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CITYSCAPES OF DIASPORA: IMAGES AND REALITIES OF LONDON'S CHINATOWN

This eighteen month research project focuses on images of London's Chinatown and the ways in which it is used by different groups, both Chinese and non-Chinese. The project is funded by the *Arts and Humanities Research Council* and carried out by researchers based at Middlesex University.

London's Chinatown is the largest in Europe and an essential and valued element of the city's multicultural landscape. It has come to be seen as the public face of an established community and is also an important part of every day life for many Chinese people. It provides employment and business opportunities, access to cultural goods and services and social support.

New Chinese migrations bring increased diversity to Chinatown and affect its character, the aspirations and needs of its users and the way it is represented. Chinatown is also increasingly promoted as a tourist attraction and as an element in the city's regeneration, a role which has become more important with the London and Beijing Olympics.

The project will explore images of Chinatown, its importance for different individuals and groups (both Chinese and non-Chinese) and the extent to which Chinatown 'belongs' to the Chinese community. It is also aimed to produce information relevant to community organisations and other agencies providing services for Chinese communities.

WHAT WILL THE PROJECT INVOLVE?

We will look at how different groups and individuals use and experience Chinatown through interviews with key informants and individuals, a street survey and observation of and participation in activities. We are keen to gain as wide a variety of views as possible from people who work, live or visit Chinatown, including community organisations, local businesses, customers, service providers and policy makers as well as individuals.

If you are interested in participating in the research or would like further details, please go to our website www.mdx.ac.uk/schools/hssc/research/centres/sprc/projects.asp or contact the research team.

THE RESEARCH TEAM

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