



Best Practices in the Dissemination of Integral Information to New Immigrants

A Scoping Review

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ABSTRACT

This Scoping Review examines the primary information needs and information practices of new immigrants, as well as the barriers associated with accessing important public information. An environmental scan was also conducted to determine the current information distribution methods being used by various service providers in disseminating key information to immigrant communities. It was discovered that immigrants employ a number of techniques in satisfying their extensive information needs, such as referring to printed materials and ethnic media, and most notably, utilizing a wide range of interpersonal sources. It was also found that many immigrant service groups employ numerous information distribution methods such as written materials, audio-visual products, and workshops when disseminating integral information to new immigrants.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New immigrants encounter numerous challenges upon arriving in a new country and one of the most significant and immediate challenges is obtaining the information necessary to successfully settle in their new home. The majority of new immigrants devote a considerable amount of time and effort to locating and accessing information related to issues such as housing, employment, education, the law, and health care. There is a wide consensus within the literature reviewed for this report that immigrants who cannot obtain the information they require are at a considerable disadvantage during the settlement and integration process.

Although new immigrants expend a great deal of time and energy in accessing crucial information there are numerous barriers that may prevent these individuals from acquiring the information they need. Some of the main obstacles to retrieving important information include language, low levels of literacy, cultural differences, and a lack of awareness on the part of immigrants regarding the information resources available to them in their new country. Certain groups of immigrant women and immigrant seniors, it is theorized, can experience additional challenges in accessing public information, as a result of such potential additional barriers as social isolation, poor literacy skills, and different cultural perceptions of women's and seniors' roles.

A great deal of study has been conducted on the issues of immigrants' information needs and the possible ways in which community organizations and immigrant service providers can mitigate the barriers mentioned in the preceding paragraph. A large portion of this research has focused on the dissemination of health, employment, and legal information and the strategies service providers in these areas are using to ensure key public information is reaching the desired audience. Printed materials, ethnic media, theatre, and various forms of interpersonal communication have steadily grown in popularity among many service providers around the world, although there is an acknowledgment within the literature many of these organizations are limited in the number and variety of information distribution techniques they use, given a persistent lack of human and financial resources.

Community organizations and immigrant service agencies in Australia, Canada, and the United States appear to employ similar information distribution techniques, and many of these organizations seem to prefer the use of printed materials, audio-visual products, and various forms of interpersonal communication such as workshops and seminars. It should be noted that that these particular distribution methods are used regardless of the type of information being distributed, and that most service organizations use a combination of dissemination techniques when providing information to new immigrants.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ISSUE

“Best Practices in the Distribution of Public Information to New Immigrants” has been prepared for the Justice Services Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General, and is one component of a three-part investigation into matters pertaining to public legal education and information (PLEI) and new immigrants.

The goal of this Scoping Review is to provide an overview of the research pertaining to the primary information needs and information seeking practices of new immigrants. Another equally important objective is to describe the most effective methods being used by governments and community agencies in disseminating integral public information to new immigrants. For example, many jurisdictions are developing innovative ways to share information through ethnic media such as newspapers, radio, and television. This report will also address some of the barriers associated with distributing information to the potentially more vulnerable segments of new immigrant populations such as women and seniors. It is hoped that this review will provide academic and practical support to the Justice Services Branch in their efforts to create effective public information distribution methods for new immigrants.

1.2 SCOPE

This Scoping Review includes two main sections: a literature review and a cross-jurisdictional scan of public information distribution projects in other Canadian provinces and other jurisdictions. The literature review comprises a thorough, albeit not exhaustive, overview of the available academic and grey literature¹ as it pertains to new immigrants and information distribution. Special attention has been given to literature that addresses the issue of ensuring that certain segments of immigrant communities that may be particularly vulnerable - such as certain groups of immigrant women and seniors - have appropriate access to integral public information. The literature review was conducted using Google, Google Scholar, as well as the online academic research database

¹ Grey literature is defined as "Information produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body." The term refers to publications that are not published commercially or indexed by major databases (UBC Library 2010). Grey literature may include, but is not limited to the following types of materials: reports (pre-prints, preliminary progress and advanced reports, technical reports, statistical reports, memoranda, state-of-the art reports, market research reports, etc.), theses, conference proceedings, technical specifications and standards, non-commercial translations, bibliographies, technical and commercial documentation, and official documents not published commercially (primarily government reports and documents) (Alberani, 1990).

EBSCOhost. Thus a broad variety of sources, including both academic and grey literatures, were consulted.

In determining the framework for this review, the researchers relied heavily on the work of Nadia Caidi, a professor of Information Studies at the University of Toronto, whose work in the area of new immigrants' information practices is extensive and seminal. Caidi identifies several key categories of information that are most sought by new immigrants, and the researchers took these as their guiding framework in determining the areas of focus for this research. See *Appendix A – Top Information Needs of New Immigrants* for Caidi, Allard, and Dechief's (2008) catalogue of the information needs of new immigrants.

The cross-jurisdictional scan includes information relating to integral public information distribution initiatives currently in existence in Australia, the United States, and Canada. Information for this section of the Scoping Review has been obtained through government reports and websites, as well as through the online publications and websites of various community organizations. This is supplemented further through the incorporation of information gathered through key informant interviews with individuals currently working in the field of immigration and settlement services.

It is important to note that while several jurisdictions acknowledge the growing importance of Web 2.0 technologies as they relate to the provision of public information to new immigrants, an in-depth examination of Web 2.0 and public information is beyond the scope of this report. A detailed environmental scan and discussion of Web 2.0 and the Internet as it applies to public information can be found in the KIS scoping review *The Internet as Effective Medium for Distribution of Integral Information to New Immigrants*, which is another of the three reports prepared as part of the broader investigation into matters pertaining to public legal education and information (PLEI) and new immigrants.

Importantly, it should be noted that available research into the use of the Internet and web 2.0 technologies for the distribution of public information to immigrants indicates that to be most successful, internet information must be complemented by in person interaction, as well as non-internet informational and educational materials. Thus although the use of internet and Web 2.0 technologies is emerging as a new and potentially effective trend in integral information distribution, the importance of other mediums in distributing vital information cannot be overstated.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 B.C.'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION

In 2008 (the year for which the most recent statistical data is available), British Columbia received 17.8% of the total number of immigrants to Canada in that year, welcoming the third highest number of immigrants among all provinces and territories (Ontario received 44.9% and Quebec received 18.3% of the total number of immigrants, respectively). As Table 1 below shows, among immigrants to British Columbia between 2006 and 2008, the majority of immigrants over the age of 25 had college- or university-level educations.

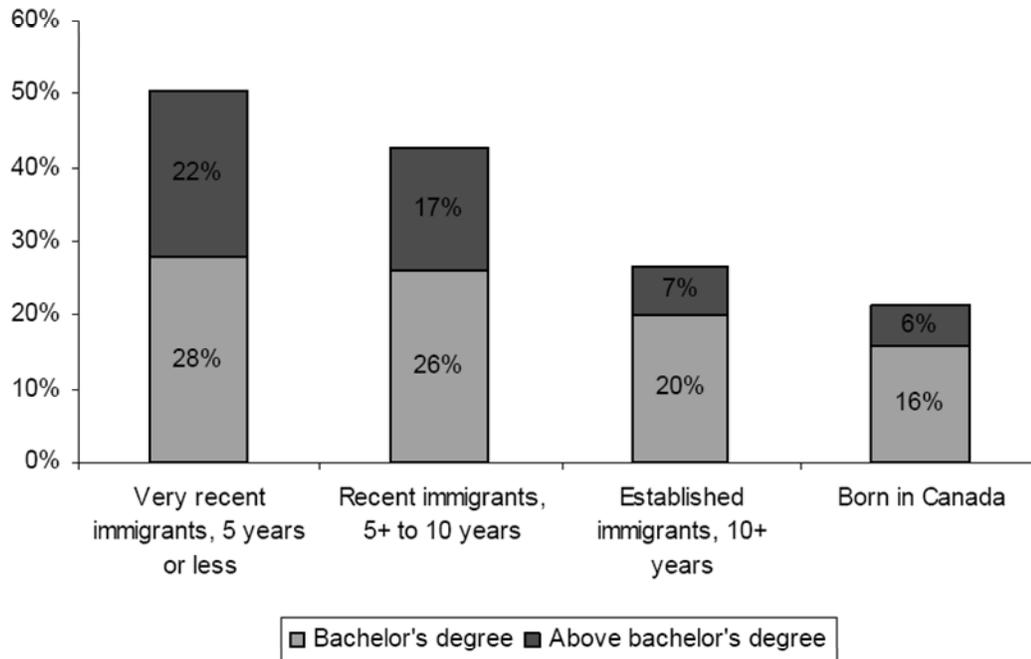
Table 1: Data source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Immigrants To B.C. (Aged 25 and Over) By Level of Education at the Time of Arrival, 2006-2008			
Highest Level Of Education	2006	2007	2008
High School or Less	26.80%	27.10%	25.00%
College or Trade Certificate	22.00%	21.40%	22.60%
University Degree	51.20%	51.50%	52.40%
Total Immigrants to B.C. (Aged 25+ Yrs)	100%	100%	100%

Further, on average, landed immigrants to B.C. are much more likely than Canadian-born British Columbians to have a university education. As represented in Table 2, the number of immigrants with a university education has historically outpaced the number of Canadian-born British Columbians with a university education, and the trend has only grown stronger in the past few years; new immigrants are significantly more likely than either established immigrants or the Canadian-born population to hold a university degree. In 2006, very recent immigrants to B.C. were more than twice as likely as Canadian-born British Columbians to have a university degree—50 percent compared to 21 percent.

In 2006, 11 percent of British Columbians aged 25–54 did not have a high school diploma or a postsecondary credential. The proportion of the population without a high school diploma or a postsecondary credential is the same for immigrants and Canadian-born British Columbians.

Table 2: Proportion of Population Holding a University Degree: Immigrant and Canadian Born
Source: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/immig/imm072sf.pdf>



There were slightly more females than males in the immigrant population of B.C. In 2006, of every 100 foreign-born persons residing in the province, 52 were women. A majority of B.C.'s foreign-born population were middle aged, with persons in the retirement ages representing the next largest group. Similar to what has been indicated by other immigration statistics, the 2006 Census also confirmed that recent immigrants to B.C. tended to be younger.

More than half (56.7%) of the immigrant population in B.C. who arrived in Canada during the last five years prior to the 2006 Census were in the 25-54 age group. It has also been shown that recent immigrants to B.C. tended to have a younger median age than the overall population in the province.

Approximately nine in every one hundred foreign-born persons in B.C. had no English language ability. Recent immigrants – those who landed between 2001 and 2006 – reported an even higher percentage (14.8%) of English language deficiency. In 2006, nearly half of the B.C. foreign born population stated neither English nor French as the language they spoke most often at home.

Table 3: Top 10 Source Countries of Immigration to B.C., 2004-2008 (Based on Country of Last Permanent Residence) Source: <http://www.welcomebc.ca/shared/docs/communities/immigrationtrends2008.pdf>

Top 10 Source Countries of Immigration to B.C., 2004-2008 (Based on Country of Last Permanent Residence)									
	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008
Mainland China	11,048	Mainland China	13,725	Mainland China	10,930	Mainland China	8,259	Mainland China	9,900
India	4,066	India	5,746	India	5,966	India	5,180	India	5,474
Philippines	3,013	Philippines	4,176	Philippines	3,738	Philippines	3,953	Philippines	4,997
South Korea	2,273	South Korea	2,519	United States	2,436	United States	2,632	South Korea	2,903
United States	1,496	Taiwan	2,235	South Korea	2,320	South Korea	2,390	United States	2,655
United Kingdom	1,397	United States	1,954	Taiwan	1,922	United Kingdom	2,212	United Kingdom	2,521
Iran	1,366	United Kingdom	1,398	United Kingdom	1,718	Taiwan	1,870	Taiwan	2,090
Taiwan	1,359	Iran	1,297	Iran	1,701	Iran	1,286	Iran	1,278
Russia	511	Pakistan	662	Pakistan	571	Japan	592	Japan	601
Japan	508	Japan	554	Japan	567	Singapore	511	Singapore	592
Other Countries	9,991	Other Countries	10,504	Other Countries	10,214	Other Countries	10,072	Other Countries	10,939
B.C. Total	37,028	B.C. Total	44,770	B.C. Total	42,083	B.C. Total	38,957	B.C. Total	43,950

Table 3 shows that the immigration patterns over the past several years have remained fairly constant in terms of the source countries of the foreign-born population of the province.

2.2 INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION PRACTICES OF NEW IMMIGRANTS

The steadily growing immigrant population in Canada and other jurisdictions around the world has motivated numerous government agencies and community-based service providers to devote considerable resources and study to the issues of settlement and integration. One of the key findings from the settlement research is that appropriate access to integral public information plays a pivotal role in ensuring that new immigrants are able to integrate successfully into their new country. As a result, an increasing number of government bodies and community service providers are working to develop effective and efficient methods of delivering integral information to new immigrant communities.

It is important to note that immigrants are an “extremely diverse” group of individuals and communities, “whose needs, experiences, and strengths vary significantly depending

on various factors, including: education, age, sex, country of origin, family status, and their knowledge of English or the dominant language in their new country” (Caidi, Allard, & Quirke, 2010).

Interestingly, however, a number of studies have shown that, “in general,” immigrants’ information needs remain “relatively similar across [...] source countries” (Caidi, Allard, & Quirke, 2010; see also George, 2002; George et al., 2004; George & Mwarigha, 1999). Another study (Chivhanga, 2005) conducted in Finland noted that the information needs of immigrants from Thailand, Somalia, the Gambia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malaysia were virtually identical.

New immigrants have numerous information needs upon arrival in a new country, such as information pertaining to housing, employment, education, and healthcare. Easily accessing such information can be a key factor in assisting new immigrants with the settlement process. There are numerous barriers to distributing clearly understood and useful information to new immigrants such as language, cultural diversity, and a lack of familiarity on the part of new immigrants with the information and other resources available in their adopted nation (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008).

It is also important to note that since the majority of information dissemination projects are client-centred and ideally designed to satisfy the needs of the individual, all information distribution methods targeted towards new immigrants should follow these guidelines:

- Information materials should be multilingual
- Information should be delivered in multiple formats (eg. print, audio, visual etc.)
- Information should be presented in an easily understood and culturally sensitive manner
- Information should be easily accessible to all new immigrants
- Distribution methods should mirror target group’s information-seeking behaviour

Given the various information needs and numerous barriers to accessing important public information it is important for immigrant service organizations in British Columbia to be cognisant of and able to utilize best practices in multi-format and multilingual information distribution to new immigrants.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this Literature Review is to provide a summary of the available research relating to the importance of providing integral public information to new immigrants, and how such information is disseminated to immigrant communities. Particular attention is given to literature that addressed the challenges of distributing public information to especially vulnerable groups within immigrant populations, most notably immigrant women and seniors.

3.1 INFORMATION NEEDS OF NEW IMMIGRANTS

The process of immigrating and settling in a new country presents numerous challenges for new immigrants, including finding appropriate housing, health care, and employment. As Caidi, Allard, and Dechief (2008) note in their seminal report “*Information Practices of Immigrants to Canada – A Review of the Literature*” the majority of newly arrived immigrants spend considerable time and effort in locating accurate and easily understood information on the issues that are of most importance to them and their dependents.

According to Caidi, Allard, and Dechief (2008) new immigrants pass through three distinct stages of information needs: immediate, intermediate, and integration. New immigrants, as they have been defined by the Ministry of Attorney General for the purposes of this project, are newcomers who are in the process of settling into Canada and have not yet become Canadian citizens. Their needs are therefore described substantially by the first and second of Caidi et al.’s stages. During the immediate stage of information needs, new immigrants are most concerned with obtaining information pertaining to issues such as housing, food, transportation, and methods of overcoming language barriers. The intermediate stage involves seeking information about topics such as accessing legal and municipals services, employment training and opportunities, and health care. The third and final stage of information needs includes any information, such as information regarding “host” culture and politics that will assist new immigrants in successfully integrating into their new country (Caidi, Allard, & Dechief, 2008).

Other studies relating to the information needs of new immigrants appear to support Caidi’s findings, and it is evident from the reviewed literature that information needs do not appear to vary much between different ethnic groups. For example, one study conducted in Finland noted that the information needs of immigrants from Thailand, Somalia, the Gambia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malaysia were virtually identical. Study participants from each ethnic group identified housing, education, employment, transportation, legal, and health information as crucial to meeting their initial settlement needs. Participants also acknowledged the importance of information about Finland’s culture and system of government in helping them become fully settled in their new home (Chivhanga, 2005).

Appendix A – Top Information Needs of New Immigrants outlines Caidi, Allard, and Dechief’s catalogue of top immigrant settlement needs.

Much of the reviewed literature also noted that conducting a needs assessment should be one of the primary activities immigrant service agencies undertake prior to the development of any integral public education and information program or service (Lindberg, 2005; Chivhanga, 2005). A needs assessment can aid community centres in identifying the specific type of integral information required by particular immigrant groups, as well as in determining the most effective methods for disseminating this information (Lindberg 2005; Chivhanga, 2005). For example, the Refugee and Immigration Legal Service organization based in Australia uses focus groups and roundtable discussions with local multicultural and settlement groups to assess the current needs of the immigrant populations they serve. This type of consultation allows public legal education workers within the organization to develop high quality PLEI programs and services for their clients (Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, personal communication, January 20, 2010).

Due to the wide range of information needs of immigrants three types of information, health, employment, and legal, will be addressed in greater detail within this report. Health, employment, and legal information were chosen due to the large amount of literature available on these topics, and the fact that many community service organizations devote most of their programs and services to the dissemination of information pertaining to these three subjects.

3.1.1 Health Information

One of the most pressing information needs identified by new immigrants relates to various health issues such as locating a family physician, eligibility for medical coverage, and information regarding how to access other health services such as mental health and long-term care (Cortinois, 2008). A major concern for many health care providers and immigrant service agencies is the poor health literacy of many new immigrants, who generally have a difficult time in accessing accurate and easily understood information about medical problems and the health care system, which places them at a significant disadvantage when attempting to utilize health care services (Simich, 2009).

Several reports suggest that providing new immigrants with multilingual and culturally sensitive health information could potentially lead to improved health outcomes, as such information would be very beneficial in assisting immigrants to navigate the health care system (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008; Cortinois, 2008). Similar to research regarding the information needs of new immigrants, a significant proportion of literature exploring health information and immigrant communities focuses on how community organizations, governments, and other service providers can best distribute such materials to new immigrants. It would appear from the findings of most studies that a combination of distribution methods such as workshops, ethnic media, theatre, and educational displays may be the most effective way in which to deliver important health information to new immigrants (Simich, 2009; Ahmad, Shik, Vanza, Cheung, George & Stewart, 2004).

3.1.2 Employment Information

Employment information is yet another critically important category of information needs for recently arrived immigrants, as securing stable employment can play a significant role in the overall settlement and integration process. In general, many new immigrants are intent on obtaining employment information that addresses the following issues; current labour market conditions of the new community, job training, and any accreditation processes that may be in place (Duryea & Grundison, 1993; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008).

One recurring finding in the literature relating to employment information and new immigrants is the lack of awareness many new immigrants have of the employment and training information materials available to them, which can be a disadvantage when seeking employment (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008). Employment agencies and other community organizations mandated to provide services to immigrants and refugees are encouraged in some research reports to allocate human and financial resources to the development of programs and services that successfully deliver employment information to immigrant communities (Volunteer Canada, n.d.; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008).

3.1.3 Legal Education and Information

New immigrants generally appear to be more interested in accessing public legal education and information after meeting the more pressing needs of securing shelter, food, and language training (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008). While public legal education and information may not necessarily be of crucial importance for new immigrants upon their immediate arrival, it does play a vital role as immigrants attempt to fully integrate into their communities (Broad & Hagerty, 2004).

Easily accessible public legal education and information can assist new immigrants in gaining a better understanding of the laws and legal system of their adopted country. Effective PLEI can also provide immigrants with the capacity to seek out legal services and information as needed, thereby allowing immigrants to have more control over other aspects of their daily lives such as employment, familial responsibilities, and the settlement process (Broad & Hagerty, 2004). The distribution of public legal education and information to immigrant communities therefore has become an increasingly important issue for community legal centres across Canada and in other jurisdictions, largely due to the rapid growth of immigrant populations and the role PLEI has in ensuring newcomers are able to better function in their new country (Social Planning and Research Council of B.C., 2005). The type of legal information required by new immigrants is dependent upon the needs of the individual, although research does suggest that demand for information relating to domestic violence, immigration, employment law, tenant rights, consumer protection, and child welfare is especially high among many immigrant communities (Zalik, 2009; CS/Resors Consulting Ltd., 2005).

It should also be noted that a significant portion of the literature relating to the topic of PLEI and immigrant communities addresses the barriers organizations currently encounter in the distribution of PLEI to new immigrants, and the steps many PLEI organizations are currently taking to overcome these difficulties (Public Legal Education

and Support Task Force, 2007). A more in-depth discussion of the barriers encountered by organizations in delivering important information, not just legal education and information can be found in the following section.

3.2 MAIN BARRIERS TO ACCESSING INFORMATION

New immigrants encounter several barriers to accessing important public information, and a large portion of the literature reviewed for this report focuses on identifying and overcoming these challenges. Some of the main barriers include language, the diversity of the immigrant population, and a lack of familiarity with the information resources available in the “host” country.

Language barriers were a recurring theme throughout the literature, as numerous service providers and new immigrants acknowledged the difficulty in distributing information to individuals with different linguistic backgrounds. Although much of the reviewed literature noted that new immigrants in Canada and other jurisdictions are increasingly well-educated, there are still significant concerns regarding immigrants’ literacy levels with respect to the language of the “host” country (Cortinois, 2008; Cohl & Thomson, 2008). For example, of the 424,000 immigrants that arrived in British Columbia between 1992 and 2001, over half could not write, speak, or read English and the vast majority of these individuals relied on their children or friends for interpretive and translation services (Stampino, 2007). It should be noted that while these literacy numbers are improving—for example in 2007 close to 70% of adult immigrants in British Columbia possessed official language proficiency—language barriers still remain a source of concern to service providers tasked with distributing key information to new immigrants (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009; Simich & Fu, 2004).

There is another concern expressed within the literature relating to the issues of language and literacy. Some of literature noted there are certain populations within immigrant communities who are not literate in their native tongue, therefore relying on the provision of written multilingual materials to distribute integral information may not be effective (Geronimo, Folinsbee & Goveas, 2001; D’Elia, 2008). Immigrants and refugees with poor literacy skills in their first language are at a considerable disadvantage when attempting to access important information. In one study conducted in Toronto, for example, immigrants with low literacy skills in their first language indicated they felt socially isolated and overly dependent on friends and family members. These individuals also recommended that service providers and governments develop other ways, such as educational audio-visual products, to disseminate important information to immigrant communities (Geronimo, Folinsbee & Goveas, 2001).

Many public service organizations have struggled with developing ways in which to mitigate the linguistic and literacy barriers experienced by new immigrants (Chivhanga, 2005). The growing prevalence of information distribution through ethnic media and an increasing reliance on ESL teachers and settlement workers as information brokers appear to indicate that some service agencies have discovered ways in which to overcome the aforementioned language and literacy challenges to a certain degree.

The significant cultural diversity of new immigrant populations is another challenge for both immigrants and community service associations in accessing and distributing information. Every immigrant has different information needs, and attempting to satisfy the information needs of all immigrants is a daunting if not wholly impossible task for many organizations already struggling to operate with minimal financial and human resources (Karim, Eid, & B'éri, 2007). As previously mentioned, much of the reviewed literature stressed the importance of a needs assessment prior to the development and delivery of information distribution services and programs. Such an assessment can assist service organizations in identifying and addressing the most pressing information needs of their target immigrant population, which can result in a more efficient and effective use of resources (Lindberg, 2005; Chivhanga, 2005).

While cultural diversity can pose challenges to service organizations attempting to distribute integral public information to new immigrants, it can also create barriers to information access for immigrant populations. For example, some immigrants originate from cultures where it is deemed unacceptable or inappropriate to seek assistance from individuals and organizations outside of one's particular ethnic community (Duryea & Grundison, 1993; Vucetic, 2006). Some segments of immigrant populations may also be distrustful or unsure of government authorities and service providers in their adopted nation, due to experiences of corruption and violence within similar institutions in their native country. It should be noted, however, that an increasing number of service organizations and immigrant communities are working to overcome these cultural barriers to accessing integral information largely through educational campaigns and more direct involvement from community leaders in distributing key information to new immigrants (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008; Duryea & Grundison, 1993).

Another significant impediment to accessing and distributing public information is immigrants' general lack of familiarity with the information resources available to them upon their arrival to a new country. The majority of the reviewed literature indicated that community organizations and governments must do a better job at ensuring new immigrants are made aware of the numerous services and information sources available, although the literature also acknowledges that such a task would involve many of the same complications mentioned above (Karim, Eid, & B'éri, 2007; Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008).

3.3 Information Distribution Methods

Over the last couple of decades, many immigrant service organizations and settlement agencies have devoted considerable study and resources to the distribution of important information to new immigrants despite the numerous complications associated with this activity. The majority of these efforts have focused on ascertaining the most effective methods for delivering integral information such as health, employment, and legal information to new immigrant communities (Zalik, 2009; Karim, Eid & B'éri, 2007).

3.3.1 Print Media

One of the most popular information distribution techniques is the provision of written materials such as pamphlets, flyers, brochures, and guides that are given out to interested

individuals at a variety of locations including local community legal centres, churches, markets, and immigration offices (Lindberg, 2005; The Immigrant Learning Centre, personal communication, February 23, 2010). At a 2006 Settlement Workers Advocacy Conference, for example, 59% of conference attendees expressed the opinion that providing information in printed form was one of the most successful methods of ensuring this type of information reached target audiences like new immigrants (McEown & Reid, 2007).

The allocation of printed materials may be one of the more preferred methods of information distribution to new immigrants; however, this particular technique does present numerous difficulties both for service providers and for their clients. The most significant issue from the perspective of community agencies is producing large volumes of written information on a wide range of topics in multiple languages. Many organizations have difficulty deciding what subjects to cover in their publications and in what languages these materials should be offered to the public (The Immigrant Learning Center, personal communication, February 23, 2010; Lin & Song, 2006). Another item of concern for organizations is the cost of developing and updating PLEI documents on a regular basis. The fluid nature of the legal, health, and employment field often means that community centres must review and revise educational and informational materials whenever substantial changes in any of the aforementioned fields occur. Many organizations do not have the expertise or fiscal resources necessary, especially in terms of translation services, to ensure appropriate written materials are distributed to every immigrant community in need (Zalik, 2009).

Written information, particularly information pertaining to health and legal issues, can also present significant challenges for new immigrants, especially in terms of literacy skills and the availability of certain publications. The literacy levels of some immigrants, both in terms of their native language and the language of their adopted country can be quite low; therefore providing written materials to these particular groups may be largely ineffective (Women's Legal Services, 2007; Schetzer & Henderson, 2003). As mentioned previously, many governments and service organizations struggle with producing an adequate quantity of printed resources in the appropriate languages for new immigrants; as a result some immigrant communities may be deemed too small by service providers to receive written materials (The People's Law School, personal communication, January 21, 2010). Immigrants from these communities are therefore at a distinct disadvantage when attempting to access integral information. Due to these difficulties, much of the reviewed literature suggests that community legal centres, immigrant associations, and governments should develop information delivery systems that combine a variety of methods such as written materials, ethnic media, and interpersonal communication to ensure such information attains the widest distribution possible among new immigrants (Schetzer & Henderson, 2003; George & Chaze, 2009).

3.3.2 Audio and Visual Media

Ethnic media has emerged as an increasingly viable option for information distribution over the last few years and several community groups are employing ethnic media outlets such as radio, television, and newspapers to assist them in the dissemination of integral

information to immigrant communities (Karim, Eid & B'éri, 2007; Cader, 2002). Ethnic media may be especially effective in reaching the more isolated groups of new immigrants such as women and seniors who generally spend the majority of time within their own neighbourhood and home (Lindberg, 2005). It should also be noted that most of the reviewed literature appears to indicate that ethnic newspapers and radio are potentially more efficient at distributing information than ethnic television. The majority of ethnic television programming relies on obtaining programming from the specific ethnic group's country of origin and there is little emphasis placed on providing local information and news (Karim, Eid & B'éri, 2007). There is also the suggestion, in some of the literature, that new immigrants prefer to use ethnic television for entertainment and cultural purposes, and rely on "host" television (non-ethnic television programming) to acquire information and linguistic skills. For example, one U.S. study conducted a survey of Chinese immigrants living in the Silicon Valley to determine their uses of various ethnic and "host" media. The majority of study participants acknowledged that they used "host" media, particularly television, to obtain information about legal and financial matters, as well as to assist them in learning the language of their new country. Ethnic media was used primarily as a means to remain connected with the culture of their native country (Zhang, 2007).

Ethnic radio and newspapers are thought to be more successful at disseminating integral information than television mainly due to the greater inclusion of local content in both radio and newspapers. Many ethnic newspapers and radio stations devote most of their resources to providing news that is relevant to the local community, which can include information relating to politics, employment, finance, and law. In Australia for example, Radio Australia and the Special Broadcasting Service have allocated significant resources to the development of local, multilingual programs and podcasts in an effort to better serve immigrant communities (Cunningham, McCombe & Sarkozi, 2007).

It is important to recognize that despite the keen interest in utilizing ethnic media for the delivery of integral information, the actual number of programs and services using ethnic media for this purpose is still quite minimal. For example, recent research performed in Ontario on the topic of immigrants and media programming revealed that of the 10,000 media items examined for the study, only five percent addressed the issue of public legal education and information (Karim, Eid & B'éri, 2007). One of the chief reasons for the underuse of ethnic media for integral distribution may be related to the fiscal and other resource restraints encountered by many ethnic media outlets, which can diminish their capacity to provide accurate and timely information on a regular basis (Karim, Eid & B'éri, 2007). Although the use of ethnic media for disseminating community education and information can be problematic in some instances, there is widespread agreement within the research that this is a topic which community organizations and government agencies should explore in greater detail.

3.3.3 Theatre

One innovative approach to information distribution, particularly with respect to health and legal information, is the use of theatre and similar dramatic presentations. For example in Vancouver, short dramas were produced and aired on local television

channels in order to promote awareness of various health issues within the Iranian community. All of the dramas involved actors solving health problems with the assistance of the B.C. Health Guide (Simich, 2009).

Another example from Australia is the South West Sydney Legal Centre Legal Theatre. Legal theatre is an amalgamation of legal education and Forum Theatre that first emerged during the 1970s in Argentina. The goal of Forum Theatre was to provide a means by which the more disadvantaged segments of the population could learn about the law through a combination of theatre-based entertainment and audience interaction (South West Sydney Legal Centre, 2009). Two of the South West Sydney Legal Centre's most popular and successful legal theatre productions are "*Song of Anklets*" and "*Marla*." "*Song of Anklets*" focuses on the issues of violence and discrimination against women and uses South Asian music and dance to communicate information about these issues. The performance also includes presentations from guest speakers and audience discussion about the issues raised during the performance. In 2006 the production received the New South Wales Prevention of Violence against Women Award and was also identified by the University of Sydney as a powerful example of successful community engagement (South West Sydney Legal Centre, 2009). "*Marla*" is a play centering on the various legal, social, and cultural issues associated with domestic violence. The production includes a significant audience interaction component designed to further highlight the concerns surrounding domestic violence and how such a complicated problem can be resolved in the most effective manner possible (South West Sydney Legal Centre, 2009).

The People's Law School in British Columbia also has a Justice Theatre program which is delivered in various schools and public events on the Lower Mainland. According to the key informant from the People's Law School, there are several benefits associated with using theatre as a method of distributing information to the public (People's Law School, personal communication, February 16, 2010). One of the major strengths of legal theatre is its interactive component. Many productions include opportunities for audience interaction, which can assist people in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the issues being addressed within the play. Other advantages of legal theatre are its flexibility and adaptability, which can be of critical importance to organizations already struggling with a shortage of resources. Unlike audio-visual and printed materials, theatre can be altered at low cost with relative ease to ensure greater relevance and accuracy. This can be especially important when the theatrical production is highlighting issues relating to health and the law, as information pertaining to these two sectors is in a state of constant flux (People's Law School, personal communication, February 16, 2010).

Although theatre does offer many benefits in the distribution of integral information, there are two main challenges associated with this dissemination technique that are difficult to overcome. The cost of developing and delivering theatrical productions can be prohibitive for many community-based organizations, especially those organizations that provide their services for free. For example, the People's Law School charges a fee of \$350 per performance to the client in an effort to cover the costs of salaries, accommodation, meals, and transportation despite the fact that the School would prefer to offer this program free of charge (People's Law School, personal communication, February 16, 2010). Linguistic barriers also present a significant obstacle to the delivery

of effective information theatre, as not all organizations may have the capacity to perform productions in multiple languages. The People's Law School Justice Theatre, for instance, performs all its plays in English due to a lack of translation services and the restricted linguistic abilities of the cast (People's Law School, personal communication, February 16, 2010).

3.3.4 Interpersonal Communication

As previously discussed, many community organizations and agencies use a wide range of methods for circulating important information to new immigrants, including printed materials, ethnic media, and the Internet. One of the chief findings of the literature review, however, was that new immigrants overwhelmingly prefer interpersonal communication as a method of obtaining important information (Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez & Cunningham, 2004; Cohl & Thomson, 2008).

Several studies have reported that during the initial few months and even years of settlement, immigrants rely heavily upon various social networks to satisfy their information needs. This reliance is based largely on issues of trust and lack of familiarity with the services and resources of the "host" country (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008). In one report detailing the information seeking behaviour of Latino immigrants, researchers discovered most of the study participants preferred to obtain health information from their friends, families, colleagues, and employers. Several participants also noted that they did use other materials obtained from libraries, clinics, and hospitals, but they often supplemented this information with knowledge gained through interpersonal connections (Courtright, 2005).

In terms of employment information, several pieces of research have noted the pivotal role of interpersonal communication and social networks. One study conducted by Volunteer Canada revealed that new immigrants preferred to receive employment information through workshops and one-on-one interaction with service providers or members of their own social networks (Volunteer Canada, n.d.). Research in Germany also discovered that strong social networks and interpersonal connections improved a new immigrant's chance of securing employment, largely due to the information sharing that occurs between individuals (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008).

Over the last few years, many researchers have also focused on the increasingly important role of immigrant children in the dissemination of integral information. Due to immigrant children's knowledge of the "host" language, many immigrant parents and other family members rely on children to act as interpreters and translators (Orellana, Dorner & Pulido, 2003). While some educators and service providers have attempted to target information distribution services to children in the hope that integral information will eventually be communicated to the children's families, there is considerable concern about the pressures associated with children fulfilling such a role. One concern is that relying on children as translators and interpreters could place children in a position in which they are required to make critically important choices such as those regarding medical treatment or legal action. Another difficulty in using children as information distribution agents is the potential of negatively altering family dynamics and

relationships which could be problematic for new immigrant families in the process of settling and integrating into their adopted nation (Orellana, Dorner & Pulido, 2003; Caidi, Allard & Quirke, 2010).

Many immigrant and refugee service organizations appear to have a good understanding of immigrants' tendency to use interpersonal sources for information seeking purposes, as evidenced by the increasing number of in-person initiatives being developed to disseminate important information. Several organizations dedicated to the provision of public legal education and information (PLEI) have incorporated legal education into pre-existing programs targeted towards immigrants, such as ESL classes, settlement workshops, and tenant meetings (Lindberg, 2005). Speaker's bureaus and workshops tailored to address legal topics are also quite prevalent in several jurisdictions, and many PLEI organizations offer such events several times throughout the year. Another popular interpersonal method of disseminating PLEI involves training community and settlement workers in providing and explaining legal information to their clients. Several community legal education professionals claim that delivering PLEI through settlement and immigration workers is very effective, as workers can highlight key pieces of information and can answer questions in way that is easily understood by their clients (Cohl & Thomson, 2008).

3.3.5 The Internet

It is perhaps prudent at this point to acknowledge the rapid growth of Internet and Web 2.0 technologies in the circulation of integral information. A detailed examination of employing online tools for information distribution is beyond the scope of this report, but it is important to be cognisant of this international trend. While Web 2.0 applications allow for considerable versatility in terms of distribution methods and audience, some of the literature expressed the concern that the advent of such technologies was only widening the gap between different populations (Mazur, 2009; Cunningham, McCombe & Sarkozi, 2007). The potential benefits and barriers associated with the widespread use of Web 2.0 technologies and information delivery to new immigrants are discussed in greater detail in the KIS Scoping Review entitled *The Internet as Effective Medium for Distribution of Integral Information to New Immigrants*.

A great deal of the reviewed literature focused on the various benefits and challenges associated with the primary methods of information distribution to immigrants including printed materials, ethnic media, Web 2.0, and interpersonal communication. While disseminating integral information can be a complex undertaking, there are certain immigrant populations that are particularly difficult to serve. The next two sections of this literature review highlight some of the key issues involved in supplying public information to two of the potentially more vulnerable segments of the immigrant population.

3.4 Public Information and New Immigrant Women

A significant portion of the reviewed literature highlighted the additional intricacies or difficulties associated with delivering public information to certain groups of immigrant and refugee women. It should be stressed that such challenges do not apply to a large

proportion of immigrant women, as many such individuals arrive in their new country well-educated, well-connected, and considerably fluent in the language of the “host” country (Anetcol, Cobb-Clark, & Trejo, 2002). It is equally important to note, however, that there are some segments of the female immigrant population that struggle with social isolation, low levels of education and literacy, and various other cultural complexities that may prevent them from successfully accessing the information they require (Kilbride et al., 2007; Ahmad, Shik, Vanza, Cheung, George & Stewart, 2004).

3.4.1 Challenges

Social isolation has been identified by both service providers and immigrant women as one of the primary barriers to some women’s access to important public information. For example, one Australian study involving in-depth interviews with thirteen Latin American female immigrants acknowledged that social isolation and the loss of pre-existing social networks were two of the main challenges encountered by some immigrant women upon arrival in a new country (Aizpurúa, 2008; Kilbride, 2007). Such feelings of isolation can result in certain immigrant women spending the majority of time within their own home or particular ethnic community, which makes the dissemination of integral information difficult (Aizpurúa, 2008; Ellison, Schetzer, Mullins, Perry & Wong, 2004). Ethnic media has been proposed as one possible method of reaching particularly isolated immigrant women although as previously mentioned, there is currently a lack of media programs designed to distribute integral public information of any variety to immigrant communities. The use of interpersonal communication and networks such as settlement workers and telephone helplines have also been used in some jurisdictions to deliver information to hard to reach immigrant women, and, according to client feedback, these initiatives have had some degree of success (Women’s Legal Services, 2007; Ahmad, Shik, Vanza, Cheung, George & Stewart, 2004).

Another key issue in the distribution of information to certain groups of immigrant women relates to literacy skills and education. While many immigrant women, particularly those women arriving in Canada, Australia, and parts of Europe, are very well-educated and possess some post-secondary degree or training, there are some female immigrants who have substantially lower levels of educational attainment and literacy skills (Anetcol, Cobb-Clark & Trejo, 2002). Low literacy rates for this particular population of immigrant women usually apply to both their native language as well as the language of their adopted country; therefore service providers may want to consider options other than providing translated written material to assist women in obtaining the public information they need (Women’s Legal Services, 2007).

While social isolation and low literacy levels can present considerable challenges in the delivery of information to especially vulnerable immigrant women, many community organizations have developed methods of mitigating these difficulties through the creation of peer groups, workshops, expert presentations, and various audio-visual products. Arguably, the obstacle with which service providers struggle the most is in addressing specific and varied cultural practices and expectations as they apply to women. Several of the reviewed reports and articles highlighted the importance of presenting information, especially health and legal information, in a manner that was both

cognisant and respectful of cultural variations, although many authors acknowledged the complexity of such a task (Women's Legal Services, 2007; George & Chaze, 2009).

For example, the complications associated with providing culturally sensitive and appropriate public legal education and information is particularly relevant considering that many immigrant women identify family law and domestic violence as the two most pressing legal matters they encounter. Domestic violence and family law concerns are made even more complicated for some immigrant women and for PLEI agencies due to the various socio-cultural realities that often accompany these two issues (Broad & Hagerty, 2004; Anitha, 2008). Different beliefs and expectations regarding a women's role and responsibilities within a family and society can make it extremely difficult for some immigrant women to locate and use the information they need. In the United Kingdom, Anitha (2008) explored the topic of domestic violence and immigrant women and noted that one of the primary reasons immigrant women do not seek legal assistance on a more frequent basis is a lack of information about their legal rights. Many immigrant women experiencing domestic violence fear obtaining legal aid will result in a loss of child custody or deportation, and are therefore very reluctant to seek out legal information. One method of assuaging such fears would be the provision of PLEI, although Anitha and other researchers note that community legal centres and immigrant agencies find such a task quite arduous (Anitha, 2008; Women's Legal Services, 2007).

3.4.2 Solutions

Immigrant service associations have attempted to find innovative methods of disseminating integral information to at-risk immigrant women, the majority of which have relied on interpersonal communication such as telephone hotlines and workshops. A focus group of immigrant women in New South Wales, for example, indicated that they felt more comfortable discussing private matters, such as domestic violence, one-on-one or in a group of women facing similar challenges (Women's Legal Services, 2007). One project based in Ontario selected a group of high-needs women, including immigrant women, and trained them as public legal education and information peer counsellors. The goal of the initiative was to assist women in developing the skills and confidence necessary to seek out legal information on an individual basis, and to encourage them to pass on this knowledge to other women in need. One of the chief findings of this project was that women felt knowing how to access reliable PLEI was as critical a goal as understanding specific details about legal topics such as immigration and family law (Broad & Hagerty, 2004).

A study of forty-six Chinese and Indian immigrant women and their access to health information revealed similar findings to the two examples mentioned above. Many of the study's participants indicated that service providers could make health information more accessible to newly arrived immigrant women if it was presented in a variety of forms including printed materials and ethnic media such as radio. The women in this study also highlighted the importance of distributing information in multiple languages as much as possible, although they did seem to understand that many organizations did not have the capacity for executing such a task (Ahmad, Shik, Vanza, Cheung, George & Stewart, 2004).

Certain groups of immigrant women remain a source of concern to many community providers and agencies due to the numerous barriers associated with delivering integral information to such individuals. Some immigrant women experience greater degrees of physical and social isolation, lower levels of education and literacy, and cultural differences that may prevent them from accessing the information materials they need to settle successfully in their new home. While some agencies have devoted considerable time and effort in resolving these challenges, much of the literature suggests that more work must be done to ensure that especially vulnerable immigrant women have quality access to the information they require.

3.5 Public Information and Seniors

Certain groups of immigrant seniors are another population of particular concern to service agencies. An aging immigrant population has resulted in a growing demand for information relating to legal matters, government programs for seniors, financial management, housing, language training, and recreational and social opportunities (McDonald, George, Daciuk, Yan & Rowan, 2001; Vucetic, 2006). Similar to some immigrant women, particular groups of immigrant seniors encounter several challenges in accessing integral information including physical and social isolation and poor literacy skills. A growing number of community service agencies and governments have attempted to overcome these challenges by circulating important information through helplines and ethnic media such as radio and newspapers (Simich & Fu, 2004; McDonald, George, Daciuk, Yan & Rowan, 2001).

3.5.1 Challenges

Isolation and poor literacy skills can be problematic in the delivery of integral information to certain groups of immigrant seniors. Although many immigrant seniors arrive in the “host” nation with a high degree of education and a strong network of social and familial support, there are some immigrant seniors who do not possess such benefits. Some elderly immigrants experience greater feelings of social isolation due to physical or medical limitations, as well as a lack of social and economic resources which can restrict their access to key public information (Simich & Fu, 2004; Ng, Northcott & Abu-Laban, 2004). There are also some immigrant seniors who do not have the same level of educational attainment, or first language and “host” language literacy as other immigrant groups, which can also make distributing integral information to this particular population quite difficult (D’Elia, 2008).

Although isolation and lower levels of literacy and education can be problematic in the delivery of integral information to certain groups of immigrant seniors, much of the reviewed literature identified a more pressing concern in relation to this issue. As previously noted, many service organizations are spending an increasing amount of time and resources on the development of information materials that can be disseminated to the public using various Web 2.0 technologies (Karim, Eid & B’éri, 2007; Cunningham, McCombe & Sarkozi, 2007). A growing reliance on Web 2.0 for information distribution could create further challenges for some immigrant seniors attempting to retrieve public information including:

- High costs of necessary technology;
- Poor public access to necessary technology;
- Poor accessibility for people with disabilities; and
- Privacy and security of personal information (Ellison, Schetzer, Mullins, Perry & Wong, 2004; Cortinois, 2008).

It is important to recognize the potential barriers associated with a greater use of Web 2.0 applications in the delivery of public information, especially with respect to the potentially more vulnerable segments of immigrant populations such as seniors. Although Web 2.0 may be very effective in disseminating information to certain groups within immigrant communities, such as immigrant youth, the widespread implementation of Web 2.0 could potentially place some immigrant seniors and women at a further disadvantage relative to other members of immigrant communities, in terms of obtaining the information they need (Ellison, Schetzer, Mullins, Perry & Wong, 2004; Cortinois, 2008).

3.5.2 Solutions

Similar to other marginalized immigrant populations, some at-risk immigrant seniors seem to prefer to access information through interpersonal communication. Such personal contacts can include family members, friends, colleagues, or community workers specializing in immigrant and settlement issues. Many organizations have made significant efforts to provide information to senior immigrants through in-person contact. In addition, several of these agencies use helplines specifically targeted towards assisting the more isolated groups within immigrant communities (Ellison, Schetzer, Mullins, Perry & Wong, 2004; McDonald, George, Daciuk, Yan & Rowan, 2001).

The distribution of integral information to certain groups of elderly immigrants continues to be a key challenge for many organizations. Certain groups of immigrant seniors are physically isolated and possess poor literacy skills in both their first language and the language of their adopted country (Vucetic, 2006). The increasing popularity of Web 2.0 technology and information distribution has also led to concerns surrounding decreased access to integral information for vulnerable seniors and other disadvantaged segments of immigrant communities. The preference of many senior immigrants for interpersonal communication can also be problematic for associations already struggling with limited human and financial resources, although it should be noted that despite these challenges several community service agencies are currently implementing in-person programs designed to address the information needs of at-risk immigrant seniors.

4 Environmental Scan

The purpose of this section of the Scoping Review is to present some of the key findings from the environmental scan of public information dissemination initiatives in Australia, the United States, and Canada. This section will also include information gathered from interviews with key informants currently working in the area of immigration and settlement services. The purpose of these interviews is to gather more detailed information regarding information distribution programs and services and to discover whether the organizations highlighted in this section are currently conducting evaluations of their programs. Key informants were chosen based on findings from the following jurisdictional scan, as well as advice from other individuals working in the field. A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix C of this report and a list of key informants can be found in Appendix D. It is hoped that the findings contained within this portion of the report will lend practical support and evidence to the development of public information distribution methods within the province of British Columbia.

4.1 Australia

Immigrant Women's Speakout Association

<http://www.speakout.org.au>

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, which is staffed mostly by women from non-English speaking backgrounds, is an information, referral, and research agency based in New South Wales. The organization's mandate is to address the main issues of concern to immigrant and refugee women living in the state, such as education, employment, integration, and various legal matters (Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, 2009).

In terms of legal education and information, the Association has developed several audio-visual and printed materials pertaining to the subjects of domestic violence, immigration law, and acquiring legal assistance. The majority of these products are available in numerous languages including Arabic, Kriol, Somali, and Ethiopian (Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, 2009). One example of the multimedia products developed by the Association is a cassette entitled "*Kurdish Women's Legal Plays*." The cassette includes eight plays performed in the Kurdish dialects of Kurmanci and Sorani, which inform the audience about the legal issues surrounding domestic violence, divorce, and immigration. Another similar item is a compact disc called "*Domestic Violence Plays in Community Languages*," which is available in Arabic, Sudanese, Dinka, Dari, Kriol, and Somali. The CD contains two plays both dealing with the issue of domestic violence, including information on how to apply for an Apprehended Violence Order (Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, 2009).

Refugee and Immigration Legal Service

<http://www.rails.org.au/index.html>

The Refugee and Immigration Legal Information Service (RAILS) is an organization operating out of Queensland with the mandate to distribute free legal advice, assistance,

and public legal education to immigrants and refugees living in the area. Legal information is delivered to interested stakeholders through printed materials and educational workshops and presentations. Written information is available in several languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Tagalog, and covers a number of topics including citizenship, immigration law, and domestic violence (Refugee and Immigration Legal Information Service, 2008). The public legal education workshops offered by the organization also deal with a broad range of issues such as family law, discrimination, healthcare, employment law, and consumer protection. These sessions are offered to community workers, other refugee and immigrant agencies, and members of the public. Interpreters also attend these workshops if there is enough funding available to cover the costs (Refugee and Legal Information Service, 2008).

Evaluation is viewed as an integral component of the organization's work as feedback from clients and community partners is used to assist RAILS in the creation of future public legal education and information projects. The main sources of feedback are satisfaction surveys, which are conducted at the conclusion of each community legal education workshop and seminar (Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, personal communication, January 20, 2010). The surveys are kept simple due to the limited English proficiency of most workshop attendants, and in some instances interpreters are provided to assist attendees in completing the evaluation form. Questions contained within the survey mainly focus on whether the information provided was useful and was presented in clear manner. A copy of the organization's satisfaction survey can be found in Appendix B of this report. Clients are strongly encouraged to be as candid as possible when completing these surveys and RAILS only collects the forms once attendees are no longer identifiable. The feedback from these surveys has been overwhelmingly positive and as a result, RAILS continues to develop public legal education and information workshops and seminars (Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, personal communication, January 26, 2010).

Roundtable discussions and focus groups with clients, PLEI workers, and community partners are another important source of evaluative information for the Refugee and Immigration Legal Information Service. Interpreters attend these sessions as needed to ensure non-English speaking participants are able to contribute fully to these discussions. RAILS also relies heavily on the opinions and advice of other community associations dealing with refugees and immigrants to better understand the information needs of these communities (Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, personal communication, January 26, 2010).

Women's Health Queensland Wide

<http://www.womhealth.org.au/>

Women's Health Queensland Wide is a non-profit agency tasked with providing health information and education to women and medical professionals living and working in the Queensland area. One of the organization's primary services is the *Health Information Line*, which operates five days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. This telephone service is managed by registered nurses and midwives who answer calls and e-mails from

Queensland residents. Staff members usually provide clients with health information, although when necessary employees will refer clients to other health service institutions (Women's Health Queensland Wide, 2010).

Women's Health Queensland Wide also runs a series of *Health Education Workshops* under the direction of the organization's Health Promotion Officer. These workshops are delivered at schools, community service organizations, businesses, and various health care conferences. The majority of the workshops focus on health issues relating to women such as body image, safe sexual practices, menopause, and mental health issues such as depression. The educational sessions are available to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, although it is the responsibility of the client to provide an interpreter if such a service is necessary (Women's Health Queensland Wide, 2010).

Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/gtmhc>

The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre is an organization that provides health information, referrals, and some clinical services state-wide at no cost. One of the resources available to consumers is an extensive library of multilingual brochures, videos, audio tapes, and CD ROMs which address a number of mental health issues (Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre, 2007).

Between 2004 and 2006, the Centre launched a series of seminars on the subject of cultural perspectives of mental health and mental health services. The seminars were delivered by members of the particular cultural community with the assistance of Centre employees, and covered a wide range of issues including pre-migration and post-migration mental health and different ethnic groups' utilization of mental health services. All seminars were recorded and are available in videotape format through the Centre's resource library (Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre, 2007).

Islamic Women's Association of Queensland

http://www.iwaq.org.au/main/page_home.html

The overall mandate of the Islamic Women's Association of Queensland is to provide individuals with a broad range of services including settlement assistance, seniors' care, and aid for people with disabilities. One such service is the *Orientation Program Towards Integration of New Settlers (OPTIONS)*, which is primarily aimed at assisting women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds successfully integrate into Australian society (Islamic Women's Association of Queensland, 2009).

OPTIONS uses a variety of techniques in helping women from multicultural backgrounds acquire the information and skills they need to settle in Australia. Some of the services offered through OPTIONS include information and referral, case management, and advocacy. A case worker from the organization acknowledged that most of the case worker's time was devoted to ensuring women had relevant and accurate information (Islamic Women's Association of Queensland, personal communication, March 8, 2010). As an example, the key informant noted they provided clients with twelve information sessions dedicated to describing the various organizations and agencies available to assist

women from different cultural backgrounds. Case workers also provide information on an individual basis depending on the specific needs of the client (Islamic Women's Association of Queensland, personal communication, March 8, 2010).

4.2 The United States

4.2.1 California

Services, Immigrants Rights & Education Network

<http://www.siren-bayarea.org/history.html>

The Services, Immigrants Rights & Education Network (SIREN) is an organization based in northern California with the mandate to enhance awareness regarding immigrant rights. The organization delivers information to immigrant communities and immigration workers through a variety of methods including an Immigrant Q&A Line and community presentations (Services, Immigrants Rights & Education Network, 2009).

The Immigration Q&A Line is a free telephone-based service that provides information to immigrants on matters such as immigration law, the naturalization process, health care, civil rights, and public services. This service is offered in three languages; English, Spanish, and Vietnamese (Services, Immigrants Rights & Education Network, 2009).

The organization also prepares presentations in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese designed to educate immigrants on a wide range of issues such as information relating to the legal system and the legal rights of immigrants. Presentations are delivered at a variety of locations including churches, libraries, and ESL and citizenship classes (Services, Immigrants Rights & Education Network, 2009).

4.2.2 Maine

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

<http://www.ilapmaine.org/index.html>

The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, operating out of Maine, is an organization dedicated to providing legal information and aid to low-income state residents. A key initiative of the organization is Information Workshops, which are delivered throughout the state several times a year. The purpose of these workshops is to disseminate relevant and accurate legal information to immigrant communities and to ensure immigrants have a solid understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities. The majority of the topics covered during these workshops relate to immigration law and Constitutional rights, although other subjects have been addressed at these events, including immigrants' access to public services and benefits (Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, 2009).

4.2.3 Massachusetts

The Immigrant Learning Centre

<http://ilctr.org/>

The Immigrant Learning Centre is a non-profit organization that provides free ESL classes to adult immigrants and refugees. Although the Centre's main priority is ensuring newly arrived immigrants and refugees receive high quality language training, the organization also employs a full-time guidance counsellor to assist students in accessing important information and services (The Immigrant Learning Centre, 2010).

The primary responsibility of the guidance counsellor is to provide integral information to the Centre's students on the subjects of employment, continuing education, health care, housing, legal aid, and various social services. The counsellor also uses class time to deliver workshops on a number of different topics including employment, stress management, and health issues such as depression (The Immigrant Learning Center, personal communication, February 23, 2010).

Important information, most notably job openings and employment training opportunities, is posted on bulletin boards and copies are placed in the Centre's student lounge. All information is provided in English due to the broad linguistic background of students and the lack of resources necessary to translate the materials into multiple languages. Translation and interpretive services are occasionally provided by advanced level students or teachers who speak several languages including French, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian (The Immigrant Learning Centre, personal communication, February 23, 2010).

4.2.4 Oregon

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization

<http://www.irco.org/>

The primary goal of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization is to assist immigrants and refugees in successfully integrating into American society. The organization delivers a wide range of services and programs for approximately thirty different ethnic groups originating from countries in Asia, Africa, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. Employees of the organization also come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and it is estimated staff speak a combined thirty-nine languages (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, 2010).

The *African Immigrant and Refugee Elder Health (ARIEH) Program* is designed to educate recent African immigrant seniors about various health issues. Approximately fifty seniors per year attend presentations focusing on a number of health issues including how to access various health services and the importance of preventative care. These weekly sessions also provide an opportunity for participating seniors to be screened for various health issues by nursing interns. The program also presents seniors with

volunteering opportunities such as mentoring younger immigrants and assisting with leadership development in their respective communities (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, 2010).

4.2.5 Washington State

Centre for Multicultural Health

http://www.multi-culturalhealth.org/mission_approach/

The Centre for Multicultural Health was founded in 1976 with the mandate to enhance health and wellbeing among various cultural groups such as immigrant and refugee communities. The majority of the Centre's programs and services are focused on health advocacy, community education, and disease prevention (Centre for Multicultural Health, 2005).

For example the *Sound Heart Program* is designed to increase awareness of cardiovascular disease among cultural communities. Community-based education and outreach initiatives, as well as blood pressure and cholesterol screenings are used to educate members of the public about the importance of cardiovascular health. Many of the aforementioned activities occur at public venues such as neighbourhood festivals, health fairs, community organizations, major local businesses, and public housing units (Centre for Multicultural Health, 2005).

Another program, the *Community Health Services Program*, was launched in 1979 largely due to the large increase in Southeast Asian immigrants and refugees into the Seattle-King County area. The program features three Family Health Workers charged with the task of providing community-based education to individuals from Cambodian, Chinese-Cantonese, Chinese-Chau-Jo, Chinese-Mandarin, and Vietnamese speaking backgrounds (Centre for Multicultural Health, 2005).

4.3 Canada

4.3.1 Alberta

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)

<http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/>

The Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing settlement services to immigrants and refugees living in Southern Alberta. The agency is staffed by employees who speak a combined 70 languages and is also supported by the work of approximately 1300 volunteers (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, 2010).

Immigrant Seniors Services offers several programs, such as the *Seniors Host Program* and the *Seniors Literacy Program*, aimed at assisting immigrant seniors in the settlement process. The *Seniors Host Program* involves placing immigrant seniors into learning circles, or partnering them with CCIS volunteers, in an effort to improve immigrant

seniors' knowledge of daily living skills such as cooking and language training. A secondary objective of this program is to ensure immigrant seniors become more familiar with the resources and culture of their newly adopted community and country (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, 2010). *The Seniors Literacy Program* includes a peer-learning approach to language training and overall literacy, as immigrant seniors who are fluent in English are paired with newly arrived immigrant seniors still in the process of learning the new language. This program also allows recently landed immigrant seniors to establish social networks and supports within the community which can be very beneficial in aiding them with the integration process (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, 2010).

The organization also runs a series of workshops every year called the *Legal Workshop Series*, which is designed to provide public legal education and information to new immigrants, various service providers, and interested members of the public. These workshops address a wide range of issues under the broader legal categories of immigration and civil and criminal law (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, 2010).

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary

http://www.elizabethfrycalgary.ca/main/page.php?page_id=21

In 2006 the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary launched a pilot project, the Community Awareness for New Immigrants Program, with the objective of delivering legal education and information to new Canadians. The program involves a series of workshops addressing a number of legal subjects such as traffic law, theft, tenant rights, domestic violence, and the immigration process. Over one hundred and forty new immigrants attended these workshops in 2008, and approximately 90% of these attendees indicated the event assisted them in becoming better integrated into Canadian society (Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary, 2009).

The Community Awareness for New Immigrants Program also strives to reduce the number of barriers preventing some individuals from attending these workshops through the provision of food, transportation, and financial aid for individuals who cannot afford childcare. Such steps have had an overwhelmingly positive impact on workshop attendance rates and the Society is currently exploring ways to expand these services (Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary, personal communication, January 25, 2010).

At present there is no evaluation planned for the Community Awareness for New Immigrants Program largely due to the fact it is still a pilot project and the Elizabeth Fry Society is devoting the majority of human and financial resources to other priority areas (Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary, personal communication, January 25, 2010). Some minor evaluation is conducted, however, through the use of participant feedback forms which are completed at the conclusion of each workshop. These forms include questions relating to the overall quality of the presentation, the usefulness of the information provided, and whether the presentation assisted the individual in becoming more informed about Canadian laws and the legal system. Participants are also encouraged to suggest potential topics for future workshops in an effort to better address the information

needs of workshop attendees (Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary, personal communication, January 25, 2010).

4.3.2 British Columbia

Campbell River and Area Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association (CRMISA)

<http://www.crmisa.ca/index.php>

The Campbell River and Area Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association (CRMISA) is a non-profit organization with the mandate to provide critical information and services to newly arrived immigrants, as well as other community service providers. The majority of services available to other community groups focus on educating these organizations about the importance of delivering programs and services in a culturally relevant and appropriate manner (CRMISA, 2009).

The Drop-In Multilingual Resource Centre offers considerable support to new refugees and immigrants primarily through the distribution of multilingual information and referrals to other community organizations and government services. The information provided by the centres address a wide range of issues including health, public legal education and information, and information pertaining to Canadian culture. The information is offered in a variety of formats included printed pamphlets, books, and audio-visual materials such videos (CRMISA, 2009).

The Association also runs a series of Life Skills and Education Programs which are tailored to address the most pressing needs of a particular cultural or linguistic group. The majority of these programs take the form of educational workshops and cover a vast array of topics such as pre-natal care, parenting skills, and employment. These workshops are also usually developed and delivered in collaboration with other community organizations. To ensure program attendees are able to fully participate in workshop activities and learning, interpreters are provided whenever necessary (CRMISA, 2009).

Justice Education Society

<http://www.justiceeducation.ca/>

The Justice Education Society runs the Court Information Project for Immigrants which was recently expanded through funding from the Government of Canada and the collaboration of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Ministry of Attorney General. The goal of this program is to improve immigrants' access to the justice system by reducing the number of linguistic and cultural barriers experienced by newcomers. Immigrants attending certain courthouses within Metro Vancouver as alleged perpetrators, victims, witnesses, or civil plaintiffs are provided with information and referral services in Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Hindi, French, and Spanish. An evaluation of the project is due to be completed in the spring of 2010 (B.C. Ministry of Attorney General, personal communication, March 15, 2010).

Collaborative Consortium Project

The Government of Canada and a collaboration of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Ministry of Attorney General have provided funding for a pilot project aimed at developing a more effective and integrated approach to public legal education and information delivery to new immigrants living in the Metro Vancouver area. Several PLEI agencies and immigrant service organizations are involved in the Collaborative Consortium Project which includes the identification and assessment of existing information resources in the areas of housing, domestic law, and family violence. The Project also includes training for community leaders and educators, as well as the provision of public forums on various topics. The Project is currently undergoing an evaluation and it is hoped the ensuing report will be released sometime in the spring of 2010. The organizations contributing their knowledge and expertise to the Project are:

- DIVERSEcity;
- Immigrant Services Society for BC;
- Justice Education Society;
- Legal Services Society;
- MOSAIC;
- North Shore Multicultural Society;
- Options: Services to Communities Society;
- People's Law School;
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services;
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.;
- TRAC Tenant Resources and Advisory Centre; and
- Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services (B.C. Ministry of Attorney General, personal communication, March 16, 2010).

MOSAIC

<http://www.mosaicbc.com/home>

Established in 1976, MOSAIC (Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities) is a non-profit association dedicated to assisting immigrants obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to integrate and succeed in Canadian society. One of the organization's priorities is the delivery of public legal education and information to immigrant communities. MOSAIC also makes every effort to ensure high-needs subgroups within immigrant communities, such as women and seniors, are

receiving the support and information they require. The chief PLEI delivery methods used by MOSAIC are the circulation of printed materials, workshops, seminars, and the Internet. The organization is currently struggling with providing adequate quantities of written products for their clients due to a lack of financial resources (MOSAIC, personal communication, January 27, 2010).

The Legal Advocacy Program is one of the main distributing bodies of PLEI within the organization. The Program's objectives are to provide quality legal information, referrals, and if necessary, representation to clients who meet the following criteria; they are low income, have limited proficiency in English, possess little or no knowledge of the Canadian legal system, and are not eligible or able to receive assistance from other service providers (MOSAIC, 2009).

Another public legal education program offered by MOSAIC, in cooperation with RED FM 93.1, is the Legal Education for the South Asian Community Program (LEAPV). The program features a series of radio and television talk shows presented in English and Punjabi that discuss issues relating to violence against women in the South Asian community. The ultimate goal of the project is to enhance the safety and well-being of women and children by improving women's access to public legal information and legal services (MOSAIC, 2009).

It is important to note that there are several settlement agencies and organizations providing various services to recently arrived refugees and immigrants in British Columbia. MOSAIC was included in this review to provide an example of how these organizations are endeavouring to meet the information and service needs of new immigrants.

People's Law School

<http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/>

In 1975, the People's Law School, an organization responsible for educating the public about various legal matters, began providing public legal education and information services to immigrants in their native languages. Some of these PLEI services include the Cultural Minorities Program, the Law-Related ESL Program, Justice Theatre, and the Violence Against Minority Women Project (People's Law School, 2009).

The objective of the Cultural Minorities Program is to provide multilingual legal education and information to new immigrants living in British Columbia. Information is provided through booklets, radio broadcasts, and articles in ethnic newspapers in multiple languages including Punjabi, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Persian. Public legal education and information radio programs provided by this program involve discussions with professionals working in the PLEI field including police officers, physicians, government employees, and settlement workers (People's Law School, 2009).

The Law-Related English Language Services for Adults Project is targeted towards immigrants attending intermediate and advanced level ESL classes. The program is made possible through funding from the Government of Canada and a collaboration of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Ministry of

Attorney General. In this program, ESL instructors educate students about the basics of Canadian law at both the federal and provincial level. Instructors employ a variety of techniques including quizzes and poster-making to introduce new immigrants to a wide range of legal subjects such as family, criminal, and employment law (People's Law School, 2009). The Law-Related ESL Program is currently undergoing an evaluation by an independent contractor. It is hoped the evaluation report, due sometime in the spring of 2010 will help the organization improve the program or assist them in developing similar services. It should be noted that client satisfaction surveys are completed at the conclusion of each teaching session in order to obtain some feedback, but these surveys are not designed to be very in-depth or comprehensive (People's Law School, personal communication, January 21, 2010).

Although not specifically aimed at new immigrants the organisation's Justice Theatre program has enjoyed significant success since its introduction in 1985 at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE). Information regarding this program has been included in this Scoping Review at the request of the PLEI Working Group. Over the next several years the Justice Theatre performed several plays at the PNE on the topics of bullying, gang violence, and impaired driving until the Theatre was incorporated in 1997 as a regular program of the People's Law School (People's Law School, personal communication, February 17, 2010). The Theatre is primarily run in schools on the Lower Mainland and during performances audience members are chosen to act as the jury. While the jury is deliberating, the Theatre Director engages the remaining audience in a Q&A session to further educate students about the legal topic being addressed in the play. The program has currently not undergone a formal, external evaluation, but satisfaction surveys are collected at the conclusion of each performance and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive (People's Law School, personal communication, February 17, 2010).

Another public legal education and information project run by the People's Law School is targeted towards immigrant women. The Violence Against Minority Women Project is a three-year initiative with the goal of educating women from ethnically diverse backgrounds about the various Canadian laws and services designed to protect and help victims of domestic violence. The organization is primarily using radio and television to distribute the information and over 2009 and 2010 eleven radio broadcasts and seven television programs will be aired in Mandarin, Tagalog, and Tamil. All of the broadcasts and ensuing project materials will focus on the various socio-cultural and legal issues surrounding domestic violence in an effort to assist women in developing the skills and confidence necessary to take appropriate action (People's Law School, personal communication, January 21, 2010)

4.3.3 Nova Scotia

4.3.4

Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services

<http://www.isisns.ca/index.php>

The establishment of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services was the result of a merger between the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association and the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre, and is now an organization dedicated to assisting immigrants to successfully integrate into Canadian society (Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services, 2010).

The *Orientation Program* offers daily learning sessions and workshops to new immigrants with the aim of enhancing new immigrants' familiarity with Canadian life and the numerous community and government resources available to aid them during the settlement process. The sessions provide new immigrants with detailed information about a wide array of subjects including health care, parenting skills, child care, financial management, recreational and entertainment opportunities, housing, transportation, education, and information relating to the Canadian legal system and government. The organization also delivers four workshop series, the Legal Workshop Series, the Health Workshop Series, the Family Life and Parenting Workshop Series, and the Financial Management Workshop Series, to provide new immigrants with more in-depth information and education on these particular issues (Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services, 2010).

4.3.5 Ontario

Community Legal Education Ontario

<http://www.cleo.on.ca/>

Community Legal Education Ontario is a community legal clinic that provides a large array of legal information to Ontario residents, including immigrants. Two initiatives that deliver public legal education and information specifically to new immigrants are the ESL Resources Project and the Six Languages Text and Audio Project (Community Legal Education Ontario, 2009).

The ESL Resources Project involves providing instructional materials to ESL and LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) teachers so they can address various legal subjects in their classes. The instructors are also trained on how to deliver and explain legal information to their students in the most effective manner possible. Teachers are encouraged to educate their students on the legal services available and how best to access these resources (Community Legal Education Ontario, 2009).

The Six Languages Text and Audio Project was launched in 2006 as a pilot program with the goal of distributing information relating to children's aid, criminal charges, employee rights, and immigration law to immigrant communities through the dissemination of text

and audio files. The majority of these files are offered in six languages: Arabic, Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, and Urdu (Community Legal Education Ontario, 2009).

211 Toronto Community Connection Service

<http://www.211toronto.ca/index.jsp>

The 211 Toronto Community Connection Service is an information provision and referral service funded by the United Way of Greater Toronto and the City of Toronto. The service is staffed by highly trained employees tasked with identifying callers' information needs and assisting them in locating the information they require. The Service currently maintains a directory of well over 20,000 government, health, and social services which is used to connect clients with the appropriate information (211Toronto.ca, 2010).

Although the service is not specifically designed to address the needs of immigrants, quarterly reports published by the Service indicate that approximately 40% of the 30,000 calls per month are from individuals whose first language is not English. One study focused on immigrants' use of 211 Toronto as source for health information and discovered 67.1% of surveyed callers expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the service (Cortinois, 2008). Many participants were very appreciative of the fact many of 211 Toronto's staff were multilingual and could communicate in the participant's language of choice. Other survey respondents indicated the speed and quality of the service provided by 211 counsellors were the primary strengths of 211 Toronto. Several participants also noted that 211 Toronto should devote more resources to promoting their services, particularly among the elderly and less educated members of the public (Cortinois, 2008).

North Hamilton Community Health Centre

<http://www.nhchc.ca/index.php>

The North Hamilton Community Centre offers several programs and services to immigrants with the goal of promoting health and well-being among new immigrants. Many of the services are tailored to meet the needs of particular segments of immigrant communities such as immigrant women and seniors (North Hamilton Community Health Centre, 2010).

A Mi Salud is one such program available to all Latin American women and is focused on delivering community education on the topics of health, Canadian Culture, and language training. The program is available in Spanish and the content and structure of the program are chosen by participants according to their specific needs. For example, the program has included workshops and learning sessions on the topics of dental care, the health care system, and how to access community resources and services like public libraries (North Hamilton Community Health Centre, 2010). Program operators employ a variety of educational methods such as group discussions, cooking classes, field trips, and audio-visual materials to ensure the information is presented to participants in the most effective and culturally appropriate manner possible. The Centre also provides food, child care, and bus tickets to program participants in need of these resources (North Hamilton Community Health Centre, 2010).

Third Youth is very similar to *A Mi Salud* although this particular program is aimed at providing community education on the subjects of health, language, and Canadian culture to Latin American seniors. A secondary goal of the program is to foster greater social inclusion among program participants as many new immigrant seniors often experience significant social isolation upon arriving in a new country. Much like *A Mi Salud*, attendees are responsible for providing input on how they would like the program to be delivered and what topics program facilitators should address (North Hamilton Community Health Centre, 2010).

The *Twinning Program* is another service offered by the Centre to assist new immigrants in improving language skills as well as ensuring immigrants are aware of the numerous community and government resources available to them. New immigrants and their ‘twin’ volunteer meet once a week for two hours and work on improving the immigrant’s conversational English. The volunteer also uses these weekly meetings as an opportunity to provide information to their immigrant partner on the subjects of community services, Canadian health care and legal systems, and Canadian culture (North Hamilton Community Health Centre, 2010).

5 Conclusion

The goal of this report was to provide a comprehensive overview of the research pertaining to the main information needs and information seeking practices of new immigrants, and to detail effective methods of disseminating integral public information to immigrants that are currently in use in jurisdictions in Australia, Canada, and the United States.

New immigrants have a wide range of information needs upon first settling in a new country, including information pertaining to health, employment, legal issues, and the legal system. Information is gathered through a variety of means such as ethnic media, printed materials such as brochures, and perhaps most importantly, through interpersonal sources such as friends, family, and settlement workers. Although new immigrants employ numerous methods to obtain the information they require, many of these individuals encounter significant barriers such as language, low literacy levels, cultural differences, and a lack of awareness regarding available information resources, when accessing key public information. It should be noted that the majority of the reviewed literature acknowledged the possibility that certain groups of immigrant women and seniors may experience further challenges in addition to the barriers mentioned above, such as social isolation and different cultural expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and the elderly in society.

A detailed environmental scan revealed that many community organizations and immigrant service agencies are employing a variety of information distribution techniques to ensure integral public information reaches as many new immigrants as possible. Health, employment, and legal information are delivered through audio-visual materials, ethnic television, ethnic radio, and various printed materials such as brochures, posters, and handbooks. Many organizations also rely heavily on the use of interpersonal communication such as seminars, workshops, and telephone helplines to distribute information to new immigrants. It is important to note that information distribution techniques do not appear to vary depending on the type of information being disseminated, and the vast majority of organizations appear to use a variety of different delivery methods when distributing public information to immigrant communities.

It is hoped that the findings presented in this report will assist the Justice Service Branch in their efforts to create effective public information distribution methods for new immigrants with the long-term goal of assisting new immigrants in successfully settling in British Columbia.

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Appendix A – Top Information Needs of New Immigrants

Table 4: Adapted from Caidi, Allard, and Dechief, 2008

Top Information Needs of New Immigrants	
Top Settlement Needs	Top Non-Settlement Needs
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

Appendix B – Legal Education Workshop Satisfaction Survey (RAILS)

Legal Education Workshop

Satisfaction survey

Location:

Topic:

Date:

Male **Female**

1. Did you find the information in the workshop useful?

No. a little yes very



2. Did the workshop help you to have a better understanding of how law works in Australia?

No. a little yes very



3. Was the information presented clear and easy to understand?

No. a little yes very



4. Any other comments? What else would you like to know?

Thank you for your input.

Appendix C – Key Informant Interview Questions

1. What are the primary methods used by your organization to distribute integral public information to new immigrants? (Eg. workshops, seminars, pamphlets, videos, etc.)
2. In your opinion, what distribution methods are most effective in delivering important information to new immigrants (esp. immigrant women and seniors)?
3. Can you share your knowledge of any existing initiatives that you believe may be best practices or promising practices related to the dissemination of important information to new immigrants?
4. What are the main challenges in delivering integral information to new immigrants? (Eg. language barriers, cultural issues, lack of human and financial resources etc.)
5. Have there been any evaluations of your organization's programs?
 - a. If no – What are the reasons for not conducting an evaluation?
 - b. If yes – What evaluation methods were used, and what were the results of the evaluation?
6. What are some of the main barriers to conducting evaluations of information distribution programs and services?
 - a. How has your organization overcome these barriers?

Appendix D – List of Key Informants

Note: At this, the draft stage of this Scoping Review, this is an early list of potential informants. We have contacted a number of informants already but are also continuing to add to the list on a regular basis. Suggestions of names for other key informants are welcome from the committee.

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