

# **Building a Community for Immigrants: SUCCESS (1973-1998)**

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## **Paper on Chinese Migration VI**

Edited by Diana Lary

The research for these papers was funded by a grant from

**The Hampton Fund**

Centre of Chinese Research

Institute of Asian Research

University of British Columbia

**2003**

Cover Design by Norman Yeung

Calligraphy by Gee Yuen Yeung

## **Introduction**

SUCCESS, or the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society, is a community initiated voluntary organization founded in 1973. Its founding was in response to the failure of government agencies and mainstream organizations to provide accessible social services for newly arrived Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong. During its initial stage, the organization mainly provided basic settlement services. By the time the Society reached its 25th anniversary, it has become a well-established multicultural organization providing a wide range of programs and services to both Chinese and non-Chinese. More importantly, it has created a home and a community to which immigrants felt they belonged. Using interviews and document analysis, this paper investigates the process SUCCESS was founded and the historical development of the organization between 1973 and 1998. This examination is guided by the following question: How did a community initiated voluntary organization such as SUCCESS respond to changing needs of an ethnic community in a multicultural society?

This paper falls well into four parts. First, it reviews the historical, social, and political context in which SUCCESS emerged. Second, it examines the founding process. Third, it investigates the historical development of the organization. Finally, it analyzes the social contributions of SUCCESS.

## **Historical, Social, and Political Context**

### **History of Chinese Immigrants in Canada**

The Chinese immigrant group in Canada is one of the oldest, and its history is probably the uneasiest among these groups. Con et al. (1982) recorded that the first group of Chinese arrived in Victoria on June 28, 1858, from California in search of gold and new development opportunities. Originally these people came predominantly from the southern coastal provinces of Guangdong (or Kuangtung) and Fujian (or Fukien). Most of them were single men with rural origins. They came as coolie workers and chain migrants. As the gold fields petered out, the Chinese found employment as domestic servants, coal miners, and seasonal workers in the salmon canning industry (Tan & Roy, 1985). Later they were used extensively during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).

The proliferation of the Chinese on the West Coast was perceived as a threat to the mission of the government to build a white *British* British Columbia. After all, the Chinese signified an ancient and medieval baggage of distinctions between "West" and "East," civilized and barbarian, master and slave, Christian and heathen, white and non-white (Anderson, 1995). With the completion of the CPR, the Chinese were no longer welcome in Canada. In 1885, the government of Canada imposed a \$50 head tax on all incoming Chinese to control over their entry. The head tax was increased to \$100 in 1900, and to \$500 in 1903. When it was found that the head tax was not effective enough to keep the Chinese out of Canada, the federal government legislated a restrictive Chinese Immigration Act in 1923 which virtually prohibited all Chinese immigration into Canada until its repeal in 1947. Besides the head tax and the 1923 Act, the Chinese also faced other kinds of discrimination. Since they were not allowed to vote, they were prohibited from entering certain professions such as law, medicine, or accounting. Further, they

were denied the opportunity to acquire Crown land (Tan & Roy, 1985).

### **Canadian Immigration Policy**

The founding and historical development of SUCCESS were mirrored in and influenced by the national immigration policy. Hence, the analysis of postwar Canadian immigration policy is central to this discussion.

From Confederation to the 1960s, the selection of immigrants was based on racial background with the British and Western Europeans as the most 'desirable' citizens and the Asians as the 'unassimilable' and, therefore, 'undesirable.' After the Second World War, Canadian immigration policy continued to be "highly restrictive" (Knowles, 1997) despite external and internal pressures for an open door policy in immigration.

In the mid-1960s, Canada was experiencing "the greatest postwar boom" (Whitaker, 1991, p.18). Skilled labour was required to help Canada build its expansionary economy, but Europe as the traditional source of immigrants was not able to meet the needs of Canada because of the economic recovery there. The Canadian government turned its recruitment efforts to traditionally restricted areas - Asia. In 1967 a 'point system' was introduced by the Liberal government, which based the selection of immigrants on their "education, skills and resources" rather than their racial and religious backgrounds (p.19). According to Whitaker, this new system represented "an historic watershed," and "it did establish at the level of formal principle that Canadian immigration policy is 'colour blind'" (p.19). However, the new selection method was criticized by Matas (1996) for being "in favour of some racial groups and against others" (p.100). Whitaker (1991) was more specific in stating that the new system might have stacked the deck

against poor immigrants from Third World countries.

According to Whitaker, the 'point system' was successful in reversing the pattern of immigration to Canada away from Europe toward Asia and other Third World areas. By the mid-1970s there were more immigrants arriving from the Third World than from the developed world, with the largest number from Asia, followed by the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa (p.19). Among them, many were from Hong Kong.

### **Emigration from Hong Kong**

To help understand the founding of SUCCESS, besides understanding the historical, social, and political context in the receiving country - Canada, it is also important to review the context from which the immigrants came. Since immigrants from Hong Kong accounted for over two-thirds of the total from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China between 1968 and 1994 (Li, 1998, p.99), it is necessary to focus the following discussion largely on the emigration from Hong Kong since the Second World War to 1998.

According to Wong (1992), there have been three major waves of emigration from Hong Kong since the end of the Second World War. The first occurred between 1958 and 1961 owing to dramatic changes in Hong Kong agriculture. The second wave was triggered by a political crisis, the 1967 riot. It was a spill-over of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China. It began with a demonstration led by local communists, but ended with violence and terrorism. Threatened by bombs and political instability, thousands left Hong Kong for popular destinations: the United States and Canada. Many of them were Hong Kong elites.

The third wave of emigration illustrated by Wong began in the 1980s. According to the Sino-British Agreement on the future of Hong Kong, the colony would become a special administrative region under the rule of China. Many of the residents who were worried about their future began to leave Hong Kong. Among them, a large number found homes in Canada. Wong described this latest group of emigrants as "predominantly 'yuppies' - young, educated, middle class professionals" (p.4).

## **Founding of SUCCESS**

### **The Gap**

The above discussion has made it clear that both the domestic 'pull' and international 'push' factors contributed to the increase of Chinese immigrants in Vancouver in late 1960s and early 1970s. However, many of them did not speak good English when they came. In particular, with the group who came under the family reunion category, many of them arrived in Vancouver with little or no English at all. Owing to their language difficulties, many people had problems accessing mainstream social service agencies for assistance.

The Hong Kong Chinese also had difficulty in getting help from the local Chinese community. According to Willmott (1969, 1970), there were four kinds of Chinese voluntary associations in Canada. The first was the clan association, in which members were grouped under the same surname. The second was the district/locality association, in which membership was limited to Chinese from the same village or county in China. The third was the fraternal-political association, which included the Chinese Freemasons and the Guo Min Dang. The fourth

was the community-wide association, such as the Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA).

With the CBA as an exception, the first three types of voluntary associations functioned "largely as mutual-aid fraternal associations" (Chow, 1976, p.133). Many of them mainly served their own group members. For the new immigrants from Hong Kong, it was hard to find an association they belonged to. Furthermore, these new immigrants "are more concerned with government contributive welfares and government assistance programs" (Chow, 1976, p.132). Since many of the traditional associations were quite isolated from the mainstream society, they could not provide the kind of help this group needed. In addition, many of the new immigrants "found the traditionalist clan and locality association of Chinatown anachronistic and refused to participate in them" (Willmott, 1970, p.50). The gap in the mainstream society as well as the Chinese community indicated that a new type of organization was needed to help the newly arrived immigrants from Hong Kong.

### **Pender YWCA: Predecessor of SUCCESS**

Before the founding of SUCCESS, the YWCA at the corner of Dunlevy and Pender Street in Chinatown (people usually referred to it as Pender Y) played an important transitional role in helping new immigrants with their settlement and adaptation. The reason it attracted many Chinese immigrants was due to its convenient location, a visible presence in the community, and bilingual services in both English and Cantonese. In addition, they have YWCA in Hong Kong, too. The Pender Y provided information on social services, housing, law, and schools. It also hired a counsellor to help people with different social problems. The Women in Training Project

was initiated by Pender Y and funded by the federal government with an objective to provide immigrant women an opportunity to learn new skills.

In fact, it was not only individual immigrants who came to Pender Y for help, institutions needed it, too. Because of the overwhelming demand for help, it became too much for Pender YWCA to handle. Furthermore, Pender Y was not mandated and prepared to provide bilingual settlement services for new immigrants. The special demands of Chinese immigrants just could not be dealt with efficiently. In addition, with its broad mandate, Pender Y would not be in any strong position to speak for the Chinese community. The Chinese should be in a better position to speak for themselves. Therefore, a separate organization with a special mandate to service Chinese new immigrants was necessary. This eventually led to the founding of SUCCESS.

### **Purposes of Founding SUCCESS**

From discussions with early founders of SUCCESS and by analysis of SUCCESS documents, five purposes for the founding of SUCCESS were identified. They were: to bridge the gap in social services between new Chinese immigrants and service agencies, to act as a united voice in the Chinese Community, to educate Chinese immigrants about their rights and responsibilities, to help immigrants become independent and productive citizens, and to promote integration.

### **The Founding Process**

To bridge the gap in social services between mainstream service agencies and new Chinese immigrants, a group of enthusiastic and conscientious citizens and professionals in the

social and community welfare spheres started to talk about the founding of SUCCESS. This group included Maggie Ip, K.C. Li, Jonathan Lau, Mei-Chan Lin, Pauline To, Linda Leong, and many others. Later they formed the first Board of Directors of SUCCESS. Most of them were fluent in both Cantonese and English. This was the group who had worked together for years to organize programs and services for the new Chinese immigrants.

When Maggie Ip and her friends started to talk about the founding of SUCCESS, the first thing they discussed was money. In the summer of 1973, the group made an application to the Health and Welfare Canada (now Health Canada) for a three-year grant to carry out a demonstration project called "The Chinese Connection." The objective of this project was to provide the much-needed link between the service agencies which delivered the services and the immigrants who received them. In November 1973, a public forum was held to find out what the consumers themselves thought of the project and how the service agencies would react to it. Close to three hundred local citizens attended this forum in support of the project and over two hundred signatures were collected, endorsing "The Chinese Connection" project. Many social service agencies which dealt with the problems of the Chinese immigrants on a daily basis also came out to support this project. In February 1974, SUCCESS was officially registered as a non-profit and non-political organization under the B.C. Societies Act. The fifteen founding members formed an interim Board of Directors with Maggie Ip as the Chair, Philip Leong Vice-Chair, Faith Lam Secretary, Sister Teresa Fung Treasurer.

### **Choosing the Name and Location**

The name for the Society in English was different from its Chinese name. In English, it was called the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society, or SUCCESS; in Chinese, it was called Zhong Qiao Hu Zhu Hui, or Chinese Immigrant Mutual Help Society, to reflect its spirit of mutual help. Many local Chinese in Vancouver simply call it Zhong Qiao. Qiao - Bridge (the same sound as Qiao in Hua Qiao - Chinese Immigrants) was chosen as its logo.

When SUCCESS was founded, it was located at 321 Main Street in Chinatown. This office was chosen because of its central location. Many Chinese residents lived in Chinatown during that time. It was close to many services in Chinatown as well (e.g., travel agencies, accountants, lawyers). For people living outside Chinatown, the transportation was convenient, too.

At its initial stage SUCCESS served two groups of people. A large proportion of its clients was Chinese people from Hong Kong. As soon as SUCCESS's programs started, many early immigrants from Taishan County and surrounding areas in Guangdong Province also came to the organization for help because they required more professional services which they could not get from other organizations.

### **Historical Development of SUCCESS: Three Stages**

To facilitate an understanding of the historical development of SUCCESS between 1973 and 1998, its twenty-five year history has been divided into three stages. This division was made on the basis of a general review of the history of SUCCESS, its programs and services, and its organizational development. Stage One, from 1973 to 1979, is the founding and establishing

stage of SUCCESS. Stage Two, from 1979 to 1989, is the developing and maturing stage. Stage Three, from 1989 to 1998, deals with its expansion and transformation. The data employed come from the analysis of SUCCESS documents and from interviews with the early founders of SUCCESS, former Board members, Chairs, and Executive Directors, and current Program Directors.

### **Stage One: Founding and Establishing Stage, 1973-1979**

#### ***The Chinese Connection Project***

As alluded to earlier, "the Chinese Connection Project" was the first project sponsored by SUCCESS between 1973 and 1977. It was a three-year demonstration project funded by Health and Welfare Canada. Its objective was to study existing gaps, to provide the much needed link between immigrants and social service agencies, and to pressure agencies to modify their policies to provide better services. A team of seven staff members was formed for this project, including Paul Chan, Ambrose Hsiung, Elgin Lee, and Lilian To who were all community workers, and a receptionist. Jonathan Lau from the Neighbourhood Services Association and Penelope Steward shared the responsibilities of the co-ordinator of the project.

At this stage, SUCCESS was opened for only half a day for referral services. The other half of the day was for the staff to do paper work, make contacts, among other duties. The Third Annual Report of SUCCESS (1976) documented the three major areas in which the Chinese Connection Project was involved: 1) Direct Information/Referral Services; 2) Community and

Agency Development; and 3) Volunteer Development. SUCCESS was also actively involved in the debate about the published Green Paper on Immigration and the proposed changes in the Citizenship Act. Philip Leong, Chair of SUCCESS from 1975 to 1978, reported at the Third Annual General Meeting that in its first two years, the Chinese Connection Project was the prominent and most ambitious project sponsored by SUCCESS. By the third year, the project had had a tremendous impact and far-reaching effect on the local Chinese community.

### ***1977: A Crucial and Difficult Year***

The year 1977 was a crucial and difficult one in the history of SUCCESS. When the grant for the Chinese Connection Project ended in 1977, the Board of Directors had many discussions about the future of SUCCESS. Because their services were well utilized and because they foresaw the need for such a society, they decided to continue to provide services. Since the government was not prepared to give provide more funding, the Society had to let some of its staff go. At one point, they were down to one staff member and the Executive Director. Despite these difficulties, the SUCCESS Board members and staff did not disappoint their clients. They all worked together to get through this difficult period. They overcame the difficulties by getting everyone involved, including members, volunteers, staff and board members.

Angela Kan became the Executive Director in 1977. Under the leadership of the Board of Directors, Angela and her colleagues started to rebuild the Society. In her interview, Kan highlighted four major actions taken in the rebuilding process. They were: to have a long term plan; fundraising; membership development; and joining the United Way to win recognition. The availability of funding from the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) in 1979

became a turning point for the Society. In addition, in the same year, SUCCESS was accepted as a member organization of the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The acceptance implied that the organization had, for the first time, city-wide recognition. With core funding now being provided by the United Way, SUCCESS turned its attention to its Task Force on Long Term Planning.

### *Hosting Vietnamese Refugees*

Another important development during Stage One was the arrival of a large number of Vietnamese refugees in 1979 under the Federal Government's assistance program. SUCCESS stood out, among other organizations, and met the challenge to provide a whole new branch of services for the refugees. In an agreement with the Vietnamese Refugees Assistance Association (VRAA) chaired by K. C. Li, a citizen group was formed to sponsor 50 Vietnamese families to Canada. The Society undertook to perform all re-settlement services for these newcomers. This was also the time when the spirit of voluntarism, mutual help, and self-help manifested themselves.

In sum, the foregoing discussion has described major events and activities which took place from 1973 to 1979 at SUCCESS. Following its establishment, the Society successfully sponsored its first project, the Chinese Connection Project. Despite high popularity of the Society, SUCCESS encountered financial difficulty when the Chinese Connection Project came to an end in 1977. However, the Society did not disappoint their clients and decided to continue with their services. Members, volunteers, staff and board members all worked together to

overcome the difficulties and rebuild the Society. The rebuilding process ended by winning recognition from mainstream organizations in joining the United Way. This also marked the end of the Founding and Establishing Stage and the beginning of the Developing and Maturing Stage.

### **Stage Two: Developing and Maturing Stage, 1979-1989**

During Stage Two, a steady increasing number of Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong came to Vancouver. Meanwhile, many early Chinese immigrants moved out of Chinatown and settled in South Vancouver areas. These demographic changes had an impact on the general development of SUCCESS during this period.

#### ***Restructuring Programs and Services***

In the 1984-1985 SUCCESS Annual Report, Angela Kan, Executive Director of SUCCESS from 1977 to 1986, highlighted two important decisions made in 1984 that had a long-range impact on the growth of SUCCESS. The first was the introduction of a Policy and Procedural Manual for the Society; the second was the change of staff structure. Under the new structure, program and services were coordinated under four major program areas: 1) Settlement/ Public Education and Citizenship; 2) Family and Youth Services; 3) Volunteer and Membership Development; and 4) Language and Vocational Training. Kan assured people that SUCCESS would continue to serve the community more fruitfully and effectively under the new structure.

#### ***Kingsway Community Outreach Project***

The Kingsway Community Outreach Project was the first of its kind in SUCCESS. It aimed at developing a sense of community and encouraging community participation among Chinese-Canadians in the Kingsway neighbourhood. Nicholas Lo, Program Director of Finance and Asset Management of SUCCESS, started to work on the Project in 1984 as a staff member and later became the program manager. He stated that in the 1980s the Kingsway and South Vancouver areas became the second largest Chinese community outside Vancouver Chinatown. They felt that there was a need to reach out to this group of people. It was also one way for SUCCESS to diversify its services. It marked a very important step for the development of SUCCESS outside Chinatown.

According to the 1984-1985 SUCCESS Annual Report, the activities of Kingsway Community Outreach Project included: publication of a monthly Community Calendar in Chinese introducing community events that took place in the neighbourhood; publication of a Community Resources Directory in Chinese introducing service agencies and their programs that operated for residents of Kingsway; organizing community events and workshops; and organizing classes and interest groups such as pre-citizenship classes, survival English classes, women's group etc. Most of the funding for this project came from the federal government although they had to raise money for some programs.

### ***Fraser Office: Its First Branch Office***

Having served the community in neighbourhood houses and community centres for one year, the Project moved to Fraser Office in 1985 and developed into SUCCESS's first branch

office in 1986. The Project continued to provide settlement services, direct information, and referral services. In 1989, Fraser Office got funding to offer employment programs and job training, which consisted of specific skills training as well as general orientation for job seekers. It opened a new area for SUCCESS.

### ***Change of Executive Director***

In June 1986, Angela Kan, Executive Director of SUCCESS, was appointed Citizenship Court Judge for the British Columbia/Yukon region. Sandra Wilking (1986), Chair of SUCCESS from 1985 to 1987, stated that "With this appointment, Canada in particular British Columbia and the Yukon, was to gain the tremendous experience and expertise of an individual who has devoted herself to ten years of active community work" (p.2). Unfortunately, Wilking continues, the Society lost "a committed, innovative and hardworking executive director" (p.2).

The search for a new Executive Director was a difficult and lengthy process. They searched for a replacement not only in Vancouver, but across Canada, the United States, and Hong Kong. In 1987 Lilian To became the new Executive Director. In the 1988 SUCCESS Annual Report, Eugene Lee, then Chair of SUCCESS, had this to say about the new Executive Director. Lee reported that To had performed remarkably in the first few months of her work in leading the staff and the Society. Her dedication and perseverance were unparalleled and the rapport that she had with the staff and the Board of Directors created stronger morale and a sense of unity. The Executive Director Search Committee had high expectations when interviewing for this position, Lee said, and "we most certainly are satisfied with the results" (p.4).

### ***Financial Difficulty***

SUCCESS faced a financial challenge in 1986. In the 1986 SUCCESS Annual Report, Sandra Wilking, Chair of SUCCESS from 1985 to 1987, stated that the Board was forced to make the very difficult decision of cutting back their administrative and program staff. They also had to raise approximately \$100,000 through their own fundraising activities, such as fundraising dinner, raffle, donations, new members, and Walkathon. Wilking appealed to all quarters in the Society to help them meet this goal. She argued that "this challenge is coming at a time when the demand for our services are increasing and government funding at all levels are not expanding" (p.3).

### ***Walk With the Dragon: Walkathon***

In 1985, SUCCESS was successful in hosting its first Walk with the Dragon Walkathon event. It was jointly sponsored by SUCCESS and the United Way of the Lower Mainland. Hong Kong T.V.B. (Television Broadcasting) and A.T.V. sent their stars to support this special event. The Walkathon later became an annual event at Stanley Park, and one of the two major fundraising activities for the organization.

### ***Unprecedented Organizational Growth***

In the 1988 SUCCESS Annual Report, Lilian To, Executive Director of SUCCESS, pointed out that "[t]he number of Chinese immigrants entering Vancouver has nearly doubled over the past year. Such changes were reflected both in the volume of our services and also in the

demands for new approaches and direction" (p.8). In 1988 and 1989, SUCCESS saw unprecedented organizational growth. Eugene Lee (1988), Chair of SUCCESS from 1987 to 1989, claimed that expanded programs and the demand for more services contributed to an annual budget which increased 50% over the last three years. In the 1989 Annual Report, Lilian To reported that with an influx of immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and students from China, SUCCESS provided more than 90,000 service contacts for over 40,000 clients in 1989, reflecting an increase of almost 50% in service demand. Lee projected further growth as demographics of the Chinese community changed and the demand for services increased.

### ***Responding to Changing Needs: Expansion of Programs and Services***

In late 1980s, SUCCESS continued to strengthen its programs and services in the four major sectors: Direct Services and Public Education; Volunteer and Membership Development; Language and Vocational Training; and Family and Youth Services. To respond to the changing needs of the Chinese community, SUCCESS also expanded its programs and services to the following areas: Family and Youth Counselling Services; and Employment Programs.

As a result of its expanded programs and new undertakings, the number of staff and volunteers at SUCCESS increased substantially. One of the most important priorities ahead would be to identify and move into more permanent and more functional premises. In 1988, the Board of Directors approved in principle the plan for studies and negotiation for a permanent SUCCESS Social Services Complex and Extended Care Facility. In the Summer of 1989, a unanimous resolution was passed at Vancouver City Council to agree in principle that the City would grant a long term lease of its land for the construction of an extended care facility.

### ***The Establishment of the Richmond Office***

In late 1980s, Richmond attracted many new Chinese immigrants. In an attempt to further service accessibility and improve service delivery, SUCCESS opened its third office in Richmond in the Summer of 1989. According to Wilfred Wan (1989), Chair of SUCCESS from 1989 to 1990, this new office immediately attracted over 150 volunteers and quickly became an important part of the rapidly expanding new immigrant Chinese community in Richmond, offering, among other things, career consultation and job referral services. To (1989) reported that in 1989 "this newly established Richmond service centre succeeded not only in meeting service needs of local residents but also in establishing bridges and linkages for Chinese immigrants in Richmond area" (p.8).

### ***Advocacy and Fighting for Social Justice***

During this period, besides the aforementioned programs and services, SUCCESS also spent large amount of time on advocacy and fighting for social justice. There were two major racist incidents towards the Chinese in the media: the W5 Campus Giveaway, and the Dim Sum Diary. In the first incident the CTV erroneously depicted Chinese Canadians as foreigners. They were accused of taking educational opportunities away from white Canadians and unduly benefiting from taxpayer-subsidized public education. In the "Dim Sum Diaries," the accents of new Chinese immigrants and their stereotypic behaviours were satirized (Li, 1998). SUCCESS participated in the national campaign against the first one. It led the protest against the second one. As a result the CTV issued two apologies and the CBC withdrew the Diary Sum Diary

program and acknowledged publicly that it hurt and distressed many Chinese, particularly the more recent immigrants.

### ***Reward and Recognition from the Community***

SUCCESS's dedication and compassion to help immigrants, and its commitment to community development, began to win recognition from the Chinese community and society at large. During this stage, SUCCESS received a number of awards from the Chinese community, including the Community Service Award and Certificate of Merit from the Chinese Benevolent Association in 1980 and 1986 respectively. Another significant achievement was that during 1989 SUCCESS became a full voting member of the Chinese Canadian National Council, a national Chinese Canadian organization with 28 member chapters across Canada.

### ***Joining the Vancouver Foundation***

In 1985, SUCCESS joined the Vancouver Foundation. Its first year's commitment of \$25,000 was matched equally by the Vancouver Foundation in December 1986. SUCCESS's fund with the Vancouver Foundation reached a capital base of \$60,000 in 1986. In October 1989, the Vancouver Foundation SUCCESS Endowment Fund reached a balance of \$160,000. K. C. Li calls this new development of SUCCESS joining Vancouver Foundation "another landmark for SUCCESS." It indicates that SUCCESS would commit to serving immigrants permanently.

### ***A Mature and Well Recognized Organization***

In the 1989 Annual Report, Wilfred Wan (1989), then Chair of SUCCESS, reported that

"SUCCESS is now a mature and well recognized establishment after 16 years of operation" (p.7). Although the demand for its services was growing and became more complex, the staff members at SUCCESS along with its volunteers had capably proved themselves in serving their needs in the areas of settlement, adaptation, and integration services. Wan also stated that, after working with the staff of SUCCESS for 4 years, he came to realize that Lilian To and her staff were "social workers in the true meaning of the profession." They had always "tried their best, sacrificing their personal and family lives, to ensure that whatever task demanded of them will be dutifully fulfilled" (p.7).

### **Stage Three: Expansion and Transformation, 1989-1998**

#### ***Demographic Changes***

During Stage Three, with 1997 approaching, Hong Kong people were worried about the returning of Hong Kong to China. Some of them moved to Canada, many of them residing in the Lower Mainland. The 1990s also saw many Mandarin speaking Chinese emigrating from Taiwan and Mainland China to Vancouver. They came from different linguistic backgrounds and their needs for services were different from immigrants from Hong Kong. The new demographic changes created more opportunities for SUCCESS to grow and expand on a much larger scale than the previous years. SUCCESS's branch offices expanded to ten from the original two in 1989 with many new services and programs. The Society made efforts in adjusting its nature of services to meet the changing community needs. In the 1990s, the whole Society was also

involved in the construction of the New Social Service Building and the Multi-Care Centre for seniors. This stage was characterized by expansion and transformation of the organization.

### ***Reorganization of Programs and Services***

The Society started the decade with re-organizing its programs and services into five major areas: Settlement and Public Education; Group and Community Development; Family and Youth Counselling; Employment and Job Finding; and Community Relations and Resource Development. Both the Fraser and Richmond Offices expanded with the addition of more office space to meet the growing demand for services. The Fraser Office was relocated to accommodate not only immigrant services, but also employment counselling, women's job training, and Youth Employment Training to provide at-risk youths with alternate employment opportunities. The Richmond Office added English classes and other group programs for new immigrants.

### ***SUCCESS Advanced Training Institute***

In the Settlement Services Division, increasing demands for English language training became apparent. With updated and revised curricula material and monitoring of instruction standards, ESL enrolment exceeded 250 encompassing both settlement language programs for women and other English training provisions in 1990. The Board approved an application in 1990 for SUCCESS to register as an advanced training institute with anticipated further developments in the training area. In June 1991, the Ministry of Advanced Training and Technology approved this application and registered SUCCESS as a Private Training Institute.

### ***Meeting Community Needs: Expansion of Programs and Services***

**Opening Burnaby-Coquitlam Office:** According to Ip (1991), founding Chair and Chair of SUCCESS from 1990 to 1992, many new immigrants arriving in Vancouver made the outlying areas such as Burnaby, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, and New Westminster their new homes. In order to better serve these new immigrants, SUCCESS opened a new service centre in Burnaby-Coquitlam in November 1991. This added to two other outreach offices SUCCESS opened in Vancouver South and Richmond areas in 1986 and 1989. It was a demonstration of its community-based approaches to ensure accessibility and establish bridges for Chinese immigrants in their local communities. Among other things, the new Burnaby-Coquitlam Office offered family and youth counselling, immigrant orientation programs, and English language training.

**Host Programs:** The Host Program was initiated in Coquitlam and Burnaby areas in 1991, with funding support from Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP). This program involved local Canadian families in the settlement process of new immigrants, sharing each other's cultures. SUCCESS Annual Report (1991) recorded that in its first year, the program helped over 500 immigrants connect with Canadian hosts. The program proved to be a very effective vehicle in assisting new immigrants' settlement and facilitating constructive interaction between immigrants and citizens of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

**Community Airport Newcomers Network - CANN:** SUCCESS launched the Community Airport Newcomers Network (CANN) on October 15, 1992 to receive landing immigrants at the airport. Extensive research and consultation showed a great need for a

comprehensive post-landing/pre-settlement orientation and referral service for the sake of effective and efficient settlement. There was a call for proposal from Employment and Immigration Canada (later called Citizenship and Immigration Canada). A number of agencies submitted proposals and SUCCESS was selected. The project received funding from the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) of Employment and Immigration Canada. The purpose was to help new immigrants go through the landing procedures and provide them with basic information and referral services upon landing.

CANN set up a multi-lingual kiosk at the Vancouver International Airport. With group and individual orientations granted in 14 different languages (the 14 languages are: English, French, Filipino, Mandarin, Cantonese, Fukienese, Taiwanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Persian, Turkish, Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu), the kiosk provided direct services and referrals for general enquiries at the airport. The project provided a bridge for immigrants of many backgrounds to Canadian society. It provided newcomers with an opportunity for their crucial first point of contact before subsequent referral. The kiosk helped relieve the frustration and confusion of many newcomers arriving in Canada. As new immigrants awaited their landing papers to be processed by Immigration Officers, the airport reception team briefed them on Customs and Immigration procedures. Reception officers also assessed their needs and provided appropriate referrals.

**Small Business Training and Development:** As government policies had shifted its emphasis to business and skill oriented immigration, Greater Vancouver increased its intake of business and independent immigrants. A growing number of them required settlement services in

business information and training to help them with their economic integration. In response, SUCCESS conducted a feasibility study for a Small Business Training and Development Centre in 1993, and developed training programs to meet their needs. In 1995, SUCCESS formally launched this Centre located on West Broadway. The purpose of this program was to prepare immigrants to start a business and become self employed.

**Newcomers Integration Network for Tri-City - NINT:** The Newcomers Integration Network for Tri-City (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, and Port Moody) (NINT) began its operation on September 2, 1993. At that time, many immigrants from Korea and Iran settled in this area, and they had difficulties accessing programs and services from the mainstream. Their own ethnic communities could only provide them with limited support. SUCCESS got funding from the federal government to provide multilingual services at this location for both Chinese and non-Chinese immigrants.

**Opening the Second Office in Richmond:** As more Chinese immigrants settled in Richmond, a second office in Richmond at the Caring Place commenced operation in June 1994 as an integral service delivery network in coordination with 20 other local agencies.

**Mandarin Service Centre:** The early 1990s brought a considerable influx of Mandarin speaking immigrants mostly from Taiwan and Mainland China to the Lower Mainland. They called for increased services in Mandarin at the Society, particularly in the area of settlement services. In response, the Society hired and placed six Mandarin-speaking staff members in 1992 to provide Mandarin services and programs at each branch office. In addition, an Advisory Committee was established to address needs as well as program development for this group. As

the population of Mandarin speaking residents in the Lower Mainland continued to grow, SUCCESS opened a Mandarin Service Centre in the Oakridge area in Vancouver in 1994. A second Mandarin Service Centre in Chinatown was established in July 1996 with support from the Hong Kong Bank of Canada.

According to Mason Loh, Chair of SUCCESS from 1994 to 1998, the establishment of Mandarin service centres was not a unanimous decision. First, he commented on the debate over the necessity of singling out one language group and giving them preferential treatment. He argued that it was important to create space to make them feel comfortable and have a sense of belonging. Loh also maintained that, although SUCCESS was originally set up by and for Cantonese speaking people primarily from Hong Kong, it should not restrict its programs and services to this group only. Furthermore, Loh claimed that this new initiative would gain more support for SUCCESS and benefit its own development.

**1995-1996 - A Challenging Year:** During 1995-1996, SUCCESS was faced with tremendous challenges arising from shifts in community demographics, changes in government funding policies, and new dynamics in fundraising endeavours. The greatest challenge during 1995-1996 was changes in government policies on employment training which resulted in the termination of almost all of government funded employment and job-training programs for immigrants across the country. Consequently, funding for most of the highly successful employment training programs at SUCCESS was terminated by the end of March 1996, although these projects had achieved over 90% success rate for gainful employment.

**Completion of the New Social Service Building:** As alluded to earlier, in 1988 the

Board of Directors approved in principle the proposal to build a permanent SUCCESS Social Services Complex. In 1992, Block 17 between the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Garden and International Village was slated by the City of Vancouver for possible development. In the 1994-1995 Annual Report, Mason Loh, then Chair of SUCCESS, reported that the City of Vancouver had approved the construction of this 26,000 square-foot Social Service Centre.

The New Social Service Building was completed in the Fall of 1998. In his interview, Mason Loh pointed out that the New Social Service Building took a lot of work, time, and planning. Many volunteers and Board members helped out, especially Wilfred Wan, who actually oversaw the construction of the building. It also involved a lot of fundraising, in total 5.4 million dollars within a period of three years. Loh also highlighted the significance of the completion of the new building. He pointed out that this was the first home for SUCCESS. The new building signified permanence and long-term stability for the Society.

In his interview Wilfred Wan, Chair of SUCCESS in 1998, claimed that in the long run, the new building would save the organization rental money and property taxes, and that the money saved could go to their general operating fund. He also pointed out that the completion of the new building meant a symbol of pride and a sense of belonging. Seniors and youth would gain the most from this new building by having their own space.

**Progress with the Multi-Level Care Facility Project:** The Multi-Level Care Facility Project in Chinatown was approved by the Board at the same time with the New Service Building. Its objective was to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services for a growing population of seniors. At the time when this research was being conducted in 1999, it

was still in the planning and preparation process. However, the Society had made progress with it. In the 1994-1995 Annual Report, Mason Loh, then Chair of SUCCESS, reported that the Provincial Government had approved the construction of the \$12.2 million, 108-bed Multi-Level Care Facility. Both Loh (1995) and To (1995) projected further organizational expansion with the completion of this project and the New Social Service Building. In his interview Wilfred Wan commented on some of the hurdles they encountered in constructing the Multi-level Care Facility. He claimed that the biggest one was to secure provincial funding.

### *A Holistic Multi-Service Agency*

After serving the community for 25 years, SUCCESS had developed into a holistic multi-service agency providing a comprehensive array of programs and services based on community needs. By the end of Stage Three, its programs and services had evolved into six areas: Community Airport Newcomers Network; Settlement and Public Education; Group and Community Services; Family and Youth Counselling; Employment and Job Finding; and Community Relations and Development.

All these programs and services were delivered by a professional team consisting of 200 people through its headquarters in Chinatown and eight other branch offices in Greater Vancouver. These branch offices were: Vancouver International Airport Reception Services, Chinatown Mandarin Service Centre, Fraser Office, Cambie Mandarin Service Centre, Small Business Development and Training Services, Richmond Office, Burnaby-Coquitlam Office, and Tri-City Office.

### ***Volunteer and Membership Development***

Volunteers were seen as an integral part of the SUCCESS team. They were regarded as the backbone of SUCCESS. The volunteer development program at SUCCESS started almost at the same time as the Society itself. In 1975 there were 85 volunteers working with senior citizens, information/referral, and new immigrants children and youth (SUCCESS, 1976). By 1998 the number had increased to 7,000. They rescued SUCCESS from many important events, such as the Vietnamese refugee resettlement. They also played an important role in the daily operation of the organization. They brought in different talents and expertise and alleviated the shortage of staff at SUCCESS. Shirley Leung, Program Director of Group and Community Services, rightly pointed out that without the help of volunteers, SUCCESS could not survive.

By 1998 SUCCESS had developed a large membership of 16,000. The majority of their members were their clients. Their shared experience as an immigrant prompted them to join SUCCESS. Their membership dues helped SUCCESS financially, but more importantly they helped raise the profile of SUCCESS and strengthen the organization.

### ***Building Bridges on Both Sides***

During the past years, SUCCESS had continued to build bridges on both sides. Regular consultations and presentations were made to schools, parents, and community groups to promote social awareness and inter-group relations. The Society had taken the initiative to cooperate with other agencies in joint workshops, conferences, and programs. Job Development staff were placed in 8 community centres and neighborhood houses in Richmond and Vancouver

to develop 'bridging' services. The Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers continued to work with other organizations such as the Police, AMSSA (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies of BC), the Multicultural Health Coalition, Canadian Ethnocultural Council, and other ethnic and community groups to address issues of multiculturalism, racism, employment equity, and media relations. The Society had also taken an active role in advocacy in the areas of immigration and social policies, health care policies, education policies, and the family and child protection regulations. The Board of Directors of SUCCESS and staff members had been invited to serve on over 20 committees of the City Council, the School Board, government departments, and social service organizations.

### **Social Contributions**

The preceding discussion has made it clear that SUCCESS has grown exponentially between 1973 and 1998. It was established in 1973 as a demonstration project. By the time the Society reached its 25th anniversary, SUCCESS had evolved immensely from its austere beginning in a 300-square office to an influential organization with nine offices throughout Greater Vancouver. It provided a wide range of programs and services to a large number of clientele. The organization also extended its services from primarily serving Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong to immigrants from Taiwan and China, and further to people from other ethnic groups as well as the mainstream. This paper concluded that during its first 25 years of existence, SUCCESS has contributed tremendously to the ethnic Chinese community and Canadian society at large. Its contributions touched both practical and theoretical fields of immigration, citizenship, and integration. Its social impact was extensive.

An area that SUCCESS has had a great impact on was the Chinese community itself. First, Chinese immigrants benefited immensely from its programs and services. By providing culturally- and linguistically-appropriate services, SUCCESS was able to increase the access of Chinese immigrants to settlement and other social services, which they were entitled to but deprived of, owing to the failure of mainstream social service agencies. It was instrumental in filling the gap between immigrant community and government services. Furthermore, it helped create a safety network, a home, a community to which Chinese immigrants felt they belonged. In addition, it helped form a united front among immigrants to fight for social justice and equity in social services, immigration, and other government policies. It helped immigrants foster a sense of critical consciousness while educating them about their citizenship, rights, and responsibilities. This study found that SUCCESS played a significant role in increasing citizenship participation. To many immigrants, SUCCESS was a stepping stone for them to integrate into mainstream society. As a transitional institution, it helped immigrants ease the process of settlement, adaptation, and integration.

Another important aspect of SUCCESS's contribution to the Chinese community was the instrumental role it played in raising the profile of the Chinese in Vancouver. The outstanding performance of SUCCESS testified to how an ethnic community fulfilled itself. The successful development and expansion of SUCCESS demonstrated to the larger society that the Chinese were no longer just an isolated group confined to Chinatown. Instead, the group became an outreaching community, willing to contribute to the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of Canadian life. It challenged the argument that immigrants were a social drain.

Through its community development events and activities, SUCCESS contributed to sensitizing the mainstream organizations about their service approaches and changing public attitudes towards immigrants. It helped enhance mutual understanding between immigrants and mainstream society, hence shortened the social distance between the two groups. As a model which was originally developed from an ethno specific community, SUCCESS also provided assistance to other ethnic communities, especially those which did not have the necessary resources. Moreover, its services also extended beyond immigrants to mainstream society. SUCCESS became a financially-affordable model for the government to provide community services while maintaining social control over it. It became a venue for government to lobby for community support, philanthropy, and donations. It was testimony to how a community organization and government could work together to serve the community. This study also demonstrated that SUCCESS was not only an exit for immigrants to step into mainstream society, but also an important entrance for government agencies and mainstream organizations to approach a hard-to-reach ethnic community. The significant bridging role played by SUCCESS between the immigrant community and Canadian society at large was salutary.

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