

How can NZCFS encourage more Young People to Join the Society?

Recently a young French woman, [Inès Roth le Gentil](#), visited New Zealand and offered to help the NZCFS in their quest to encourage more youthful members to their midst. Having been taken on as an intern, she looked at the problem from a young person's perspective. Below is the gist of what she suggested, which should prove very useful.

New Zealand China Friendship Society is a respectable 60-year-old organisation which faces a major problem – the lack of young members. After meetings and discussions at several branches [Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga] during the two months that Ines was with us, she realised that there are great opportunities for young people within the Society, a society whose main goals are:

- To give the New Zealand people a greater understanding of Chinese culture,
- To develop friendship between New Zealand and China
- To organise projects for needy Chinese people.

All these goals should be of interest to young people and Inès suggested that to attract them, the Society should:

1. Develop a better system of informing young people about the Society and its aims.
2. Organise the young members into groups
3. Offer the young both regular and attractive activities to provide a better understanding of Chinese culture and provide long-term projects for them to keep them motivated.

Ines suggests that:

- **At present, there is little information available for young people about the Society and its aims.**

Ines also identified the fact that there is little connection between the Society and other Chinese organisations. Thus, if we are to attract the young interested in China:

- **The Society needs to inform the young of the differences between it and other Chinese organisations.**

In addition:

- **Young people need regular activities and long-term projects**

Informing Young People about the Society

Students from 15-25 years should be encouraged to join. Senior high school pupils to university students, both Kiwi and Chinese, could join. Chinese students need to integrate with Kiwi society. This could be achieved by:

Contacting other Asian societies e.g: NZ Asia Institute where the Society could advertise for an intern to implement this Youth Strategy,

Organise seminar presentations in universities on interesting subjects, for example: Waikato University has a 'Culture Hour' each week and evening lectures. Large numbers attend when the subject is attractive. Perhaps organise a Chinese meal afterwards?

Organise Chinese movies at universities with adverts on websites.

Other ideas might be:

Contact other Chinese organisations and inform them of details of the Society,

- Confucius Institute who arranges free movies at Auckland uni.

- Auckland and Christchurch hold Chinese lantern festivals and NZCFS should be there
- Kiwi Asian Club is a group of Asian people living in NZ.

We need to create a Facebook page and a Facebook page for each branch. These would help the young organise themselves and attract other young people to the Society. We should produce regular activities and long-term projects to achieve humanitarian missions and more understanding of Chinese culture.

Young people in the Society should form their own groups and activities – perhaps arranging cooking lessons, role playing of cultural differences, etc. (see more complete list of suggestions below).

The activities for the young members could be:

- Meetings around a meal, NZ meal and Chinese meal in turns where they can talk about their cultures, their futures etc.
- Chinese barbecues, perhaps at University
- Buffet with dishes from different regions of China
- Cooking lessons
- Sport lessons (Chinese dances and Haka groups)
- Dance shows
- Performance on classical Chinese instruments
- Chinese art lessons, calligraphy or brush painting
- Partnerships to exchange Mandarin lessons in exchange for a meal or other kind of activity
- Chinese tutor could teach Mandarin monthly
- Competitions to win a youth-specific scholarship or travel grant to China or Mandarin study grants. These could be food or essay competitions.
- Mandarin corner
- Chinese New Year, Zhong Qiu Jie festivals – obtain help from city council
- Newsletters written by volunteers

Long-Term Projects

These projects need to attract young people into volunteering to aid projects such as:

- Exchanges between Chinese and NZ schools.
- Aid Projects
- Help in a Chinese Orphanage
- Help disabled people in China
- Teach English in Chinese Schools
- Provide Chinese people who want to teach English with information
- Send students to West China to help
- Help planting rice in Chinese countryside

Time-line for Youth Strategy

1. Define NZCFS's goals to suit young people's expectations
2. Create a Facebook page (national and for each branch)
3. Start small youth groups within branches beginning with perhaps Auckland, Tauranga and Hamilton
4. Appoint someone in each branch to organise the youth group
5. Appoint someone in the Executive to organise young members' activities
6. Look at target areas to recruit young members e.g. universities, high schools
7. Organise activities in these places to attract more young members and introduce them to NZCFS

8. Identify other Asian organisations and use their events to explain NZCFS
9. Around 5 young people per branch are needed to take responsibility for the youth section and to organise activities for themselves
10. Prepare a budget for the young people sections
11. Organise some long-term projects to attract young people