They've Only Just Begun

By Elizabeth Honsberger,
Coordinator, Employment Challenge

Since that day, everything that had been in darkness, and without hope, turned beautiful and shiny. It’s for these reasons I want today to say thank you to MOSAIC and all its staff.”

Speaking to the 200-plus audience which included keynote speaker Dr. Carol Christensen, Marisol described the sense of commitment required to succeed in a training program in what is still a relatively new, and very different, country.

For the 99 graduating students, the completion of the training they take at MOSAIC often proves to be the accelerating factor in the acquisition of permanent employment. Historically, approximately 80% of all participants graduating from MOSAIC’s employment programs find permanent jobs in the Lower Mainland.

For Ting Ping Cheung, valedictorian for the Office Training Program for Immigrant Women & Men, completion of her training program resulted in an Accounts Clerk position at Strataco Management Ltd. Ting credits both her own and her classmates’ experience in the program as being instrumental in finding employment in what remains a difficult labour market to break into.

“If we had not participated in this program, we would not have had the chance to gain essential skills and find meaningful employment. It has made a significant difference in our lives.”

Shirin Drudjian, valedictorian for the Office Training Program for Immigrant Women, is pleased to be employed as a secretary for the local legal firm, Zool K.B. Suleman. She too expressed the sense of gratification felt by her entire class for the support and guidance they received in the program during the course of the training. On behalf of her classmates, Shirin presented MOSAIC Board President Fiona Begg with a modest donation of money from the entire class which, in Shirin’s words, was “to express our gratitude.”

In partnership with CEIC, MOSAIC will continue to provide individuals such as Marisol, Ting Ping and Shirin with the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to enter the local labour market.
Prime Minister Kim Campbell recently announced a major reorganization of the federal government departments and services. Under the new structure, responsibilities for the immigration program and policy will be shared by two ministers. Bernard Valcourt is the Minister for the Department of Human Resources, and he will retain responsibility for Settlement Operations. Doug Lewis, the Minister for the Department of Public Security, will have responsibility for Immigration Operations, and International Services. The emphasis of this new ministry is enforcement and law and order.

Not only is this merger wrong in principle, but it has been carried out incorrectly without proper preparation, coordination and consultation.

According to the Immigration Act, the Immigration program is all about bringing people to Canada "to enrich and strengthen the cultural and social fabric of Canada" and "to fulfill Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees and to uphold its humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and the persecuted." Only two out of ten objectives outlined in the Immigration Act deal with security. Why then is immigration being now cast as a threat to the public security and well-being of Canadians?

David Matas of the Canadian Council for Refugees states that "any time a refugee or potential immigrant makes an application or goes for an interview, they will find themselves dealing with Public Security. The message they will hear is 'We need to protect the public against you.'"

We have written to the Prime Minister asking her to reconsider these changes. Canada has a well-earned reputation as a fair, humane and progressive country; we hope that she will reassure the public that this image will be upheld.

In Touch With Changing Market Trends

By Holly Whittleton

The labour market is constantly changing to accommodate trends, technology, skill levels and new developments. The Employment Programs are in touch with these trends and are offering training accordingly. We have identified specific needs within the immigrant communities by conferencing with the Bilingual Counsellors at MOSAIC. The result of this is two new program ideas: Foreign Trained Engineers and Foreign Trained Counsellors. Both of these proposals have been well received by CEC and are at the pre-operational phase. Existing programs such as Employment Challenge, Office Training Programs for Women and Men and Women, and Job Finding Club are constantly assessing the needs of participants and applicants and incorporating that information into proposal renewal.

Program staff and instructors stress quality programming and encourage a positive, success-oriented learning environment. The knowledge that "poor training results in poor productivity" has guided the Employment Programs.

The future of further programming rests on client need and labour market demand. A collaborative effort between the bilingual counsellors at MOSAIC and the Employment staff will be necessary to establish our future for MOSAIC, our clientele and our funders.

PROFILE: New Program Manager

In June of this year, Holly Whittleton joined MOSAIC as the Program Manager for the Employment and Language Programs. Management and staff were thrilled to have Holly accept this position, as she brings with her eighteen years experience in the field of "human services" working specifically with socially and economically disadvantaged adults, in non-profit post secondary training organizations within Alberta.

Originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Holly moved to Alberta in 1977, devoting the last seven years to the design, development, management, organization and administration of projects.

"Non-profit organizations are where I got my 'Frontline' experience - I got hooked at an early age, the spirit of community involvement, partnerships and the non-profit philosophy are why I choose to remain in this sector."

Holly Whittleton
Program Manager - Employment and Language Centre

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MOSAIC in close collaboration with Vancouver Community College, Mount St. Joseph's Hospital, B.C.'s Children's Hospital and the Vancouver Health Department, will begin a 2 1/2 year innovative research project aimed at developing and testing an interpreter program for health care agencies.

Funding from the B.C. Health Research Foundation will give key players such as health care consumers and those delivering care, together with the agencies providing volunteer and professional interpreters, a chance to break barriers to quality health care for immigrants.

MOSAIC has been a major force in the professionalization of medical interpretation as demonstrated in last year's health care initiative, funded by the federal Immigrant Settlement & Adaptation Program and the provincial Ministry of Education & Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. This initiative marked the beginning of standards for interpretive services and formal training within the province.

This new research project is based on the understanding that different types and levels of complexity of interpretation are required in health care settings. Straightforward one-time interpretation is needed for simple admissions or history taking; ongoing interpretation for patients in hospital over long periods and isolated by language barriers; and complex interpretation for counselling and medically-informed consents.

The project will demonstrate its innovation in several ways:
- formulating interpreting standards where none exist for health care.
- establishing training programs recognizing the level of expertise required for interpreters varies according to the health care situation.
- delivering the training and pilot-testing the service.
- evaluating the training and the efficiency of the service delivery.
- laying the foundation for a centralized system of interpretation for the lower mainland.
- developing a workable model capable of implementation in other regions of British Columbia, where none exists.

It is the mandate of the Health Care System to provide services which are equally available and of equal quality for all members of the community. An increasingly significant segment of the community consists of immigrants who face language barriers which hinder their ability to access services.

The availability, professional qualifications and personal suitability of interpreters have become issues of concern for both users and providers of interpreters. Thus, the success of this research project will mean greater health care accessibility for non-English-speaking residents.

In our increasingly multilingual society there is a growing awareness of the vital role the interpreter plays in health care.

PICNIC in the Park

By Habiba Rashid

You couldn't have imagined a more unlikely day to have a picnic. However the cloudy, rainy day didn't spoil the atmosphere of this special gathering. Vietnamese and Spanish women cooked over glowing barbecue coals, while sharing stories of raising their children. The picnic organizers, Kim Ton, Dinh Trinh and Miriam Maurer wanted to give these women a chance to get together regardless of the language barrier, knowing that the difficulties they encounter being mothers would give them a common bond.

Sonya Garcia is one of the many women who attend the Spanish Young Mother's Group, organized by Miriam. Sonya came to Canada from El Salvador at the age of 16. "How did you come to know about MOSAIC?" I asked her. "I think every one who comes to Canada from another country comes to know about MOSAIC immediately," was her response.

When Sonya came to Canada, she did not speak a word of English. "I could not even say 'hello'! As I was under age, I could not get financial help for shelter." A MOSAIC staff member offered her a foster home and Sonya stayed with her for two years until her husband joined her. A mother of three children, aged nine, seven and two, Sonya is very settled here, "El Salvador seems like a place to visit but this is home for me now."

Sonya's future plans include becoming a computer programmer. She will take courses at King Edward Campus and BCIT.

The picnic organizers were so pleased with the new venture that they are planning another gathering to include mothers from many cultures.
New ESL Child Care Centre

by Kathryn Maloney
Coordinator Child Care

When MOSAIC language classes were serving only a female population it was realized that childcare would be a tremendous asset to the language program. Mothers could have the freedom of attending English classes while their children were being cared for in a room nearby. Having childcare on the premises made ESL classes accessible to mothers and lessened anxiety for parents.

The childcare facility began as a childminding service with two staff and a maximum of 16 children. It is now in the process of becoming a licensed child care guided by provincial regulations. It will be staffed by six part-time and full-time early childhood educators representing Chinese, Polish, German and Canadian cultures.

The new facility recently opened on the second floor alongside the Language Centre's administrative offices. There are two rooms to accommodate a maximum of 24 children aged from infancy to five years.

Easing the settlement process is as important for children as it is for adults, so the primary goal at the childcare is to help children feel secure and comfortable in their new play space. Each child goes through a gradual entry process visiting the centre from one to five days with her parent before attending regularly. The majority of children attend on a part-time basis either from 9 to 12 am or from 1 to 4 pm, and several attend full-time from 9 to 2:30 pm having lunch with their parents.

Children become oriented to the childcare, staff and new friends through songs, games and art activities. After orientation, the teachers take the children through a series of learning units choosing subjects familiar to the children. These units focus on family, homes, food, community, animals and whatever experiences the children themselves bring to the childcare (ie. visit to the doctor, aquarium, etc.).

The philosophy that's been evolving amongst our diversified staff is that we want to introduce Canadian culture while respecting cultural differences, yet seeing the many similarities within the whole group.

MOSAIC child care staff are excited about our new child care and look forward to continuing to meet the needs of Vancouver's immigrant children.
Volunteer Tutoring Group A Success

By Madeleine Addison
Public Education and Volunteer Officer

The volunteer tutors with the Vietnamese Women’s Support Group agreed that they each had their own reasons for becoming involved in this pilot project for MOSAIC. But when we speak of the success of the program, we must acknowledge the positive experiences they had working as a group.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of the participants and their willingness to learn, the volunteers were rewarded time and again by these women and children from a different cultural background who came together to learn and practice new language skills. Sharing knowledge, seeing the tangible progress made by eager participants, and gaining understanding of a culture other than their own made involvement in this project very satisfying for all the volunteers.

Originally, the women in the group thought that their elementary school age children needed extra help with their homework. They wanted tutors to help the children at the same time that they themselves were in class. It was soon discovered however, that many of the children had high level English skills and most of them needed little or no help with their homework assignments. The volunteer tutors working with the children’s group were constantly challenged to keep them busy and stimulated. Early in the program intense games of Scrabble were going on with play only interrupted for quick trips to the dictionary to check the spelling of that high scoring word!

Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House generously assigned three rooms for the program, which was designed to accommodate a mix of mothers and children. One of the rooms was to be for childcare, one was for the women and one was for the younger students. Unfortunately those plans were disrupted by the Vancouver teachers’ strike. This meant valuable space at Cedar Cottage was needed to provide daycare for local children. This imposed severestress on the facilities available. We are very grateful to the staff at Cedar Cottage for keeping a big room expressly for our use. The women and children adjusted quickly to this very informal and flexible method of learning English. A visitor to Cedar Cottage on any Thursday evening would have seen students and tutors so involved in their work together that they were oblivious to the noise being made by the younger members of the group.

Feedback from the students has been very positive and the volunteers are proud that they had the opportunity to be part of this project. Both the volunteer tutors and the students agree that one and a half hours, one evening a week, for seven weeks is not enough. Many expressed disappointment that the classes were over so soon. Some tutors and students wanted to keep going during the summer!

Thank you to the volunteers for their feedback and help in putting this article together.

Volunteer Tutors Involved in the Pilot Project:
Roman Plonkovsky, Helen Smiciklas, Poppy Vohra, Cesar Orellano, Lorena Williams Pelly, Danny Truong, Sharon Carey, Nels Finberg, Annie Marenghi, Richard Kent, Sally Ogis, Paul Martin.
POWER PLAY:
Traditional Indian Marriages through Forum Theatre

By Hemi Dhanoa
Indo-Canadian Counsellor

In Indian traditional arranged marriage, the consent of the bride and bridegroom is generally not sought. They may not see one another before marriage, except in photographs that are exchanged prior to finalizing the marriage agreement.

The attributes and accomplishments of the couple, the economic, social status and background of the two families are matched, and the suitability is then determined by both families. Traditionally, Indian marriages are a union of two families, not just the two individuals.

However, both in India and in Canada, there is growing rebellion against such traditional and orthodox methods of marriage.

Indo-Canadian families are caught between two cultures. Often the values, beliefs and expectations of the two cultures are quite dissimilar. Parents may want to retain their own culture, and they may expect their children to conform to these values. Children may feel pressured to adopt western values and ways.

Many fears and concerns may arise from these differing expectations, and if mutually satisfactory solutions are not found, conflicts may occur between parents and children. This results in a lot of anxiety and frustration possibly being passed on to subsequent generations unless these serious and sensitive issues are first recognized, and solutions found.

This is a controversial issue for the Indo-Canadian community. Many have attempted to address this issue in various ways such as with individual and family counselling, in organizing discussion groups for youth, or by producing relevant educational forums on community television.

On the 6th of June, 1993 MOSAIC, in collaboration with HEADLINES THEATRE (a Vancouver based theatre company), organized a power play titled, "Indian Marriages: Arranged, Free Choice or..." Approximately 300 attended this power play at Sunset Community Centre.

This was the first power play organized for the Indo-Canadian Community. An overwhelming majority of the audience said that such forum theatre was highly effective in helping to address this issue and that more such power plays should be organized.

A future power play is being organized on the topic of "Gender roles and relations" in October 1993.
The following is a condensed version of the keynote address given at MOSAIC's Employment Programs Graduation on May 29, 1993. Dr. Christensen is with the School of Social Work at the University of British Columbia.

Graduation is always a happy time - a time to celebrate work accomplished, and to share hope and dreams with families and friends. I would like to offer you my thoughts about the qualities necessary to start again, with new hope; qualities that keep hope alive on the occasion of your graduation, and beyond. I call these qualities the five E's for success, because all of the qualities begin with the letter "E.”

The first quality is effort. I know that a lot of effort was necessary for you to qualify to enter Canada as an immigrant or as a refugee. Once in Canada, it doubt took great effort to remain here and make the required adjustments. Effort was involved in order to enrol in the MOSAIC program, attend classes, and complete assigned tasks.

In the future, however, the mental and physical effort that you have made will serve you well. Your current and future employers will be pleased to have employees who have been disciplined through effort.

The second quality is empathy. How many of you had heard about someone from your home town, village, city or country who had immigrated to Canada and had become happy and successful here? You were able to put yourself in the person’s shoes in your fantasy, and think, "I could do that."

I hope that the ability to empathize with new immigrants trying to find their way in a new society will never leave you. Memories of your feelings of homesickness, loneliness, alienation, strangeness, and not being fully accepted will allow you to come to the aid of others who are new to Canada.

The third quality is endurance. The quality of endurance, coupled with a little luck, led you to be among those who escaped adverse conditions. You were able to keep your courage, faith, and belief in better times to come. But most of all, you endured because you believed in yourself.

You are wonderful examples proving that, given the opportunity, immigrants have the endurance to overcome many hardships to become assets to the society as a whole.

Excellence, the fourth “E” quality necessary for success, means being able to surpass others, or to transcend. One is called upon to transcend one’s doubts, fears and limitations to believe in the ability to surpass all of the odds that suggest failure.

"You have gained or reinforced your stamina and sense of determination to continue to work toward a goal without giving up."

Many of you have given up some positive aspect of your lives in another country for the hope of having your children and grandchildren excel in Canada someday. Here at MOSAIC, it is clear, by virtue of your graduation ceremony, that you have demonstrated excellence, surpassed many odds, and transcended adversities to reach your goal.

The final quality beginning with the letter "E" that I wish to discuss is enjoyment, defined as the experience of pleasure. The joy of learning was felt as you gradually began to master new concepts, and as you could express them with increasing ease in a newly acquired language. Of course, the experience of pleasure will be greatly enhanced when you are eventually rewarded by having an opportunity to use your new knowledge and skills. And monetary rewards have never been known to lessen enjoyment!

I close with words of advice to the graduates. Remember that no matter how great the effort necessary, empathize with others who are enduring similar struggles to those that you have now surpassed; and remember to continue to excel in your ability to enjoy every success, however great or small, that may come to you in the future. Again, warm congratulations and my very best wishes for a wonderful life in Canada!
MOSAIC RAFFLE

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"5 WAYS TO SEE THE WORLD FOR $5" RAFFLE

to win one of the following prizes:

TRAVEL THE WORLD
$1500 toward airfare to any destination world-wide that you choose through Travel Travel

A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT
tickets for 2 to the Vancouver Opera, Ballet B.C., Vancouver Playhouse, Vancouver Symphony
and Cineplex Odeon Movies

A WORLD OF FINE DINING
dinner for 2 at Estia Taverna, Le Gavroche, Pink Pearl, Tojo's and Tommy O's

A WORLD OF MUSIC
5 tapes or CDs from Festival Records' huge selection of worldbeat music

A WORLD OF WORDS
select your favourites with a $100 gift certificate from Duthie Books

Draw date is November 22, 1993

MOSAIC'S WISH LIST

Each item on this list represents a step toward improving our facilities and services. Look in your attic - ask your employer - consider an "item" rather than a cash donation!

ARTWORK from a variety of cultures to brighten our barren walls
CAMERA good quality 35 mm
CATERING for a reception for 100
CHAIR an adjustable office model
COMPUTER IBM Compatible
COOKIES 24 dozen for our job finding club
CRAFT SUPPLIES yarn, knitting needles, fabric (1 metre or more), macrame string
CUTLERY it's hard to feed a group of forty with four forks
DAYCARE ITEMS a doll house, new or nearly new educational toys, a painting easel, a puppet theatre, a doll stroller, a sound monitor, musical instruments, puzzles, a kitchen set
DISHES serving or dining, china or paper
ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER there are still things computers can't do
FLOWERS & VASES to enhance a special event or brighten our reception
FLYER RACK to display information on services to our clients
OLD MAGAZINES for our employment and language classes
PAPER photocopy/fax/notepad
PLANTS silk or real

To purchase raffle tickets or to make an in-kind donation please contact the MOSAIC Fundraising Coordinator - Deborah Bennett - at 254-0244