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Abstract: This paper examines the founding and historical development of an immigrant service organization in Canada, and the role it played in building a learning community for adult immigrants.

Introduction

Canada is a country of immigrants. Immigration has played an important role in transforming Canada into an ethnoculturally diverse and economically prosperous nation (Knowles, 2000; Moodley, 1995; Palmer, 1975). The 2001 Census of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003) reveals that as of May 15, 2001, 18.4% of the total population were born outside the country, and that 13.4% identified themselves as visible minorities. According to the Ethnic Diversity Survey, almost one-quarter (23%) of Canada's total population of 22.4 million people aged 15 years and older were identified as first-generation Canadians who were foreign born. The latter number indicates that a large proportion of the new immigrants are adults.

Despite our rich history in immigration and the strategic role it plays in our future, the issue of immigrant settlement and adaptation is still prominent. We are still grappling with questions such as: How do new immigrants adapt to a society very different from their own, with a different language, culture, and tradition? How do they navigate the complex paths that citizenship (all the skills required) entails? In this regard, where do they go for assistance? What is the role of voluntary organizations concerning immigrants' settlement and integration? What is the role of adult education? This study was designed to address such questions through investigating the founding and historical development of an immigrant service organization in Vancouver called SUCCESS - United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society. The research focused on two areas: The founding and historical development of SUCCESS between 1973 and 1998 and The role of SUCCESS in building a citizenship learning community for adult immigrants

Theoretical Framework

Citizenship can be defined as membership in a socio-political community which comprise dimensions: legal status, rights, identity, and participation (Bloemraad, 2000). The past decade has witnessed a revitalized debate regarding the concept of citizenship. Part of this debate has been focused on the membership of immigrants in the national community, or the identity dimension of citizenship. Traditional liberals advocate a culturally neutral state (Rawls, 1971). Critics of such paradigm claim, however, that the ideal of a culturally neutral state embodies an oppressive illusion (Kymlicka, 1995; Tamir, 1995; Taylor, 1994). It promotes a universal citizenship, which ignores differences and perpetuates oppression and inequality. Consequently they propose "differentiated citizenship" as an alternative model (Young, 1995).

As to the best approach of promoting citizenship, all the records examined reveal that there was no consensus. Four contradicting perspectives can be identified here. Walzer (1995) argues that voluntary associations, including ethnic and religious groups, are the best "schools of citizenship," and that it is the best for the state to leave these organizations alone. On the other hand, Arneson and Shapiro (1996) argue that the sort of socialization provided by ethnic and religious groups can inhibit, as well as promote responsible citizenship. They propose mandatory citizenship education in the schools to supplement and correct the lessons learned in civil society. Okin (1997) goes even further to argue that the state should actively intervene in certain

ethnic and religious groups to prevent them from passing on illiberal or undemocratic attitudes and practices. As well, Derwing (1992) conducted a national study among government-sponsored citizenship programs in Canada, which claims that citizenship is often treated as static, as something to be acquired rather than a process of continuous growth in attitudes, skills, and knowledge. As an alternative the author suggests community-based participatory citizenship education. This study was situated in the current debate over citizenship and citizenship education.

Research Design

The central guiding question for this research was: How did a community-initiated voluntary organization such as SUCCESS respond to changing needs of an ethnic community in a multicultural society? Two major qualitative research methods were used to conduct this study: document analysis and personal interviewing. The selection of research methods derived from the nature of this research as an interpretive study, and its attempts to understand people's lived experience with the organization. The document analysis included SUCCESS annual reports, newsletters, AGM meeting minutes, important speeches, and program brochures. Twenty interviews were conducted with the Executive, Board members, and Program Directors. Time and space did not permit interviews with clientele, so their views of this organization were not represented here. In addition to the two major methods, site visiting and participant observation as a volunteer were used as complementary methods to help me contextualize what was read and heard about the organization.

Multiple data sources and methods indicated that this study adopted a triangulation approach which ensured the credibility of the research. For the analysis of the research, a four-stage process was developed: (i) identifying main points, (ii) searching for salient themes and recurring patterns, (iii) grouping common themes and patterns into related categories, and (iv) comparing all major categories with reference to the major theories in the field to form new perspectives. The four-stage process assured that there was frequent interplay between the data and theory.

Founding and Historical Development of SUCCESS
Founding of SUCCESS

SUCCESS is a community initiated voluntary organization founded in Vancouver 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 SUCCESS has become a well-established multi-level service agency 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 have felt they belonged. To analyze the founding and development of SUCCESS, it is important to review the social and political context within which the organized was founded. In the post World War II period, Canada was experiencing dramatic social and economic changes. The nation needed skilled immigrants to help with the booming 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 (Whitaker, 1991, p.19). 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. Among them, many were from Hong Kong. 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 and cultural barriers, 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 associations because many of them mainly served their own group members. In 1973 SUCCESS was founded out of this context to bridge the gap in social services.

Historical Development

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. Stage Two, from 1979 to 1989, is the developing and maturing stage. Stage Three, from 1989 to 1998, deals with its expansion and transformation.

During **Stage One**, following its establishment, the Society successfully sponsored its first project, the Chinese Connection Project. SUCCESS provided direct and referral services to meet the needs of individual immigrants. Meanwhile, they worked with mainstream organizations to help them provide better services to non-English speaking Chinese clients. In addition, SUCCESS also participated in advocacy activities, such as forming a special task force to pursue discussions on the publication of the Green Paper which contained proposed new immigration policies in the Citizenship Act. Volunteer development also started during this stage. The spirit of voluntarism, mutual help, and self-help was manifested through sponsoring refugees from Vietnam in collaboration with other Chinese ethnic organizations. All their programs and services were very popular.

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. Board members, staff, and volunteers 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.

Demographic changes of Chinese immigrants in Vancouver in the 1980s contributed to the branching out of SUCCESS programs and services to Vancouver South and Richmond during **Stage Two**. In late 1980s, there was a big increase of Chinese immigrants primarily from Hong Kong. Such changes were reflected both in the volume of its services and budget.

Also during Stage Two, SUCCESS held its first Walk With the Dragon Walkathon event in 1985, jointly with the United Way of Lower Mainland. Also in 1985, SUCCESS became a member of the Vancouver Foundation. Also during this time, the Board of Directors approved in principle the proposal to build a permanent SUCCESS Social Services Complex and Extended Care Facility for seniors.

Besides providing programs and services, SUCCESS did not forget its roles in advocacy and fighting for social justice. It participated in the debate over W5 Campus Give Away and the Dim Sum Diary incidents. The Society also strengthened its public relations, fundraising, membership, and volunteer development. As a result of its dedicated hard work and compassion,

it won a number of awards and recognition from the Chinese community and community at large. Although its influence on mainstream society was not obvious at this time, it had become a well established organization by the end of Stage Two.

Stage Three was characterized by expansion and transformation. During this stage, there was an increasing number of immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China. Among the most recent group, there were more business and independent immigrants than before. Their needs for services were different from their early counterparts. To respond to the new demographic changes, SUCCESS expanded its programs and services to business and employment training. They also set up special centres to accommodate the needs of Mandarin speaking immigrants. Furthermore, the Society extended its program and services to other ethnic groups. Following the opening of its first two branch offices, Fraser and Richmond Offices during Stage Two, SUCCESS set up another 6 branch offices in Stage Three in order to meet the changing needs. Stage Three also witnessed the completion of the New Social Service Centre, home to its Head Office. To many people, this meant permanence and stability, a symbol of pride, and a sense of belonging. By the end of Stage Three, success had developed into a holistic, multi-service agency providing a comprehensive array of programs and services based on community needs. To be more specific, these programs and services were categorized into six areas: Community Airport Newcomers Network (CANN), Language Training and Settlement Services, Family and Youth Counselling, Small Business Development and Training, Employment Training and Services, and Group and Community Development. The study reveals that SUCCESS played multiple roles with a three-pronged focus: providing professional programs and services, advocating on behalf of immigrants, facilitating citizenship education and community development.

Building a Learning Community for Immigrants: The Contributions of SUCCESS

The preceding discussion has made it clear that SUCCESS has grown exponentially between 1973 and 1998This paper concluded that d During its initial stage, the organization mainly provided basic settlement services and language assistance.By the time the Society reached its 25th anniversary, it By the time it celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1998, success has become a well-established multi-level service agency providing a wide range of programs and services to both Chinese and non-Chinese.During its first twenty-five years of existence, it has contributed tremendously to the ethnic Chinese community and Canadian society at large. Its contributions touched both practical and theoretical fields of immigration, citizenship education, 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, SUCCESSwas able to has increased 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 has been instrumental in filling the gap between immigrant community and government services. Furthermore, it helped create a safety network, a home, and 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.

Second, SUCCESS has played a significant role in increasing citizenship participation. It acted as a mediator between the individual and the state, which are often seen as two sides of the citizenship equation. It provided a means to investigate the dynamic between individual immigrants' agency and the structural or institutional constraints they face in exercising that

agency (Bloemraad, 2000). As a transitional institution, it has helped immigrants ease the process of settlement, adaptation, and integration. To many immigrants, SUCCESS was a stepping stone for them to integrate into mainstream society.

Furthermore, it built a citizenship learning community. This study demonstrates that SUCCESS adopted a community-based participatory approach in promoting new citizenship learning. It built an infrastructure which incorporates activities that required engagement and collaboration among a number of stakeholders. Besides acquiring knowledge and skills, more importantly it helped immigrants foster a sense of critical consciousness while educating them about their rights and responsibilities. In this learning community, learning is fundamentally socio-cultural and socio-political. It involves constructing complex social relationships between the immigrant community and society at large. In addition, the study reveals that the role of SUCCESS in citizenship education is two-sided. Through its community development events and activities, SUCCESS has 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.

Implications for Adult Education

This study has many significant implications for adult education. First, it demonstrates the central role that immigrant community organizations have played in providing accessible and responsive community-based adult education for immigrants. Second, this study sheds new light on the root of adult education in citizenship education and community development. Third, it speaks to the aim of adult education in bringing about democracy and social change. Fourth, as our population is growing more diverse, it is imperative for adult education to be more inclusive in order to embrace people from different ethnic and cultural background.

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