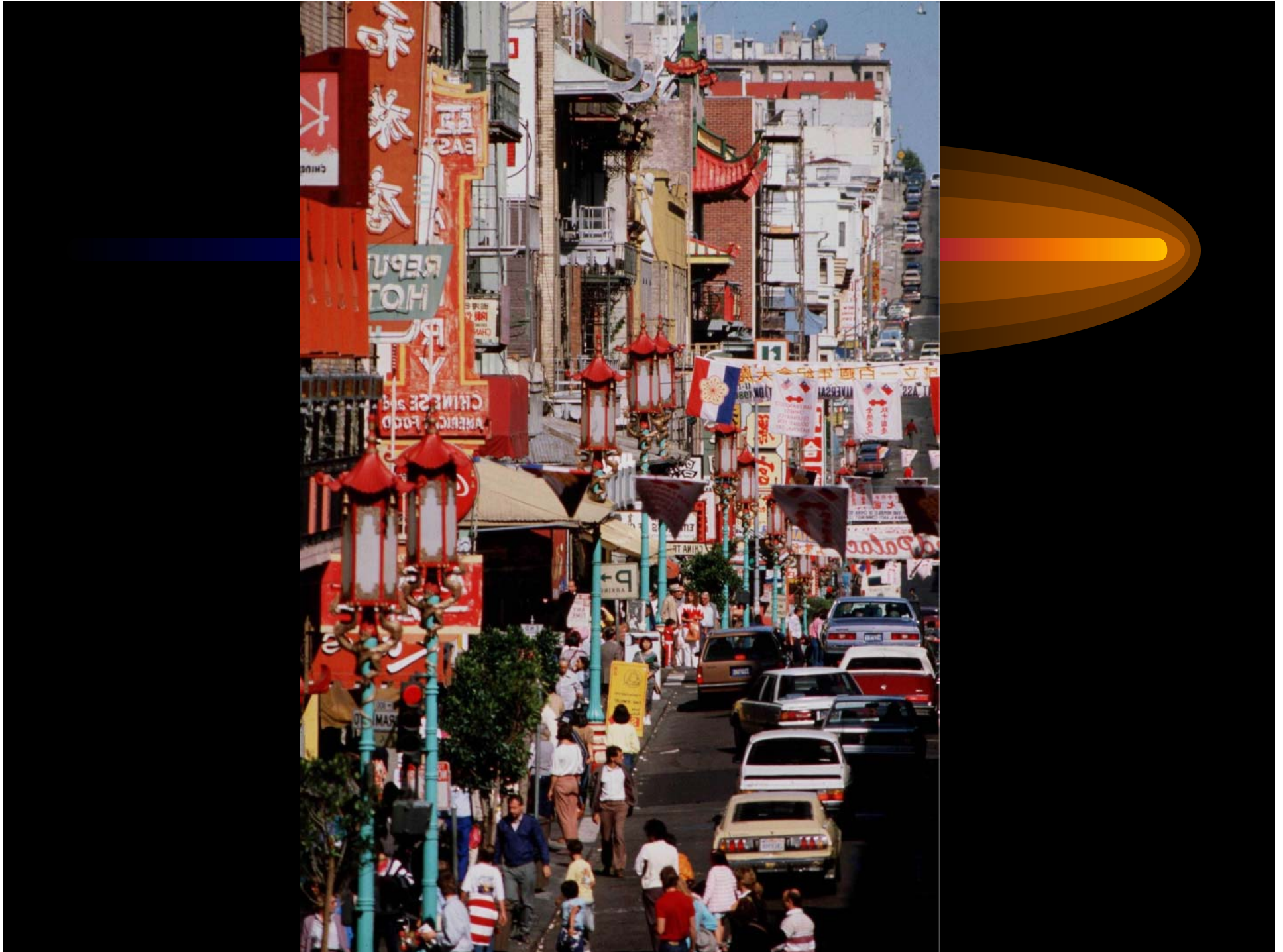


*Developing a CBPR partnership with  
Chinese restaurant workers: Lessons from  
the beginning of the story*

*Meredith Minkler, Charlotte Chang, Pamela Tau Lee,  
Alicia Salvatore, Gordon Mar,  
Alex Tom, Rajiv Bhatia*

*Presentation to APHA Annual Meeting  
Nov. 5, 2007*



# *Chinatown Project Partners*

- Robin Baker
- Rajiv Bhatia
- Charlotte Chang
- Fei Yi Chen
- Alan Hubbard
- Niklas Krause
- Pam Tau Lee
- Shaw San Liu
- Gordon Mar
- Meredith Minkler
- Alvaro Morales
- Alicia Salvatore
- Alex Tom

And thanks to our sponsor CDC/NIOSH!

# *CBPR is...*



A collaborative process that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes [their] unique strengths. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities.

- Israel et al, 1998; CHSP, 2001

# *CBPR Principles*



- Participatory
- Cooperative
- Co-learning process
- Systems development & local capacity building
- Empowering
- Balances research and action

Israel et al, 1998

## *Some Context*



- Immigrants accounted for 86% of all newly employed workers in US 2000-2005

- US DOL, 2005

- Restaurants are a primary source of employment for immigrants and low wage workers, especially for Asians

## *More Context*

- Almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Chinatown workers are employed by restaurants

- US Bureau of the Census, 2000

- High rates of injuries, work- related illnesses for restaurant workers are compounded for this population due to low literacy, immigrant status etc.
- “Slow pay, no pay”

# San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

## EDITORIALS

### Long-overdue paychecks

**W**ITH ONE ACT of courage and defiance, five Chinese Americans have set a precedent for thousands of immigrant workers.

For six months, more than 30 employees at San Francisco's historic Golden Dragon restaurant in Chinatown went without a paycheck, living off tips and a promise that their hourly wages would come "later."

The employees said nothing, until one of them approached the Chinese Progressive Association. The immigrant advocacy group then worked to organize the workers and urged them to fight back.

Many of the documented workers were fearful of retaliation and backed out of several planned walkouts and protests — until last Sunday. On that night, five workers, including Raymond Yuen, who had worked there for three years, protested in front of the restaurant, forcing the owners to come out and negotiate.

On Wednesday, the workers picked up their checks, receiving collectively more than \$12,000 in back wages. The owners, Jack Lee and his wife, Big Hong Ng, have promised

the remaining 25 workers that they will be paid as well.

Unpaid wages is a major problem in immigrant communities, where workers are fearful of retaliation and are not aware of their rights in the workplace. In San Francisco alone, 60 percent of low-wage workers are immigrants. And, according to 2000 census data, 11,728 Chinese workers were employed in the restaurant industry.

"In China, there are many abusive workplaces, where employees are scared. These businesses are not regulated by the government, and they are free to just close down or declare bankruptcy," said Leon Chow, chairman of the association. "When they come to America, they assume the regulations are just as low."

Unfortunately, so do the workers.

Raymond Yuen, Yue Hua Mai, Li Chan Huang, Yat You Lam and Min Shan Liu have sent a strong message to restaurant workers everywhere.

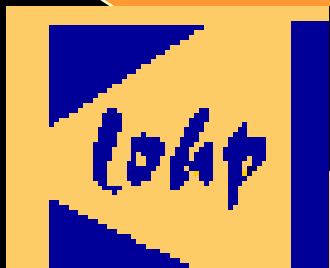
Their message should bring hope and resolve for immigrant workers in San Francisco and elsewhere who are not getting the wages they have earned.

*CPA's role in  
fighting  
"slow pay / no pay"  
at the  
Golden Dragon  
Restaurant*

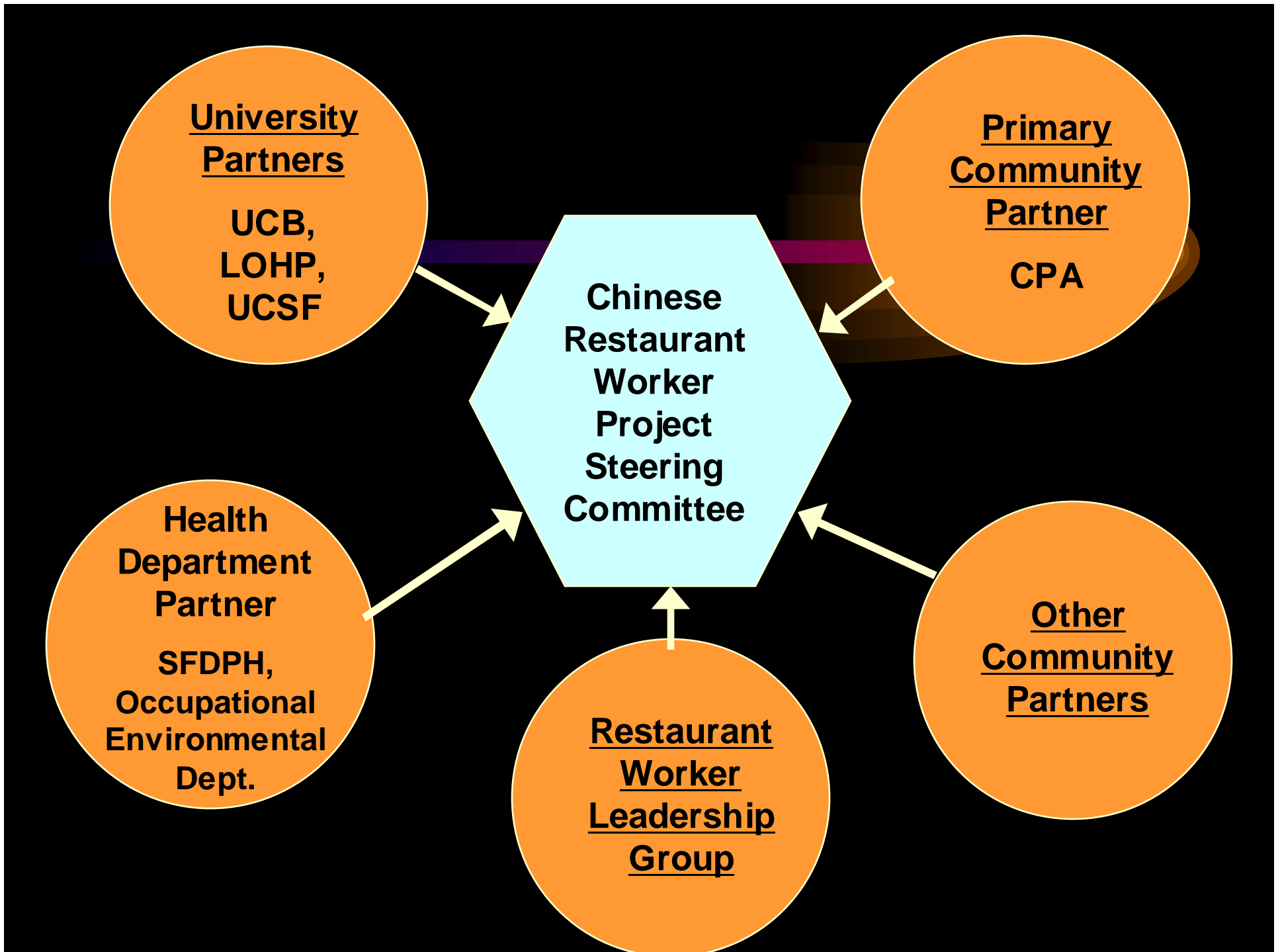


# UCB School of Public Health

## Labor Occupational Health Program



A community outreach program providing information, training, and TA to improve health and safety in the workplace.



# *Restaurant Worker Leadership Group (RWLG)*

- 15 low wage restaurant workers, hired and trained as project team members
- Representation on Steering Committee
- Assistance with survey construction
- Help in interpretation of findings
- Involvement in education, dissemination phases

# *A prerequisite of full participation: Simultaneous translation*



# *Project Goal*



- To engage workers in Chinatown restaurants in a CBPR project to study and promote worker health and safety within an ecological framework.

# *Specific Aims*



- Developing an effective partnership
- Conducting a pilot study of association between physical and psychosocial restaurant environments and Chinese restaurant workers' occupational experiences
- Providing culturally relevant worker education
- Disseminating project finding
- Using findings for subsequent research and action

# *Pilot survey of restaurant workers in an ecological context (n=400)*

- Training and extensive involvement of RWLG in pilot survey
- Outreach through CPA newsletter, Super Sundays, community meeting places
- Multi-lingual translators
- No recruitment at the workplace !!!

# Ecological Framework

## ENVIRONMENTAL

### Community Factors

- Social Networks
- Healthcare access

## ORGANIZATIONAL

### Restaurant Factors

- Physical Environment
- Social Environment
- Work-related events  
(e.g., no pay, “slow” pay)

### Policy Factors

- Occupational standards
- Enforcement
- Immigration laws

## INDIVIDUAL

### Worker Factors

- Characteristics
- Perceptions
- Behaviors
- Health



*Contextualizing findings: Access to  
pre-existing data on each  
Chinatown Restaurant (n=92 - 131)*

- Food safety compliance scores
- Fire Department safety reports
- Restaurant demographics (e.g., seating capacity, # of workers employed)
- Compliance with local minimum wage ordinance

# *Sample Questions for New Restaurant Worker Safety Checklist*

- Burn Hazards
  - Splash guards on fryers?
- Cut Hazards
  - Cut-resistant gloves?
- Slips and Fall Hazards
  - Walkways free of clutter?
- Ergonomic Hazards
  - Foot stools and ladders?

# *Some early challenges: IRB and University issues*

- Partners' commitment: Decision making by Project Steering Committee

vs.

- University demand: For liability reasons, PI must be named as the decision maker

# *Who's an adult?*

- California Law: Adults = 18+
- Federal Rules (CDC): 18-21 year olds = minors requiring special human subjects considerations

# *Cultural insights through ice breakers: What's in a name?*



# *Color-Coding by Partner Category*



# *Getting to a Rainbow*



Still missing:  
*Restaurant  
Worker  
Leadership  
Group*

# *Participatory Evaluation Slides*

- Specific Aim: Developing and evaluating an effective CBPR partnership



# *Evaluation Criteria*

- Green et al.'s Guidelines (1994; 2003)
- Flicker and colleagues' recommendations for IRBs (2007)
- Collectively determined criteria

# *Participatory Evaluation Activities*

- Participant observations of steering committee meetings
- One-on-one interviews
- Additional activities determined by steering committee and evaluation subcommittee
  - Survey
  - Process, outcome, and participation logs

# *Challenges*



- Who is (not) at the table – RWLG
- Balancing time, moving project forward, and partnership process



**Thank You!**

謝  
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