

what's changed. what hasn't.

Migration is the systematic movement of people from one region of the world to another. The catalysts for modern migration – particularly from Latin America, Africa and Asia – have often been involuntary factors, such as economic policies, military conflicts and systemic poverty. As recently as 30 years ago, migration was a two-lane highway, with a free flow of people back and forth between communities of work and communities of family and origin.

But even as global trade and commerce has become more sophisticated and commonplace, the ability of (im)migrants to easily and regularly visit their place of birth has declined. The reality of one-way movement and subsequent separation of families and communities makes maintaining all forms of communication critical.

More than 38 million adults in the U.S. were born in another country.¹

Communication is an essential human need and a fundamental human right. According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, communication is the right to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Without the liberty of physical migration to sustain connections with family or country of origin, (im)migrants look to technology to replace some of what has been lost.

Newer Internet applications like Skype and YouTube, and social networks like Facebook and MySpace allow (im)migrants to have a presence at important family events such as weddings, holidays and funerals. And it allows them to get timely information and news about the community and country they came from through online newspapers and blogs.

*Main Street Project is an anchor member of the **Media Action Grassroots Network** (mag-net.org).*

AFFORDABILITY matters

- The importance of broadband in keeping communities connected and helping people in their daily living is a priority that should supersede economic interests. Low-cost options must be available.
- Protection against predatory pricing practices by Internet service providers is also critical. It's not uncommon for (im)migrants to be forced to drop Internet service because of later cost increases they didn't understand were part of their contract or arrangement.

51% of children of (im)migrants are in low-income families (less than two times the poverty level).²

LOCATION matters

- Communities should provide public access points such as telecenters, libraries, community centers, schools and health care clinics, for people who don't have access to the Internet and/or a computer at home.
- For (im)migrants, relevant access points also include places of worship, mercados, restaurants, recreation centers, and service agencies.

MOBILE DEVICES matter

- Advancements in technology have made Internet access through mobile devices more affordable than paying for a home broadband connection and computer.
- For (im)migrants, improving access to more affordable, high-quality devices with the capability of running applications like Skype and YouTube, or language-of-choice texting is important.

In 2008, 25% of Latinos lived in cell phone-only households.³

SOURCES: (1) and (2) "Children of Immigrants: National and State Characteristics," Fortuny, Capps, Simms, Chaudry; (3) Blomberg and Luke 2009

We see possibilities.

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