, particularly children’s education, while men are more concerned with economic and political issues. In terms of their transnational participation, women are more likely to connect with friends and family rather than maintaining their political or economic ties (2007). Immigrant women are also more likely than men to experience social isolation and mental health issues, as well as seek health information for the family (Courtwright, 2005).

### *Income/occupation*

Because most studies did not distinguish between the occupations and incomes of their study groups (and the ones that did tended to focus on low income immigrant information needs), more research is needed to determine the distinctions within income and occupations categories.

It was noted that immigrants found in the low income and low-paying occupations faced multiple barriers to information seeking, particularly language barriers. For example, Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez, & Ramirez's (2004) examination of the information practices of low income Hispanic farm migrants reveal that language is the largest barrier for this group. For this reason, Spanish language radio, Spanish speaking community organizations, and family and friends who emigrated to the region months or years earlier were the most important information sources for this group. It was interesting to note however, that language barriers were also faced by university students (generally considered to be better educated and economically better off) in a number of studies. (Jeong, 2004; Liu and Redford, 1997)

### *Case Studies: Areas Where Essential Information is Needed*

In order to elaborate on some of the findings identified above, we have selected three specific areas that were identified as essential information needs by the *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada* (Statistics Canada, 2007), including: housing, employment, and health. We explore how the literature in these three areas conceptualizes information needs or rather how these information needs are constituted in the literature and how they might be addressed by information providers.

#### *Housing*

As an initial and continuing settlement issue, we identify the realm of housing as having potential barriers and as a site where information provision may contribute to ameliorating some challenges. The past decade has been one of significant increases in costs of housing, particularly in Western Canada, as well as Toronto and even Montreal. Because nearly 70% of the more than one million newcomers to Canada between 2001 and 2006 settled in the three largest urban centres, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, immigrants are particularly impacted by these shifts. In the remainder of this section, we provide a general overview of immigrants' experiences with housing in three large Canadian cities, and suggest some recommendations for information provision.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, among others, produce city-based studies (2007) that make observations and recommendations about the housing situation and needs of recent immigrants. As many people (251,649 in 2006 alone (CIC, 2007) are migrating to Canada to become permanent residents, the amount of affordable rental options is diminishing fast (CMHC, 2007). While many newcomers tend to rent (in Montreal in particular), Census and LSIC data demonstrate that "recent immigrants achieve a higher rate of homeownership than expected from their incomes" (CMHC, 2007). Indeed, people who migrated to Canada twenty years ago are likely 'better housed' than people who were born in Canada. This is achieved at significant costs, including depleting initial savings, spending 30-50% of income on housing, and living in crowded conditions (CMHC, 2007). Racial categories depict a correlative

relationship; in the three urban centres discussed below, homeowners who are identified as 'visible minorities' spend a much larger percent of their income on mortgage and utilities than homeowners who are of European-origin (CMHC, 2007).

### **Vancouver**

Vancouver is the most expensive of these three cities to live in. Few refugees choose to live in Vancouver; individuals who comprise the foreign born demographic are likely to be from Asian countries, and are more affluent than Canada's average immigrant. Hiebert, Mendez and Wyly (2008) consider immigration *to be* the Vancouver housing market because of its role in increasing the population of the region (p. 112). Because migrants to Canada are heterogeneous, their housing needs "intersect with almost every aspect of the housing market" from low cost rentals to premium purchases (p. 112). Hiebert, Mendez and Wyly state four significant findings:

- immigrants achieve substantial upward mobility in the housing market
- this mobility is swift: within 6 months of arrival 20% of immigrants and refugees in Vancouver already owned a home
- this high level of home ownership is attained at some cost given comparably modest levels of income
- immigrants of European origin experience more favourable housing circumstances including less crowding

### **Montreal**

In general, Montreal's housing market is characterized as rental-based. In the late 1990s it shifted from high vacancy rates and low costs of rent to demonstrating low vacancy rates and higher costs to rent. This context positions immigrants, especially those who have low incomes, in vulnerable situations. In general, fewer newcomers choose to live in Montreal than in Vancouver or Toronto. While many people emigrate from Europe to Montreal, immigrants (including refugees) come from diverse regions. Newcomers to Montreal are younger, more likely to be alone and less likely to be part of a multi-family household (Rose, Germain, & Ferreira, 2006, p. 1).

Currently, the overall housing situation of immigrants is less troubling in Montreal than in Toronto and Vancouver. However, concerns exist and are noted by Rose, Germain and Ferreira (2006, p. 79). These include:

- 30% of the study's respondents experience of extreme "housing stress" caused by a combination of low incomes and scant savings brought to Canada
- 6% of homeowners and 18% of renters being very vulnerable as they spend 50% or more of their income on housing
- living conditions for newcomers being overcrowded

- the inability to find a guarantor for a rental lease as a very significant challenge

### **Toronto**

Between 2001 and 2006, 447,900 newcomers moved to Toronto (CIC, 2007). While Toronto receives significantly more recent immigrants than Vancouver (151,700 for the same period) and Montreal (165,300 also for the same period) combined, its housing situation can be characterized as more comparable to Vancouver, but sharing attributes with Montreal (CIC, 2007). People from Asian countries do make up the majority of immigrants to Toronto, but they are joined by newcomers from a wide variety of regions (CMHC, 2007). Findings from the CMHC (2007) indicate that as in Vancouver:

- recent immigrants achieve a higher rate of homeownership than expected from their incomes
- the proportion of multiple-family households is especially high, yet the level of crowding is highest in Toronto
- in Toronto, the level of crowding is dramatically different for European vs. 'visible minority' ethnic cultural groups.

Literature about immigrants' housing situations showed some promising work, particularly in Toronto, where Johnson and Martin (2006) report that the Toronto Community Foundation worked with private landlords, Toronto City Council and the Ontario government to make 5,400 additional rental units available to low-income people (p.19). Milroy and Wallace (2004) report that GTA urban planners do receive information describing the city's ethnocultural composition. Their recommendations urge efficient use of newcomer's perspectives and suggestions.

Maxwell (2006) describes the ways that cities are spatially segregated into neighbourhoods described in economic terms. Maxwell's term "poverty by postal code" is illustrated by areas with cheaper, overcrowded and poorer quality housing, overtaxed public services, and low personal safety being the only options for people with fewer options: new immigrants, Aboriginals, and lone parents. Worse still, the possibility of getting ahead by broadening social networks is decreased as contact between people of different income classes becomes non-existent, resulting in "fewer opportunities for mutual support and ...a lack of empathy" (Maxwell, 2006). As a means of cutting through this spatial segregation, one hopeful story comes from Vancouver's resoundingly successful Collingwood Neighbourhood House where residents built a third-space (Oldenburg, 1989) because "when people of many cultures live together, they need a neutral place to meet, a place where they can participate as equals and relate to one another on a common topic, although not necessarily in a common language" (Cavers, Carr & Sandercock 2007, p.7).

### *Recommendations for Providing Housing Information*

Besides action to broaden social networks, other recommendations for providing housing information include detailed information in the pre-migration stage (CMHC, 2007). Hiebert, Mendez, and Wyly (2008) consider the CIC website’s relevant information “far too optimistic” (p.117) because CIC’s estimated costs spent on housing are significantly lower than the authors’ findings. In terms of initial settlement, the settlement services offered to immigrants and refugees should include direct assistance for obtaining housing (Hiebert, Mendez, and Wyly, 2008) including information about areas with poor quality and unsafe housing that immigrants should avoid (Teixeira, 2006). Developing a specific institution for aiding newcomers with finding housing would provide assistance at both initial, intermediate and even long-term stages of settlement (CMHC, 2007). Hiebert, Mendez, and Wyly consider this to be a highly appropriate need: some of the recently announced increase in funds for settlement could be used to enhance immigrants’ knowledge of housing markets in Canada (2008, p.117). An agency that aided newcomers find housing could work to diminish barriers to suitable housing for newcomers by providing information to landlords. These barriers include racial discrimination, and the tangible requirements of references from previous landlords and credit checks, which are very challenging for newcomers to attain (Teixeira, 2006; Mwarigha, 2002). Finally such an agency could also provide groundwork for the provision of more social housing projects, assistance called for by Hiebert, Mendez and Wyly (2008, p.117).

<b>Pre-migration</b>	<b>Immediate</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• realistic, regional information about costs of rent, homes, and utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct assistance for obtaining housing</li> <li>• information about areas to avoid</li> <li>• maps with local “neighbourhood” houses marked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing a specific institution for aiding newcomers with finding housing</li> <li>• providing information to landlords about racial discrimination</li> <li>• challenges of references from previous landlords and credit checks for newcomers</li> <li>• advocate for more social housing projects</li> </ul>	

**Table 5: Housing-Related Information Recommendations Described in Settlement Stages**

### *Employment*

Despite being better educated and more likely to be fluent in one or both of Canada's official languages than the Canadian born, new immigrants have seen a decline in entry level earnings since the mid-1980s (Preston, Lo, and Wang, 2003; Johnson and Martin, 2006). Based on analysis of the 2001 census, new immigrants to Canada earn roughly 30% less than Canada's native born (Frenette and Morrison, 2003; Picot, Hou, & Coulombe, 2007). Clearly, barriers to recent immigrants gaining employment commensurate with their experience

and skills exist in Canada. Here, these challenges are described in more detail and then examined as potential information needs.

Poor economic conditions within Canada, changing source countries of immigration, and diminishing returns on foreign experience are often cited as contributing factors to this situation (Walters, Phythian & Anisef, 2006). A 2006 study examining the newly released *Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey* (EDS) (Statistics Canada, 2003) reveals that barriers to the successful economic integration of newcomers to Canada include: difficulties in having one's foreign credentials recognized—both as education and professional experience; a lack of Canadian job experience, which is often a hindrance to entry in the job market (and lack of recognition of experience acquired outside of Canada); and, the knowledge of official languages particularly workplace/occupation-specific language (Walters, Phythian & Anisef, 2006). Significant concerns have also been raised about discrimination in the labour market resulting in the racialization of poverty (Ornstein, 2006).

These barriers are a serious consequence of the Canadian social and employment environment. In some cases, they can be articulated as information needs. For example, information is needed about foreign credential recognition, accreditation, volunteer opportunities to acquire Canadian job experience, workplace/occupation-specific language training, education upgrading, and licensing (George, 2002). For these reasons, George recommends that settlement organizations put in place specialized training for settlement workers who deal specifically with highly educated and foreign-trained professionals requiring employment services (George, 2002).

#### *Recommendations for Providing Employment Information*

Volunteer Canada (n.d.) has prepared a document with recommendations to NGOs, as well as local, provincial and federal governing departments for providing employment information to recent immigrants. The document establishes and recommends maintenance of a network between federal departments and volunteer organizations across Canada. Besides maintaining key regional employment information in plain language on websites (i.e., accurate and up-to-date information on the employment situation, information on industries, sectors and occupations, the skills needed, and how those skills are assessed), the report also recommends distributing print materials for key points.

They also recommend that employment information is available to potential newcomers before migrating; one practical asset would be a detailed template/checklist of support material indicating employment and experience information newcomers are advised to bring with them from the country of origin (Volunteer Canada, n.d.).

Situating these barriers as information needs demonstrates that while there are particular points that can be communicated to immigrants at various stages of

settlement, there is no quick fix. One information practice that is recommended for people needing to improve their employment situation is to form broader social networks. In general, findings reveal that the social networks one has access to will contribute to successful employment outcomes in terms of salary and position. (Greve & Salaff, 2005) In other words, the larger and the more people with social status found in one's network, the more likely it is that one will find a "good job". Those with more developed social networks will seek and find employment outside of so-called ethnic enclaves (Greve & Salaff, 2005; Ooka & Wellman, 2003).

Recent immigrants who do not build beneficial social networks in Canada, but maintain strong ones in their former countries, may be able to use their transnational connections to their economic advantage. Wong's (2004) research on Taiwanese entrepreneurs in Canada suggests that many entrepreneurs turn to self employment because they are unable to find adequate work in the Canadian labour market due to a lack of job experience in Canada. Setting up businesses that operate transnationally is understood as a deliberate strategy to mobilize non-local social networks to address Canadian employment barriers. Providing information as well as courses or mentoring about entrepreneurship is a way for service providers to support these endeavours.

The development of strong social networks both within and outside of one's ethnic community is a significant need for newcomers. For information providers, assisting newcomers to form broader social ties may be accomplished by making available information about social organizations, volunteer opportunities, professional association meetings, and recreational groups and clubs.

Forms of information that can contribute to a decrease in racism in Canadian society are also needed. For example, effective public education is needed on issues of anti-racism and anti-oppression. Native-born and longer-settled residents of Canada would also benefit from extended social networks through volunteerism or other activities that cross-cut dominant culture's communities and neighbourhoods.

Pre-migration	Immediate	Intermediate	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current information about credential recognition and average salaries</li> <li>• awareness of the forms of racism within Canada, especially for people who will be 'visible minorities' in Canada</li> <li>• realistic expectations about employment opportunities and obstacles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resources and guides to improve and market one's skills and qualifications</li> <li>• language classes and accent-reduction if desired</li> <li>• directory of organizations of help to locate employment</li> <li>• information about venues (print, online, individuals) to locate job ads</li> <li>• contact Chambers of Commerce (for setting up own business) or community-based resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to access and use employment services</li> <li>• knowledge about human resources</li> <li>• knowledge about legal matters</li> <li>• dealing with workplace stress</li> <li>• information about where to get help (conflict resolution, mediation, counselling, etc.)</li> <li>• support for entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continuing education</li> <li>• mentorship</li> <li>• changing careers</li> <li>• setting up own business</li> <li>• maintaining or expanding social networks</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Employment-Related Information Recommendations Described in Settlement Stages**

### *Health*

Information about health is often presented to immigrants in a way that is different from how they understand the world, health, and illness. Examining the health information practices of immigrants provides an excellent example of the need to identify cultural distinctions between immigrant groups and provide culturally relevant services, particularly where information may be sensitive. Health information is vitally important across all stages of settlement.

Immigrants are healthier on average than the Canadian born when they arrive in Canada due to the immigrant selection process which privileges healthy and able bodied individuals (Mulvihill, Mailloux, & Atkin, 2001). However, they have higher than national average rates of depression and mental illness due to stress from moving, social isolation, and unemployment (Mulvihill, Mailloux, & Atkin, 2001). It is also known that immigrants tend to acquire less quality health care information (Courtwright, 2005) and under-utilize the health care system in their new countries. (Holroyd, Taylor-Piliae, & Twinn, 2003) Although immigrants may be generally healthier when they arrive in Canada, it is well known that their health declines as they live in Canada.

It is commonly thought that one of main reasons for the decline is that immigrants “experience clashes between their ethnocultural or religious beliefs and Western medical care” (Weerasinghe, 2000, p. 11). In other words, what new immigrants conceive of as health care and appropriate medicine does not always fit within the Western biomedical model of health and medicine currently circulating within Canada and the US. Different understandings of health, illness, and treatment often lead to communication problems and immigrant dissatisfaction with the health care system (Weerasinghe, 2000).

Ahmad et al’s (2004) study of *Popular Health Promotion Strategies among Chinese and East Indian Immigrant Women* indicates subtle differences among immigrant groups with respect to their beliefs about health, illness and appropriate medical care. They indicate that East Indian women take a more holistic approach to health care than our current health care model; they also suggest that Chinese women use social networks to learn about health care in their home country and are therefore less likely to “trust” health promotion strategies in Canada. Both Chinese and East Indian immigrant women have a large amount of faith in the Canadian medical establishment; this trait is not necessarily shared by all immigrant groups (Fadiman, 1997; Sligo & Jameson, 2000; Weerasinghe, 2000).

In addition to varying beliefs about health and illness, cultural norms about appropriate behaviour may play a large role in the health information practices of certain immigrant groups. Sligo and Jameson (2000) argue that concern about what other community members will think of them prevent Pacific Island Immigrants to New Zealand from getting cervical smears. They argue that, “most participants knew it was desirable to have a cervical smear. Yet the cultural imperative that this is a taboo area, hardly to be discussed even with one’s closest friends, served as a major inhibitor to action” (Sligo & Jameson, 2000, p. 863).

In additional to cultural issues, many immigrants face significant challenges and barriers to finding appropriate health information and seeking health care. These include:

- being too busy to take care of one’s self (Courtwright, 2005; Holroyd, Taylor-Piliae, and Twinn, 2003)
- being unfamiliar with health information sources and the health care system in their new country
- language barriers
- hostility from some health care providers, and inadequate social networks (Courtwright, 2005)

For example, Courtwright’s study of Latino newcomers in the US also indicates that Latino newcomers prefer human sources to acquire health information and do not use the Internet for health information seeking (2005).

### *Recommendations for Providing Health Information*

There are a number of strategies available to information providers to increase the likelihood of health information use by immigrants. For example, health information providers should take cultural differences into consideration when designing services. The use of “insider” endorsements may be employed to address cultural norms and taboos. Insiders have authority that outsiders do not because they are part of the group and are understood to share the same values and belief system as the group (Chatman, 1996; Sligo and Jameson, 2000). Sligo and Jameson suggest that we use informal and non-institutional means such as social networks, community groups, and churches in order to best target immigrant health information (Sligo & Jameson, 2000).

Additionally, understanding the cultural context of health and well-being of immigrant groups is imperative (Allen, Matthew, and Boland, 2004). In order to communicate health information adequately to newcomers, it is necessary to be able to put health information in “their terms”. For example, Allen, Matthew and Boland describe the relative lack of medical terminology in the Hmong language. Communicating medical concepts is therefore accomplished by translating Western biomedical models of health into the Hmong language using words and concepts of health, well-being, and death understood by the Hmong (2004). This may also include avoiding or minimizing the use of culturally inappropriate content such as discussions about sex.

Creative initiatives are underway to achieve this. For example, the website EthnoMed.org (University of Washington Harvard Medical Centre, 2008) is a Seattle based repository of information about cultural beliefs and medical issues about the health care of specific immigrant groups within the US. The site makes cultural health information about specific immigrant groups available to health care workers; it also provides culturally specific language materials on health promotion topics such as cervical smears and nutrition available for distribution to immigrant groups.

Another significant barrier to health information access is the language in which written health information is published. Immigrant groups in Ahmed et al’s study suggest they want health information in their first language through ethnic newspapers, television, Internet, workshops, health workers, pamphlets and displays at family physician clinics (2004). For example, Sun et al. determine that due to the low English health literacy rates among Chinese immigrant women in San Francisco, media campaigns in both Cantonese and Mandarin using local Chinese media, were successful in promoting breast health to this demographic (2007). For those communities that do not rely on written forms of communication, theatre and story telling in their first language may serve well as health promotion initiatives (Fadiman, 1997).

Pre-migration	Immediate	Intermediate	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make culturally specific information about Canadian health care system available on the Internet in multiple languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at the airport provide culturally specific information about Canadian health care system in multiple languages</li> <li>• provide information about how to access essential services such as health card in multiple languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help immigrants develop social networks</li> <li>• provide necessary health information through “insiders”</li> <li>• provide necessary health information through “ethnic” media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dialogue between immigrants and health care providers about understanding differences in models of health care</li> <li>• provide culturally relevant health promotion and education</li> </ul>

**Table 7: Health-Related Information Recommendations Described in Settlement Stages**

## V. Information Sources

This section of the literature review identifies and discusses sources immigrants use to find information. First, we identify top information sources used by immigrants based on the twelve studies examined earlier. Information sources are then placed in the context of immigrant stages of settlement. We discuss in detail several of the main information sources identified in the literature, including: individuals, institutions, “ethnic” media, and the Internet, and conclude by identifying several themes that emerge from the literature.

### *Top Information Sources*

It is well known that human sources are the most popular information channel among people in general. This finding was born out among the twelve studies of immigrant information practices identified earlier (see Appendix I for full study details)<sup>3</sup>. In almost every case, family and friends were identified as the number one information source consulted by immigrants. Media sources, such as the newspaper and the Internet were identified as the second most popular information source. In particular, respondents in many of the studies identified other-language material as preferred. Organizations such as community centres and settlement agencies were also identified as significant information sources for immigrants.

<sup>3</sup> Again, “top” sources were determined by number of times content appears in 12 reviewed studies. It is important to reiterate that the number of sample studies were small and that this list is not exhaustive.

<b>Top Information Sources</b>
<b>Interpersonal Sources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• friends and family</li> </ul>
<b>Mediums (particularly in languages other than English)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newspaper</li> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• TV</li> <li>• radio</li> <li>• telephone directory</li> </ul>
<b>Organizations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community organizations</li> <li>• social service agencies</li> <li>• employment centres</li> <li>• public libraries</li> <li>• settlement agencies</li> <li>• language training centres</li> <li>• immigrant organizations</li> <li>• professional associations</li> <li>• authorities such as police</li> <li>• schools</li> </ul>

**Table 8: Top Information Sources Accessed by Immigrants**

### *Information Sources and Stages of Settlement*

The twelve studies do not provide enough information to determine how information sources are made use of across the settlement stages; however if we look at the issue more broadly, we can identify trends. For example, it is known that family and friends who have already immigrated are consulted during and before immigration process (Wong & Salaff, 1998). It also known that the Internet is primarily considered a job finding tool at the beginning of settlement. As immigrants spend more time in the host country, it is used for more leisurely activities such as browsing online international newspapers (Caidi, Longford, Allard, Dechief, forthcoming). In general, the longer a newcomer resides in Canada, the more likely it is that she will develop local social networks to meet her informational as well as support needs.

Pre-migration	Immediate	Intermediate	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contact family and friends who have already emigrated to the destination country for advise and support</li> <li>• contact government for migration information</li> <li>• use the Internet to find information about new country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contact family and friends who have already emigrated for assistance and support</li> <li>• contact settlement agencies and ethno-cultural orgs for immediate needs</li> <li>• gain familiarity with local and national media (TV, radio, print press, etc.)</li> <li>• use of Internet and other ICTs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment agencies</li> <li>• use the Internet to find jobs</li> <li>• develop local weak ties from strong ties</li> <li>• volunteer</li> <li>• contact professional associations</li> <li>• Visit library</li> <li>• join local groups and organizations</li> <li>• ongoing maintenance of transnational networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop local social networks</li> <li>• ongoing maintenance of transnational networks</li> <li>• join local groups and organizations</li> <li>• ongoing use of ethnic media</li> <li>• access leisure material</li> <li>• access citizenship information</li> <li>• access counselling and support services</li> </ul>

**Table 9: Information Sources Identified by settlement stages**

### *Individuals*

New immigrants make use of various individuals when seeking information. Research indicates that they rely on people with whom they have personal relationships such as family, friends, neighbours, and co-workers. They also rely on weak ties or people who are not particularly close to them such as settlement workers and government employees.

Social capital is defined as “resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for action” (Lin, 2001, p. 25). In other words, individuals have social capital to the extent that they are able to mobilize their networks in order to accrue particular resources. Social capital research often focuses on how information travels with social networks, and whether this information travels via strong ties (such as family or friends) or weak ties (such as acquaintances) (Johnson, 2003; Haythornthwaite, 1996).

Researchers in the field of Information Studies have pointed to the importance of social networks as sources of information for so-called vulnerable or marginalized populations (Birkel & Repucci, 1983; Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez, & Ramirez, 2004; Gollop, 1997; Liu, 1995). Findings reveal that low-income communities are generally a source of information for each other. They tend to make use of trusted close relationships or strong ties for everyday life information (Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez, & Ramirez, 2004). Earlier

discussions in this paper also highlight the importance of “insiders” when seeking information sources.

Contrary to this, Johnson’s study of the information practices of urban low-income Mongolians in Mongolia (2003) illustrate that individuals choose to seek information from individuals that are different rather than similar to them and the people in their networks. Individuals choosing to ask assistance from people with higher education and employment status than themselves suggest that efforts are being made by individuals to find the best source of information available to them. More research is needed to determine how immigrants make choices when choosing human information sources.

### *Social Networks and Local Ties*

It is well known that immigrants often make use of each other for access to resources and information. Numerous studies within the field of Information Studies shed light on the value of local social networks for particular ethno-linguistic groups (Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez, & Ramirez, 2004; Gollop, 1997; Liu, 1995). Likewise, studies in the immigration literature examine how strong local ties in ethnic and immigrant communities contribute to social capital in the form of aide, social support and reciprocity (Nee & Sanders, 2001; Portes & Bach, 1985; Salaff & Greve, 2004; Waters, 2003).

Courtwright’s study of the social networking practices of Latino newcomers in the US seeking health information points to the use of both strong and weak social ties (2005). Her research indicates that immigrant newcomers will initially rely on family, friends, and co-workers (their strong ties) for health information. The information that comes from these strong ties is often inadequate. However, family and friends are often able to put newcomers in contact with weak ties such as health care or settlement workers (within the family or friend’s network); these weak ties are often able to provide newcomers with adequate information (Courtwright, 2005).

Gatekeepers have also been identified as an important local source of information in ethnically diverse communities. (Chatman, 1987; Metoyer-Duran, 1993) Metoyer-Duran explores the role that information gatekeepers play in various ethno-linguistic communities in California, and offers profiles of different types of gatekeepers (ranging from the impeder to the leader/executive). Gatekeepers are considered to be knowledgeable by the community because they speak multiple languages (both the first language of the group and the official language of the host country) and hold prestigious occupations within the community. They are often called upon to provide or find information for community members. In his study of Korean graduate students, Jeong (2004) identifies a Korean clergyman as an information gatekeeper for students. Rather than providing adequate information access, this gatekeeper significantly limits what information is available to students as well as providing inaccurate information (Jeong, 2004).

Similar to gatekeepers, Chu (1999) highlights how immigrant children often become information mediators for their parents. Indeed, children are likely to develop English language skills more quickly than their parents. When children become responsible for identifying and collecting information for family use, this may result in poor information choices and retrieval because children tend to have less sophisticated information seeking techniques than do adults (Chu, 1999).

### *Social Networks and Transnational Ties*

Immigrants are also known to retain social networks with individuals from the source country. The *Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey* (Statistics Canada, 2003) indicates that 57% of first generation immigrants have a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic background (Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 8), 68% value customs and traditions from their ethnic background (Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 9), and 75% are in contact with family members outside of Canada at least once a month (Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 10). These facts point to the presence in Canada of transnationalism.

Transnationalism suggests that many immigrants retain ongoing ties with their home countries through various means including “social, cultural, economic and political linkages” (Kelly, 2003, p. 210). Kelly lists several ways that transnational processes have been enabled in our present historical context (2003). He points to the Internet, inexpensive phone calls and airfare, and international financial institutions to illustrate ways that communication and financial exchange is being facilitated among immigrants in ways not previously possible.

Although immigrants may have difficulty accessing information sources within Canada, they may also have access to transnational network ties not available to the Canadian born. Examples of transnational information practices include: collecting pre-migration information from family and friends who have migrated (Wong & Salaff, 1998); transnational entrepreneurship (Wong, 2004); providing or receiving employment and other referrals from individuals abroad (Kennedy, 2004); locating health and other information for family and friends abroad; and, information about the health and wellbeing of family and friends from the source country. Additionally, transnational sources such as online language newspapers and websites are regularly consulted by immigrants (Caidi & MacDonald, 2008).

Within Information Studies, there is very little research that directly examines the transnational information practices of immigrants. It is beginning to be recognized however, that there is much to be learnt from “recognizing the place-based, lived realities of immigrant communities while also acknowledging the existence of complex, globalized, diasporic information environments” (Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007, p. 1734).

Although there is little research on the specific transnational information practices of immigrants, information is often named as a commodity that travels

transnationally between immigrants (Williams, 2006), communities (Faist, 2000), work places (Kennedy, 2004), and organizations (Finkelievich, 2004). More research is needed to determine how this information travels and how it is used.

### *“Ethnic” Media*

Another important source of information for immigrants is “ethnic media”. Media in general, was identified as the second most popular source of information for immigrants in the 12 studies polled above. Sources included newspapers, Internet, TV, and radio. Many of the studies also highlighted the use of non English language print and broadcast media of both local and international origin. Satellite TV, local language newspapers, and International websites are all examples of ethnic media. These resources appears to be a significant source of information for both newcomers and longer established immigrants (Karanfil, 2007; Lee, 2004; Lin & Song, 2006)

Research examines how “ethnic” local newspapers are used to keep track of events in both the source country and the local neighbourhood (Lin & Song, 2006). As such they act to promote connections abroad and locally. Other research examines how the proliferation of satellite TV is contributing to transnational contact (Karanfil, 2007; Lee, 2004). In particular, immigrants appear to prefer to watch news programs from their countries of origin indicating a keen interest in what is going on in those countries (Karanfil, 2007; Lee, 2004).

Rigoni (2005) argues that online Muslim minority media in Britain and France function as a contributor to social inclusion and full citizenship because “group identity politics are revitalized from within and the politics of multiculturalism are advanced” (p. 577). Because a great deal of “ethnic” media is found online, the implications of the consumption of “ethnic” media, is discussed in further detail in the following section on Information Communication Technologies (ICTs).

### *Organizations and Institutions*

There are a number of organizations that have been identified in the twelve studies (examined above) as information sources for immigrants. These include: community organizations, social service agencies, employment centres, settlement agencies, public libraries, language training centres, immigrant organizations, professional associations, and schools. And no doubt there are many more examples that were not captured in the 12 studies surveyed because information tends to travel informally in spaces where people meet, referred to as “information grounds”.

An information ground has been defined by Fisher (néé Pettigrew) as “an environment temporarily created by the behaviour of people who have come together to perform a given task, but from which emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information” (1999, p. 811). More research is needed into what types of information grounds exist for

immigrants, or which venues become a de facto information ground for them (such as bowling alleys, grocery stores, churches). In their study of Hispanic migrant workers, Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez, and Ramirez (2004) identify church, school and the workplace as places where information spontaneously traveled among participants.

In addition to the informal sharing of information that tends to happen at institutional sites (both formal and informal) where people gather, many of the organizations identified above provide formal information services to immigrants. For example settlement services, ethno-cultural organizations, and libraries all provide targeted services to immigrants.

Both settlement services and ethno-cultural organizations provide services targeted specifically to immigrants. Often these organizations are funded by government to provide particular programs and information services to immigrants. Part of the reason for this service delivery model is the assumption that ethno-cultural groups have the resources to provide information in culturally relevant ways. It is also well known that membership in organizations, such as ethno-cultural groups, contribute to social network building (Owusu, 2000).

Within this literature review, a number of studies address how settlement organizations can improve their information services to new immigrants (George & Tsang, 1999; George, 2002). Key recommendations are to provide pre-immigration services as well as longer term services such as family counselling and mentorship. It is recognized that settlement organizations have a role to play in immigrant information access beyond the immediate stages of settlement.

Scholars within Information Studies examine how one information institution, the public library, should respond to immigrant information needs (Chu, 1999; Fisher, Durrance, & Bouch Hinton, 2004;). In addition, there is a growing body of practitioner based literature that documents how libraries should serve immigrants (Mylopoulos, 2004; Prock, 2003). The challenge for libraries is to balance the specific needs of immigrants with their mandate to serve the general population. Multicultural and multilingual collections and services guidelines exist to facilitate this process (Ballance & Zielinska, 1998; Libraries and Archives Canada, 2003). However, the inclusion of multilingual collections and services has been slow to appear, with exceptions in larger cities such as Toronto and Vancouver.

### *Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)*

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a significant information source for immigrants. Indeed, they are central to the shifts taking place within immigration by providing different and accessible cultural mediums such as online local newspapers in languages other than English and French, newsgroups, chat rooms, and home country internet sites (Aizlewood and Doody,

2002). They also affect employment opportunities for immigrants through online education, online job searching, and by providing transnational entrepreneurial opportunities (Salaff and Greve, 2004).

Technology has been recognized as one of the main impetuses enabling transnational practices because it allows for relatively easy and rapid communication across great distances. For example, Vertovec (2004) explores how the proliferation of inexpensive phone cards has contributed to transnational contact. Uy-Tioco describes how text-messaging allows overseas Filipina workers to parent from abroad (2007). Additionally, immigrants often participate in the civic and political life of their home countries via online newspapers, the Internet, and telephone (Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller, 2003). Global social justice movements such as environmental and peace movements have also been mobilized and enabled through the use of ICTs (Finkelievich, 2004; Ong, 2003).

ICTs are used for both task based and socially motivated information practices, spanning both local and transnational environments. For example, in their study of the ICT information practices of International students, Mehra and Papajohn (2007) describe how International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) use the Internet for “glocal” (both local and global) information practices. Their study found that among ITAs, email and the phone were the most favourable activities for both communication with the home country AND finding information in the US (2007).

This study also indicated that students who spent more time engaging in social activities on campus also spent more time engaging in online activities, such as: chatroom activities; listservs and newsgroup participation; and, audio/videoconferencing use (p. 26). This supports “the more the more” argument made by Wellman (1999) and others who argue that Internet contact enhances “real world” contact rather than replacing it. Viewed from this perspective, the Internet is a potentially valuable tool for fostering both local and transnational networks.

A recent report commissioned by HRSDC and conducted by Caidi, Longford, Allard and Dechief (forthcoming) documents how publicly available ICTs are used by immigrants at non-profit institutions such Community Networks (CNs), settlement agencies, and public libraries. They found that employment related activities are the main reason immigrants are using ICTs at the organizations they visited. It was stressed that new immigrants are very busy making ends meet and are making strategic use of their time in public settings where computers and other information and settlement resources are available.

ICTs have significantly affected employment practices for immigrants through online education, job searching capabilities, and the provision of online government and settlement information. Their findings reveal that this may not necessarily be beneficial to all immigrants because Canadian bureaucratic

structures and online interfaces are difficult to navigate for new users and those whose first language is not English.

At libraries, more so than at settlement agencies, ICTs are being used for cultural and recreational activities. In particular, immigrants go to libraries to read online language newspapers and use language databases.

In terms of ICT use across the settlement stages, researchers found that at the beginning of the settlement process, newcomers were equally or more interested in seeking information directly from individuals in their new cities than in using the Internet to find information. Study respondents indicated that “making connections” and learning how to evaluate the glut of information sources on the Internet were primary motivations to make personal connections when they first arrived to Canada (Caidi, Longford, Allard, Dechief, forthcoming).

As immigrants continue to live in Canada, their ICT knowledge and practices begin to look more and more like the Canadian born. They also follow mainstream trends indicating that income and education correlate strongly with ICT use. Canadian born and immigrant ICT use differs in terms of the frequency that immigrants maintain ongoing transnational contact and communication (Caidi, Longford, Allard, Dechief, forthcoming).

The provision of ICT services and programs is a significant component for information service providers. But it also has its challenges. As discussed in the health information section, it is not enough to make content available in digital form. Access, after all, is about more than content alone. It includes issues of usability, literacy, and effective policies. In the case of ICTs, user-interface design, search and linguistic capabilities, and taxonomies need to be designed to be as inclusive and culturally relevant as possible. However because culture, from a technical perspective, is a broad and often “messy” concept, this is not always possible. By trying to cater to individual needs, one runs the risk of making the system hard to use for most people. More research on cross-cultural usability is being undertaken, but there is a general consensus that advances in this area are difficult and at best limited to very narrow domain areas.

ICTs are also being used to create culturally-specific content. Srinivasan (Srinivasan, 2006; Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007) examines the development of information systems within the context of culturally-differentiated communities, in particular, how an information system can be developed to engage communities to develop their socio-economic, educational, and cultural infrastructures. Indeed, an analysis of communities’ cultural practices can be used as guiding points for designing an information system’s architecture, particularly with respect to how it represents, categorizes, and disseminates the information it stores. Similarly, there is a call for more participatory approaches to designing information systems that include community members not merely as recipients but as active participants and co-designers of any systems.

## *Summary*

Based on the literature surveyed above, various threads have been identified, and some important themes have emerged that highlight the complexity for immigrants in navigating an unknown information environment. We summarize these in terms of:

- the role of trust in information seeking
- using information practices to build networks and relationships
- instrumental and expressive information practices

A greater discussion of each issue is provided below.

### *The Value of Trust*

For some immigrant communities trust appears to play a large role in choosing information sources. Metoyer-Duran (1993) explores the role of trust among information gatekeepers. Likewise Sligo and Jameson (2000) examine how Pacific Islanders respond favourably to health information when conveyed through “insiders” within their communities.

According to Silvio (2006), Sudanese youth often immigrate to Canada with their families to escape civil war and find a better life. Most prefer easily accessible informal sources such as trusted friends, relatives and co-workers. In general, “they are very sceptical of information they receive from the radio, television, Internet, and other mass media” (2006, p. 263). They are also suspicious of the government agencies with whom they deal, although this mistrust tends to diminish over time. Although Silvio does not explain why, one can speculate that the political climate of civil war may have led Sudanese youth to be suspicious of people and organizations with whom they are not familiar.

Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez, & Ramirez’s, (2004) examination of low income Hispanic farm migrants reveals that they prefer to use trusted informal sources for their information needs. Because language is the largest barrier for this group, Spanish language radio and community organizations that provide services in Spanish are preferred information sources. Other important information sources are Spanish speakers such as family and friends who emigrated to the region months or years earlier. If information is not readily available through these trusted sources, they will not pursue it.

It is important however, not to assume that trust issues only apply to so-called “vulnerable immigrants”. For example, immigrant university students in Liu and Redfern’s 1997 study indicated that they were reluctant to use the reference desk at the University library because they were afraid of speaking English. This doesn’t necessarily indicate an issue of trusting the information or response coming from the reference desk. Reluctance to use the reference desk may be

well founded; it may also indicate a mistrust of “outsiders” and their willingness to be tolerant or understanding of language difficulties. It is evident that more research is needed on trust-building and other related issues because issues of trust play a significant role in preventing immigrants from accessing necessary information.

#### *Relationship and Network Building*

Several studies reveal interesting findings about the connections between information seeking using human sources and simultaneously building relationships (social capital) in the host country. For example, Chien (2005) examined Settlement.org, a Toronto-based agency that provides settlement information to newcomers. She studied the use made by immigrants of Settlement.org’s online bulletin board and argues that in addition to informing immigrants, the board contributes to involving them in Canadian life (by connecting them to others, including Canadian born). She also observes that newcomers often have blogs in their first languages directed to others who are contemplating emigrating from a shared home country. Not only do immigrants find information from these sources but they are a significant site of engagement and social networking for both content contributors and information seekers before and after arrival.

Similarly, Dechief (2006) explores the role that community networks play in the social and economic inclusion of immigrants. She argues that although newcomers initially go to community networks to make use of their information services, they often become volunteers at these organizations (in her study, the Vancouver Community Network). Through volunteering, immigrants acquired Canadian “work experience” and increased Canadian social networks that contribute to civic participation and finding employment.

In their study of migrant workers and their families, Fisher et al. (2004) argue that their respondents deliberately work to build stronger relationships from other immigrant acquaintances they meet in the host country in order to facilitate both information finding and support networks. Their findings suggest that, “in social networking terms, [immigrants] want to create strong ties from their invaluable weak ties” (2004, p. 9). Developing strong ties in this context is used for both information seeking and social support.

Such research studies illustrate how information practices may address multiple goals such as belonging and inclusion, and leads to outcomes beyond just finding settlement information, such as the development of social capital. As well, in addition to the fact that social networks are necessary for information seeking, information seeking itself promotes the development of social networks.

#### *Instrumental and Expressive Information*

When we expand the term “information practices” to include non-directed activities such as media browsing or communication with home, it becomes

obvious that information practices are not just about finding *instrumental* information – information with which to complete a task. Information practices also comprise more *expressive* activities. These activities, which often have more of a *phatic* function (i.e., small talk or informal activities that open up a social channel and can lead to more substantial or factual communication) are not often accounted for in discussions of immigrant information needs.

For instance, Sampredo illustrates how immigrants use transnational sources to create “connections” or feelings of closeness with their home country. He observes that daily language newspapers are read for reasons beyond information collection; they are consumed to create symbolic closeness with the home country (Sampredo, 1998).

Mitra (2006) and Wenjing (2005) both describe how virtual spaces such as websites are used to create unique immigrant identities. In both cases, the development and maintenance of identity practices motivates the information practice. Mitra argues that immigrants of Indian origin use Indian websites as “safe” spaces where they can express themselves freely (2006). Wenjing argues that Chinese diasporic websites allow Chinese immigrants to maintain their “Chinese” identities while simultaneously creating new identities based on experiences in their new countries.

Caidi and MacDonald (2008) examined Canadian Muslims or those of Arab origins and how their information practices mediate and shape their experiences and sense of belonging in Canada. The aim was to understand how individuals perceiving themselves as “under siege” after the 9/11 attacks go about seeking and using information to make sense of their lives. The findings point to an interesting – if not surprising – paradox between the lack of confidence in fair reporting on Islam and Muslims in the media, along with an increased awareness and consumption of media objects by the population sampled. Respondents indicated that the 911 event itself, the subsequent media coverage about Muslims, and respondents’ own attempts at making sense of the media coverage, caused them to evaluate what it meant to be Muslim, in a way they had not previously.

Mehra and Papajohn (2007) also argue that there is a significant link between emotional wellbeing, cultural understanding, and information practices. International students in their study use the Internet to maintain transnational contacts because they perceive “the Internet to provide significant social and psychological/emotional benefits in the process of maintaining communication to the home country” (p. 26). They interpret communicating with home as an information practice because the emotional support derived from transnational ties contributes (in terms of psychological comfort and overcoming isolation) to the ability to understand US culture, which is a “culturally alien information environment” to students.

The preceding sections of this literature review describe the information needs, sources, and barriers to finding information experienced by both newcomers and longer established immigrants. We now turn to a review of the literature that describes best practices of delivery of relevant information to newcomers.

## **VI. Best practices**

In this exploratory section we look at the significance of “best practices” (BP) for the information needs and practices relating to immigration to Canada. Here the term “best practices” is defined; ways of situating best practices are described; and some relevant examples of BP are provided.<sup>4</sup>

### *Definition*

Writing on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Bendixsen and de Guchteneire (2003) define best practices as “successful initiatives or model projects that make an outstanding, sustainable, and innovative contribution to an issue at hand” (p. 1). BP is a way of applying what has been learned and made effective in one context to others; while the term “best” is used, it is meant to inspire, not to create a competitive sentiment (Bendixsen & de Guchteneire 2003). Bendixsen and de Guchteneire state minimal requirements: a BP project must include its purposes, the criteria used for its selection, and how the practice is composed (p. 2).

There are two ways of looking at best practices. The first is what we see in the case of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) *Multicultural Communities Guidelines for Library Services*, where guidelines are provided for use in individual library branches. This is considered a generic approach to realizing an objective. The approach favoured by UNESCO, is that of a “successful practice in a particular context” as is the example of Vancouver’s Collingwood Neighbourhood House (Bendixsen & de Guchteneire, 2003).

### *Significance*

“Best practices” is a term that increased in use through the 1990s and is now used in many professional fields; business, education, policy, and governance are all realms where BP has gained regular use (Bendixsen & de Guchteneire, 2003). The concept is particularly useful for making links between research and practice. While immigration is often discussed in theoretical terms, recent immigrants and settlement workers require practical tools for ameliorating barriers to newcomers’ equal participation in Canadian society. Where programs

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<sup>4</sup> We do not look specifically at settlement-focused information provided to newcomers to ascertain a set of best practices, though given appropriate context this may be a valid approach to future research.

and tools actually work to do this, it is of great benefit to share details of their composition and implementation.

The general criteria of BP include (Bendixsen & de Guchteneire, 2003)

- *innovation*: puts forward creative solutions
- *making a difference*: has positive implications (e.g., for newcomers)
- having a *sustainable* effect: helps eradicate a problem
- being *replicable*: serves as a framework for creating projects in other contexts

### *Situating BP in this review*

The actual term “best practices” was generally not seen in the literature reviewed in this project, although it was possible to examine guidelines and success stories (e.g. Collingwood Neighbourhood House in Vancouver) in terms of best practices.

However, building a best practices database may be of benefit to the many immigrants, NGOs, settlement workers, public colleges, researchers, and policy makers at work to eradicate settlement barriers. One rare example of the use of BP in the literature is in Wayland’s (2007) *Unsettled: Legal and Policy Barriers for Newcomers to Canada*. Wayland’s work could be used to a BP database as she includes a set of “detailed recommendations” and “best practices” that address settlement (p. 25).

Bendixsen and de Guchteneire suggest that when collecting projects for a BP database, data should describe the composition of the practice, its approach and purpose as well as more complete details (i.e., stakeholders, costs, time-frame and geographical scope, an introduction to the organization(s) involved, contact persons, and strengths and weakness or "lessons learned"). These types of information should allow the reader to gain an understanding of how the project can be considered a "best" practice and can gauge the potential for initiating the project in a different context.

It is important to note that the less culture-bound a project is, the more likely it is to transfer to other contexts (Bendixsen & de Guchteneire, 2003). This note should be considered when attempting to replicate a project that works for one of Canada’s minority cultures to another. It is also noted that the success of a BP database as a means of transferring lessons learned between contexts is “highly dependent on policy-makers and other relevant actors having access to and making active use of the information” (Bendixsen & de Guchteneire, 2003).

## *BP Examples*

While the term “best practices” was rarely found in the literature discussed in this review, some projects can be described in those terms. The cases described here vary from a neighbourhood house in Vancouver and the creation of social housing in Toronto to library guidelines for maintaining multicultural resources. These quick descriptions are meant to show the possibilities of best practices for the realm of information practices as a means of reducing settlement barriers for newcomers.

One example that stands out is Vancouver’s Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH), where a wide range of activities engage neighbours. These include free English as an Additional Language (EAL) courses are offered through the LINC program, as well as courses on the themes of Getting a Work Permit, Workers Rights, and Tenant Rights. Further, child-minding, badminton, gardening, as well as fruit preserving and dispersal are all activities engaged in by CNH community members (Cavers, Carr & Sandercock, 2007). While the information provided here is not sufficient to catalog this series of projects in a BP database, CNH certainly seems to be an inspiring place that benefits its community members. It also seems positioned to share information and contribute to programs in other regions.

The guidelines (Ballance & Zielinska, 1998) established by the IFLA *Multicultural Communities Guidelines for Library Services* could be considered best practices, although they are a generic approach to realizing an objective. As an umbrella organization, IFLA recommends to its member branches that “library services to ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities should be seen as integral to any library service” and it provides guidelines in terms of Responsibility for Provision, Library Materials, Cross-Cultural Materials and Services, Information and Reference Services, Technical Services, Extension Services, and Staffing.

Library and Archives Canada (2003) provides its own “Guidelines for Developing Multicultural Collections and Websites” which includes very practical and replicable steps for ensuring that local branches can proceed with meeting a variety of cultural needs. The first three steps are to:

- conduct an environmental scan to determine the profile of the local multicultural community and of people who might use a multicultural library service
- conduct a needs assessment to determine the library and information needs of the multicultural community
- develop a plan with specific goals and objectives to guide the delivery of multicultural library services

A set of guidelines adapted from Neil Bradford’s findings based on eleven case studies of communities in Europe and North America from a Canadian Policy

Research Network (CPRN) study of *Cities and Communities that Work* (Maxwell 2006, p. 10). These are:

- recruit a local champion as leader
- ensure equitable participation by business, labour, neighbourhood groups, charities, foundations, education leaders and so on
- build partnerships with financial intermediaries and governments at all levels
- foster creativity through risk-taking, pilot projects and other experiments
- be accountable – set targets, measure progress, and report often

Maxwell also provides an example of a BP: the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council project's very successful internship project for well-qualified immigrants. Maxwell notes that 87% of the 226 interns have gained full-time employment, and most with their host organization (2006, p. 10).

As another example, the Volunteer Canada document (described in the "Employment" section of Information Needs in this document) establishes a cross-Canada network between Government departments and NGOs that provide employment-related information to recent immigrants. It assesses and provides recommendations for documents already in use by Canadian NGOs in this field. This document could provide a basis for further research on best practices of information provided in textual formats.

It may also be possible to develop BP from Johnson and Martin's (2006) report that describes how the Toronto Community Foundation worked with private landlords, Toronto City Council, and the Ontario government to make 5,400 additional rental units available to low-income people (p.19). This case may be too specific to local needs and governance to be replicable, but aspects of the project may be transferrable.

Other potential BP cases may exist in the literature, but what is more common to find is a series of issues that have been identified, or a list of broad recommendations to policy makers. In certain contexts these may prove to be very beneficial but cannot be considered BP. As an example, Johnson and Martin (2006) provide the simple model of regularly asking these questions within particular themes such as 'governance' (p.25).

1. What are we currently doing?
2. What could we do?
3. Addressing the gap – what are our next steps?

Best practices do have a place in immigration-related information provision. Working to collect and share best practices, such as the guidelines and programs noted above, could greatly benefit the work of government departments and immigrant-serving NGOs, and could reduce needless duplication of efforts.

## RESEARCH GAPS

Despite the importance of information for immigration and settlement purposes, studies on the information practices, uses, and needs of immigrants tend to take a narrow approach, focusing on specific demographics or contexts. While these approaches are extremely valuable, more research is needed that draws conclusions across the various small studies. In this section, we highlight several research gaps identified in the literature review. Where possible, we also identify potential research project designs or ongoing studies to ameliorate these gaps.

### *Research on Settlement Stages*

Although we found some evidence that information needs do change across the settlement process, more empirical studies and longitudinal approaches (i.e., immigrants' information needs across stages of immigration or the life course lens) would contribute greatly to our understanding of how newcomers and longer-established immigrants find the information they need at different stages of settlement, and in the context of their daily lives. Current studies might also make use of the data they collect differently. Most studies we examined did identify when newcomers arrived; however, they did not examine information practices in light of this data.

### *Examining Immigrant Demographics*

More research is needed to address difficulties comparing the attitudes toward information and the information practices of various types of immigrants, notably differences between newcomers vs. longer established immigrants. Similarly, more research is needed on the differences between immigrants vs. refugees, and between different classes of immigrants (skilled workers vs. family reunion vs. entrepreneurs, etc.). It is noted that we found no studies that examined the information practices of business or economic class immigrants. Comparing immigrants living in urban vs. rural, remote, or isolated areas is also a necessary area of research. Furthermore, the effects of age (generational gaps, specific needs of seniors vs. youth, etc.), along with gender differences, socio-economic status, and even race may also be enriching factors to consider in order to obtain a more robust understanding of the immigration process.

### *Examining "Types" of Information*

During the review of the literature, it was difficult to find studies that focused on particular "types" of information seeking (with the notable exception of health information seeking). In addition to calling for more research on the information needs and uses in the obvious areas of health, settlement, housing, and employment information (and drawing comparisons between them), there is much to be learnt about the role that leisure-related information (e.g., fiction

reading, sports, arts and culture) plays in immigrants' lives. This area is lacking in research despite the important role that leisure plays in the lives of immigrants and its value for building and maintaining social networks and contributing to a sense of belonging, as some studies attest (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000, 2005; Tirone, 2003-2004).

### *Research on ICTs*

Little research exists about the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for information seeking. We simply do not have enough data about how immigrants make use of the Internet at home and in public spaces. More studies are needed to capture how it is used for both expressive (social) and instrumental functions. It is particularly important to interview immigrants themselves and hear their stories. A promising study is the Everyday Internet project with its 'neighbourhood ethnography' of Internet usage (Viseu et al., 2006).

Lenhart et al.'s (2003) study of the barriers to Internet access shows that what a person thinks of the Internet affects their Internet use or keeps them off-line. Similarly, cross-cultural metaphors of ICTs have not been heavily studied, although much can be learnt from them. Duncker's (2002) study of digital libraries and computing metaphors among the Maori in New Zealand suggests that metaphors are deeply rooted in cultural practices and as such, should be an integral part of information systems design. Previous research on the use of Internet search tools (Iivonen & White, 2001) has shown differences in how users from different cultural groups search for information. These differences in behavior have implications for cross-cultural usability and the usable design of information resources and services for culturally diverse groups (Caidi & Komlodi, 2003; Komlodi, Caidi, & Wheeler, 2004).

Within the ICT literature, more research is needed on the relationship between Internet information practices and other concepts such as social capital. For example, studies that examine employment seeking practices using the Internet (Jansen, Jansen and Spink, 2005; McQuaid, Lindsay, and Greig, 2004), indicate that although web-based job searching can be fruitful, it is important to recognize the overriding importance of local social networks for employment information sharing and referrals (McQuaid, Lindsay, and Greig, 2004). An examination of the literature on ethnic social networks indicates a great deal about the limits that social capital places on employment seeking.

### *Transnational Research*

Although transnational research is increasing, there are also many research gaps to be filled in this area. To this end, Allard's current dissertation research investigates how new immigrants (i.e. arrivals within the last three years) from India to Toronto make use of their transnational network ties (individuals living

outside of Canada with whom they have contact) when seeking settlement information (e.g. employment, housing, and citizenship information etc). Drawing upon the notion of social capital, she explores how local and transnational network ties constrain and/or provide access to settlement resources. Using social network analysis (a method that examines the content and pattern of personal relationships in individual social networks), she traces how local and transnational networks are mobilized by individuals, as well as the motivations individuals identify as they seek information through a variety of formats.

Another such study, the Information Practices of Ethno-cultural Communities (led by Nadia Caidi, with Danielle Allard), examines the everyday information behaviour of recent immigrants to Toronto from China, India, and Iran. It addresses how new immigrants find the information they need when they first arrive to Canada. Such studies are meant to bridge a gap between current transnational research and immigrants' information practices.

### *Comparing Literatures of "Need"*

Another fruitful area of study would be to systematically analyze the means by which different bodies of literature approach and comprehend settlement or immigration "needs". What is brought into focus and what is obscured in each strand of literature (e.g. information studies, communication studies, community-based research, social work, immigrant studies, etc.) reveal telling differences about how the immigration process is understood both by policymakers, service providers, researchers and the immigrants themselves. Juxtaposing the research can result in a conversation between the various stakeholders and elicit rich findings about the assumptions made and the gap between discourse and practice, between imagined lives and real needs.

### *Non-English Language Studies*

Another gap that needs to be filled has been mentioned earlier, namely increasing the use of *non-English language studies* in our research. There is a very valuable body of literature on immigrants' needs and issues that can be tapped into, provided one makes the necessary commitment and resources to researching and assessing the findings from work in other languages and from other countries.

### *Best Practices*

Finally, there is a need for a thorough collection, review, and evaluation of best practices that focuses on different forms of information service delivery (for example, delivery models that take advantage and make use of social networks). Similarly, a comparison of best practices that focuses on pre-immigration and long term settlement services may elicit interesting findings both for service providers and policymakers. Determining best practices of immigrant information

service delivery by comparing information documents prepared for newcomers by various organizations could be very useful. An example of such a document is *Career Information for New Immigrants and Refugees: Needs Assessment Research* (n.d.) which compares career information documents across dozens of immigrant information providing organizations.

Despite these gaps, there is an increasingly rich and useful body of literature that examines (directly or indirectly) the information practices of immigrants. The potential for future research is tremendous.

## **RELEVANCE FOR POLICY MAKERS**

This relatively brief and exploratory review of literature focusing on the information practices of immigrants provides a number of important lessons for policymakers and information/service providers.

A useful starting point, as we mentioned earlier, is the **stages of settlement**. Whether one uses the life course lens model or Mwarigha's three settlement stages, these approaches are very useful to conceive of the particular circumstances of immigrants at each stage, along with the associated needs (including information requirements), behaviours, and actions undertaken to meet these needs. We note that the lack of action (or uncertainty) about how to find required information is also a very important finding from an informational perspective.

More attention must therefore be paid to understanding the role that the settlement stages play in the information provision models and cycles used by various service providers and government agencies. For instance, at each settlement stage, an **information needs assessment** can be conducted and appropriate materials be provided in a variety of formats and languages.

The lack of **reliable official data** has been pointed out by many researchers. Perspectives from immigrants and refugees who use particular services are collected in a number of studies, but this information is usually lost to other members of the NGO sector, policy makers, the communities themselves and the society because of "a lack of systematic strategies of dissemination and communication between different groups and sectors involved in research and policy development in the area of immigrant and refugee integration" (Robinson cited in Castles et al., 2002, p.159).

A related recommendation relates to **knowledge transfer** between the various immigrant serving agencies, governmental agencies, ethno-culturally specific organizations and community-based agencies. The problem of communication and silos is not restricted to various departments within the government, but pervades more generally (ISAs have similar problems as well as public library

systems and many other organizations). Implications of this problem for serving immigrants, however, are significant.

An **audit** may be one of many useful tools used to draw a map of what is available across departments and agencies. As audit consists of a compilation, review, and assessment (for currency, relevance, wording, languages, etc.) of all the materials produced for immigrants, by various departments or actors. Tracking down all of this knowledge production would be a good first step. Next, consolidation, and perhaps re-organization, of the materials along the settlement stages model may be considered. At the very least, an audit provides a departure point for discussion.

It is well known that humans favour **redundancy** when it comes to acquiring new types of information (especially in the context of migration, where one leaves his or her country and settles in a new land). The challenge for designing service delivery within and between departments is to allow for some amount of redundancy (in itself a good thing) while providing authoritative sources to which one can go, along with consistent information delivered in multiple formats.

Not surprisingly, any endeavour to audit and restructure services (as needed) require considerable **resources** (human and financial) as well as **commitment** on the part of the various actors involved. It is very important to make the process as participatory as possible, and to allow all stakeholders to share their knowledge, expertise, insights and ideas. As a corollary, if true collaboration is sought and valued, funding or research grants would require a high level of participation by community partners as well as adequate **funding** made available to community-based practitioners to ensure that they can make real and valued contributions to the research endeavour (outside their already stretched schedules).

It is not clear how much government departments track the use that is made of their materials (both print and online). For online materials, it is technically possible (and relatively easy and cheap) to **track the navigation patterns of users** (down to one's mouse clicks in particular sections, or the length of time one spends on a particular entry). If used cautiously (i.e., protecting one's privacy), web usage metrics can provide valuable insights into the access points and navigation patterns of those for whom the information is intended, and can contribute greatly to these evaluation mechanisms.

Because of our focus on information and informational practices, it is essential that policymakers be aware of the necessary **skills and literacy** required of immigrants to make sense of their new information environments. Providing immigrants with the information literacy skills required of them to understand where to access necessary information in the first place (be it at home or at a public access computer terminal), how to look for information, how to evaluate the authority of various information sources, and how to make use of it, is a

worthwhile investment. Additional resources should be devoted to enhancing immigrants' knowledge of the information infrastructure of the host country, and to acquire or hone their information literacy skills. A collaborative approach is required that includes appropriate government agencies, relevant ISAs, and Information Studies schools throughout Canada. Literacy skills may be provided in the form of workshops, online courses, video materials and mentorship opportunities.

Information services should not be considered as required only for immigrants. Established residents also need information and education about newcomers to Canada. Robinson examined how **established residents need more and better information about newcomers** via community newspapers, library resources, and outreach programmes (cited in Castles et al., 2002, p.140). Others have called for anti-racism education, cultural community activities, and better dissemination of the Canadian government's immigration agenda.

Last but not least, an important actor to keep in mind is the immigrant herself. We often see studies that examine various aspects of immigrants' experiences or the challenges they face, but where the **voices of immigrants** are not heard. Even something as innocuous as asking newcomers and longer established immigrants what social inclusion means to them in a real and concrete sense is lacking. Achieving a balance between the community as a unit of analysis and the individual as a unit of analysis is key. Different approaches are required to study these two aspects.

Although this list is by no means exhaustive, it conveys a sense of how research on immigrant information practices can inform government and immigrant service delivery policies.

## **CONCLUSION**

Communication barriers, lack of knowledge of the host country, loss of socio-economic and family networks, and lack of recognition of foreign educational or professional credentials are some of the established causes of social isolation and feelings of exclusion by immigrants (Weerasinghe, 2000). All of these issues are, to some extent, problems caused by a lack of relevant information. We therefore conclude this overview of the literature by reiterating what we have suggested in other places (Caidi & Allard, 2005); social exclusion may well be an information problem, caused in part by the significant barriers immigrants face as they navigate the Canadian information environment.

In order to understand the information practices of immigrants and cater to their needs, a holistic approach is advocated to encompass a closer examination of the relationship between immigrant social inclusion, social capital (immigrant social networks), and information practices. Indeed, assessing the contextual and

situational factors constituting the information environments that define the information practices of immigrants is essential.

There is no one size fits all model when it comes to addressing information needs; we therefore need multiple strategies to inform and empower the individuals who have chosen to immigrate to Canada. Improving immigrants' information literacy skills, language skills, community engagement, and social networks should be seen as a complement to providing sound government information. This is itself complemented by the important role of mediators, facilitators and "translators" played by ISAs, ethno-culturally specific agencies, and libraries.

In lieu of a conclusion, we advocate for:

- more research in the various areas outlined above where there are gaps in our understanding of the issues faced by immigrants;
- expanding our notions of "information needs" to include vital settlement information as well as leisure material, media consumption, and the maintenance and development of social networks;
- expanding our notions of service delivery to account for barriers to finding information such as language and trust (for example by delivering information through word of mouth networks);
- increasing knowledge transfer between various actors, including more fluidity between research and practice (the work of Metropolis, for instance, is to be commended);
- more funding and resources for collaborative processes;
- assessing various agencies' own information environments, (including the process of producing and disseminating information to immigrants);
- increasing collaboration and communication between various actors around best practices and strategies for information provision and access;
- ensuring that the voices of immigrants are heard by including them as active participants rather than mere recipients in the design of information strategies and tools.

In order to attract and successfully "include" new immigrants to Canada, our hope is that Canada becomes known for its excellent settlement and immigration information infrastructure. After all, it is increasingly clear from the literature that the implications of social exclusion hurt not only those whom are excluded, but also the broader society.

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## Appendix I Summary of Studies of Immigrant Information Needs

Study	County/ Language	Information Needs	Information Sources	Barriers to Information	Immigrant Stages	Income	Career	Age	Gender differences	Lit Area
<b>Recommendation for the Service Delivery of Services to Mandarin Speaking Newcomers from Mainland China to Canada by George et al. (2004)</b>	Mandarin speaking newcomers from Mainland China to Canada	pre-migration information; practical and spoken language skills; employment information; job searching skills; connections to professional associations; information about Canadian culture; settlement information; child care; access to affordable housing; family supports; services to the elderly; adolescent support; volunteer opportunities; pre-immigration information; translation and interpretation services	not provided	great difference in "social systems, policy, and cultural values" hinders access to information services and Canadian labour market	identifies 3 types of information needed for immigrant settlement based on time spent in Canada 1) basic settlement needs 2) occupational information for highly educated immigrants 3) information about family services and support for longer arrived immigrants	mixed	mixed	mixed	Immigrant women may not access settlement services until their children are grown	Settlement
<b>Newcomers to Canada from former Yugoslavia by George &amp; Tsang (2000)</b>	Former Yugoslavia (refugees) newcomer to Canada	pre-migration information; language training; employment information; special services to foreign trained professionals; housing information; financial education and information; health information; Canadian institutions and services	Full list not provided; institutional services used (at low rates) include: interpreter or translator service, language and career counselling, settlement services and job seeking services	language; isolation	participants have been in Canada for less than 2 years; report calls for long term follow up of services	low/ mixed	mixed	mixed	not provided	Settlement

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<b>Consultation on Settlement Programming for African Newcomers by George &amp; Mwarigha (1999)</b>	African newcomers to Canada	pre-migration information; affordable housing; employment training; language training; information on available services; orientation to Canadian life; family counselling; making community connections; translation; obtaining essential documents (SIN and health card); mentoring; peer counselling; educational upgrading	*family and friends; religious organizations; government agencies such as settlement houses and employment service centres  *in order of preference	linguistic and cultural differences; lack of familiarity with "the norms and values of Judeo-Christian, Anglo-Saxon and Western European social, economic, and political systems"; discrimination in housing and employment; inadequate bilingual services	focuses on settlement needs	low/ mixed	mixed	mixed	need for family counselling on gender relations, especially for women	Settlement
<b>Ethno-Information Needs by Chivhanga (2005)</b>	mixed to Finland	employment information; language instruction; information in English or mother tongue; local cultural information or information about "life in Finland"; education information; business information; social services; information about joining/finding organizations; "opportunities for immigrants"	Websites; friends and family; authorities such as police, employment and social services offices; books, newspapers & professional magazines; immigrant and professional associations; Finnish language training centres	language (most information is available in Finnish and English only. Respondents want services also provided in their first language)	those who had been in Finland longer were "looking for information that will make their stay in Finland more productive"	mixed	mixed; 50% have University education	mixed	not provided	Government report

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<b>The Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Immigrant Southern Sudanese Youth in the City of London, Ontario: An Exploratory Study by Silvio (2006)</b>	Sudan to Canada	educational information (scholarships and bursaries, career prospects, counselling, adult education, continuing education); health information (how to find a family doctor, treatment issues); employment information (how to find employment, how to write resume and cover letter, work safety, labour practices); information about how to deal with racism; and, political information	trusted friends, relatives and co-workers (#1); radio; TV; Internet; newspapers; churches; mosques; community centres; employment resource centres; public libraries	family poverty; language; mistrust of authority such as radio, TV, Internet and government employees	not provided	low income	students	youth (18-25)	women needed info on hygiene, pre-and post natal care, and immunizing facilities	LIS academic
<b>Information Behaviour of Migrant Hispanic Farm Workers and Their Families in the Pacific Northwest by Fisher et al (2004)</b>	Hispanic (mostly from Mexico) to USA	where to find a job; income support; getting help with English (reading documents, correct pronunciation; translation); educational information about the GED or scholarships; recreational information; computer help; legal information; homework help; current events	Spanish speaking family and friends (#1); Internet; Spanish language radio; Spanish speaking community organizations; library (Information Grounds: Church; school; workplace)	language; legal status; suspicion of "outsiders"; literacy; sense of being outside the mainstream community; cultural value differences; over reliance on using children as cultural moderators	focuses on general information practices (no specific mention of settlement issues)	low income	migrant workers	mixed	not provided	LIS academic
<b>Information Practices of Canadian Muslims Post 9/11 by Caidi and MacDonald (2008)</b>	Canadian Muslims or those of Arab origins to Canada	information about identity construction; information about how to position themselves vis-a-vis Canadian society; media literacy; information about racism and discrimination	news items (world news, "home country" news, Canada news, local news); strong transnational ties (e.g., transnational family sources; transnational information sources); Respondents use the Internet at 93%; newspapers and magazines at 66%; television at 56%; libraries at 43%.	perceived media biases; lack of relevant and in-depth information from Western media; suspicion from others; lack of dialogue and public education about Islam	average length in Canada 9 years	low/ middle	University students	youth	50% of females would consult a person such as a friend, family, or relative, as opposed to 29% males; 25% of females would consult organizations to only 11% of males	LIS academic

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<b>Serving the Invisible Population: Library Outreach for Migrant Farm Workers by Prock (1997)</b>	Hispanic (mostly from Mexico) to USA	health (condom use, needle sharing, AIDS info, mental health info); housing; workplace safety (pesticide information); ESL material; literacy information; job training information	not provided	poor social networks (due to migration); isolation; mistrust of library workers and authority; not aware of services provided by library; language	focuses on general information practices (no specific mention of settlement issues)	low income	migrant workers	mixed	not provided	LIS practitioner
<b>Information and a Forgotten Minority: Elderly Chinese Immigrants by Su and Conaway (1995)</b>	Chinese to USA	news about the world especially the homeland; health information; information about hobbies or interests (things to do and places to go); information about cultural or religious events; only 6% needed information on language learning; information on transportation	*local Chinese language newspaper (many did not read in English); family and friends; social service agencies; TV; radio  *in order of preference	unfamiliarity with non-Chinese environment; don't know how to ask for services; difficulty in English speaking environments	most participants have been in Country many years	mixed	retired	seniors (60+)	not provided	LIS academic
<b>Immigrant Child Mediators (ICM): Bridging the Literacy Gap in Immigrant Communities by Chu (1999)</b>	mixed to USA	educational information; medical services; home repair; recreation/entertainment/travel; employment information; immigration information; tax/government information; legal matters; business opportunities; banking information; housing information; car/car repairs information; transportation; emergency/safety matters	friends or relatives (#1); schools attended by participants; telephone directory; broadcast media; agencies; health care providers	immature search strategy due to age and unfamiliarity with many information sources	not provided	mixed	children	children	not provided	LIS academic
<b>Unbreakable Ethnic Bonds: Information Seeking-Behaviour of Korean Graduate Students in the US by Jeong (2004)</b>	Korean to USA	not provided	Church clergy; other Korean students; other church members	fear of speaking English; small "ethnic" social networks; gatekeeper that withholds and provided inaccurate information; don't read local newspaper or watch TV	participants have been in US less than 3 years; they all intend to return to Korea	low income	graduate students	adults (30-38)	not provided	LIS academic

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<b>Identification of the Information Needs of Newly Arrived Hispanic/Latino Immigrants in Durham County, North Carolina and How the Public Library May Address Those Needs by Flythe (2001)</b>	Hispanic (mostly from Mexico) to USA	not provided	for housing information (family/friends, newspaper, church, community centre); for employment information (family/friends, newspaper, community centre, church, public agency); for transportation information (friends/family, newspaper, community centre, library, Internet, public agency); prefer to read in Spanish or Spanish and English	not provided	not provided	low/ mixed	mixed	adults (18-50)	not provided	LIS Masters Thesis