IS EVERYONE IS USING TECHNOLOGY? ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NEEDS OF NEWCOMER YOUTH

by

Laura Arndt BA, Ryerson University, 2007

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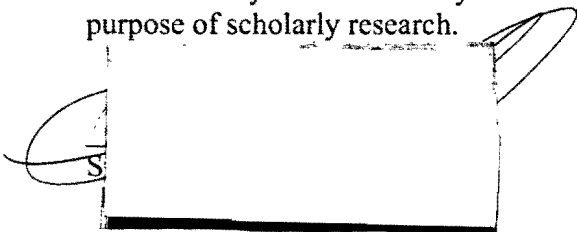**Author's Declaration**

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BRIDGING COMMUNITIES AND MULTIPLE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: THE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NEEDS OF NEWCOMER YOUTH

Laura Anne Arndt
Master of Arts 2011
Immigration and Settlement Studies
Ryerson University

ABSTRACT

This mixed methodological study involving newcomer youth aged 17-24 and settlement service staff explores the role of technology in the process of settlement and the youth newcomer services. The findings indicate that youth prefer direct engagement with services and resources as they navigate the barriers that impact their access to mainstream and settlement service resources. They want to improve the quality of their engagement in communication as they strive to become part of their community. Participants involved in the study did not see technology as central to delivering youth settlement services. Youth did see the internet as necessary for schooling and in bridging to friends and family back home. The findings reflect the paucity of resources and capacity of mainstream and settlement specific services to meet the needs of youth, a lack of focus on integrated and accountable realm of settlement services specific to the needs of newcomer youth.

Key Words: Newcomer Youth, Settlement Services, Internet, Settlement, Ontario.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The thinking for this paper began to take shape during the year spent working for a national s online and telephone counselling service for children and youth in Canada. Kids Help Phone (KHP) provides 24 hour online and telephone brief-solution focused counselling services to children and youth living across Canada. A core part of its service delivery model is focused in its work with young people being solution focused and wherever possible staff work to link children and youth back to services and resources in their home communities. At the time KHP was responding to approximately 1.5 million telephone calls and online posts from young people across Canada a year (KHP, 2007).

While at Kids Help Phone I was involved in the development and delivery of training of the KHP online counselling model to second year Master of Social Work students as part of a partnership with the University of Toronto, School of Social Work. And the development of an in house online knowledge management system to support the information needs of staff and the resource need of children and youth through an external facing website. As a result of this work the intersection of service delivery and technology became a point of increasing interest in my work and service delivery practice. Working with national child helpline organizations around the world who were using Information Communication technologies (ICTs) to do outreach, public education and counselling to children and youth provided first-hand knowledge and insight into the power and effectiveness of online service delivery.

Of great value in this learning process was the role Child Helplines International (CHI) played in linking and partnering Helplines around the work. Through our affiliation with CHI, Kids Help

Phone was able to see how countries like the Netherlands, Australia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, India, and Ghana were using the internet, telephone, radio, on line chats and traditional snail mail to provide information and direct service delivery to children and youth and it was working.

The linking of the service delivery, technology and immigration began to take form as I began discussions with CHI members on other continents. Countries were adapting and developing technology driven models in some to expand the reach of the limited available resources that existed. In other cases service providers wanting to be where young people were, began expanding their telephone service by adding online services that included live chat, email, moderated discussion forums and the use of interactive website environments. The formation of the research question being posed in this work really took form during the online counselling course I was part of co-instructing.

It was from the intersection of youth / service delivery/ and culture that the theme of immigration and settlement services became inter-twinned As we struggled through discussions and questions with students in the counselling course around cultural competencies, questions began to form around how online service delivery would translate with settlement services for young people. The separate issues of technology, newcomer youth, settlement and settlement services playing out in my professional and academic work provided the logical basis of the central question at the core of this inductive research project. In moving forward these themes were linked to form the research question being asked. How does technology factor into the settlement process and service delivery needs of newcomer children and youth?

An initial review of services for newcomer youth revealed that in Ontario and across Canada Settlement services are a federally funded, provincially delivered and community based. Generally services are directed at adults and the services delivered through this system include: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), the Immigrant Settlement Adaptation Program (ISAP) and the Host Program that pairs community volunteers with newcomers. For the most part, program resources that exist are unable to meet the needs of youth as a result of underfunding and limited staffing. The range of settlement services currently in place were originally developed in line with the anticipated settlement needs of adults. The applicability of these resources to youth was not part to the original development activities associated with settlement services. With that said, over the last few years there has been a move towards a funding grant process that supports youth specific HOST programs, Settlement Worker in the School (SWIS) program, the Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) initiative with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and after school youth leadership programs and initiatives supported by local Settlement Services for Youth and Local Library programs. A part of the delivery model for these programs is that young people be physically present to benefit from the resources that are available. As a result of the popularity of these programs the demands for service often far exceed the resources that are available.

At the time that this work began there were a number of assumptions held by the researcher. The first was that access to online service delivery would be the preferred service model for young people and settlement service providers, given my recent experience with KHP and CHI. The second was that a consistent framework of settlement services for youth was available across the province, given my background in children's services. Finally, my initial review of the system led me to believe that the settlement service system is largely unregulated,

is unable to meet the needs of many newcomers including youth and for the most part viewed by many newcomer communities as inadequately staffed.

Moving beyond the landscape of service delivery there are a number of realities for youth that had to be considered as part of the discussion of settlement, technology and settlement. These include the role of the education system as part of the service system that supports the social, technological and educational development[1] of young people in Ontario. More recently, over the last five years, classrooms have become a place where settlement workers do their work. As seen through the incorporation of the SWIS and NOE programs into the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). As such, the critical role of schools as the delivery agent of educational and settlement based services warranted its inclusion in this research work as a provider of settlement service.

For the most part where they exist settlement services are available to newcomer youth during their first 3-5 years in Canada. The Exceptions to this would be international students and those newcomer youth with the more complex issues of failed sponsorship, questions of legal status in the country, or those awaiting refugee or humanitarian ground hearings which only exacerbate the issues of isolation and invisibility already felt. This last group of newcomer youth are often without services and supports in part because they are fearful of the service system reporting them and their fear of being found out and deported or placed in the care of child welfare.

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[1] All of Ontario's 5000 schools are connected to the Internet. According to data from the Ministry of Education all of Ontario's primary and secondary schools connected to the Internet in 2004 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1996)

The assumptions made by the researcher were, in part, tied to the area of academic study and in part to their thirty years of direct service and policy experience within the child and youth service system working for government and non-profit organizations.

This research report is in many ways bridging conversations in literature across three streams of focus and making what are hopefully logical advances that begin to link the three streams into logical narrative.

2.0 THE LITERATURE

The literature review was limited to resources available through Ryerson University and Statistics Canada data bases and was balanced with the analysis of individual interviews held with youth settlement service staff and with newcomer youth. The literature review was revisited at several points and expanded based on the themes that emerged on each successive review of the interviews.

Initially three key terms were determined to be central to a study of this nature. These include: 1.Newcomer youth, 2. Technology and 3. Settlement services. Education was added to each term given the provision of settlement services in the classroom and the role of schools in the settlement process of newcomer youth. Library databases and indexes available online through Racer access to the All Ontario University Libraries and through the online resources at The Ontario Metropolis Centre – The Joint Centre for Excellence on Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS). Additionally, separate searches using the three terms and education were completed in the areas of communication and culture, community development, immigration and settlement, psychology and social work. The indexes used to focus this literature review included the Academic Search Primer, Pro-Quest, Sociological abstracts, Social

Service Abstracts, Canadian Research Index and the Communication and Mass Media Complete. Key search terms were eventually expanded to include immigration experiences of children and youth, settlement and newcomer children / youth, information communication technologies and youth / newcomer youth, internet use by children / youth in Canada and Internationally, settlement services for children / youth/ adults, acculturation experiences of children/ youth, assimilation and cultural identity for newcomer children/ youth and technology and second language users.

While a more detailed overview follows, overall the literature did not tie together the areas central to this study in a clear and concise way. There were a few reports where there was some crossover but this was primarily with respect to a digital divide that is emerging for immigrant children and youth (Fairley, 2006; Looker, 2003). For the most part the literature focused primarily on the need for specialized settlement services for newcomer youth (Anisef,2000;Anisef, 2005; Chuang, 2010) or tapped into the use / role of technology in second language acquisition by young people (Corbeil,1996; Munro,2000; Lam W. S.,2004). A few key documents were of value as they focused primarily on the voices of young people and their perception of the barriers they experienced as part of their settlement process (OCASI, 2009; Desai, 2000). There was limited literature linking to the role of technology to the delivery of services and support to newcomer youth. In this case the literature was more generic and focused on the use of technology in the provision of counselling and services through helpline services (CHI, 2009; Lazarus, 2008). While limited, the literature that exists provided some linkages around culture and community and the nature of citizenship in online environments (Thomas, 2008).

In the end these gaps in the literature became central to the development of the interview questions that were used with settlement service providers and newcomer youth who volunteered to be part of this study.

2.1 Technology, Barriers and Opportunities

Lazarus notes that the internet has evolved as a primary source of destination for youth in having their communication, socialization and educational needs met (Lazarus, 2008). Caron and Caronia (2007) take this one step further in their work on the growth of online or internet mediated communication has been enhanced and transformed by youth culture's adoption and even expansion of communication formats or tools. It is through the internet that youth culture has been pushed by technology beyond traditional asynchronous computer mediated communication formats (ACMC) like email and list serves, moving to synchronous computer mediated communication formats, including MSN[2] chat or Instant Messaging (IM), Face book[3], MySpace[4], Blogs[5] and Wikis[6] which provide a more dynamic and real time feel.

Access to the internet has dramatically shifted what it means to be present in the interactions, communications and socialization of the current generation of youth. Increasingly the importance of the internet as part of youth culture has morphed with respect to all aspects of their social, familial, professional and academic lives (Caron & Caronia, 2007). The use of Information Communication Technologies by a large number of cultures across North America, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Germany and India (Caron & Caronia, 2007) is increasingly viewed as

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[2] www.MSN.com
[3] www.faccbook.com
[4] www.Myspace.com
[5] www.myjournal.com
[6] www.wikipedia.com

an extension of body or limb. In some cases youth have gone as far as noting that they do not perceive a separation between physical social space and electronic social space (Lawford, 2008).

As with other areas in the lives of young people, socio-economic factors play a significant impact in the lives of their families. Over the last twenty-five years the average income for an immigrant woman has dropped from 85 cent to 56 cents on the dollar compared to that of Canadian born women (Toronto Community Foundation, 2009). This diminished earning capacity impacts on the degree of access and opportunity some youth have to resources that include technology and the internet (Looker, 2003; Young, 2004; Fairle, 2006;). Newcomer youth are living increasingly in poverty, especially in large metropolises like Toronto (Ornstein, 2000; Galabuzi, 2001). What is of concern in this reality is that where socio-economic disparities exist, equitable access becomes a barrier and the outcome is that a digital divide begins to emerge between those with resources and those without . In Canada two pieces of research have been undertaken into the growing Digital Divide. The first speaks broadly (Reddick, 2004), the second focuses on the evolving digital divide in Canadian schools (Looker, 2003). While neither addresses immigrant / newcomer communities specifically the findings of both studies link Socio-Economic Status (SES), education, gender and proximity to urban centres as factors tied to access to technology. Of interest is similar work done by Fairley (Fairle, 2006) into the Digital Divide in California. Fairle's work reinforces the findings in Canada and goes one step further by linking the digital divide and the economic consequences of a digital divide to immigrants.

The role of technology in this case the internet is transformed from being viewed as an add-on resource to a tool of such power that it has become a key social indicator of success in later life. When looking at the work done into a growing digital divide the importance of technology takes on increased importance in the lives of newcomer youth. As a result of this

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work technology is perceived as a tool of accessibility, with the potential of equalizing and creating opportunities that move beyond supporting the ability of young people to come together in collaboration and engagement, (Caron & Caronia, 2007; Reddick, 2004)

This same sense of extension is reinforced in Thomas' work on online communities, culture and citizenship (Thomas, 2008). Thomas evaluates the manner in which young people build and sustain online communities and how young people engage in what he refers to as "sophisticated and multiple forms of literacy practice" through the norming and incorporation of online technologies within the existing range of communication tools available i.e. telephone, radio, television and basic pen and paper. Thomas notes that the internet "moment" has moved beyond the accepted divisions between community, culture, subjectivity and bodies, as notions of social space are re conceived. Building on the linking of technology and social space with respect to newcomer youth, Lam and Wong (Lam L. , 1994; Wong, 2008) investigated textual literacy and second language (L2) learners in online environments. Both reflect on the sense of belonging that developed for the youth involved in his study, as a result of online activities and social networking.

The literature relating specifically to the Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Newcomer youth is limited. However, there is a wealth of literature linked to the broader language of "youth and technology" and "technology and service delivery". With respect to the power of the technology in the area of service delivery, CHI, an organization that Canada's Kids Help Phone is part of presents a global context of the role of technology in ICT based service delivery. In its 2008 report "Connecting to Children: A Compilation of 2008 Helpline Data" (Child Helplines International, 2008), CHI provides the data of its 101 partners in 50 countries

who provide ICT, telephone and web-based and or snail-mail and in-person services to children and youth.

The report highlights the cost-effectiveness of both online and telephone based service delivery for both the provider and service user where public access or toll-free access existed. In some cases countries provide services and supports to children who have left their home country and immigrated to countries like Canada. In these cases the originating Helpline will bridge and /or refer a child from their service to the helpline in Canada by providing them the website name or telephone number. Unfortunately, there is no data provided on the number of immigration based contacts that take place in the reporting.

Building on the linkages of technology and social space with respect to newcomer youth, Lam (Duran, 2008) considers textual literacy and second language (L2) learners within an online environment. In this work the impact technologies have on the formation of identity and literacy with ESL learners is considered. Lams' work notes the sense of belonging that develops for the youth involved in the study, as a result of online activities and social networking.

While tied to the broader technology theme of this paper, there is increasing concern about the boundaries around privacy and the protection of personal information with respect to both personal information and service delivery (Cavoukian, 2009; Cavoukian, 2009; International Working Group on Data Protection in Telecommunications, 2008). As conflicted as the literature is in this area, the attention given to privacy is reflective of the acceptance or adoption of online space as a social environment with increasing influence, relevance and importance (Steeves, 2010).

2.2 Settlement and the Needs of Newcomer Youth

When linking into resources associated with Statistics Canada children and youth are captured in two census groupings. Data is collected for those under 15 yrs, and those aged 15-24 years of age. This presented unique barriers in this study as the province of Ontario for the most part uses the age of 16 as its definition of the cut off age associated with childhood. In some cases the age of childhood is extended to the age of 21 years based on the terminology of the *Child and Family Services Act,* (1990). For the purpose of this paper where the term youth appears it is used inclusively to represent those between the ages of 15-24 years. However, when speaking of referring to settlement services for youth the definition age for services extend to those between the ages of 13-24.

When considering the context of newcomer youth, there is with it an identity that is marginalized. The Child Welfare League of Canada (2007) notes that marginalized children are in need of and deserve service approaches that value their contribution, promote inclusion and the ability for them to engage in the development of their potential. In many cases when this social inclusion framework noted is applied to newcomer youth the reality is more one of social exclusion in the form of educational barriers, social vulnerability, economic insecurity, intergenerational conflict and potential post-traumatic experiences associated with pre and post immigration activities (Richmond;2004;Shahsiah, 2006; George, 2010; OCAS, 2009). Newcomer youth can be caught in a form of "integration limbo", a term that Desai (2000) uses to describe youth that are too old for the services directed at children but not of the age where the services for adult immigrants necessarily meet their unique needs. In essence the needs of this group of Transitionally Aged Youth (TAY), despite the current literature, remain invisible and if possible more marginalized within the broader discourse of settlement services. Perhaps the

most marginalized of newcomer youth fall into two groups those in and leaving the care of child welfare without status (Hare, 2007) and Canadian born children of immigrants who enter school not speaking English (Ngo, 2009).

With Canada's outcomes increasingly tied to the impacts of a global economy, newcomer youth, like adult newcomers, are not experiencing the same degree of success as their Canadian-born counter parts or previous generations of immigrants (Fougere, 2004). Statistics Canada reports that first and second generation youth are not succeeding academically or economically to the degree that their predecessors have in the past (Government of Canada, 2006, 2008; George, 2010; Kibride; 2000 ; Munro, 2000). On closer examination the sense that young people easily assimilate into the existing structures of these systems has begun to be challenged as local newcomer service providers identify needs and gaps and inconsistencies that exist in resources targeted at newcomer youth (Anisef, 2005; Anisef, 2000; Corbeil,1996; OCASI, 2009; CCR, 2009).

In Ontario the range of settlement services that exist for young people include a range of federally funded services. These include mentorship, volunteer and leadership opportunities, after school supports (i.e. one-on-one academic tutoring, language programs, cultural events, computer skills workshops, youth focused information sessions, resume writing, interview skills and participation in recreational activities and sports. The services and resources provided by education include the Settlement Workers in the Schools (SWIS) program, the English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (EDL) programs.

While steps have been taken to expand settlement services to children and youth, there is a lack of consistency in the funding associated with these programs, they are time limited and the

level of service decreases from year to year. Additionally, there are conditions placed on the eligibility requirements for entry into the program. In Ngo's 2009 review of language services for newcomer youth, it is noted that in the absence of system direction and parental involvement in school based literacy programs leave school administrators with significant influence in the use of English language service funding. In the case of the Toronto District School Board this power has resulted in less than half of the $80 million dollars allocated to ESL/ ELD being used to provide ESL/ELD services as the remaining funds were redirected to offset direct and other operating costs of the board (Ngo, 2009).

Community based supports provided to newcomer youth include the Newcomer Youth Centres (NYC) and the Library Settlement Partnership in Toronto (LSP). Through these programs and the SWIS program, settlement workers provide referral and in the case of NYCs this includes direct services supports that include youth programming, homework programs and social programming that support young people's settlement process (OCASI, 2009).

The process of settlement and assimilation as experienced by children and youth has only recently become a point of consideration in child development and immigration literature (James, 2003; Fong, 2004; Shahsiah, 2006). In many cases the needs of newcomer youth that are advanced in the literature are tied to calls for specialized and youth specific settlement programs that address the gaps in services and supports that exist for newcomer youth at the community level (Anisef, 2000; Chuang, 2010; Anisef, 2005). When prioritizing the needs of necomer youth some of the narrowing in focus and the call for services in two key areas language service and accent elimination (OCASI,2009; Ngo, 2009; Lam L., 1994).

In his work relating to alternate HOST program options for youth, (Anisef, 2005) notes the importance of language for youth in the settlement process. The ability of youth and their family to gain proficiency in English is a key indicator of success with respect to the process of settlement. Instead of focusing on physical difference, the focus youth place on language builds on their desire for the qualities or attributes of linguistic sameness with their Canadian born counterparts. The importance of English as a second Language (L2) has been generally considered in the context of classroom outcomes and studies of socio economic potential and success (Piven, 2008; Mou & Xie, 1999). The narrative accounts of children and youth add to this view and see language as key to developing their sense of belonging (Desai, 2000; Hayden, 2007). When viewed from this lens language becomes less about functional need and more about language as a measure of "Canadian-ness"

When reviewing the literature on service delivery a number of studies, Anisef (2000), Richmond (1996) and Desai (2000) express the need for the broader service system to bring the issues and service needs of newcomer youth to the forefront of the settlement discussion. In these reports newcomer youth identified a number of targeted needs specifically those associated with the creation of opportunities for them to come together and celebrate culture, identity and issues like integration strain, and service limbo. As Richmond notes (2000) there are significant gaps in settlement service delivery and evaluation activities associated with service delivery of the formal and informal service supports.

The absence of policy and direction on the part of children and youth newcomers despite a commitment between the federal and provincial levels of government[7] has resulted in a poorly organized structure of services and supports that are poorly funded, understaffed and unable to meet the needs of the newcomer youth accessing them. A point that was reinforced in the decision of the Ontario Human Rights Commission that required the TDSB to implement a Newcomer Orientation Week to reduce the vulnerabilities these students experience in TDSB schools (OHRC, 2005; Ngo, 2009).

2.3 Gap Identification

Given what appears to be a significant gap in the literature relating to newcomer youth and their experiences with respect to settlement services and resource needs, it was determined that the best way to gain the needed insight was to contribute to existing literature with a targeted focus on settlement, settlement services and technology use specific to newcomer youth. To do this, the insight of newcomer youth and settlement service providers were sought. One-on-one interviews were employed as a means of seeking insight into individual experiences of newcomer youth and settlement service staff. The focus of the interviews was the provision of settlement services and the role of the internet in the experiences of the settlement process for both groups. The content of the six interviews became the basis of successive re-entry with the literature as the links around literacy and belonging took on increasing influence.

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[7] 1.10 AND WHEREAS Canada and Ontario signed, on May 17, 2005, an **Addendum to the May 2004 Memorandum of Agreement on Shared Priorities,** with respect to establishing new collaborative approaches to the delivery of public services and developing integrated service delivery models, including in the area of immigration.

3.0 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A mixed methodological approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods that included individual interviews provide foundational sources of information for this research study. The review of existing literature, analysis of statistical reports and available grey literature are foundational sources of information in this limited research study. The use of qualitative processes supports an ontological paradigm that recognizes the existence of multiple embodied truths associated with a participant's relation to an issue and is based on the authentic nature of their individuated lived experience (Lincoln, 2000; Toma, 2006).

Working from an inductive base the research paper is rooted in an ethnographic approach that explores the intersection of identity and culture (Chenail, 2008). As Fetterman (2010) reflects, ethnographers make their biases known and strive to understand the perspective of the insider and integrate the external social, scientific and political cultural factors or perspective as part of their explanation. The use of ethnography is aligned with the familiarity of the researcher with participant observation and one-to-one interviews as field work tools.

Ethnography is a powerful tool through which to link identity, culture and structures that illuminate the settlement process. The researchers' engagement with the children's service and settlement service sector over the period of thirty years provides the basis of the membership role that process of ethnographic immersion is rooted (Behr, 1996). Key to this role has been the building of membership based on professional rapport rather than full immersion (the term going native has been deliberately avoided here, given First Nations ancestry of the researcher) within a newcomer community.

The decision to use individual interviews as a qualitative method is in line with Kvale view that interviews are structured and focused discussions about everyday that provide insight into the nature of relations (Kvale, 1996). The stories of people's lives provide a narrative that is saturated in personalized accounts of meaning making that take on added complexity when considered and combined with the accounts of others.

The interviewer is as a result of the interview process left with what are resulting thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) that in this case illuminate specific narratives within the settlement process. It is from these thick descriptive narratives, that insights and new knowledge are gained and advanced through a deeper analysis of the data gathered for this paper.

As part of the data recruitment flyers were posted in settlement service agencies seeking project participants who identified as being a newcomer youth or a settlement service provider staff. Potential participants lived in Toronto, self-selected and sent their contact information to a confidential email addressed set up for the study and noted on the recruitment flyers. The self-selection was based on criteria stipulated on the posters. Individual interviews would be conducted with six participants, three youth between the ages of 17 and 24 and three staff who deliver settlement services to newcomer youth. Interviews were conducted in Toronto, Ontario in the summer and fall of 2009.

Critical discourse analysis has been employed as central lens of analysis in the thematic coding of the interview and textual data collected during this study. In looking for a clear definition of discourse analysis the following references provided succinct wording. Hidlen & Honkasalo (2006) noted "It is through an exploration of discourse analysis that we consider the constructed nature of talk, looking at the cultural meaning systems to present their attitudes and activities as meaningful". Talja (2000) furthers this argument by noting that the key to discourse

analysis is "that the method does not take the individual as the principal unit of analysis, but strives to recognize cultural regularities in participants' accounts in order to examine the phenomena studied at a macro sociological level". Foucault as referenced in Dines & Humez (2003) defined discourse analysis as "An approach within cultural studies that emphasizes how power relations in societies are sustained by and reflected in a variety of specialized ways of speaking and writing, such as those of elite institutions and groups such as medical professionals, religious institutions and academics "The decision to use discourse analysis is tied to language in all three definitions as this work is rooted in understanding the nature of voice in cultural and institutional analysis and how these structures influence the process of marginalization.

Critical analysis focuses on the analysis of structures of context over text and uncovers the ways in which power relations evolve and are perpetuated (Phillips& Hardy, 2002). In the case of this study the power relations between newcomer youth and federally funded settlement services. Combining ethnography and discourse analysis anchors the inseparability of culture and identity from the voice of the key informants and the analysis of the overarching power influencing the social reality of newcomer youth.

The quantitative activities of this study included a review of statistical data relating to overall online internet usage by youth and adult newcomers in Canada and internationally. The focus of the related literature review encompassed qualitative and quantitative work relating specifically to settlement and the use of the internet by newcomer youth in Ontario. In this regard, the role of the internet in the lives of youth, generally, and of newcomer youth in particular, was evaluated. Peer reviewed and grey literature that included published and unpublished reports, media coverage and online resources, were sourced as part of this study. Each was needed to enrich the depth and breadth of findings on how the internet is inculcated in

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the day to day activities of youth culture, including the day to day activities of newcomer youth culture.

3.1 Interviews

Two of the three youth participants interviewed identified as being Chinese. The third youth participant was from Burundi all had arrived in Canada within the last three years currently residing in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The youth participants aged between 17 and 22, and each had a first language other than English. Two females and one male participated in the process. All were enrolled in school and two were planning to enter university in 2010.

Interview sessions were conducted in a location selected by the interviewee, with privacy and comfort for the young person being central. In one case two participants asked to be interviewed together, as they wanted to use each other as a translation resource or support if there was a need for clarity during the interview process. As this request was made prior to the interview, each was asked if they had needs relating to translation or understanding of the questions that necessitated translation services are provided by the researcher. In the end they declined an offer of a translator and reaffirmed their desire to be interviewed together. The anxiety of the participants was primarily aligned with their comfort with their English language skills and fear the interviewer would not understand them or that they would not understand the questions being asked. In a few instances during the interview each provided context for the other on a question or concern that they wanted to articulate or needed clarity on. During their interview each was provided with a written copy of the questions, and clarity was provided as requested and again as question was asked. Each young person answered the questions individually and on occasion supported their peer in their responses where needed.

Staff participants were recruited from agencies that provide settlement services to newcomer youth. All were female and working with organizations associated with settlement service providers. In one case the service provider worked for a mainstream service that offered newcomer settlement and mainstream services. The other two staff worked for service provider agencies with a core mandate of providing settlement services.

The first settlement staff person self-identified as having come to Canada eight years earlier, but did not disclose their age. The second settlement staff was 59 and had arrived in Canada 15 years ago; the final staff person aged 28 identified as Canadian-born.

Settlement agency staff participants reflected a staffing knowledge, experience and combined set of skills that ranged from limited to broad and expansive careers. During the course of the interviews two of the staff participants noted that their academic backgrounds did not align with their current work in settlement services. All staff was currently employed by settlement service providers that represented small and large, local, as well as provincial community-based immigrant-serving organizations. As stipulated in the study participant recruitment poster, the staff interviewed provided settlement services to youth through community based resources.

Whether employed by a large provincial umbrella organization or a small community-based immigrant serving organization targeting newcomer youth the settlement staff described their work as a combination of service delivery, education and advocacy.

In total six interviews were conducted each lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. Prior to interview participants were provided with an overview of the study and were provided with consent agreements to review and sign prior to the beginning of the interview. A copy of the

signed agreement and an overview of the research study was given to each participant to take away with them should they have any questions after the interview concluded. Each participant was provided with honorarium to assist with their transportation and meal costs. All interviews were audio recorded and supported by limited researcher notes taken during the interview process. The questions asked of youth and staff participants are provided see **Appendix A and B**. The final questions were developed based on what was discovered and /or absent in the literature review and ultimately were framed within the context of linking back to the original question being posed by this study. The use of open ended questions was purposeful as this provided the opportunity for both groups of participants to expand on the questions being asked and or enter into their own course of inquiry based on the initial question presented by the researcher.

4.0 FINDINGS

The insights, while limited to a relatively small group, will be useful in and of themselves, as they are intended to add to the existing literature on newcomer youth. More specifically the findings highlight a number of themes that crossed both the literature and the interviews and identified emerging issues that may warrant further investigation.

4.1 Points of Commonality

In interviews for this study, both newcomer youth and service provider staff agreed that the role of the internet in the provision of settlement services was not something they were in favour of.

"They (newcomer youth) need to get out and meet people and make new   friends. Computers don't give them a chance to interact in a real way with others. That is half of the process just being present"

- Staff

"Parents love the settlement services we provide. They don't like their kids being locked away in their rooms all day on the computer"

- Staff

"I won't come to a place that won't talk to you directly"

- Youth

"I think both are good but I really don't like to go online to search something or make a phone call."

- Youth

"Maybe, it could really be good for others, but I don't really like to go online to learn something cause like when I use the computer I always think I want to play some games. I can't focus."

- Youth

Both groups felt that the critical part of the adaptation and settlement process was being physically present with others in the activity of basic social engagement. Settlement staff felt that a vital part of settlement service delivery was engaging newcomer youth into the social community around them while discouraging the tendency of youth to isolate themselves within their homes. At the same time, the staff interviewed felt that programming and informal discussions offered through their programs provided an opportunity for newcomer youth to become aware that they are not isolated in their perspectives of the difficulty in adjusting to the changes in their lives. Finally, staff felt settlement service sites provided a safe place for youth

to practice their communication skills and share the important settlement and adaptation experiences each was having with home, school, family, social and service system links.

> "They need assistance in so many areas and we don't have the resources. They are dealing with University applications, medical issues for their family and things as basic as trying to get their driver's license or a job. I wish I could do more but I am always on the run to other sites to do our programs."

- Staff

Interviewer:

So for you, you have to have the real visual, you have to have the words and then you can understand it.

Participant: Yeah I can get the words one by one.

- Youth

The three newcomer youth all noted the critical importance of needing to see, hear and be present with others when seeking services, assistance, or when participating in language and cultural programs. They expressed the need to be able to match the information being provided by people with the body language and tone used. Youth noted in all interviews that they did not know when to take people seriously or when people were being honest with them on the phone or online. The young people noted that the face-to-face relationships that they had developed with settlement service staff were better anchored than any that they could develop online with service providers they have never met in person. According to the newcomer youth interviewed in this study, even if they could link to the service staff online, they would prefer to travel to work through issues in a face-to-face manner. In their view, the service providers had become touchstones for them as they navigated issues in their lives. The youth who were interviewed in this study saw the internet as a more valuable tool with regard to linking to friends and family in

their countries of origin and with respect to acting as a tool to reduce the loneliness associated with being homesick in a new country.

> "I use it mostly, but mostly to friends back home"

> - Youth

> "I don't have a way to see or talk to my family, they are all back home. It's really hard, I cry a lot. People want you to tell them how it is going, but they don't really.

> - Youth

> "I like to do gaming, with friends, it helps me focus. We can play all day   and I talk to them.

> - Youth

Youth participants noted that the use of the internet was of increased value when doing research for homework, connecting to friends and back home in both good and bad times. Staff noted the use of the internet when doing email blasts on an upcoming event or when engaged in project oriented activities that require more intensive collaboration i.e. a video project that ran during a summer leadership program.

All young people noted the sense of isolation if not the sense of not being able to ask for help as they navigate they way in their own settlement process. For each the reasoning was different, in one case being unable to ask was linked fears related to their status in Canada, For two of the participants the unwillingness to ask for help was the outcome of repeated failures of those around them to help in meaningful ways around previous concerns and of fears of having their requests mocked or being perceived as insignificant by others.

"When you don't have your status sorted out, it is very hard. No school and getting a work permit is very difficult. No one understands. it is hard to be happy. It is not what I had hoped, but it is okay some days. But no one can really help. They just say I am lucky they are helping me.

- Youth

"They laugh at me because of my accent and because I don't get the joke. It is hard a lot."

- Youth

In both scenarios noted above the personalizing of the problem by newcomer youth negates the role of services, resource and their peers to engage in interactions that are respectful of the significant change in lifestyle for these young people. They are not kids who moved across town. They are experiencing a profound change in their orientation to the world around them. The degree to which this behaviour and mistreatment is normalized appears to reflect that racism is a large part of the reality newcomer youth face.

The importance of trust that evolves through the relationships that young people build with the settlement staff appears to anchor these young people. The importance of the relational trust outside the home is noted by those in the study as critical. They have someone who understands and empathizes with their needs. The youth in the study continually referenced settlement staff that really made the effort to connect with them.

4.2 Youth and Settlement Providers

Settlement Service Providers-

Two of the staff interviewed noted the potential role of the internet as a resource for staff. Both noted that training could be consolidated and provided. One of the key barriers identified by staff was the lack of communication and linkages across the differing programs within their base organizations and across local settlement service agencies. While all three staff interviewed noted the importance of having a working knowledge of the broader service system, they all noted there is not enough time to keep up with the changes in the system or across the various service systems assisting young people.

Two of the three staff participants commented on the importance of computers and the internet as communication tools. They recommended that the potential of internet forums for staff to come together and share and talk about youth services and share strategies and approaches that work in one community with those in another. Building on the previous point the settlement service system staff noted the need to bridge and share promising and or best practices that are evolving across the programs offered. This would help strengthen the services and resources within the organization and see if there is a need to amend programs based on specific cultural / community groups. This point was reinforced by one staff person in particular as they viewed the internet as a tool to bridge communication between isolated resource sites, noting that, in their case, the same programs were offered by three agency leads at three sites, but there was no effective way or time for the staff to connect and learn from each other about the work being done in their settlement groups

> "Sometimes we are able to connect across our three sites to share information and share program ideas, but this is not in any organized or regular work."

> -   Staff

> "We set up a site for a video project we were doing. It was very popular. But because it was a free site it got full very quickly by the kids posts. We did not have the money to keep it going, but they really did like it,

> -   Youth

In line with the comments made by young people, all staff noted that while it is a great tool for reminding young people about activities and events, the internet was largely not accessible at home to the young people involved in their programs. This was perhaps the greatest barrier to access and implementation of an online strategy re online settlement services. This point was reinforced when two of the staff noted that having access to computers and the internet in the service sites was a great draw for newcomer youth. Many youth arrived early for programs and often worked on homework and studies, as they did not have access to a computer at home.

> "They arrive sometimes an hour early for the program so they can use the computers. I am not sure if it is just for homework or not, but I so see them online with friends and family. We have computers onsite, but we don't have enough for all the programs.

> -   Staff

Two staff noted the possible role of the internet in gathering data about the needs of newcomer youth. It was suggested that a year or more be spent on targeted online assessments to gain an understanding of what youth feel is needed specific to having their educational, employment and settlement needs supported in a more individualized and supportive way. The use of data collection as a tool to identify gaps in resources and the potential linkages back to

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program and policy issues was seen as vital if there was to be an ongoing focus on the

importance of and need for settlement services. Interestingly, both noted there was no capacity in

their organizations to do this type of work.

Newcomer Youth

Educational issues permeated all conversations with youth. Guidance Counsellors and

teachers were often viewed as key of key barriers for youth interviewed. Those in these roles for

the most part worked with preconceived stereotypes and showed limited consideration of the

desires of young people. Guidance Counsellors and Teachers often interfered with efforts by

young people to acquire the information they needed around educational goals and interests

directing them to stereotypical education streams. But youth were clear; this is one area where

they do not want to see the focus shifted to online services.

> "I had to take a course online last year, it was not so good. It was
> hard to follow and the teacher was never online or answered my emails.
> I get angry and don't do my work. Instead I start playing games on my
> computer and no work. I would go to the school it is better.
>
> - Youth

The face to face interaction around education is critical to those interviewed, as their

questions and concerns are central to life planning. Their sense is that guidance counsellors need

to listen to them and to give them the added time to gain the information and knowledge they

need as they move forward with planning for their futures. The youth gave the impression that,

as they went from teacher to teacher and asked more questions, they learned what stereotypes

were and, more importantly, saw which teachers wanted to help them. Students noted teachers

had very limited and to a degree stereotypical understandings of their cultures and intellectual

abilities. They noted that they often gave up trying to have their questions addressed as the

teachers and guidance counsellors entered discussions with preconceived notions that were entrenched.

> "The teachers don't listen or try to listen. They say they can't understand me and I need to make my English better. They get frustrated and try to finish what I am saying. The guidance counselling would not listen to me or help me. If I could talk like them it would be good.
>
> - Youth

All young people noted that the post-secondary education system does not do much to help international students or immigrants. One youth participant noted that "They think I understand everything. They get frustrated and say I ask too many questions". Youth participants consistently saw education as a key resource barrier in their settlement process and factored in significantly when it came to language acquisition and language competence. Interestingly all the youth participants felt they had to change themselves rather than the system having to adapt and meet their needs.

There was a tiredness that permeated the discussions with young people as they talked about with running all day at school and then rushing around with family to have family member health and service needs met in addition to their own. Two youth participants noted the sense of isolation they felt trying to learn a lot all at once and also being responsible for the needs of the immediate families. Not having proper supports in place leaves them on their own with no real expertise in how this system works, but still expected to be the expert by the adults around them i.e. family, teachers, service staff, peers and community members.

There was a tiredness associated with running all day at school and then rushing around with family to have family member health and service needs met in addition to their own. Two

youth participants noted the sense of isolation they felt trying to learn a lot all at once and also

being responsible for the needs of the immediate families. One youth participant reflected

> "Parents need to understand how to use the internet so that they can depend on themselves rather than on us to find answers to their questions. Sometimes it is good going out to learn about things, so my focus is my needs and not always the needs of my family - my brother or mom or dad".

> > - Youth

> "When you try to do the University forms online they are hard to understand. The online help person is not very helpful and they do not answer your questions. When I go in they have to help me."

> > - Youth

For young people the nature of belonging and finding or establishing a sense of place has

ties that extend beyond basic settlement services. These are ties linked to basic success in the

activities of daily living and more importantly being viewed and accepted as a valued part of

their new community. As a result the role of the internet has limited applicability when the

process of settlement is largely based in establishing basic connections and relationships with

others. The internet is viewed by all participants in the study as a supplemental resource not the

answer to settlement services. Interestingly enough the internet a tool embraced by young people

is noted as a barrier for newcomer youth in the study when they need to connect in ways that

move beyond simple questions.

Perhaps the process of immersion in a new culture cannot be replicated online. Perhaps

one of the hindrances of the newness of technology it cannot yet replace the lived experience of

arrival or the framing of community connection that comes from being physically present in

discussions about their lives. "I want to see them when I do things so I can see if they are doing something to help or just ignoring me". There are issues of trust that emerge in these types of responses. A thread that runs consistently through the secondary themes that play out on closer examination of the data. But this is not to say that the links that the internet can facilitate are not of value. The literature and those interviewed as part of this work highlighted that the perhaps the more significant use of the internet is in the early months of settlement when they it provides newcomer youth is perhaps through the resilience it preserves through ties back to the place of origin for young people. It preserves what already exists in the form of friendships. Even within the literature the use of the internet has not been significantly linked to the provision of settlement services.

> "We have two online resources available around settlement issues. The first is the youth portal and the second is the discussion board that provides information and responses to settlement questions raised by newcomers and responded to by staff and volunteers. Both are popular but we do not have the resources to really make it bigger than it is"

> — Staff

Even here as a result of the newness of the resources there has been no evaluation done of the effectiveness of the programs that currently exist. The interviews reinforce findings in the literature around the inconsistent provision of settlement services provided to youth. Where Newcomer services for youth do exist they organized and delivered in an adhoc manner and the programs offered are inconsistent from site to site and city to city, often leaving the needs of most newcomer youth largely unacknowledged. It is in this void that failure to respond to the needs of children and youth results in the growing sense of alienation and isolation that many feel.

"Sometimes it is very hard to smile all the time, but you try to act like your life is the same as theirs. It is easier because no one knows how to help you. Sometimes the staff here can help a little bit but they always say they are busy and will try and find a place that can help me, but they forget me. It is okay, I know they are busy."

- Youth

"There is no real rhythm to programs- the focus is- those who can write the best grants consistently get the grants. We are competing against each other for everything. There are never enough dollars. No one wins in the end because we are all fighting to survive."

- Staff

Provincially the implications of this gap appear to be largely tied to the lack of priority given to newcomer youth or recognition of the complexity of need associated the lives of this same group of young people. For the most part they remain disconnected from a funding and service framework that has already proven that it is unable to support the service needs that exist for adults and to-date has done little to understand the needs of newcomer youth.

"I am in school all day, and my program runs from 5-7pm. I am always late by the time I leave school. Maybe they should have all the services for us here. It could be better "

- Youth

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The entrenching of the invisibility of children and youth in the broader service system appears to be equally evident in the settlement service system. Programs operate with limited linkages across and beyond the settlement community. Service providers have limited networks of support and resources that are time limited. This lack of stability may contribute to the self-directed nature of engagement that newcomer youth adopt as part of navigating the settlement service system and its resources. Limited services leave large gaps for youth to navigate on their own and as a result young people are left with many needs unmet.

At best a small segment of the newcomer youth population have access to a range of services that exist primarily in urban settings. In the end this group of young people like their established non-newcomer peers end up existing in a system of services that do not meeting the needs that exist. In turn, the services that do exist are primarily focused on superficial service provision and referral service that brings newcomer youth into a mainstream service system that is not necessarily responsible or culturally adept at providing culturally responsive services. As noted by youth in this study weaknesses across the systems increase the likelihood that young people become associated with the negative and marginalized realities of increasing homelessness, exploitation and involvement in the mainstream child welfare, children's mental health and youth justice systems.

For the newcomer youth participating in this study there was this sense that it was acceptable to be Canadian and look different but if one was to truly be Canadian they needed to sound Canadian and be accent free. Speech and communication was of critical importance for all youth interviewed. To be heard and understood took on significant importance as the young

people interviewed as they felt that as a result of their accents it did not matter how well they had mastered the language they were seen in a negative and uneducated light by many of the people they came into contact with within the settlement, education and employment sectors.

The nature of importance youth placed on the mastery of the English language by youth in this study was key to any definitional context of being "Canadian" that newcomer youth might have speaks to the powerful nature of the linking of language and belonging. Youth and staff both reflected confusion many have around accent and culture that exists in Canadian society. To have an accent translates into differential treatment by others. The loss of that accent is then believed to be tied to being less marginalized and more Canadian. That young people are in sync with this linguistic bias so early in the process of their own experiences here in Canada highlights the sense that the barriers they face in their settlement process are strongly aligned with communication.

Schools play a significant role in shaping the social and cultural attitudes of young people is of critical importance. As a social space and service system on its own, the "local school board"and "provincial ministry" is highly inflexible and resistant the needs of newcomer students. As a result the subtle messaging passed along to students is that adaptation and settlement is the responsibility of the newcomer. It is the newcomer student, who, like the adult newcomer adult who must change and alter to become more like the larger group. Their success is largely a point of development that is beyond their control. Teachers and other students are the group who ultimately determine when they have acquired a degree of linguistic and communication competency that in line with that of everyone else. And yet this social cuing is not ingrained in the formal systems of education or settlement services and as noted in the

interviews with newcomer youth, left largely to them to sort out for themselves if they are to become "Canadian".

The education system presents as the most logical point of entry for settlement services for newcomer youth. Newcomer youth are part of an education and broader societal system that in many ways alienates and reinforces their separateness from the mainstream world of adults. The outcomes of this increasingly unbalanced equation are noted by youth participants and the literature evidence of the failure of the education system as evidenced the increasing rates of newcomer students leaving the education system.

Many of the issues presented by staff and youth participants alike were themes that resonate with basic rights claims. The availability of and receipt of services that meet their needs, provided in environments that are inclusive of their voices, and meet their cultural and individual needs in a confidential and professional manner. The reality is that the rights claims being advanced through the literature and the interviews exist within what is largely a policy and program vacuum that implicates all three levels of government. As a result, the potential to better understand the impacts of youth settlement programs and advance advocacy and community-based research around developing and implementing promising practices relating to immigrant youth is almost non-existent.

The jurisdictional realities between the province and federal government result the layers of bureaucracy, that include grant submission processes, funding changes and priorities from one level of government are being made in isolation of the realities that exist for newcomers at the community level. Information tools and reporting guidelines become the only real accountability tool to monitor how approved dollars are resourced and little in these tools focus on the real needs of newcomer youth and service providers.

The internet provides a conduit to portals and resources that provide less formalized settlement services and can act as a means of introducing these services to newcomer youth. Each of the staff noted the Settlement.org youth portal and its potential as a go to first step resource for young people, but it is not a solution.

The real value of the internet for young people involved in the study was its use as a social tool in linking back home. What must not be lost in this point is the link this use has to supporting the ability of young people to access their established communities of support, people who encourage and support them as they adjust to a new country.

The ability to determine if online resources can provide an effective outreach and/or service resource for newcomer youth facing significant barriers around access has not been clarified, and will require additional investigation. What cannot be under estimated in this process of analysis is the importance of "real" human contact for young people. The value newcomer youth placed on connecting and ensuring that they are understood and in return responded to in a manner they can understand speaks to the importance they place on successfully bridging systems to have their needs met. Young people were clear that they need be present and persistent if their needs are to be addressed.

5.2 Conclusions

While technology is soundly entrenched in the social and communication structures of the province, the same cannot be said of the settlement service system. Young people accessing services and staff working for service providers both noted that while they use the internet, it was not a priority for them when it came to direct service delivery.

The young people and staff who were part of this study contextualized the applicability of when online works and when it doesn't. Both reflected on different by valued roles technology places in the process of settlement rather than the direct delivery of settlement services. Young people highlighted the importance of technology in their personal lives as a way of linking back home. This form of access provided them with a direct link to their established communities of support back home. It allowed them to draw strength and encouragement from friends and family who knew them best and gradually to friends made here as they managed the day to day work of establishing a place and space for themselves here in Toronto.

Interestingly the manner in which the males and females involved in the study used the internet to connect reinforced themes that were reflected in the literature. For the young women in the study chatting and email were the preferred mode of internet use and for the young man in the study gaming and real-time interactive online gaming was the preferred mode of internet connection with friends back home and linking to and strengthening friendships here.

While still needing further examination, it appears that young people need a process to drive their online behaviour. In the absence of comfort and familiarity with new social structures, cultural norms and language barriers settlement has to evolve in one environment before it can begin in another. Trust appears to evolve differently online and offline. Usually youth take community relationships online as a jump off point for online socialization. Perhaps this is the missing link in the use of

The internet has evolved as a social place and space for and of youth. Indeed, it has the potential to build a bridge between social relationships with peers and professional relationships with service providers. The use of the internet can be effective in the provision of direct services, has been demonstrated in Ontario's education system and by Helplines around the world and

here in Canada. But like all things the internet appears to be of value when it is an extension of established social activity or resources and not as a replacement.

The value of the internet by newcomer youth was its use as a tool to maintain connections to their former homelands. It appears that the internet acts as the modern form of the letters home and the telephone calls home to escape the loneliness and isolation that many youth feel when settling. Through the interviews, technology was presented as a bridge between here and there. By connecting to back home, gone are the barriers of language, social nuances, belonging and trying to fit in as well as the rewinding and replaying of discussions that are not fully understood. The importance attached by young people to their ability to remain culturally and linguistically connected provides insight into the importance they place on belonging and feeling connected. While the balance of the equation may shift over time as the young person begins to develop a new sense of belonging the initial links back appear to provide a valuable resiliency factor to the settlement experience. This is important not just for youth but perhaps equally important for parents who are often concerned about the westernizing of their children. Perhaps the value of the internet at least on initial settlement is that perhaps it provides a form of inoculation and resiliency against the cultural cannibalism that is predominates in the west as the influence of language acquisition becomes increasingly tied to cultural identity.

The relative newness and limited funding attached to newcomer youth services appear to be a tacit acknowledgement of young people as a newcomer group, but what is missing is a true appreciation of the nature and complexity of issues they face in their own settlement experiences. As a result the needs of newcomer youth remain largely invisible at the systemic, institutional and societal level. Balancing this point out is the need to acknowledgement that programs are

being created and submissions are being sought to expand on youth programs. It is as these programs become operational that further studies of this nature can be advanced.

In the review of the literature and the experiences of newcomer youth both supported the argument that resources for newcomer youth are not a priority for government. Services are inconsistently provided and there is limited communication and reporting within and across programs. This significantly limits the ability.

As has been repeatedly noted, the settlement process for newcomer youth remains largely invisible at the provincial level. While services and supports are important young people are clear that their priority areas of need include increased focus on social language, accent elimination programs in addition to expanding the staffing and range of settlements services that target their needs. In the end, not everyone is online.

Of perhaps greatest interest in reviewing the thematic links across the interviews and the literature, was the importance of young people with being physically and relationally connected to their engagement with the systems and communities that are central to their settlement process. All the participants in the study noted the importance of the life learning and social skill development that was critical to their becoming what it is they defined as being "Canadian". The youth and staff both noted that young people need to visually, verbally and physically be present in the process for the learning to take place.

The young people involved in the study confirmed the themes that have been raised in previous work. Settlement services are fragmented and not consistently available across the province and do not meet many of the needs that they and their families have.

The most concerning conclusion that evolved as a result of this study is the lack of priority given to settlement services for newcomer youth. As a result the range of services that currently exist do so in a vacuum. This raises several issues around efficacy, equitable access and consistency of services available to support the settlement needs of young people.

What was unmistakable in all of the discussions was the under estimation of the stress, anxiety and expectations placed on young people during their settlement process. The expectations of the education system, family and host community impact on the coping and mental health of young people. The value and importance of confidential and culturally supportive settlement services targeting their unique needs and experiences resonated across all interviews and in the literature was unmistakable.

Settlement service providers lack the resources to effectively advocate for the needs of newcomer youth around the the provision of youth specific services that focus on bridging their lives at home and their lives in the broader context of living in Ontario. Increased advocacy tied to the linking settlement services and the mainstream children's service sectors to formalize training for staff around cultural, social and linguist needs and orientation of newcomer youth.

A broader systemic review of the policy and program gaps that exist for this group of young people is needed given the growing acknowledgement of children as key settlement navigators for their families. This review should include Ontario's Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Education and Citizenship and Immigration.

The limited nature of literature specific to the monitoring of the outcomes of newcomer youth has only begun to consider the vulnerability and increased risk that can result from a failed settlement experience. The critical importance of services and resources for children and youth

are already highly marginalized and often overlooked in broader policy discussion must be a priority for government. When the added complexity of immigration, a federal area of responsibility, is added the likelihood of a responsive course of action by the province becomes increasingly complicated and unlikely. The only time that this transition is generally seamless is when the needs of the young person are anchored to a secondary issue that often overshadows the settlement experience, i.e. a youth justice, child welfare; children's mental health issue tied to existing children's legislation, something that immigration and settlement is not.

It is in this unpacking of the newcomer experience that the powerlessness of newcomer youth becomes wholly understood. This group of young people exist in a policy and program void. Settlement services are largely conceptualized as a tool to transition adult immigrants into the workforce and social landscape of Canada, it does not consider the unique needs of children and youth as there appears to be a sense by CIC that their transition will be seamless and better still is the responsibility of the newcomer parent. Perhaps what is most cautionary in this unpacking is the increasingly negative connotations associated with immigration. For children the oppressive and discriminatory attitudes associated with immigrants are largely unchecked as children are not employees, they are not seeking housing and for the most part not seeking services. But the nature of discrimination permeates their existence in classrooms and meetings with guidance counsellors. It is in this void that young people are left to navigate the issues on their own.

Interestingly, this small piece of research has raised more questions than it has answered. Can internet culture add to the complexities of identity or perhaps provide a bridge to young people that support their ability to move easily between here and there and; what role does the internet play in the transmission of social and cultural convention? Even from the limited

interviews, in this study, it is clear that the internet plays a large role in the lives of the young people and service staff interviewed.

5.3 Recommendations

1. That that the uses of Information Communication Technology continue to evolve in the settlement sector. That pilot programs and services be gradually incorporated and funded as indicated by youth. Online internet based communication tools are used that they be part of a multi-format strategy including print and online media.

2. If Ontario is to meet the needs of newcomers there must be an expanded understanding of the newcomer identity, one that includes children and youth and one that newcomer needs cross all systems and cannot be limited to limited notions of newcomer services. A provincial children's service system summit be held to bring together mainstream and settlement service providers with newcomer youth to better understand their needs and develop a strategy to move forward. Government partners should minimally include those ministries providing services to Children and Youth, Education, Community and Social Services, Education, Citizenship and Immigration and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

3. That funding for Newcomer Services for Youth be prioritized nationally, and be consistently available at the provincial and territorial level.

4. That both levels of government bring increased focus to English as a Second Language and English Language Development programs that meet the needs of newcomer youth. Secondly, that greater accountability is placed on boards to ensure funding for these services. As part of this recommendation that Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) be developed to ensure that

students have access to language services that are developed in line with promising practice and outcome measures that are aligned with language use for children and youth.

5. That settlement services and mainstream services partner to meet the needs of newcomer youth. This means staff working for settlement agencies must gain a better understanding of the broader child and family service sector. In turn young people needs move beyond an over simplified notion of what settlement is. At least initially the role of the internet in the settlement process is not something either group saw as a priority.

APPENDICES: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRES

Appendix A: Questions for Settlement Service Agency Participants

1. Does your agency provide services and supports to youth; what do these services and support include?

2. How would you describe the population of newcomer youth currently seeking services with your agency, has this group changed over the years?

3. What portion of the agency's work with youth is direct 1:1 work and what portion is linked to larger groups?

4. What portion of the agency's work with youth requires referral to another service, can you let me know when your agency would refer a youth to another service?

5. What do think is important to consider when creating services and supports for newcomer youth?

6. Do youth accessing services through your agency have access to on site computers, if yes, for what purposes are computers used?

7. What are your thoughts about the use of the internet in services provided to youth?

8. How has your agency used computers (i.e. internet) in its services generally and with youth more specifically?

9. Does the idea of computer based service delivery add too or take away from the ability of settlement agencies to work with newcomer youth, and how?

10. Do you have any points you would like to add about services and support options for newcomer youth?

Appendix B: Questions for Youth Participants

1. What kinds of services and supports have you or your family accessed since arriving in Canada?
   b) How did you find the services and supports you needed?
   c) Have you had contact with Settlement Services?

2. Do or did settlement services hours of operation s make it easy or difficult for you to access youth based services, why?

3. Are there services and supports you would have liked to see in place to assist newcomer youth in settling in Canada?

4. How would you describe the range of services and supports provided to newcomer youth?
   b) Do they meet the needs of youth and how?
   c) If not what do you think needs to be done to better meet the needs of youth?

5. Does the idea of computer based service delivery enhance of diminish the ability of settlement agencies to work with newcomer youth

6. How have settlement services used computers in providing information about leisure programming to youth?

7. Before your family came to Canada how much access did you have to computers and the internet?
   b) Where did you have access to the internet, home, school, library, friends, family etc?

8. How, if at all has your access to computers and the internet s changed since arriving in Canada?
   b) Have computers and the use of the internet been a part of your settlement process, i.e. making new friends socializing, leisure, contacts to home, etc.

9. Do you think the internet improves or takes away from services and supports provided to newcomer youth and why?

10. Do you have any points you would like to add about services and support options for newcomer youth?

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