



PATHWAYS TO
PROSPERITY
Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada



VOIES VERS LA
PROSPÉRITÉ
Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership

Research Findings and New Initiatives

Julie Drolet

University of Calgary

Victoria Esses

University of Western Ontario

Overview

- The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership (P2P)
- Recent Projects
- Research on the Information Needs of Immigrants Pre- and Post-Arrival and Strategies for Filling these Needs
- Current and Upcoming Projects

Pathways to Prosperity

- An alliance of university, community and government partners dedicated to fostering welcoming communities and promoting the integration of immigrants and minorities in Canada
- Base funding from a seven year partnership grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) received in 2012
- Primary and secondary collaborative research
- Knowledge transfer: bilingual website: www.p2pcanada.ca, bimonthly eBulletin, annual conference, workshops, roundtables ...

Recent Projects

- Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey
- Western Settlement Outcomes Survey
- The Information Needs of Immigrants and Strategies for Filling these Needs
- Immigrant Youth and Seniors in Alberta
- Official Language Minority Communities
- Local Immigration Partnerships and the Réseaux en immigration francophone

Recent Projects (cont.)

- Factors that Contribute to the Benefits of Internships for Internationally Qualified Professionals
- The Role of Employers in Bridging Newcomers' Absorption and Integration in the Canadian Labour Market
- Improving the Assessment of International Students' Contribution to Canadian Society
- Innovative and Promising Practices within the Immigrant Settlement Sector

The Information Needs of Immigrants Pre- and Post-Arrival and Strategies for Filling these Needs

Multivariate Analyses of the Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey

- Builds on previous analyses of the Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey: representative survey of 1006 recent immigrants in Alberta
- Uses multivariate analysis to isolate overlapping effects of multiple factors that have an impact on important outcomes – describes effects of specific factors on outcomes, independent of other factors
- Example: If immigration category, source region, and English language ability are interrelated and all predict key outcomes, multivariate analysis helps to determine their independent, unique effects

Highlights of the Multivariate Findings

Information that is Helpful to Receive After Deciding to Immigrate to Alberta

- The vast majority of immigrants (up to 90%) would find it helpful to receive information about important documents they will need, important things they should do before and when they arrive in Alberta, where to obtain settlement information, Alberta health care, and getting a job in Alberta
- Immigrants from South East Asia and the Pacific, as well as those from South and Central Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean are especially keen to receive more information on these topics

Desired Means of Obtaining Settlement Information from the Government

- Immigrants want to get settlement information through internet websites, as well as through printed materials, over the phone, and through in-person individual sessions, with preferences differing by immigrant characteristics
- Internet websites are less preferred by immigrants from a number of regions outside of Western Europe, the UK, and the US, and by those with lower levels of education, poor English language ability, and who are 55 years old and over

Ease of Using the Internet

- Prior to arrival, immigrants from South East Asia and the Pacific, South and Central Asia, and Africa are about 50% less likely to find it easy to use the internet compared to immigrants from Western Europe, the UK, and the US, but this effect no longer exists post-arrival
- Prior to arrival, refugees and family class immigrants are markedly less likely to have internet access, whereas after arrival this is no longer the case but dependents of provincial nominees experience more difficulties
- Immigrants with less education, with weaker English language skills, and older immigrants find it harder to access the internet before and after moving to Alberta

Information-Related Difficulties Associated with Obtaining Help to Settle in Alberta

- The primary difficulties that immigrants experience in using settlement services are lack of information or awareness of services, confusion about who to go to in order to get help, and language difficulties
- Lack of information or awareness of services is particularly likely to be experienced by principal applicants in the Canadian experience class, refugees, dependents of skilled workers and professionals, and family class immigrants
- Poor English language skills prevent immigrants from using settlement services because this leads to a lack of information or awareness of services and confusion about who to go to in order to get help

Focus Groups

- Focus groups conducted in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Brooks
- In each location, focus groups were held with:
 - (1) new arrivals who had been in Alberta for less than one year
 - (2) immigrants who had been in Alberta between one and four years
- Total of 94 immigrants to Alberta participated in the focus groups: included immigrants from a variety of immigration categories and countries of birth

Highlights of the Focus Group Findings

Challenges

- An important challenge identified by respondents involves language: language problems impede social and economic integration and limit immigrants' ability to access services in these domains
- A related challenge arises from the complexity of integration and the need to navigate fragmented systems
- Incomplete or misleading information, including that supplied by corporate recruiters, refugee and family sponsors, and ethnocultural and faith organizations is also problematic

Main Pre and Post Arrival Information Sources

- Pre-arrival, the internet and family and friends in Canada are primary information sources
- Preferred pre-arrival websites are CIC's website for information about application procedures and the Government of Alberta's website for information about provincial services - the Alberta site received high marks for usefulness and ease of navigation
- Newcomers use social media (Facebook) and YouTube videos to prepare for settlement
- Post arrival, newcomers rely on settlement service organizations and government services (notably, Service Canada and Alberta Works)

Specific Information Required Earlier in the Settlement Process, Including Pre-Arrival

- **Education:** Information about educational equivalency, bridge training and the educational pathways that must be followed to work in various occupations
- **Language:** Information about the critical importance of strong language skills for finding work
- **Employment:** Information about job search techniques, interview preparedness, and training workshops, along with challenges commonly faced in different employment areas

Specific Information Required Earlier in the Settlement Process, Including Pre-Arrival (cont.)

- **Needed Documents and References:** Practical advice about documents and references needed to get a driver's licence, secure accommodation, and qualify for employment or specialized training
- **Specialized Information Targeting Youth:** Information about special programs and services for immigrant youth, information addressing the concerns of immigrant youth
- **Other Information:** Information about living costs, affordable housing, schooling, health care, immigration and citizenship regulations and procedures, and the services offered by community organizations

Recommended Solutions to Confusion Regarding Available Settlement Services

- Disseminating information in multiple languages at key immigration processing locales, particularly pre-arrival
- Enhancing the expertise and knowledge of 'early communicators', including ethnocultural and faith groups
- Placing more of an onus on corporate recruiters and family and refugee sponsors to provide better information

Recommended Solutions to Confusion Regarding Available Settlement Services (cont.)

- Early face-to-face meetings with multilingual counsellors able to better direct newcomers
- One-stop shops, both real and virtual, targeting locations with significant immigrant populations

Use of Social Media and YouTube Videos

- Focus group participants were enthusiastic about expanding the use of social media and YouTube to communicate settlement information, particularly to forge connections with youth
- Respondents advocated expanding Alberta's use of Facebook and Twitter, beyond the provision of labour market information
- YouTube videos conveying information in multiple languages, or with sub-titles in multiple languages, about topics like job interviews (how to prepare, how to behave) were regarded as extremely valuable

Role of Ethnocultural and Faith Groups

- Broad support for using faith, ethnocultural and community organizations to help convey settlement information and direct immigrants to where to obtain help
- These institutions are trusted by immigrants, can communicate in immigrants' native languages, and offer networking opportunities
- Strategies that rely more heavily on these organizations would need to improve the quality of the information they provide

Other Current and Upcoming
Pathways to Prosperity
Research Projects

Current and Upcoming Projects

- Immigrant Labour Market Integration: Improving Collaboration in Calgary for Better Employment Outcomes for Immigrants – ISCC Project
- Optimizing the Provision of Information to Facilitate the Settlement and Integration of Immigrants in Canada
- Using Attributional Retraining to Improve Skilled Immigrants' Labour Market Outcomes
- Multiple Case Study Evaluation of Postsecondary Bridging Programs for Internationally Educated Health Professionals

Current and Upcoming Projects (cont.)

Co-Investigator Led Research Projects

- Immigrant Language Ability, Occupational Choice, and Employment Skill Match Quality
- Exploring the Social and Economic Consequences of Sponsored Parent and Grandparent Migration
- Immigrant Seniors
- Muslim Immigrants and Integration Challenges: The Role of Religion and the Lives of the Second Generation
- The Art of Immigration
- Recruitment and Retention of Newcomers

Current and Upcoming Projects (cont.)

- International Students as Future Citizens: Understanding the Relation between Universities and Cities
- Fostering Research Partnerships for Improved Labour Market Integration and Employment of Skilled Immigrants and Refugees in Edmonton, Calgary, and Fort McMurray
- The Recruitment and Economic, Social and Community Integration of French-Speaking Newcomers
- Settlement Experiences, Housing Careers and the Regionalization of Immigration

Current and Upcoming Projects (cont.)

Projects Funded through a CFP

- Pre-arrival Strategies of Settlement and Integration of Filipinos in Alberta
- The Study-Migration Pathway: Understanding the Factors that Influence the Employment and Retention of International Students as Regulated Health Professionals
- Fostering Immigrant Employee Retention Within Companies
- Orienting Live-In Caregivers
- Role of Employers and the Private Sector in Supporting the Integration of Immigrants



For Further Information:

communications@p2pcanada.ca

Or Visit:

www.p2pcanada.ca