



International Student Information Ecosystem

Desk & Qualitative Study Introduction

Knowledge Management; Immigrant Solutions

International Students; Strategy, Policy & Research

2024



Founded in 1974, WES is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, designing programs, and providing philanthropic funding, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change.

Project Context

Project Name: Information Ecosystem Mapping for International Students

Objective: Explore systemic challenges in navigating critical information

Key Issues:

- I. Changing immigration regulations
- II. Lack of awareness of rights (employment, housing, etc.)
- III. Little space for context-specific service provision
- IV. Overwhelming information volume
- V. Patterns of misinformation

Impact: Disruption of decision-making and post-graduation outcomes

Project Context

Project Name: Information Ecosystem Mapping for International Students

Key Research Goals:

- I. Explore the information ecosystem
- II. Identify information gaps and misinformation
- III. Analyze decision-making influences

Ultimate Goal: Support convening conversations in the sector regarding International Student informational access.

Our Approach:

- Desk Review
- Qualitative Study

Preliminary Findings

1. Diverse and Evolving Information Needs
 - Wide variety of subjects (i.e. immigration, employment, healthcare, housing, etc.)
 - Demand for information evolves as students progress through different stages: pre-arrival, during studies, and post-graduation
2. Quality & Accessibility of Information
 - Fragmented & conflicting information
 - Many platforms offer guidance but lack contextual clarity
3. Significant Information Gaps
 - Employment rights, housing protections, health care access
 - Legal rights & exploitation



Preliminary Findings

4. Role of Intermediaries
 - Agents and recruiters play crucial role during pre-arrival phase
 - Advice ranges from highly useful to misleading or harmful
5. Impact of Policy Changes and Misinformation
 - Frequent/rapid shifts in immigration policies
 - Education as a pathway to PR lead to scams (i.e. fraudulent Labour Market Impact Assessments – LMIA's, etc.)
6. Trust in Information Sources
 - Levels of trust vary widely, and many students trust peers/community groups over official sources
 - There is a need to build trust



Next Steps

1. Further examine origins and impacts of misinformation
 - Particularly during pre-arrival phase and during policy transitions
2. Deep dive into role of intermediaries
 - How do agents and recruiters influence student decisions at various stages?
3. Gain perspectives from International Students and information providers directly
 - Upcoming qualitative study
4. Support convening conversations
 - Bring information providers from the sector together to discuss findings & next steps

Ultimate Goal

Convening conversations with information providers to work towards generating solutions for a more timely, accurate, and accountable information ecosystem for International Students in Canada.



Need more information?

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