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Webinaire : Économie des migrations

## Information and the Acquisition of Social Network

### Connections: A Randomized Experiment among New U.S. Immigrants

avec Toman Barsbai, Victoria Licuanan, Andreas Steinmayr and Erwin Tiongson

## RÉSUMÉ

How do information interventions affect individual efforts to expand social networks? We study a randomized controlled trial of a program providing information on settling in the U.S. for new immigrants from the Philippines. Improved information leads new immigrants to acquire fewer new social network connections. Treated immigrants make 16-28 percent fewer new friends and acquaintances and are 65 percent less likely to receive support from organizations of fellow immigrants. The treatment has no effect

on employment, wellbeing, or other outcomes. Consistent with a simple model, the treatment reduces social network links more in places likely to have lower costs of acquiring network links (those with more prior fellow immigrants). Information and social network links appear to be substitutes in this context: better-informed immigrants invest less in expanding their social networks upon arrival. Our results suggest that endogenous reductions in acquisition of social network connections can reduce the effectiveness of information interventions.

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