

# Cross Culture and Culture Awareness – Chinese Community

and Chinese Book Donations

Evaluation Report  
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# Summary Evaluation Report

## *Training: London Probation: Cross Culture and Culture Awareness – Chinese Community*

### **Background**

The training session was held on Monday 17 February 2014, at London Probation Trust, Mitre House, 223/237 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JD. The training session started at 2.00pm and finished at 4.15pm, with 14 attendees from the London region.

The training session was led by a member of staff and joined by two volunteers from the Chinese Information and Advice Centre.

The training was scheduled for two sessions (14/02/2014 and 17/02/2014), however we were later informed that the session was amalgamated to just the Monday afternoon as London Probation were going through major changes and training was not at the forefront for some staff.

### **Training aims and objectives**

The training aimed to encourage probation officers to explore their own assumptions and preconceptions about the Chinese culture and understand ways in which they can help overcome some of the barriers faced by the Chinese offenders. Objectives of the session included:-

- Define the key concepts relating to Chinese culture
- Identify the cultural values that cause culture difference and barriers to Chinese offenders
- Understand how awareness about the Chinese culture and culture difference can improve probation officers interaction in a multicultural environment
- Use the knowledge acquired to further develop probation officer's culture sensitivity

The training was designed for 2.5 hours.

The training took an active learning approach, with group discussions, activity and a case study that provided an opportunity for every participant to openly discuss some of the issues faced when working with Chinese offenders, and ways they can overcome these issues.

### **Brief description of the training delivered**

Trainers introduced the services available at Chinese Information and Advice Centre, followed by an overview on the background of Chinese in the UK. The session was divided into three parts:

#### *Part 1 – Barriers faced by the Chinese community living in the UK*

In this section, we looked at the two most notable barriers for BME offenders and that was language and culture. Like many learners from other countries, Chinese immigrants, whether settled or newly arrived, are often excluded from learning because of their unsocial working hours in kitchens and restaurants. In some cases, offenders are not only illiterate in English but may also have learning difficulties in their mother tongue language – Chinese.

We looked at a number of ways to overcome the language barrier and often the easiest solution is through the assistance of a translator. Although this may not be the most cost-effective solution, however it will provide immediate results. Through the group discussion, a few participants further expressed concerns as to whether the interpreter is translating the information correctly. This shows that having an interpreter alone does not necessarily overcome the language barrier, but requires a mixture of resources. For instance, translated materials in Chinese and the use of body language, tone and gesture will also be important when trying to get the information across.

In this section, the group also played a short game called “Name that word”. The group were put into pairs and between them they were to guess each other’s “word”, without using the omitted words listed on the paper. An example of this included the word “school” and when describing this word to their partner, they were not allowed to use the following words such as head teacher, school, teacher, classroom or children to say the word school. Two groups completed the game, whereas the remaining 5 groups did not.

The next barrier we had looked at was the cultural barrier. The concept of Confucianism and his ideologies were introduced to help explain how Confucius ideologies have heavily influenced and shaped Chinese culture and society today. Due to the timescale of the session, we explored one of the concepts in detail and that was “filial piety”. The ideology where the younger generation cares for the old and the old nurturing the young are fundamental family virtues. To demonstrate this concept, the group were shown a video and was followed by a group discussion. The group were asked to share their views as to how their own culture differs or in anyway similar to the Chinese culture. From the discussion, it conformed that families are an integral part to individual lives and a discussion around “shame” and “face values” were introduced in this section, but was discussed in more detailed in part 3 of the session.

Following which, we looked at the rise of Chinese people moving to the UK whereby this can either be legal immigrants and illegal immigrants.

### *Part 2 – Most common crimes committed by Chinese immigrants*

In this section, the group looked at the most common crimes committed by Chinese immigrants. This section linked into part 3, where we looked at some of the problems for Chinese offenders when reintegrating back into society.

In this section, the group further explored a case study called: *The brothel worker: 'I regret not working in the sex trade as soon as I got here'* by Hsiao-Hung Pai. The case study tells us about Pai's experience of working as an undercover in brothels in London. The participants were divided into 4 groups and were asked to discuss how their topics related to the article. The topics included: immigration, face value, family and community.

### *Part 3 – Reintegration barriers*

In this section we looked at the main problems when Chinese offenders reintegrate back into society. One of the reintegrating issues is the concept of "face" - how you are valued or judged by others. "Face" is deemed highly important in Chinese culture and society, whereby it is not only a reflection on the individual but also the reflection on the family. Due to the stigma attached to those who have been to prison, reintegrating back into the family is not an easy transition. As such, most Chinese offenders are unlikely to talk about their time in prison or seek help relating to it and this will lead to further isolation.

The concept of "face" also has implications in terms of being accepted by the Chinese community. For instance, there might be difficulties in finding jobs or accommodated by another Chinese or within their own family. As a result, offenders may attempt to find acceptance through gang affiliation, substance misuse or gambling. Hence, it may be hard to break free of the cycle of offending.

The last discussion we asked the group was "What can you do to overcome language and culture barriers?" Comments received included:-

- The use of qualified interpreters to overcome language barriers
- To have a better understanding of other BME groups and their culture. To also understand the different dynamics and implications involved
- Use of body language when communicating
- Bridging the gap of trust between offenders and probation officer through another service e.g. CIAC
- To put prejudice thoughts aside and rethink
- To share their experiences and topics learned in the training session, with their colleagues

### Learning outcomes

Participants were asked to score the training session and were asked what they enjoyed the most about the session and what aspects of the training could be improved. The results are listed in the summary table below:-

*Summary table – 12 people completed the evaluation forms*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training met my expectations	4	7	1		
I will be able to apply the knowledge learned	6	5	1		
The content was organized and easy to follow	5	6	1		
Class participation and interaction were encouraged	9	3			
Adequate time was provided for questions and discussion	10	2			
	Excellent	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
How do you rate the training overall?	3	8	1		

In addition to scoring the training session, the following questions were asked to help see what had worked well and for future training sessions:-

#### *What did you like most about this training?*

Overall, the group commented and said the most enjoyable part of the session was around the discussion of cultural issues, in particularly the concept of “face” and family acceptance. From all the feedbacks the group very much enjoyed the group discussions, the video clip and had found the case study very insightful.

#### *What aspects of the training could be improved?*

In summary, the group would like more detailed introduction of CIAC services and projects and the referral procedures; more pragmatic details on agencies that support a Chinese client; while one suggested more video shows and a discussion around the criminal justice system.

*For future reference, are there any other topics you would have liked us to cover?*

The group suggested more details and discussion around the following topics: domestic violence, “snake-head” gangs, smuggling and gambling. As each of these topics is broad in its own nature, for future trainings we can focus one or two topics in each session.

***Comments:***

“Training was interesting and informative. I enjoyed the case discussion.”

“The choice of the guardian article was very good. It initiated a good discussion and the feedback given was thought provoking.”

“I thought the three presenters worked well together and gave plenty of time and space for reflection.”

## ***Book Donation to London Prisons and Detention Centres***

As part of Clinks project in helping offenders, we have launched the Chinese book donations to prisons and detention centres. We have been collecting Chinese leisure reading books for some time with the aim to redistribute to help others. During the Clinks funding, we started to approach prisons and detention centres in London for the books redistributions. We have publicized the book donations project as funded by Clinks in CIAC's quarterly newsletter as well as appeal for more books donations for the next round of redistribution to prisons and detention centres. 400 newsletters were distributed in Chinatown and Soho area and during the Chinese New Year celebration in London Chinatown. At time of writing, we have donated the books to:

1. The Custody Room of **British Transport Police** at Camden Road NW1 9LN
2. HMP Holloway at Parkhurst Road, London N7 ONU

And further letters have been written to the following prisons where we expect to have held a small population of Chinese inmates.

1. **HMP Wandsworth** at Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HS which holds hold 1877 prisoners, one of the largest prisons in Western Europe.
2. **HMP Thamesmead** at Griffin Manor Way, Thamesmead, London SE28 0FJ which holds 900 convicted and remand male prisoners
3. **HMP Brixton** at Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF which serves the local magistrates courts, Inner London and Southwark Crown Courts
4. **HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE**