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**Building Community:**  
A Framework for Services for the Korean  
Community in the Lower Mainland Region  
of British Columbia

Prepared for:  
The City of Vancouver,  
Canadian Heritage and MOSAIC  
by  
Martin Spigelman Research Associates

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## **Thank You**

*This project is very much about the shared commitment of government, community agencies and individuals to ensuring that immigrants to British Columbia can participate fully in the mainstream of community life.*

*The project wanted to engage people in a discussion about the settlement and integration needs of the Korean population in the Lower Mainland region. Now, as the project is completed, I would like to thank all those who became engaged in this discussion:*

- *the Community Resource Group which provided direction and advice;*
- *those people from the Korean community and from a variety of community agencies who shared their experiences and thoughts;*
- *staff from MOSAIC, the City of Vancouver and Canadian Heritage who provided support and encouragement throughout the course of this work; and*
- *Jumy Kim, the project's community facilitator, who worked long and hard, and who contributed in immeasurable ways to the project's goals.*

*Their experience, advice and commitment will certainly enrich both the Korean community and the larger Canadian community of which they are now a part.*

Martin Spigelman

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

British Columbia and the Lower Mainland region in particular have been fundamentally transformed through the past fifteen years by the arrival of over 500,000 immigrants. There are now approximately 23,000 Koreans who are in the midst of the ever-challenging settlement and integration process.

The City of Vancouver, the federal Department of Canadian Heritage and MOSAIC initiated this project to identify the Korean community's service needs and to build a policy framework for supporting the community's efforts to settle successfully in this region. The project's methodology included extensive consultations with members of the Korean community and analysis of Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada data sources.

### **Community Profile**

The statistical data provide a very detailed picture of the Korean community.

- Almost 65% of the region's Korean population arrived during the 1990s. In 1996, Koreans represented about 3% of the region's visible minority population and about 1% of the entire population. They are the third largest visible minority group in Burnaby and Coquitlam.
- The community is relatively young with almost 60% being in their prime working years (15–44) and only 1% being seniors.
- Korea was the third largest source country for Business Class immigrants to BC and one of the province's most significant sources of skilled workers. Relatively few Koreans arrived as Family Class immigrants. Korean immigrants are well educated with 35% having a post-secondary degree or diploma. However another 34% have only a high school diploma or less. Korean men are more likely than Korean women to have a post-secondary degree or diploma
- The unemployment rate is much the same for Korean men and women, and is much lower than that among other recent immigrants. The labour force participation rate, however, is significantly higher among Korean men (56%) than among Korean women (44%).

- In spite of their education, 39% of Koreans are working in sales and services, one of the lowest paying and least stable occupational areas.

## Community Issues

The Korean community generally welcomed this opportunity to identify their needs as individuals, as immigrants and as a community. Among the many issues discussed, three proved to be quite unexpected.

The first concerned young adults who saw themselves as being fully integrated into Canadian society. If they needed help of one sort or another – perhaps to come to terms with the ever-present pressure on them to succeed in school – they would access mainstream service organizations rather than Korean organizations. They saw themselves as a linguistic and cultural bridge for first generation Korean immigrants. And they lamented their community's tendency to have little respect for those young people who had successfully settled and integrated but who were no longer fluent in the Korean language.

The second concerned the divisions in the Korean population. Contributors suggested these are based upon period of arrival, economic class and generation. In many ways, they said, the Korean community is lacking a sense of community. There are few Korean organizations and little awareness of or respect for some of the few that do exist. The Korean churches play a vital role in the community but they too reflect the community's divisions. Currently, for example, there are over 100 Korean churches with many having only tiny congregations. There is certainly very significant leadership potential in the community, particularly in the "1.5" or second generation, but to date they have had little success in organizing and uniting Koreans so they can work together toward their settlement and integration goals.

The third issue concerned the profound isolation of many Korean seniors in the Lower Mainland region. They were isolated by their inability to speak English and by the absence of Korean organizations that could provide them with the social supports they desired. When there were family problems they could not reach out for help given their pride, their concern for "*face*" and the tradition of keeping such matters private.

Korean participants in this process identified a range of community needs, for example:

- orientation to life, customs, values and business in BC, with a particular emphasis on families and parenting, and better information on the many services available to immigrants in the Lower Mainland region;
- opportunities to come together as a community and efforts to develop organizations which involve all the different generations that make up the Korean community;
- special services and supports for seniors, social housing for low-income people and temporary housing for those escaping an abusive relationship; and
- family counselling and support, provided in a professional, culturally sensitive and timely manner, to help Koreans cope with the pressures inherent in the settlement process.

The project identified four types of agencies whose services are available to meet these needs. First, there are government agencies that provide a wide variety of services, invariably in English, to the entire community. Second, there are the large multicultural agencies that provide services to immigrants. Some of these have developed a particular capacity to work with the Korean community. Third, there are some organizations that focus upon a particular issue or need, for example domestic violence or Canadian business development. Fourth, there are a small number of organizations whose membership is entirely Korean.

### **A Framework for Service and Action**

A framework outlines a general approach for organizations to use as they plan, develop and implement policies and services. It is a tool that provides direction, guidance and consistency. It allows organizations to set priorities, make decisions and allocate resources.

The framework emerging from this project places the Korean community's needs in the context of the Lower Mainland region. While appreciating the uniqueness of this community, it identifies the universality of the immigrant experience and distinguishes between:

- those needs which Koreans share with very many other residents in BC, whether immigrant or Canadian-born;

- those needs which Koreans share with other immigrants in the region, for example the profound isolation often associated with the settlement experience; and
- those needs that are unique to or particularly acute in the Korean community, for example the need to build bridges across the gaps that currently divide the community.

The framework offers a *Statement of Principles and Goals* to suggest how services should be provided and what the services are intended to achieve. This Statement presents a challenge to all the different organizations currently providing services. It emphasizes community involvement in the decision-making process, choice, respect for the community's unique characteristics, ensuring accessibility and providing services in a professional manner. It also suggests that agencies' primary service goal should be to support Koreans' own efforts both to preserve their culture and identify and to integrate into the larger Canadian community.

Finally the framework addresses the question of who should be providing which services. It rejects the suggestion that any particular type of agency should be restricted to providing certain services. Instead it recommends a community development approach which builds on the many strengths evident in the Korean community and in the array of organizations available to Koreans.

Community development is not directed at solving one or even several specific problems. Instead it is an effort to bring the community together and to build an environment in which people have the power, the will, the tools and the commitment to achieve their common goals. This part of the framework identifies a variety of measures which, together, will:

- help the Korean community to build the organizations they require and to strengthen the ability of their organizations to work together;
- remove access barriers in the larger multicultural organizations and strengthen their ability to reach out to the Korean community; and
- enable all these organizations to work together toward their common goal of helping Koreans settle in the Lower Mainland region.

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## **1. Introduction**

Between 1986 and 1999, over 500,000 immigrants arrived in British Columbia with 85% settling in the Lower Mainland region.<sup>1</sup> These newcomers have fundamentally transformed the area with the number of people born in India, China and Vietnam doubling, the number born in Malaysia, the Philippines and Pakistan tripling, the number born in Iran, Hong Kong and Korea quadrupling, and the number born in Taiwan rising by more than ten times.<sup>2</sup> Immigrants now make up 48% of the population in Richmond, 45% in Vancouver and 42% in Burnaby.<sup>3</sup>

*British Columbia* is no longer quite so British.

### **1.1 Purpose and Objectives**

About 23,000 Koreans are part of this transformation. The City of Vancouver, the federal Department of Canadian Heritage and Mosaic – one of the large immigrant-serving agencies – initiated this project to learn more about the Korean community and its service needs. Their goal was to build a foundation for supporting the community's own efforts to settle successfully in this region. More specifically, the project's objectives were:

- to construct a social and economic profile of the community;
- to identify current and emerging needs; and
- to construct a framework for addressing the policy and service delivery issues confronting the Korean community.

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<sup>1</sup> This report uses the terms 'Lower Mainland region' and the 'Vancouver CMA' (Census Metropolitan Area) interchangeably. The term "Vancouver CMA" is the Statistics Canada designation for the area roughly equivalent to the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD).

<sup>2</sup> Hiebert, 1998: 17.

<sup>3</sup> See BC, MRMI, 1999 or Martin Spigelman Research Associates, 1999. The *Looking Ahead* data and reports can be found at [www.lookingahead.bc.ca](http://www.lookingahead.bc.ca).

## 1.2 Methodology

Community development principles guided the project. The research team included a facilitator from the Korean community and was supported by a Community Resource Group that provided direction and insights for the research team. The project overview was available in both English and Korean and the meetings used both languages as appropriate. The research process included, first, meetings with representatives of different groups in the Korean community and, second, reporting back to the community.

The project also made extensive use of data specially ordered from the 1996 Census, the most reliable and comprehensive source of information for research purposes.<sup>4</sup> These data focused on:

- the “visible minority” rather than immigrant population in order to capture the entire Korean population including the Canadian-born children of immigrants; and
- those cities with the largest Korean populations, namely Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey and the Tri-Cities.

The project supplemented the Census information – for comparative purposes and to fill the Census gap from 1996 to the present – with more recent data from the Landed Immigrant Data System (LIDS) maintained by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

## 1.3 Organization

This report is organized in 4 sections. Section 2 uses the Census and other data to build a profile of the Korean community. Section 3 summarizes the focus group meetings and interviews, and also identifies the services available in the region. Section 4 discusses and presents a policy and service framework. The appendices, under separate cover, include background materials from the project and additional data from the 1996 Census.

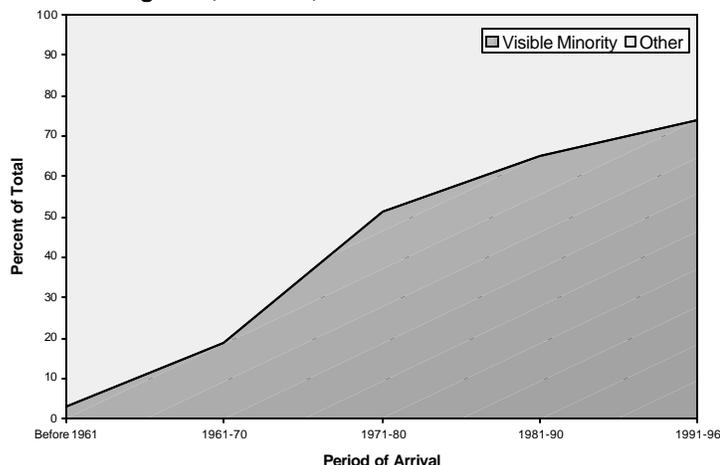
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<sup>4</sup> In cases where a household does not return the Census form, Statistics Canada enumerators contact that house to determine why not. The enumerators can provide the Census form in any of forty-two languages. Statistics Canada also has translators who will call the non-reporting household and ask them to complete the form over the telephone, in the language of their choice.

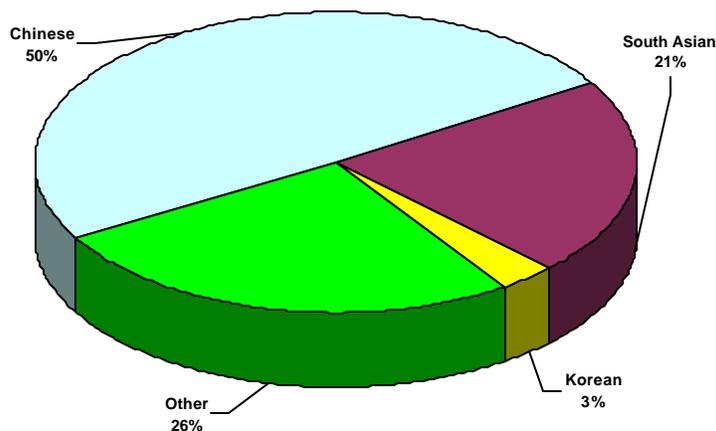
## 2. Community Profile

Immigrants to Canada are today most likely to be born in Asia. As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the proportion of visible minorities among immigrants has been increasing in the past two decades. Visible minority people now make up almost 90% of the total immigrant population in British Columbia and 31% of the total population in the Lower Mainland region. Many different nationalities are included in this population with the largest groups being from China and South Asia<sup>5</sup>. Koreans represent 3% of the visible minority population.

**Fig. 1, Visible Minority as Percent of All Immigrants, Canada, 1960-1996**



**Fig. 2, Visible Minority Population by Nationality, Vancouver CMA 1996**



**Table 1** on the following page identifies the largest visible minority communities in each of the project’s study cities.

<sup>5</sup> For example, India and Pakistan. Statistics Canada defines “visible minority” as those persons, other than Aboriginal people who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

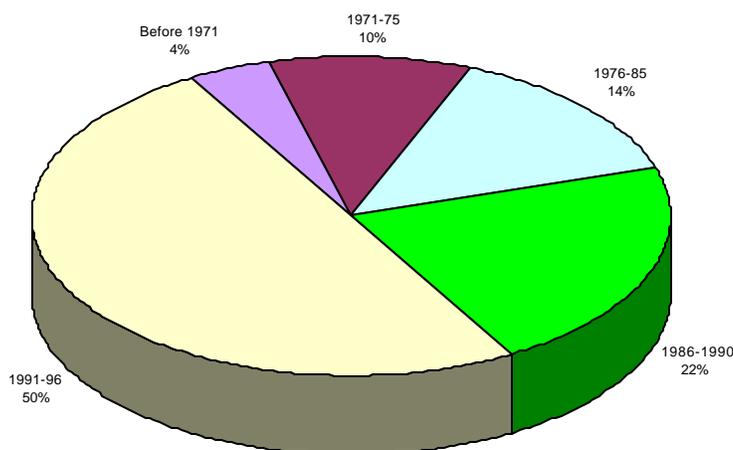
**Table 1, Largest Visible Minority Groups by Selected Cities, 1996**

| Vancouver   | Richmond    | Burnaby     | Coquitlam   | Surrey   |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Chinese     | Chinese     | Chinese     | Chinese     | S. Asian |
| South Asian | South Asian | South Asian | South Asian | Chinese  |
| Filipino    | Filipino    | Korean      | Korean      | Filipino |

### Immigration from Korea

Koreans have come to British Columbia in relatively small but increasing numbers through the past decades. **Figure 3** shows the Korean population by time of arrival in the Vancouver CMA to 1996. About 63% of the region’s total Korean population arrived between 1991 and 1999.

**Fig. 3, Korean Population by Time of Arrival, Vancouver CMA, 1996**



In 1998, Korea was the eighth largest source country for immigrants to Canada but the seventh largest for British Columbia.<sup>6</sup> **Table 2** uses data from LIDS to present the number of Korean immigrants arriving in British Columbia by year since the 1996 Census.

**Table 2, Korean Immigrants Arriving in BC, 1996-1999<sup>7</sup>**

| 1996  | 1997  | 1998  | 1999  |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1,100 | 1,200 | 1,800 | 2,100 |

<sup>6</sup> Canada, CIC, 1999: 29; Canada, CIC, 1998: 19. China was the leading source country for BC followed by Taiwan, India and Hong Kong.

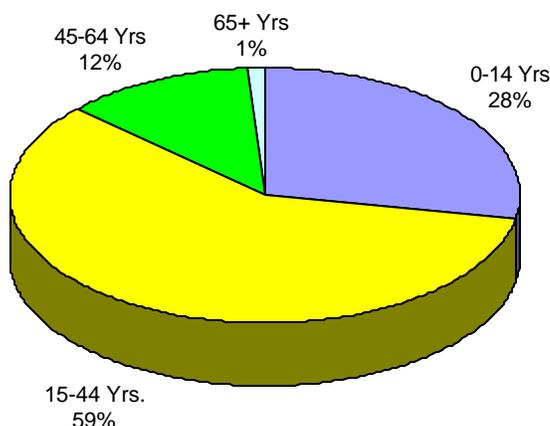
<sup>7</sup> Canada, CIC, 1999: 29; Canada, CIC, 1998: 19. LIDS, Special Run, 2000.

### Sex and Age<sup>8</sup>

The majority of Koreans in the region are male. In Richmond, however, almost 57% of the Korean population is female. Overall the population is relatively young with almost 60% being in their

prime working years (15 to 44 years) and another 28% being 14 years or younger. Only 1% of the Korean population in the Vancouver CMA is 65 years of age or over.

**Fig. 4, Korean Population by Age, GVRD, 1996**

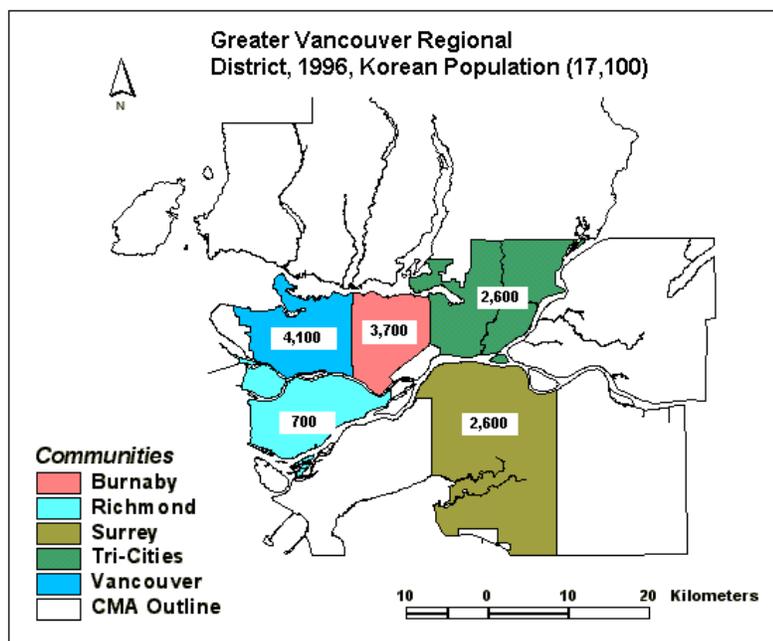


### Settlement Patterns

Koreans live in all the different municipalities of Greater Vancouver. **Table 3** indicates their proportion of both the total population and the total visible minority population in each city while the map on the following page shows their distribution in the study communities.

|   | Vancouver | Burnaby | Richmond | Surrey | Tri-Cities |
|---|-----------|---------|----------|--------|------------|
| Koreans as % of Total Population            | 1.0%      | 0.8%    | 2.1%     | 0.5%   | 1.6%       |
| Total Visible Minority Population           | 227,500   | 69,700  | 73,200   | 87,200 | 38,800     |
| Koreans as % of Visible Minority Population | 1.8%      | 5.4%    | 1.0%     | 2.9%   | 6.6%       |

<sup>8</sup> Age-related data are from the Special Run undertaken on the LIDS data from Citizenship & Immigration Canada.



### Immigrant Class

In 1998, 26% of all immigrants to BC were Family Class, 65% were Economic Class (skilled worker or business), 5% were Refugees and a further 4% were classified as “Other.” Korea was the third largest source country for Business Class immigrants to BC and the ninth largest source country for skilled workers (Principal Applicants and Dependants). It was not one of the top ten source countries for Family Class immigrants to BC.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 4** presents data for those Korean immigrants who arrived since the 1996 Census. It shows that almost 3,300 arrived in the skilled worker category (Principal Applicant and Dependants), 1,500 in the Entrepreneur category and 652 in the Investor category. Principal applicants in these categories were predominantly male.

<sup>9</sup> Canada, CIC, 1999: 28, 41, 74 & 89.

**Table 4, Koreans by Immigrant Class, 1996-99**

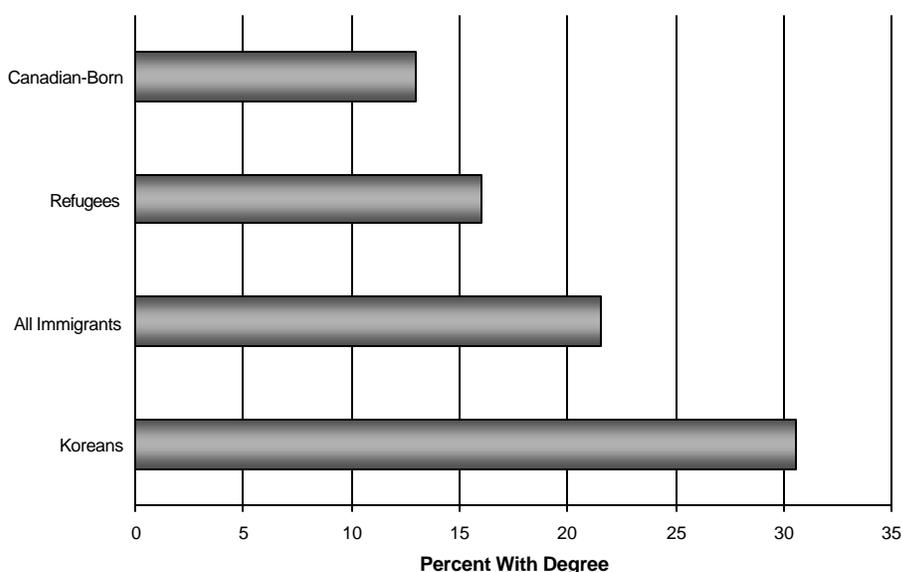
| Category                     | Male | Female | Category                        | Male         | Female       |
|------------------------------|------|--------|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Skilled Worker, Principal    | 881  | 130    | Son/Daughter                    | 4            | 7            |
| Skilled Worker Dependant     | 804  | 1,474  | Parent/Grandparent, Dependent   | 30           | 56           |
| Entrepreneur, Principal      | 356  | 47     | Other                           | 1            | 6            |
| Entrepreneur, Dependant      | 405  | 698    | Refugee                         | 2            | 1            |
| Self-employed, Principal     | 39   | 17     | Dependants Abroad               | 0            | 0            |
| Self-employed, Dependant     | 56   | 62     | Retired, Principal or Dependent | 0            | 0            |
| Investor, Principal          | 134  | 16     | Retired Dependent               | 0            | 0            |
| Investor Dependant           | 191  | 311    | Deferred Removal Order          | 0            | 0            |
| Spouse or Fiancé(e)          | 92   | 300    | Prov/Terr Nominees              | 0            | 0            |
| Live-in Caregiver, Principal | 0    | 0      | <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,995</b> | <b>3,126</b> |
| LCP, Dependant               | 0    | 0      |                                 |              |              |

**Education**

Recent immigrants are generally better educated than those who arrived in earlier years. In 1998, for example, 37% of all immigrants arriving in BC had a university degree compared to 24% in 1995. Similarly in 1998, 17% had nine or fewer years of schooling compared with 19% in 1996.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 5** focuses on those with a university degree and shows that a significantly higher proportion of Korean immigrants have a degree than do either other immigrants or the Canadian-born population. There is some difference across cities with Richmond having the highest proportion of Koreans with a university degree and Surrey the lowest.

**Fig. 5, Proportion with University Degree, Vancouver CMA 1996**



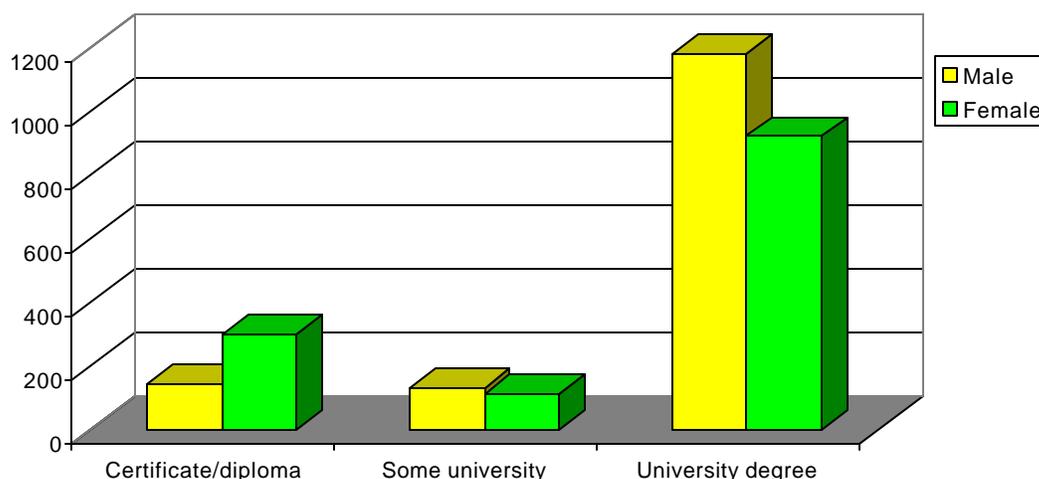
<sup>10</sup> Canada, CIC, 1999: 30.

The apparent educational advantage of Koreans diminishes when one takes a broader view of post-secondary education. Approximately 45% of the Canadian-born population have a post-secondary degree or diploma from either a university or a college compared to only 35% among Koreans. At the other end of the educational spectrum, 41% of all BC residents have a high school diploma or less compared to fewer than 34% of Koreans in the province.

Korean men are generally better educated than Korean women in the Lower Mainland region. Forty-one percent of men have a post-secondary degree or diploma compared to 32% of women while 28% and 39% respectively have a high school diploma or less.

Korean immigrants who arrived between 1996 and 1999 show a similar pattern. Again 34% have a university degree and a further 7% have a post-secondary certificate or diploma. This is illustrated in **Figure 6**.

**Fig. 6, Korean Immigrants by Education, 1996-99**



### Labour Force Activity

Koreans in the Vancouver CMA work in many different occupations. Twenty-three percent, for example, work as managers, 11% in Business, Finance and Administration, 39% in Sales and Service and 27% in occupations classified as “Other.” The unemployment rate among males and females in the Vancouver CMA is roughly equal although in Richmond and Surrey the unemployment rate among females is twice that among males. This is presented in **Table 5**.

| Table 5, Korean Labour Force Activity, 1996 (%) | Vancouver CMA |        | Vancouver |        | Burnaby    |        |
|---|---------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|
|   | Male          | Female | Male      | Female | Male       | Female |
| Unemployment Rate                               | 10.4          | 10.5   | 11.6      | 14.6   | 12.7       | 9.6    |
| Participation Rate                              | 55.9          | 44.2   | 49.4      | 44.5   | 56.9       | 39.5   |
|   | Richmond      |        | Surrey    |        | Tri-Cities |        |
|   | Male          | Female | Male      | Female | Male       | Female |
| Unemployment Rate                               | 10.0          | 20.5   | 6.3       | 12.1   | 12.6       | 11.1   |
| Participation Rate                              | 57.7          | 57.4   | 66.0      | 53.0   | 56.6       | 40.7   |

The unemployment rate among Koreans is higher than that of both non-immigrants and all immigrants in the region but considerably lower than that of those immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996, 10.4% as compared to 16.8%. These data are presented in **Table 6**. As with other immigrants, Koreans require a number of years before they are participating fully in the paid labour force. Their unemployment rate generally declines the longer they are resident in Canada.

**Table 6, Korean Labour Force Activity, 1996**

|               |                    | Korean immigrants (%) | Non-immigrants (%) | All immigrants (%) | Immigrants arriving 1991-1996 (%) |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Vancouver CMA | Unemployment Rate  | 10.4                  | 7.7                | 10.1               | 16.8                              |
|               | Participation Rate | 49.8                  | 72.0               | 61.2               | 53.7                              |

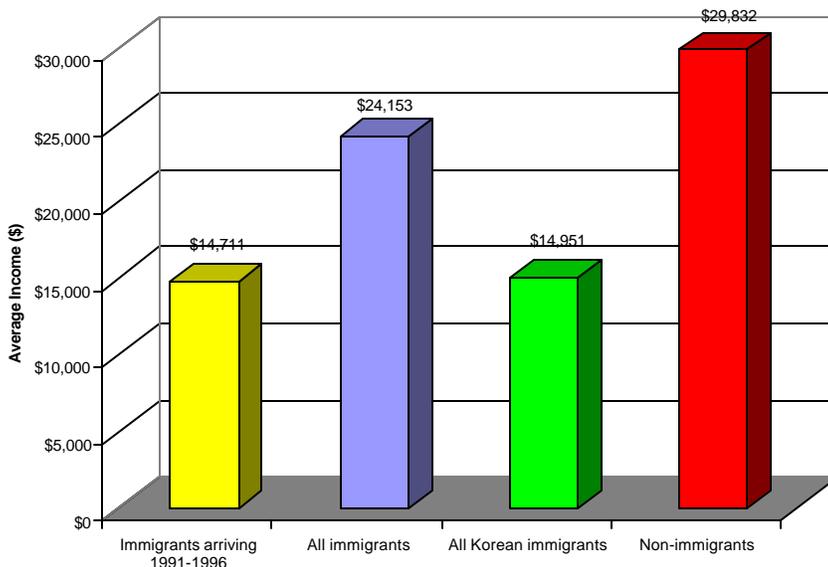
## Income

In spite of 50% of Korean immigrants arriving in the period 1991-1996 and 72% arriving since 1986, this group's income is:

- very slightly higher than that of other recent immigrants;
- lower than that of all immigrants in the Vancouver CMA; and
- significantly lower than that of non-immigrants.

This pattern is illustrated in **Figure 7**. Koreans in the Vancouver CMA receive less in government transfer payments – Employment Insurance, Income Assistance and Old Age Security primarily – than both Canadian-born residents of BC and other immigrants who have settled in BC.

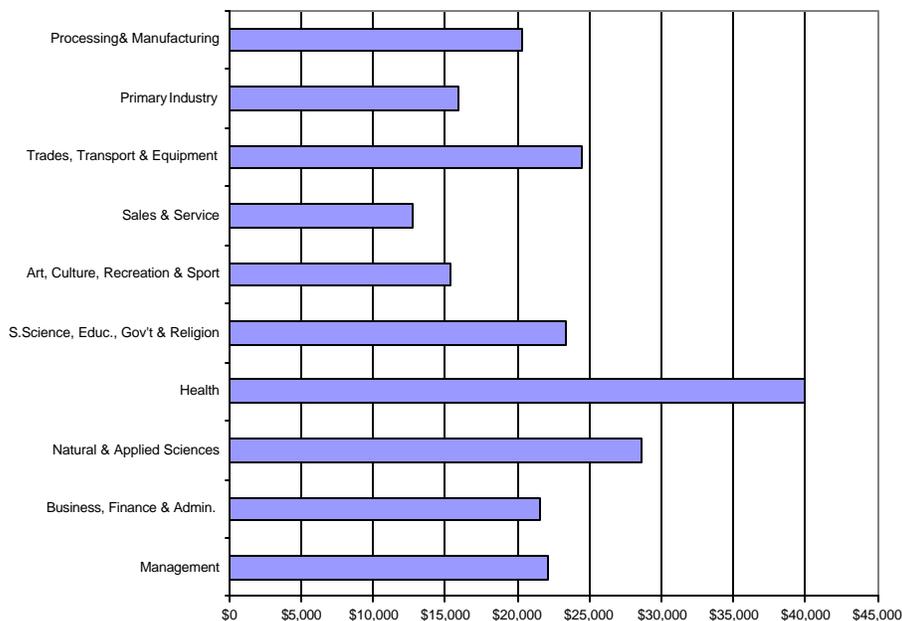
**Fig. 7, Average Total Income, Vancouver CMA**



**Figure 8**

indicates that Koreans working in the health and natural or applied sciences sectors have the highest incomes. However 39% of Koreans work in the sales and services sector where they earn the lowest average income.

**Fig. 8, Income by Occupation among Koreans, Vancouver CMA 1996**



In 1996, the average income across all occupations among Koreans was highest in Richmond (\$20,200) and lowest in the Tri-Cities (\$13,000). It was also higher for men (\$17,300) than for women (\$12,400). Women's incomes are significantly lower in every city except Richmond. Although there were more female than male Korean workers in the Vancouver CMA, there were twice as many men than women in management. Men also outnumbered women in the higher-income natural and applied science sector and in the health sector. Women outnumbered men in the lower-income sales and service sector.

### **Family Status**

There are 295 Koreans in the Lower Mainland region who are lone parents, about 2% of the adult population. This is significantly lower than the 15% rate among all Canadians. The Tri-Cities have the lowest percentage of Korean lone-parent families with 1.5% while Vancouver has the highest with 2.5%. About 82% of these lone parent families have one or two children while the rest have three or more children.

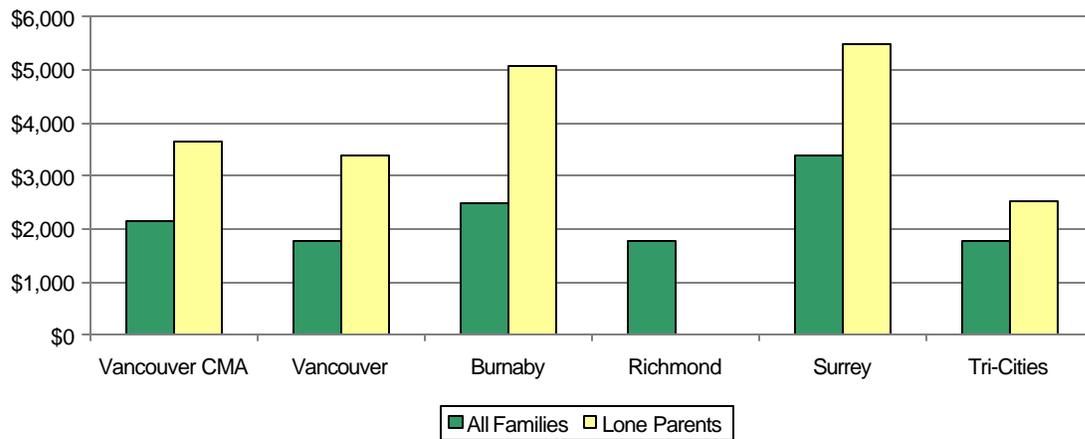
As would be expected, the average total income for lone-parent families is somewhat lower than the average for all Korean families in the Vancouver CMA and in all cities except:

- Richmond where no Korean lone-parent families were identified by income; and
- Vancouver where the average total income for lone parent families is \$19,222 compared to \$15,561 for all families.

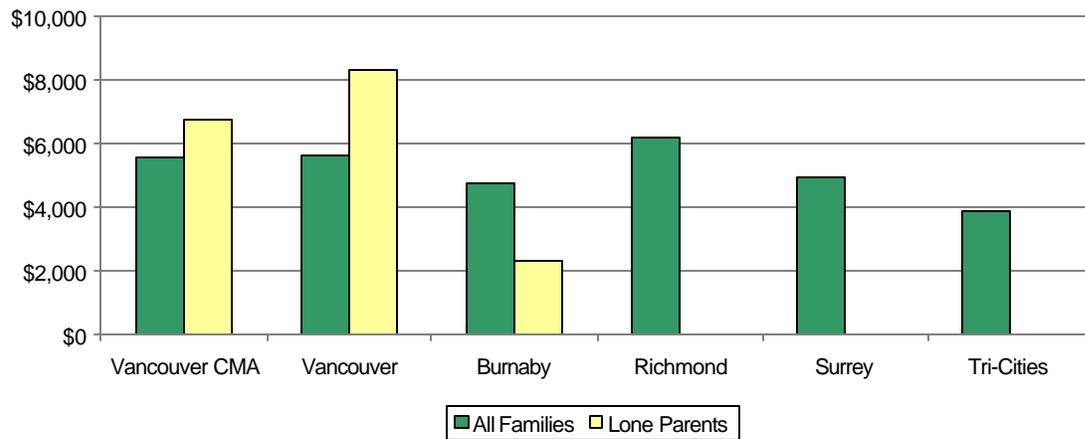
Lone-parent families receive significantly more in government transfer payments than the average for all families. They also have a slightly higher income from investments than do other families in the Vancouver CMA and in the City of Vancouver. This overall pattern, however, does not hold true in Burnaby where they receive significantly less from investments, in Richmond where there were no Korean lone-parent families identified by income, and in Surrey and the Tri-Cities where no lone-parents were identified as having income from investments.

These patterns are illustrated in **Figure 9** and **Figure 10** on the following page.

**Fig. 9, Korean Population by Family Status: Income from Government Transfer Payments, 1996**



**Fig. 10, Korean Population by Family Status: Income from Investments, 1996**



***What have we learned about the Korean community?***

- *The Korean community in the Vancouver CMA is growing quickly but still relatively small. Koreans represent about 3% of the region's visible minority population and about 1% of the entire population. Nevertheless, Koreans make up the third largest visible minority group in Burnaby and Coquitlam.*
- *About 65% of the people in the Korean community arrived in BC during the years 1991-1999.*
- *The Korean community is relatively young. About 60% are between 15 and 44 years and only 1% are seniors.*
- *Korea was the third largest source of Business Class immigrants to BC. Most Principal Applicants and Dependents from Korea arrive as Skilled Workers, Entrepreneurs or Investors.*
- *Korean immigrants are well educated. About 35% have a post-secondary degree or diploma. However 34% have only a high school diploma or less. Forty-one percent of Korean males compared to 32% of Korean females have a post-secondary degree or diploma.*
- *In spite of their education, the largest group in the Korean community is working in sales and services, one of the lowest paying and least stable occupational areas. The unemployment rate for Koreans in the Lower Mainland region is slightly lower and their average income is slightly higher than those of other recent immigrants in the Lower Mainland region. Overall, however, their unemployment rate is significantly higher and their average income is significantly lower than those of all immigrants and non-immigrants in the region.*
- *Given both their recent arrival in the Lower Mainland region and their employment and income patterns, it is likely that some assistance is required to support the community's efforts to settle and integrate.*

### 3. Community Issues

#### 3.1 Process

The project gathered the views of community members and service providers on the circumstances and needs of the Korean community, and on approaches for ensuring these needs are addressed in the most appropriate and effective manner. This component of the project included:

- six meetings specifically with community members – an informal mother’s group including both younger and older women, university-aged youth, young adults involved in a variety of cultural and professional activities, seniors, business people and pastors.
- one meeting with nine service providers working with the larger immigrant-serving agencies in the region – for example Immigrant Services Society (ISS) – and with the International Credential Evaluation Society. These agencies have staff or services specially targeted to either the Korean or the Filipino community.<sup>11</sup>
- key informant interviews with a variety of community figures – a lawyer, an academic, a business developer, one of the first Korean pastors in the Lower Mainland region, the President of the Korean Society and publisher of the Korean *Sunday Times*, and an associate with the Korean language school.
- further key informant interviews with the immigrant-serving agencies in the region, selected staff from the Ministry of Multiculturalism and Immigration and officials in the different city administrations.

**Table 7** provides a profile of the 45 people – 30 women and 15 men – participating in the six community meetings. The groups spoke knowledgeably of the Korean experience in Canada although it was not entirely representative of that community. Twenty-one percent, for example, were born in Canada while 39% came from Korea in 1980 or earlier.<sup>12</sup> Thirty-four percent were sixty-five years of age or older, the

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<sup>11</sup> The research team was conducting a similar project for the Filipino community in the Vancouver CMA.

<sup>12</sup> Importantly 15% first settled in another province and then moved to BC.

consequence of one very well attended meeting with seniors in Burnaby. Thirty-five percent lived in Vancouver and another 41% in Burnaby.

Most participants indicated that their circle of friends consisted of other Koreans, both Canadian and Korean-born. The largest number were involved in church activities and, other than a business association, none were involved in a specifically Korean organization.

| <b>Table 7, Survey of Korean Focus Group Participants</b>                               |     |   |     |                     |     |
|---|-----|---|-----|---------------------|-----|
| <b>1. Where were you born? (n=38)</b>   |     |   |     |                     |     |
| Canada  | 21% | Korea                                   | 71% | Other               | 8%  |
| <b>2. Where are you living now? (n=37)</b>  |     |   |     |                     |     |
| Vancouver   | 35% | Burnaby                                 | 41% | Richmond            | 3%  |
|   |     | Surrey                                  | 5%  | Tri-Cities/Other    | 16% |
| <b>3. If you were born outside of Canada, when did you come to this country? (n=31)</b> |     |   |     |                     |     |
| 1980 or earlier   | 39% | 1981 – 1990                             | 32% | In 1991 or later    | 29% |
| <b>4. When you first came to Canada, where did you first settle? (n=33)</b>             |     |   |     |                     |     |
| Lower Mainland Region   | 85% | Elsewhere in BC                         | 0%  | In another province | 15% |
| <b>5. How old are you now? (n=38)</b>   |     |   |     |                     |     |
| 24 years or younger   | 13% | 25 – 44                                 | 45% | 45 – 64             | 8%  |
|   |     | 65+                                     | 34% |                     |     |
| <b>6. Are most of your friends ... (n=44)</b>   |     |   |     |                     |     |
| from Korea  | 46% | born in Canada but also Korean          | 41% | not Korean          | 14% |
| <b>7. Can you give us the names of two organizations in which you are involved?</b>     |     |   |     |                     |     |
| Church  | 13  | Sporting organization                   | 2   | Cultural events     | 2   |
|   |     | Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society | 1   | UBC                 | 1   |
| <b>8. In the past three months, have you used:</b>                                      |     |   |     |                     |     |
|   |     | Yes                                     |     | No                  |     |
| • the public library  |     | 10                                      |     | 6                   |     |
| • a local swimming pool   |     | 5                                       |     | 10                  |     |
| • the services of a Korean organization   |     | 2                                       |     | 12                  |     |
| • other City or community services  |     | 3                                       |     | 12                  |     |

### 3.2 Community Needs and Issues

The following summarizes some of the most important issues discussed by meeting participants. In some cases it integrates the information of certain of the key informant interviews with the appropriate focus group.

## Young Adults

Youth and young adults participated in two meetings. They had clearly come to terms with their dual identity and were perfectly comfortable with both their Korean ethnicity and their Canadian values and surroundings. They spoke elegantly of troubling aspects of their experience as Koreans in Canada, for example with racism in communities and schools that were not yet culturally diverse. They expressed the hope and expectation that *“racism won’t be an issue for the next generation.”*

They raised also the family tensions associated with the different generations having starkly different value systems. The hierarchical approach that was part of their parents’ worldview, for example, did not have the same strength among these younger people. Some in the group resented the tremendous pressure on them to succeed in school and to do better than other children. Education, one person said, has become their parents’ new religion. At the same time, they noted that many of their parents, in spite of their commitment to education, were not able to participate in their children’s schools or to meet their children’s teachers because of language barriers.

They also spoke – with regret and some bitterness – of the community having no respect for those young people who had successfully settled and integrated, but who no longer were fluent in the Korean language. Those who are integrated, they suggested, should be appreciated and used as a bridge between the first generation whose English is often poor and the larger Canadian community.

Generally these young people were perfectly comfortable with their degree of assimilation into Canadian society. One asked *“why learn Korean when you can learn hockey.”* Others wanted to preserve the Korean side of their character but said there were no opportunities to do so outside of the church. And while most participants were still active in the church – either the Korean church or the Canadian church – some were very weary of the divisions and rivalries evident in those congregations. This derived, they said, from the weak sense of community among Koreans and from their highly individualistic and sometimes competitive nature.

These participants suggested that first generation Koreans need an array of family support and effective parenting programs. Reaching out to the community would be a challenge, however, because it has little experience with the concept of social services. Furthermore, they cautioned that it would be difficult to reach the first generation because of its concern for *“face”* and its aversion to *“shaming the family.”* As for

themselves, if they needed help with personal or family issues they would access mainstream services not the immigrant-serving agencies.

Participants suggested that outreach to the first generation be undertaken by other Koreans who are both fluent in Korean and older in age. The schools and the churches would be effective vehicles for this outreach. They did add, however, that *“the city’s concern and that of MOSAIC should be with immigrant-related issues not Korean-related issues.”*

## Seniors

The project team met with a lively, spirited group of seniors living in Burnaby. They spoke of their being sponsored by family members already living in British Columbia and of their contribution to the family’s well being. They were active in their churches and assisted by individuals in their community who were concerned with their welfare. They travelled and shopped in spite of their inability to speak English.

Beyond these strengths, what was most striking about the group was its profound isolation, the consequence of:

- their inability to speak English; and
- the absence of Korean organizations and Korean-language services.

They spoke of being *“frustrated because we cannot speak with Canadians”* and of their continuing desire to learn English. Part of their motivation was their natural desire to communicate with their Canadian-born, English-speaking grandchildren. But English language classes are largely inaccessible to them because of transportation and cost barriers. This language handicap manifested itself in almost every milieu – the public transportation system was challenging; community recreation was almost impossible; seeing the doctor or staying in a hospital was terrifying. Families are most often available to help but occasionally the traditional family relationship breaks down and parents can no longer live with their adult children. Only rarely can they admit to such problems, however, given the importance of keeping family matters private.

Importantly, their needs and wants were not great – for example, a van to transport their church’s Korean-language choir – but there no Korean organizations and no organized Korean effort to provide even this level of support. The task of organizing to meet their

needs and of accessing Canadian services was beyond the experience of these seniors and beyond the ability of even the best intentioned volunteer. Yet outside of the church, there are no Korean seniors' groups to organize on their behalf or to undertake the fund raising necessary.

### **Mothers Group**

This group consisted of women associated with several Korean churches who came together to provide the project with their insights into the Korean community. Some had come to Canada decades earlier and some more recently. Some had come as adults and others as young children. The latter now had children of their own. Only one was born in Canada itself and many still felt more comfortable speaking in Korean than in English.

The group's composition allowed them to compare the experience of immigrants today with their own experience years ago. The Lower Mainland region, they said, is much more hospitable now because of its greater cultural diversity and because the Korean community is so much larger. This in itself, however, presents a challenge for recent immigrants – the larger Korean-speaking community slows the integration process since newcomers are able to work, shop and socialize in the Korean language. Nevertheless none of the participants would want new immigrants to experience the isolation and racism they experienced in previous decades.

This group spoke about Koreans relying upon their families and their churches for help during the settlement and integration period. They emphasized how important these networks are for Koreans. At the same time, they spoke about the lack of organization in the community as a whole. Some of the younger women wanted their children to have the opportunity to learn the Korean language, to associate with other Koreans and to experience the Korean culture. Yet they were not aware of any Korean social or cultural organizations to provide these opportunities. The Korean Society did not meet this need and few in the group were even aware of the region's one Korean-language school. Several had experience with Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society but it served an entirely different purpose.

There was an urgent need, they said, for organizational efforts:

- to promote volunteerism and foster a stronger sense of community;

- to encourage people to contribute, financially and morally, to their community “as the Chinese do;” and
- to develop services specifically for the Korean community.

Organizing for these purposes, they said, would require efforts to “*reach into the community in order to break down the barriers that exist.*” Currently there is not much trust between those who are established in the region and those who are just arriving. More significantly there are very pronounced divisions between those who are first generation immigrants, those who are second generation in Canada and those who are somewhere in-between, namely the “*1.5 generation*” who came to Canada as either children or teenagers.

The mother’s group suggested the community requires information about the services available in the community. To be effective, the information has to be provided in the Korean language and by a Korean person. It could be provided through a mainstream, multicultural organization as long as these criteria are met.

## **Pastors**

There was some divergence of views across the generations. An older gentleman described how the church was once both a community and a spiritual centre. It helped people settle into Vancouver, to find jobs and to become established. Even non-Christians attended the church in order to connect with the rest of the Korean community. This gentleman suggested that the churches have lost much of their community role and now are only places of prayer.

In contrast, some of the younger pastors believed that the churches were playing too large a community role and consequently were drawn into some of the tensions and rivalries that divide the Korean community. As evidence, they pointed to the proliferation of Korean churches in the region with many having tiny congregations.

In many ways, their differing views reflect the differences between the generations in Canada. The church as community centre “*was their parents’ model and that of the first generation.*” The second and more integrated generation pursue a more Canadianized model.

Both generations acknowledged the challenges inherent in the immigration process. The credentials and skills that some Korean immigrants bring with them are not recognized and professionals end up working as labourers. Others find that their business requires a tremendous number of hours and they have little time or energy left for family. There are “lots of immigrants who are crashing and burning,” who are finding the language and integration problems to be too severe and who are returning to Korea.

This group also suggested that the social service agencies in the city have to focus on the first generation and on immigrants rather than on Koreans. If second generation Koreans need help, they will go to “counsellors, not Korean counsellors.” They cautioned that reaching into the Korean immigrant community would be a challenge since there is no experience with social services. The major multicultural organizations, including SUCCESS, are not well known in the community. There is not a network of Korean agencies or associations that can serve as a bridge and even if there were, many people would not seek help because of “pride and face.” Some will avoid even the Korean staff working with the multicultural organizations for the same reason.

Nevertheless this group felt it important that the immigrant-serving agencies reach out to the Korean community by including Koreans on their Boards, by advertising in the Korean press and by having spokespeople from the Korean community itself.

### **Business People**

The business people identified the range of challenges that confront many Koreans as they establish their own business in Canada. Newcomers can easily become involved in lawsuits because:

- of language difficulties and barriers and because they do not understand business law in Canada;
- someone was attempting to take advantage of them and they do not understand all the implications of particular contracts; and
- they are not familiar with the reputation of certain of the businesses they are dealing with in Canada.

Many Korean business people use a “mediator” – often family, friends or acquaintances – who can help them assess the enterprise they are thinking of buying. Additionally

there are workshops sponsored by the Korean Consulate General and the Canadian-Korean Business Association.

SUCCESS also plays a role in the business community through its Small Business Development Program. That program is now five years old and for the past two years has employed a Korean counsellor on a part-time basis. It advertises in the Korean media and often has five to ten Koreans involved in the program at any given time. Its services consist of a variety of workshops and are offered on a fee for service basis.

One of the most significant challenges facing these business people is their inability to speak English. The SUCCESS program offers an English component and some business people enrol in ESL classes. But very many have no time for such classes. Some participants suggested that ESL classes should be available on the weekends or in the evenings, in locations close to where Koreans live. But even if this were done, many would not be able to attend because of their family responsibilities.

This group also spoke of the stress that is common in immigrant families. Loss of status, business insecurity, the pressure of resettlement and the challenge of dealing with schools and other institutions all take a toll on family life.

The business people offered a variety of suggestions for meeting the community's needs:

- a greater commitment and more help and leadership from those in the community who have been in Canada for a longer period of time;
- a new and meaningful role for the Korean Society;
- efforts to build a stronger sense of community among Koreans; and
- programs to inform new immigrants of the many challenges that will confront them in Canada.

### **Other Key Informants**

Key informants, like the other groups, identified the divisions within the Korean community as their most pressing concern. These divisions exist between generations and between the different economic classes. Often they are based when people arrived

in Canada. One person went so far as to suggest “*there is no Korean community as such*” which could undertake activities such as providing support to those families who are poor and struggling. The poor, he said, remain largely hidden and invisible because of “*pride and face.*” He also suggested that as many as 25% of Korean immigrants are returning to Korea although often just the father returns while the mother remains in Canada “*for the children’s sake and the children’s future.*”

Key informants also discussed the need to provide new Korean immigrants with information and orientation to Canadian values and institutions. Many parents are not equipped to raise their children in a Canadian context and need new parenting skills. Some need to learn that there are constructive alternatives to physical punishment and have to understand there is no place for abuse and violence in the home. Korean immigrants have a lot to learn. Yet business and settlement pressures leave them with little time to learn.

Special supports are needed, the key informants said, for the many young people who have been sent to Canada for school and are now living without their families and without sufficient adult guidance and supervision. Canadian school boards are looking for foreign students because of the fees they pay. Those Boards, meanwhile, are taking no responsibility for their emotional and physical well being.

These key informants identified a number of Korean organizations in the region: the Korean Society, the Korean Senior’s Society, the Korean Businessmen’s Association and the Canadian-Korean Business Association, the small Korean language school, the Korean churches, the Korean Pastors’ Association and various fraternal and social organizations. But few of these, they suggested, enjoy wide spread support in the community or were sufficiently well organized to reach out beyond their immediate membership. None of them are focused on the many settlement and integration issues confronting Korean immigrants.

Consequently certain of the key informants emphasized the importance of strengthening the community. Some suggested the larger multicultural organizations such as Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society, MOSAIC or SUCCESS have an important role to play in this regard. To be effective and credible however, these larger organizations should:

- develop on-going working partnerships with Korean organizations;

- reach out to the community through the Korean media and help the media to develop a capacity to translate for the community; and
- bring respected members of the Korean community onto their Boards, ensure their visibility, create Korean Advisory Committees and engage Korean staff.

The provincial government, the city governments and the multicultural organizations will have to take the initiative in this regard since Korean immigrants do not yet know how to become involved in Canadian organizations. Most importantly these institutions should undertake to build organizational capacity within the Korean community itself with the foundation being:

- the increasing number of Canadian-trained Korean professionals in the Lower Mainland region;
- the Korean media given its ability to reach into most Korean homes; and
- the second generation or the “1.5 generation” Koreans who understand Canadian society and who know how to relate to Canadian governments and other community organizations.

### **Multicultural Agency Service Providers**

Participants in this group were all associated with larger agencies providing information, settlement, family, employment-training and credential evaluation services to immigrants in the Lower Mainland region. The group's input to the project was different from that of the other groups. While addressing the specific needs of the Korean and <sup>13</sup>Filipino communities, the participants' cultural diversity, professionalism and organizational base gave them a broader perspective on many of the issues.

The discussed, for example, the relative advantages and disadvantages of providing services through the larger multicultural organizations relative to the smaller ethno-specific organizations. Each type of organization has its strengths and its weaknesses. Indeed a particular organizational characteristic – for example, detachment from the specific community and anonymity for the client – could be a strength in some cases

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<sup>13</sup> As noted earlier, the project team was undertaking a similar study of the Filipino community.

and a weakness in others. Some people want service from one of their own; others do not want to risk their problem becoming known in their own community.

They also emphasized the importance of:

- professionalism in the design and delivery of services;
- providing services which are linguistically and culturally appropriate;
- addressing client needs in a holistic manner and accessing the broad range of services available in the community;
- ensuring that the services support the efforts of Koreans to integrate with Canadian society; and
- respecting the privacy and dignity of clients.

They grappled with the challenge of making their services known to the specific communities and groups of people. They identified the airport information service (Community Airport Newcomers Network) while acknowledging that it cannot effectively reach everyone and that, in the first rush of arrival, not everyone is paying attention to the information that is available.

They also identified some of the most pressing needs evident in the community: more information for immigrants and better ways of reaching them; information and training for those establishing small businesses; special efforts to identify and address cases of domestic violence and to raise awareness about such problems in the immigrant community; perhaps orientation and training for the pastors and ministers who often are the first contact for people in crisis; and training sessions to help immigrants understand life in Canada.

Finally, they identified ways of making the larger organizations more visible in and acceptable to the Korean community. These organizations, they said, have to:

- be willing to partner with ethno-specific organizations;
- make their services available when and where they are needed, on weekends or in the Korean churches for example;

- ensure that their own bureaucracy and systems do not constitute an access barrier for new immigrants;
- ensure that their staff and Boards reflect the ethnic character of the communities which they are serving; and
- be willing to reach out to the communities, through the Korean press for example or by developing contacts in the different ethno-specific organizations.

### **3.4 Community Services**

Meeting participants and key informants highlighted the needs of the Korean community in the Lower Mainland region. Another of the project's components identified the services available to meet these needs.

The Lower Mainland region has responded vigorously to the growing number of immigrants in the area and to its increasing cultural diversity. There are four types of organizations providing services. First, there are government agencies such as the Ministry for Children and Families or the Parks and Recreation departments of the different cities. Second there are the large community-based, multicultural and immigrant-serving agencies, for example MOSAIC and Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society. Some of these have Korean staff and specifically target certain of their services to the Korean community.

Third, there are both large and small organizations whose efforts are largely directed toward a particular cultural or linguistic community, for example SUCCESS or the Korean Society.

Fourth there are some agencies that focus on a particular issue or need, for example domestic violence, multicultural child care or credential evaluation. The Pacific Immigrant Resources Society and the International Credential Evaluation Service are examples of this type of organization. Parents in Crisis is another organization of this sort and serves both the immigrant and Canadian-born communities. It has ten community-specific Steering Committees although it has not yet been approached by the Korean community to establish one. Additionally there are the community colleges and the Open Learning Agency which are adapting their courses to the particular needs of the immigrant community.

Overall there are many programs and services available to Korean and other immigrants in the Lower Mainland region.

### **Government Services**

Both the city governments in the region and the provincial government provide services which are available to the Korean community in the same way as they are available to others, both immigrant and non-immigrant.

The city governments generally do not consider themselves as mandated to provide services specifically to immigrants as that is traditionally the role of the two senior levels of government. However, administrators acknowledge that it is the cities and the basic institutions in each city, for example the schools and community centres, which most immediately feel the impact of an increasingly diverse population. Consequently the cities – some more than others – try to make their services accessible by:

- reaching out to the immigrant communities in different languages;
- engaging multicultural staff and cultural facilitators to provide a broader, more inclusive perspective on issues; and
- funding community development initiatives or, periodically, research projects to identify community needs.

Generally, however, the cities are struggling with their need to serve the entire community rather than to support individual communities within the larger community.

Both the provincial and the federal governments struggle with a similar dilemma and are generally more willing to support multicultural and immigrant-related initiatives rather than ethno-specific ones. Neither government has adopted immigrant-friendly strategies in any of their child welfare, income security or other programs. In many cases, services are available in a variety of languages but on an ad hoc basis only, because an office happens to have a staff person who is bilingual.

### **Multicultural, Immigrant-Serving Organizations**

The multicultural, immigrant-serving agencies offer a wide variety of settlement and integration services. There are all available to Korean immigrants although their being

offered in English certainly constitutes an access barrier. To address this problem, many of the agencies have engaged Korean staff. SUCCESS for example has a Korean staff person in its Small Business Development Program and two Korean counsellors. The Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Services Society, MOSAIC, Burnaby Multicultural Society, Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society and OPTIONS in Surrey Delta all have Korean workers. The Community Airport Newcomers Network and the International Credential Evaluation Service both have information available in the Korean language.

In some ways the size of these multicultural organizations can be a shortcoming if it is allowed to create access barriers. At the same time, however, these organizations certainly have many strengths:

- they have a history of service in the community and a track record;
- most are sufficiently large as to have the administrative systems in place which allow them to access government funding;
- they are most often staffed by professionals and have well-defined practice and service standards; and
- their size, structure and breadth allow them to provide service or referrals in a holistic manner.

### **Ethno-Specific Organizations**

Other than the numerous Korean churches, there are currently very few Korean organizations in the Lower Mainland region. There is the Korean Society, two business associations, a small and struggling Korean language school, a number of social or fraternal organizations and the Korean media. However:

- some of these are not well known in the community while others do not enjoy a great deal of respect;
- most have a relatively narrow focus and mandate and none provide the array of family settlement and integration services that Korean immigrants may need; and

- none provide the cultural or social supports that would appeal to the “1.5” or second generation.

Furthermore – and importantly – these organizations have little experience working together or working with the larger multicultural organizations in the region.

**What are the Korean community's most pressing needs?**

- *A thorough orientation to life, customs and values in BC and better information on the services, supports and resources available from the larger immigrant-serving agencies and from government.*
- *Opportunities to come together as a community, so children can learn the Korean language and culture and, importantly, so adults can break down the many barriers currently dividing the community.*
- *Efforts to develop community-based Korean organizations that will develop the specific services needed by Korean immigrants.*
- *Opportunities to learn English in a setting that is specifically adapted to the special needs and circumstances of Korean seniors and business people.*
- *Housing for low-income people and seniors who cannot live with their families, and temporary housing for those escaping an abusive relationship with a spouse or parent.*
- *Settlement and parenting programs that are sensitive to the particular characteristics and needs of the Korean community.*
- *Protection from abuse and exploitation, whether in the home or the workplace.*
- *Special measures to help Korean parents understand and access the Canadian school system.*
- *Family counselling and support to help Koreans cope with the strains and pressures inherent in the settlement process particularly in those cases where the father is absent.*
- *Services provided in a timely and professional manner that respect a person's privacy, their concern for confidentiality, their dignity and their cultural and linguistic preferences.*

## 4. A Framework for Service and Action

### 4.1 Constructing a Framework

A framework outlines a general approach for organizations to use as they plan, develop and implement policies and services. It is a tool that provides direction and guidance. It sets general boundaries for their actions and it reminds those organizations of their commitment to act in certain ways.

By formally outlining their commitment to a certain approach, a framework helps organizations to set priorities, make decisions and allocate resources. It also enhances accountability by establishing benchmarks against which services can be measured. If a number of agencies are working within the same framework, the outcome can be services that are consistent with and complementary to each other.

There are three steps to constructing a policy and service framework for the Korean community in the Lower Mainland region.

- The first step is to identify **what** community members need and to **understand** these needs in the context of the Lower Mainland region.
- The second step is to identify **how** services should be provided so as to ensure they are appropriate and effective.
- The third step is to consider **who** can most effectively provide **which** services.

### 4.2 Step One: Identifying and Understanding Community Needs

During this project, the Korean community identified its needs and service priorities as orientation and information, efforts to overcome the divisions that currently exist in the community and to build Korean organizations, a range of opportunities, protection from abuse and certain family and other support services to help them cope with the strains and pressures of the settlement and integration process.

These needs have to be considered within the context of the Lower Mainland region. In this regard, it is important to recognize that each immigrant community thinks of itself as unique. And no doubt, each community is unique in many ways. But at the same time,

there is a certain degree of universality, first, between immigrants and native-born and, second, among all immigrants in the Lower Mainland region.

Koreans, for example, share some of the needs identified above with many other residents in BC, including those who are Canadian-born. Being underemployed and not having one's former skills and experiences acknowledged are humiliating for everyone. Too many families – foreign and Canadian-born – experience conflict and tension, and too often experience violence and abuse. Young people – whether born in Korea or in Canada – often are in conflict with their parents and need help to resolve inter-generational differences.

Mainstream government and non-governmental agencies have programs in place to meet these needs in a more or less adequate manner. The Ministry for Children and Families, Vancouver Parks and Recreation, Human Resources Development Canada and Parents in Crisis, for example, all provide services addressing the entire community's needs.

Similarly, other recent immigrants experience certain of the needs identified by the Korean community. Isolation, for example, seems to be an integral part of the immigrant experience, particularly for seniors and for mothers who remain in their homes to care for children. Very many immigrants experience a significant decline in their living standards and are now living in poverty.<sup>14</sup> Most if not all immigrants need help to understand the workings of Canadian society. These problems may manifest themselves in slightly different ways in the different communities. And different communities may respond in different ways. But the issues – and the needs arising from those issues – are much the same.

Again there are organizations attempting to meet these needs. MOSAIC and SUCCESS, for example, provide services to all immigrants while trying to ensure that they accommodate the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of each different immigrant community.

Finally there are some needs that are either unique to the Korean community or particularly acute in that community, perhaps because of their history and experience in Korea itself.

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<sup>14</sup> See Martin Spigelman Research Associates, 1998.

- The need for community development activities – to build community in the “absence of community” – may be the best example of a need that is particularly strong among Koreans.
- A second would be the need to build bridges across the gaps that currently divide the community, for example between first and second generation Koreans and between those who have been in Canada for many years and those who are recent arrivals.
- Another would be the need to develop community-based Korean organizations that are respected by community members and are able to provide certain Korean-specific services, for example services for the many seniors who are isolated by their lack of English language skills.
- A fourth would be the need to build support services that can address issues such as family conflict while accommodating the unwillingness and cultural inability of many Koreans to reach out for help.

To address these, the Korean community’s most immediate need is for better information, a more thorough orientation to Canadian life and more extensive and effective outreach by the multicultural and government agencies.

This is certainly the case for families in which there is inter-generational conflict and violence. Efforts are required to ensure that victims of violence know there are resources available to help them either escape or put an end to the violence. It is equally important that spouses and parents know that there are alternatives to violence which are infinitely more constructive and effective.

Better information and more effective outreach would also help ensure that Koreans are aware of the services already available in the region, often in the Korean language.

- Koreans facing labour market or business problems should know about the International Credential Evaluation Service, the SUCCESS Small Business Development Program, the government employment equity programs and the other community and government efforts to remove the labour force barriers confronting immigrants.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For example, see Martin Spigelman Research Associates, 1999.

- Korean business people and homemakers should know about the special efforts being made by the community colleges to ensure that their English language courses are accessible to the community.
- Korean parents should understand the school system and the challenges their children will face in school, and should know there are multicultural counsellors available to assist them.
- Korean mothers should know that Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society offer programs that build on Korean customs and are led by Korean staff, and that the Pacific Immigrant Resource Society, MOSAIC and other government and community agencies are available to provide services which are both professional and confidential.
- Seniors and new arrivals should know that the Korean churches and media could help them connect with the larger Korean community.

### **4.3 Step Two: How to Provide Services to the Korean Community**

The second step in constructing a framework involves thinking about how to provide services to the Korean community. As indicated above, there are currently many organizations attempting to address the needs evident in the Korean community. Very few of these are Korean. Most are multicultural but some have Korean staff and counsellors. Other multicultural organizations also have services available for Korean clients if they are able to work in English and if they are willing to work with a professional who is not necessarily Korean. And finally there are the city and other governments that provide services to the community as a whole rather than to Koreans specifically.

A framework can ensure that all these organizations – regardless of their particular focus – provide services in a way that respects the Korean experience and that is sensitive to the particular characteristics of this community.

The following is based upon what the community, through the course of this project, said was important in terms of the services needed by the Korean community. The

Statement of Principles suggests **how** services should be provided. The Statement of Goals suggests the **outcomes** that the services are intended to achieve.<sup>16</sup>

Importantly this element of the framework is intended as a challenge to the different types of organizations identified above, i.e. government, multicultural and Korean. It is also intended to be a practical working tool and thus attempts to respect the policy and budgetary restraints common to all the different organizations. It would be the responsibility of the different agencies to determine how to embed these principles and goals within their services and structure, and ultimately to assess whether they have done so adequately and effectively.

### Statement of Principles

As Korean, multicultural and government agencies working with Koreans in the Lower Mainland region, we will:

- involve an appropriately representative range of organizations in any planning or decision-making processes that will have a particular impact on the Korean community. We will provide community members with the opportunity to contribute directly to these processes.
- recognize that the “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate and that people require choices. Some will want to receive services from other Koreans, in the Korean language. Others will want services from organizations offering greater anonymity.
- acknowledge and try both to strengthen and to build upon the network of family and friends that already exists within the Korean community and that is available to help community members.
- strive to make our services accessible to members of the Korean community. We will promote accessibility: by ensuring our staff are aware of and sensitive to the particular cultural and historical characteristics of the Korean community; by providing services when and where they are required, for example on weekends or through the Korean churches; and by removing

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<sup>16</sup> The framework does not include objectives as those must be more specific and measurable, and will differ significantly from organization to organization.

- administrative barriers which may discourage people from accessing our organization.
- provide services in a professional manner. Our services will adhere to generally accepted service standards and will be of the highest quality possible. Our staff will respect clients' privacy, dignity and cultural experience as well as those fundamental values that are commonly accepted in Canada. This is particularly true in regard to issues such as family violence, child protection and working conditions.
  - ensure that our staff are able to refer clients to those services which are most appropriate to their needs. Our staff will be aware of the full range of services available in the community.
  - coordinate our services to the Korean community to the greatest degree possible. Our staff will cooperate with other organizations so as to ensure there is a seamless continuum of services available to those settling in the Lower Mainland region.
  - recognize that special efforts are required to address the unique needs of the Korean community, for example efforts to build Korean organizations, to serve Korean business people, to bridge the gap between the generations and to address conflict within the family.
  - attempt to ensure that our organizations' Boards and staff reflect the diversity of the Lower Mainland region.

### **Statement of Goals**

Our goals as Korean, multicultural and government agencies will be:

- to support the community's effort both to preserve its culture and identity and to integrate – socially, economically and politically – into the larger Canadian community.
- to coordinate and rationalize the currently complex array of funding and services provided by various community agencies and governments in the hope of filling service gaps while avoiding wasteful duplication.

- to provide Korean immigrants with a seamless continuum of services addressing the full range of their social and economic needs with particular priority being given to building Korean organizations and protecting victims of violence.
- to improve accessibility by removing cultural, linguistic, physical and financial barriers to accessibility and by ensuring our organizations are reflective of the community's diversity.
- to share resources in an equitable manner so as to ensure that the full spectrum of settlement and integration needs are met in the most effective manner possible.

#### **4.4 Step Three: Who Should Provide Which Services to the Korean Community**

The question of who should provide which services is a particularly difficult one. At present there are significant divisions within the Korean community. Additionally there are few organizations within the community that can supplement the efforts of the larger multicultural organizations and address the community's uniquely Korean needs. There is always some competition between agencies and some resentment that other immigrant communities seem to have a broader array of services available to them. There is some sense that the larger multicultural organizations appear to have a lock on government funding.

The challenge for this framework, therefore, is to identify ways:

- to build a network of Korean organizations and to build capacity within the few which are active;
- to strengthen the ability of the Korean organizations to work together;
- to remove access barriers in the larger multicultural organizations;
- to strengthen the ability of the multicultural organizations to reach out to and serve the Korean community; and
- to enable all these organizations to work together toward their common goal of helping Koreans settle in the Lower Mainland region.

The key is to adopt a community development approach. Community development is not directed at solving one or even several specific problems. Instead it is an effort to bring a community together and to build an environment in which people have the power, the will, the tools and the commitment to achieve their common goals. The community development model invites different people and organizations to play different roles depending on their skills and strengths, and on what they see as the most important problems in which to be involved.

In this regard, there is a need for Korean organizations that are part of and respected by the entire community. These organizations could understand, as others cannot, the particular experience of Koreans, both in Korea and in Canada. They would understand the pressure on children and would be in a position both to relate to seniors and to organize the services which seniors need. With effort, they could work to bridge the chasm that currently separates the different generations.

At the same time, the multicultural organizations have an important role to play in the Korean community. These organizations have many strengths – their professionalism, the quality and breadth of their services and their ability to provide Korean immigrants with access to a network of other community agencies and services. Their weaknesses perhaps are:

- their failure to reach out to the Korean community in a vigorous way and to make their presence known in that community; and
- the access barriers that their size and complexity sometimes create.

Neither type of organization – Korean or multicultural – is necessarily better or worse than the other for meeting the needs of the Korean community. Some could argue that the multicultural agencies should focus on those needs that Koreans share with other immigrants. Or that Korean organizations should focus on those needs which are unique to their community. But this black and white approach would ignore, for example, the commitment and Korean experience of organizations such as SUCCESS, MOSAIC and Options. It is an approach that could place undue pressures on the relatively small Korean community that does not yet have an organizational structure that can reasonably bear such responsibilities.

It also would ignore the reality that at present both the provincial and the federal government, and many of the city governments, are uncomfortable with the concept of

funding ethno-specific organizations. It would ignore the reality that people need choices.

Given the community development model outlined above, we would recommend the following specific measures as the framework's final component. These measures are designed not to solve specific problems or to address specific needs. Instead they are designed to bring the community of service providers together, to build capacity and to integrate the resources available to the community. Some funding would be required to support these initiatives.

- a. The larger multicultural and immigrant-serving agencies and the region's few Korean organizations could forge working partnerships. Those multicultural organizations that currently have Korean staff and a Korean focus – Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Services Society, MOSAIC and Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society for example – could assume responsibility for organizing this initiative.

The initiative's goal would be two-fold. The partnership could build administrative and professional capacity within the Korean organizations, help certain of them achieve charitable status and provide meeting space to others such as the Korean language school. Similarly the partnership could serve to enhance awareness and cultural sensitivity within the region's multicultural organizations. Any such relationships should incorporate the partnership lessons identified by the Collaboration Roundtable<sup>17</sup> so as to ensure that the smaller organizations are equal partners.

- b. In terms of building capacity, the more established multicultural organizations could undertake, in the most respectful of ways, developmental work in the Korean community. Enlisting second generation Koreans as their bridge, the multicultural organizations and the city of provincial governments could help build a Korean-specific organization to serve seniors. Another initiative, perhaps involving Parents in Crisis, could work to bring parenting information to the first generation.

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<sup>17</sup> See Martin Spigelman Research Associates and Zena Simces and Associates, 2000.

- c. The few existing Korean organizations could affiliate with AMSSA<sup>18</sup> and the Collaboration Roundtable, both to share their experiences and to learn from the experience of others. Joining these groups would allow the Korean organizations to become part of a larger network and would provide them with an opportunity to broaden and strengthen their services.
- d. The Korean Pastors Association could organize a forum bringing together the churches, the ethno-specific organizations and the Korean media to explore whether and how they can work together more fully. The forum should consider the divisions that are evident in the community and develop an action plan for overcoming their differences.

The different sectors may also wish to consider the possibility of creating a Korean Community Council that could undertake community development initiatives such as social housing for seniors or a cultural centre for parents with young, Canadian-born children.

- e. The provincial Ministry of Multiculturalism and Immigration, the federal Department of Canadian Heritage, and the City of Vancouver could host a forum to document the full spectrum of services available to Koreans and to construct a concrete and practical workplan for filling gaps and avoiding duplication.

At the same time, these three governments could jointly prepare a discussion paper on the advantages, disadvantages and implications of funding ethno-specific as opposed to multicultural organizations. At present governments generally adhere to this policy but it is not clear whether the policy is founded upon fiscal necessities, administrative preferences or sound logic. The policy's logic should be tested.

Subsequently the discussion paper should be widely distributed in the community – among multicultural and ethno-specific organizations – for discussion.

- g. The larger immigrant-serving organizations could take a close look at their operations and consider whether their systems are creating access barriers for Koreans and other immigrants in the community and whether they are reaching out to the community in effective ways, for example through the Korean media

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<sup>18</sup> Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies.

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and churches. They could also consider ways of ensuring their organizations better reflect the community's diversity, perhaps by inviting certain Korean organizations or individuals to serve on their governing Boards.

The community development model depends on cooperation and collaboration among individuals and organizations both within and outside of the immediate community. By bringing them all together, the model can build awareness, ownership and strengths that can be applied to a variety of issues and problems. Importantly it can foster self-reliance and community action targeted to community goals.

Koreans in the Lower Mainland region make up a new, growing and vibrant community. Through concerted and cooperative efforts to build on the strengths in both the Korean community and the Lower Mainland region as a whole, Koreans will become a vital part of the foundation upon which the new British Columbia is constructed.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Project Overview**

**COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING:**  
Assessing the Needs of the Korean Community in the  
Lower Mainland Region of BC

Over the past decade, immigration has dramatically changed the character of British Columbia. Between 1986 and 1996, over 300,000 immigrants settled in the province including almost 35,000 Filipinos and 13,000 Koreans in the Lower Mainland Region alone. MOSAIC, the City of Vancouver and Canadian Heritage are initiating a project to support these communities' efforts to settle successfully in this region. For each of the two communities, the project will:

- construct a comprehensive social and economic profile using Census and other data sources;
- identify current and emerging needs;
- identify the services available to the community and analyse their appropriateness and adequacy given these needs; and
- consider the key issues confronting the two communities and develop a policy and service framework for each.

Community development principles will serve as a foundation for this project. There will be a Community Resource Group to advise the research team. That team will include bilingual community facilitators. The process will include interviews and meetings with different individuals and groups within the community. There will also be "validation meetings" to consider the project's findings and conclusions, and to develop recommendations for service agencies and the City.

Importantly, all of the project's reports will be prepared in an easy-read format and will be of moderate length. This will ensure they are of practical value to the communities themselves and can be used for a variety of other planning or program purposes.

MOSAIC and the City have selected Dr. Martin Spigelman to lead this project. Martin has very considerable experience with immigrant and settlement issues. In 1999, for example, he led a community-based project to address the labour force barriers confronting immigrants. The reports from that project can be viewed at [www.lookingahead.bc.ca](http://www.lookingahead.bc.ca). In 1998 he prepared a report on poverty among immigrants and refugees in the province.

For further information, or to contribute your views to the project, please contact Martin at:

Martin Spigelman Research Associates  
3785 Kathleen Street, Victoria, BC V8P 3H7  
Telephone (collect): (250) 361-3663; Fax: (250) 361-3789  
Email: [spigelman@aol.com](mailto:spigelman@aol.com)

Alternately you may wish to contact Eyob Naizghi at MOSAIC in Vancouver. He can be reached, by telephone, at 254-0244 or by Email at [enaizghi@mosaic-trans.com](mailto:enaizghi@mosaic-trans.com)



**Appendix B**  
**Community Resource Group**

**Community Resource Group Membership**

| <b>Name</b>      | <b>Organization</b>                | <b>Name</b>        | <b>Organization</b> |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Martin Spigelman | Principal researcher               | Eyob Naizghi       | MOSAIC              |
| Baldwin Wong     | Social Planning, City of Vancouver | Riitta Katajamaki  | Canadian Heritage   |
|                  |                                    |                    |                     |
| Michael Yoon     | Community member                   | Irene C. Yatco     | Philippine Journal  |
| Sylvia Yu        | Community member                   | Eleanor G. Atienza | Community member    |
| Jumy Kim         | UBC                                | Michael Cayetano   | Community member    |
| Charlie Hyun     | Korean Society of BC               | Bella Cenezero     | Community member    |
| Cecile Lee       | Korean Society of BC               |                    |                     |
| Haerim Lee       | MOSAIC                             |                    |                     |

**Appendix C**  
**Sample Letter to Focus Group Participants**

Date

Name and Address of Invitee

We are writing to invite you to participate in a very important project. We are calling it “*Community Understanding*” and its purpose is to identify the most pressing short and long-term needs of the Filipino and Korean communities in the Lower Mainland Region of BC. The project will assist community, government and service agencies to develop effective policies and programs to support the groups’ efforts to settle in their new homes. There is a Community Resource Group – with representatives from the Filipino and the Korean communities – advising the research team. For your information, I am attaching a brief project overview.

We wish to talk with different groups of people within each of the two communities, for example youth, seniors, low-income working people, business people and various community leaders. In order to do so, we are organizing a series of small focus group meetings. Each will involve between 10 and 15 people and will run for 2<sup>1/2</sup> – 3 hours. We are hoping that one of the participating agencies will provide a meeting place that will be comfortable and convenient for the group – a house or a small office would be perfect. The project team will provide tea and other refreshments of course.

**We are hoping that you will agree to participate in one of these focus group sessions.**

The meeting will take place in early **April** and we will contact you shortly about your participation and about an appropriate place and time for the session. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions about the project or the session. We are looking forward to your participation in this important undertaking.

Sincerely

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Martin Spigelman  
Principal Researcher  
(250) 361-3663 (collect)  
[spigelman@aol.com](mailto:spigelman@aol.com)

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Eleanor Atienza  
Community Facilitator  
(604) 538-7392  
[ega@direct.ca](mailto:ega@direct.ca)

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Jumy Kim  
Community Facilitator  
(604) 228-2292  
[jumy@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:jumy@interchange.ubc.ca)

## **Appendix D**

### **Sample Interview Guide**

## Korean Community Meetings ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

During these meetings, we would like to discuss three main topics: the community's needs, now and in the future; the services which are available now to meet these needs; and what services might be needed in the future.

### QUESTIONS

1. What are the main problems people face in the first five or ten years after immigrating to BC?
2. Do different groups of people (for example youth, seniors, single parents, or professionals) have different needs? What are the needs of your particular group? How are these needs being met?
3. What organizations are helping people with these problems? Are these organizations meeting all the needs which people have? Are some people not using these organizations? Why not?
4. Which needs are not being well met? Why not?
5. With regard to the organizations serving the Korean community, are they serving other groups of people as well? Would it be better, or worse, if they served **only** the Korean community?
6. Are there any or too many organizations trying to do the same thing?
7. Now I would like to ask some questions about the future. What are Koreans in the Vancouver area likely to need through the next five years? What are Koreans in your particular group likely to need?
8. Will the Korean community or its organizations be able to meet these new needs?
9. What can or should each of the following do to help Koreans settle in the Vancouver area: (i) the City government, (ii) the provincial or federal government, (iii) the larger immigrant-serving agencies in the area, and (iii) the Korean community's own cultural, religious or social organizations?
10. In the future, how can these organizations make sure their help is useful? What are they doing well right now? What are they not doing so well right now? What should they be doing differently?
11. Are there any other issues you would like to raise?

**Appendix E**  
**Participant Profile Questionnaire**

**Focus Group Participants: PROFILE**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to have a picture of the people who participated in these focus group meetings. We are not asking for your name.

2. Where were you born?
  - (a) Canada                      (b) Korea                      (c) Other
  
3. Where are you living now?
  - (a) Vancouver                      (b) Burnaby                      (c) Richmond                      (d) Surrey
  - (d) Tri-Cities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody)   (e) Other
  
4. If you were born outside of Canada, when did you come to this country?
  - (a) 1980 or earlier                      (b) Between 1981 and 1990   (c) In 1991 or later
  
5. When you first came to Canada, did you settle in:
  - (a) the Vancouver and Lower Mainland Region   (b) elsewhere in British Columbia
  - (c) in another province, for example Ontario
  
6. How old are you now?
  - (a) 24 years or younger                      (b) 25 – 44 years                      (c) 45 – 64 years
  - (d) 65 years or older
  
7. Are most of your friends
  - (a) from Korea                      (b) born in Canada but also Korean
  - (c) not Korean
  
8. Can you give us the names of two organizations or activities in which you are involved?
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_

| 9. In the past three months, have you used:                        | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| (a) the public library   |     |    |
| (b) a local swimming pool  |     |    |
| (c) a community centre or Neighbourhood House                      |     |    |
| (d) the services of a Korean organization (please name which ones) |     |    |
| (e) other City or community services (please name which ones)      |     |    |

This report was prepared by:

**Martin Spigelman Research Associates**

3785 Kathleen Street

Victoria, British Columbia V8P 3H7

Telephone: (250) 361-3663 Fax: (250) 361-3789

Email: [spigelman@aol.com](mailto:spigelman@aol.com)

**Research Team:**

Dr. Martin Spigelman, Principal Researcher

Jumy Kim, Community Facilitator

Gregory Cunningham, Data Specialist

Aleina Spigelman, Data Analyst