

# **Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region**

## **Chairperson's Report (1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022)**

### **Introduction**

With COVID-19 subsiding in 2022, the work of CIFA continued with vigour and positive energy, demonstrating our commitment in advancing family well-being in the Asian region and beyond. Through active engagement and continuous efforts, we had proactively taken initiatives and explored best practices to support families in the Asian region. Adapting to the new normal and by staying agile and open-minded, we had embraced technology and found innovative ways to navigate challenges.

In the year, we maintained active communication with the United Nations and participated actively in its activities, especially in the preparation for the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30). Collaborating with our global counterparts, we proudly took the lead in the Asian region, proactively responding to requests, fostering collaboration, and advocating for family well-being. We were pleased to see the preparatory work for the celebration well underway, presenting us with a unique opportunity of providing a remarkable platform to showcase our wholehearted dedication and contribution to fostering better family functioning, happiness, and overall family health and wellness.

With the input from Council members, we have responded to the UN call for comments on Enhancing Relationship with NGOs Granted Consultative Status, sending a submission to the NGO Branch of Department of Economic and Social Affairs on 30 August, and subsequently I have joined the interactive hearing held on 9 December in UN when the document was deliberated.

### **Corporate Governance**

#### **The Council**

With understanding, dedication and close collaboration, the Council and committee members have demonstrated oneness in continuing to strive for the common goal of “Converging Professional Wisdom For Family Well-Being”, a mission pledged by the Founding Members of CIFA when it was inaugurated in 2008 with increasing recognition, not only in Asia, but in the international arena.

We are most thankful to Ms. Elsie Leung, Ms. May Tsui and Mr. Edwin Chiu, who have kindly agreed respectively to continue to serve as our Hon. Advisor, Hon. Legal Advisor and Hon. Auditor, giving timely and wise advice on many important issues. We are most thankful for their staunch support and involvement whenever their expert input is called for.

As mentioned above, with high team spirit and close collaboration, the Council and various committees have been busily engaged in the various aspects of work of CIFA, with the support from the Secretariat. This involves a lot of coordination with concerned parties, including funding bodies, member organisations, collaborators in specific projects etc. In the spirit of accountability and transparency, reports to funders and information on events and announcement of upcoming activities have been included in CIFA-NET, the quarterly newsletter, and uploaded onto the CIFA website. All these are made possible due to good will and understanding in achieving a common goal to strive for improvement and excellence.

## **Financial Management**

We are thankful to the Wofoo Social Enterprises (WSE), the Title sponsor of the Asian Award For Advancing Family Well-Being (3A Project) since this regional initiative was launched in 2010. We are also thankful to the Family Council for its approval of funds and to co-organise the Exchange Programs on Wofoo 3A Project throughout the years. With their generous support, we have been able to provide opportunity for sharing of knowledge, experience and good practice. Through close dialogue with concerned parties and monitoring by the 3A Committee led by Dr. Agnes Ng, the funding bodies are satisfied with the deliverables and the financial management of the various activities under the Wofoo 3A Project umbrella.

On the front of fund raising and under the chairmanship of Ms. Alice Wan, the Publicity & Fund-raising Committee continues to develop online activities aimed at raising funds and promoting the importance of spending quality time and creating happy moments with family to build family resilience. The campaign, namely Family WE-time at home Challenge was launched in April. While it promoted the importance of spending quality time with family, it also raised some fund. We will continue to appeal for funding support and active participation for the ongoing development of CIFA.

Navigating through the challenging year of COVID-19, we are grateful to have received additional support in the form of a subsidy from the Hong Kong government's Employment Support Scheme. This subsidy played a crucial role in bolstering our initiatives during these unprecedented times.

With prudent financial management and continued support from various quarters, I am pleased to report that we are in a healthy financial position. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Lam Yee Mui, the Hon. Treasurer to work closely with the Secretariat in overseeing the financial management of CIFA.

We will continue to adopt a prudent approach in financial management as well as complying with the principle of transparency and accountability to gain the recognition and trust from our supporters and members.

## Membership

To promote CIFA and increase membership, 2 videos have been produced. The first video promoting CIFA has been produced, under the leadership of Ms. Eliza Lam from Caritas, Hong Kong. It is planned to be launched simultaneously with the introduction of the revamped CIFA website. This video aims both to create awareness and attract potential members.

A second video will be produced featuring more recent photos to further promote CIFA and its activities. This video will showcase the organization's ongoing efforts and initiatives.

To effectively recruit new members and maintain regular contact, CIFA is exploring various communication apps and media platforms. These include popular channels such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Line, and more. By leveraging these platforms, CIFA aims to expand its reach and engage with a wider audience. Caritas-HK has generously offered to support the CIFA Secretariat in enhancing the mechanisms for connecting with members through these communication channels.

The Secretariat has successfully extended invitations to participants of the Exchange Program for the 3A Project through email. This initiative seeks to establish a connection and engage individuals who are involved in the program. By reaching out to these participants, CIFA aims to attract them as new members and foster their active involvement in the organization.

In addition, CIFA has created a special CIFA promotion e-card seasonal greeting, which has been sent to existing members. This thoughtful gesture serves as a means of promoting CIFA and expressing gratitude to current members. Through this seasonal greeting, CIFA aims to maintain a strong connection with its existing members and reinforce their sense of belonging to the organization.

To foster stronger bonds and enhance engagement with the organization, CIFA has implemented an innovative Buddy system. This initiative aims to establish closer contact and promote regular exchange and sharing between members and Vice-Chairpersons. This strategic connection will facilitate ongoing communication and foster a profound sense of ownership and commitment towards CIFA.

Efforts to enhance the management of CIFA's membership database have been diligently carried out. The updating and validation exercise of the existing membership database have been successfully completed, and a thorough database analysis has been conducted to provide a clearer picture of the membership landscape. In order to expand membership beyond Hong Kong and engage members from various regions and countries, we are seeking the support of Council members, particularly the Vice-Chairpersons, who can actively promote membership in their respective regions/countries.

The improved management of the database presents an opportune moment to enhance the promotion of CIFA's activities and news. Simultaneously, we will focus on promoting membership alongside the forthcoming activities of CIFA, especially those in celebration of

the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30), with a specific emphasis on attracting new members.

## **Preparation for Celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30)**

Having been granted Special Consultative Status by the United Nations (UN) in July 2021, CIFA is in a better position to echo the call from UN to celebrate IYF+30. CIFA has been invited by UN to plan ahead in preparation of the celebration of IYF+30 in 2024. The subject had been thoroughly deliberated in the Council and there was unanimous consensus to echo the UN call to celebrate IYF+30. Initial ideas of a series of activities have been shared with Renata of the Focal Point on the Family, receiving very positive feedback and support.

Meanwhile, to keep abreast of global efforts in preparation of the IYF+30, CIFA has been invited to participate in Kick-off meeting in preparation of IYF+30 on 17 May 2022, organised by the International Federation of Family Development (IFFD) and contributed towards the drafting of the Civil Society Declaration. CIFA also attended the World Family Summit on 28-29 June organised by the World Family Organisation in collaboration with various UN bodies. It has provided an excellent opportunity to learn about initiatives in various parts of the world for family well-being, generating enlightening sharing and exchange.

The Working Group on IYF+30 was formed in April to kick start preparatory work, designing various activities and working out the details of the various proposed activities which were endorsed by the Council. These include:

- a. An Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Ageing of Population in Asia under the mega trend of Demographic changes to be held in November/December 2023 to launch the celebration. It will be co-organised with the UN, National University of Singapore and the University of Hong Kong.
- b. Cross Country Study on 'Application of Information and Communication Technology in Family Services in Post Pandemic Era In Asia' co-ordinated by the Research & Training Committee, in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic University, involving 6 countries/regions in Asia. Data collection will take place in 2023, with a view to present the findings at the Asian Family Summit (AFS) in 2024.
- c. Project in the spirit from 3A to 4A to be organised by the 4A Core Group (4ACG) under the 3A Committee to further promote family well-being. The idea of the possibility to organise capacity building programs for enhancement of quality of services to benefit service recipients will be explored.
- d. The Publicity & Fund Raising Committee, in collaboration with the Child Welfare League Foundation of Taiwan will organise a regional wide campaign to promote family well-being with the theme of 'Family We-Time' to raise awareness about the importance of spending quality time with family members across the region with the

sub-theme of Clothing, Food & Nutrition, Living & Environment, and Travelling & Leisure. Submission of family photos and colouring pieces will be collected and developed into a collage adopting the emblem of the IYF to be presented on 15 May, the International Day of Families.

- e. A commemorative publication highlighting the challenges faced by families in various parts of Asia and the efforts undertaken by CIFA to advance family well-being will be produced and distributed at the AFS in 2024.
- f. The Asian Family Summit will be co-organised with the Family Council, Social Welfare Department, Hong Kong Council of Social Services and the HKU, to be held in November/December of 2024 in Hong Kong to wrap up the celebration of IYF+30. An Organising Committee had been formed to work out the details.

An announcement on the major activities to celebrate IYF+30 had been made during the Closing Ceremony of the CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022 in November in Singapore to appeal for support and participation.

## **WEBINAR ON SKILLS OF HELPING ASIAN FAMILIES UNDER STRESS**

CIFA has been committed to providing opportunities for professional learning and exchange among family practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and university students across Asia and beyond. Webinars are organised to address family-related issues, stimulate critical thinking, and promote evidence-based practices and policy formulation for the well-being of families. Each webinar is hosted by Vice Chairperson from various regions/countries in Asia, alongside renowned speaker in the field.

One notable webinar was held on 15 June on the theme of "Skills of Helping Asian Families under Stress", with an impressive enrolment of 110 participants, witnessing a remarkable participation rate of over 80%. We were honored to have Ms. Bawany Chinapan, Vice-Chairperson of Malaysia & Singapore and Senior Lecturer in the Psychology Department of HELP University, Malaysia, and Dr. Herman Hay-Ming Lo, Associate Professor of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, as speakers.

During the webinar, Ms. Bawany Chinapan shared valuable insights on "Couples Communication," while Dr. Herman Hay-Ming Lo presented on the "Application of Mindfulness-based Intervention in Supporting Families Across Family Life Cycle." Their presentations sparked engaging discussions and sharing among participants. The overall response was highly positive, and we received encouraging feedback from attendees.

To ensure wider access to the valuable content, we have uploaded the video recording of the webinar on the CIFA website. This enables those who were unable to attend the live event to benefit from the knowledge and expertise shared by our esteemed speakers.

## **CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022**

The CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022 (CIFA-AFC 2022) was held in Singapore from 8 to 10 November 2022. The conference, co-hosted by the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA), the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), and the Social Work Department of the National University of Singapore (NUS), revolved around the theme of "Empowering Asian Families: Embracing Challenges and Building A Better Future." This bi-annual event brought together more than 440 participants from 12 countries/regions across Asia, including policymakers, academics, and practitioners from various sectors.

The conference provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and experience sharing on strengthening Asian families. Under the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, participants engaged in fruitful discussions on the challenges faced by Asian families and explored ways to improve policies and programs to better support them.

The opening ceremony featured an address by DPM Heng Swee Keat, the Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies in Singapore. He emphasized the evolving context of societies and the significance of strengthening families. DPM Heng Swee Keat also launched the national plan for families and unveiled the 'Vanchoanthe SG Families' Orchid.

The scientific program included keynote speeches by Mr. Derek McCormack, Director of Raising Children Network, Australia, and Professor Daniel Shek, Associate Vice President and Chair Professor of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Mr. McCormack discussed the characteristics of strong families and their recognition and support by stakeholders, while Professor Shek highlighted the need for policies to focus on human capital as protective factors against psychological distress.

The conference featured plenary sessions covering topics such as innovations and sustainability of Asian family services and the health, mental health, and resilience of families. Six concurrent sessions delved into various subjects, including innovative family services, children and adolescents, family practices and their effects, innovations in family services, domestic violence, and the challenges faced by Asian families.

National perspectives on strengthening families and marriages were discussed in presentations by distinguished guests, including Minister Mariam Bint Ali Bin Nasser Al Misnad from Qatar, Ms. Grace Li from Hong Kong, Minister of State Zifleena Hassan from Maldives, Minister of State Sun Xueling from Singapore, and Minister Chuti Krairiksh from Thailand.

A major highlight of the event was the Final Round Adjudication of the Wofoo 3A Project 2022. Eight finalists out of 24 projects across five countries/regions in Asia presented their projects at the conference. The Gala Dinner & Wofoo 3A Project 2022 Award Presentation Ceremony celebrated the outstanding projects and recognized excellence in various categories.

The CIFA-AFC 2022 received positive feedback from participants, providing an excellent platform for networking and knowledge exchange among policymakers, academics, and family service practitioners. The event's success has generated anticipation for future gatherings, and everyone looks forward to coming together again in 2024.

## **Wofoo 3A Project**

### **Wofoo 3A Project 2022**

The 3A Project Committee is most grateful to Wofoo Social Enterprises (WSE) for its continuation of sponsorship to allow us to continue conducting the 3A Project Competition 2022. The Launching Ceremony, together with the Exchange Program on Wofoo 3A Project 2020 was held online on 10 December 2021, attended by around 110 participants from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, India, and the Philippines. Following that, 24 submissions from five regions/countries had been received demonstrating that the competition and opportunity to share was much treasured, under the unfavourable circumstances affected by the pandemic.

After the screening process in the first round adjudication, the second round adjudication ran smoothly with 16 teams attending the interview session on 14 and 15 July 2022 either in person or on Zoom, resulting in the shortlisting of 8 finalist teams to join the Final Round Adjudication held on 9 November 2022 in Singapore, as one of the highlights of the symposium, to present their projects for competing for the Gold, Silver, Bronze Awards, as well as the Best Collaborative Award, Most Innovative Award, Bringing Hope Home Award and My Favourite Project. This was the first time the finalist teams of Wofoo 3A Project could present and meet in person after the last online Final Round Presentation in 2021 due to the pandemic and travel restrictions. Apart from competing for the awards at the Final Round Adjudication, the finalist teams were able to share and exchange directly with speakers and participants at the Symposium, involving many distinguished scholars and professionals presenting papers at the keynote, plenary and concurrent sessions with a wide variety of topics.

After a keen competition, Heep Hong Society project on “Brain Challenge Intervention Program for ADHD Secondary School Students in Hong Kong” won the Gold Award and Most Innovative Award. Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Ho Yuk Ching Educational Psychology Service Centre won the Silver Award and My Favourite Project, namely “Brain-Based Emotion Coaching Parenting Program”. Caritas Family Service & Hong Kong Christian Service Early Childhood Education Service won the Bronze Award and Best Collaborative Award with their project “Jockey Club Interactive Wonder Box”. Obviously, all the presented projects not only met the competition requirements, but the efforts made in term of need identification, intervention strategies, multi-level collaboration among sectors, used of IT, and outcome-based demonstration had received astonishing praises by adjudicators and audience at the Final Round Adjudication.

Ms. Christina Lee, representative of Wofoo Social Enterprises, the Title Sponsor of 3A Project delivered a speech to show her appreciation and encouragement to the teams at the

Gala Dinner & Award Presentation Ceremony and CIFA was most thankful for her presence at the event giving recognition to this regional initiative. Obviously, The Wofoo Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being Project (3A Project) had once again demonstrated its value and achievement in promoting family well-being in the Asian Region which had also received recognition from the United Nations.

Apart from the above achievement, The Wofoo 3A Project Competition had also conveyed a strong message on what and how family-well-being can be promoted and sustained, giving stimulation and appeal to social service organisations with the result that some had joined CIFA as members, and they were already considering taking part in this meaningful initiative in 2024. Press Release of the event had been sent to the editors of local news, education, and organisation sections on 11 November 2022.

### **Improvement & Development of the Wofoo 3A Project**

Improvement is always a sign of advancing our work, a thorough evaluation on how to make our work better had been discussed. We all agreed to provide more information on the 3A Project so that audience at the Final Round Adjudication would have a better understanding of the uniqueness and features of Wofoo 3A Project, including the selection guidelines to vote for My Favourite Project as embedded in the spirit of Aspiration for Sustainability, Innovation, and Applicability (ASIA).

### **From 3A to 4A**

To actualise the plan from 3A to 4A, the 4A Core Group (4ACG) had been formed consisting 10 members from the finalist teams of 3A Projects in the past rounds to build up an alliance among those professionals to sustain the impact of the 3A Project in promoting family-well-being work. Ms. Lucia Chow from Singapore and Mr. Kenneth Tsang from Hong Kong were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. There is a total 10 members in the Core Group, representing different countries/regions. Representatives of the 4ACG had presented a paper on 3A to 4A at one of the Concurrent Sessions at the CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022 in November 2022 in Singapore with positive feedback from audience. Continuous efforts are being made to work out action plans to echo the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF +30) as promulgated by the United Nations.

Our paper on “Multilevel Impacts of the Wofoo Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-being: A multimethod qualitative study applying a socio-ecological model” has been accepted and published in the Social Sciences & Humanities Open Journal (Volume 7 Issue 1, 2023) full appreciation is given to the concerted efforts of the research team headed by Vivian of the Sau Po Centre on Ageing who has conducted the study without charging any fees.

To sum up, CIFA has come a long way since the 3A Project, a regional initiative, was launched in 2010, with the staunch support of the Wofoo Social Enterprises that it has developed and flourished in the Asian Region. This is only made possible with the vision, leadership and guidance of Dr. Joseph Lee, President of WSE that CIFA has been able to put

an innovative idea into reality, and getting growing recognition for various quarters and, most importantly from the United Nations. CIFA will continue its efforts on this front as we firmly believe that there are still a lot to be done to advance family well-being in Asia with input from various professionals sharing their knowledge, wisdom, and good practice. We look forward to receiving continuous support from WSE so that we can realise our vision of “Converging Professional Wisdom For Family Well-Being”.

## **Publicity and Fund-raising**

### **Campaign on promoting family well-being**

To promote the need to maintain positive energy through togetherness among family members under the extremely challenging pandemic situation, CIFA attempted to organise the Family We-time at home Challenge in April 2022. The project provided an opportunity for the public to relax and spend quality time with their families through family photography, colouring and/or drawing. The smooth holding of the program was made possible by the strong and generous support from Lee Kum Kee Family Foundation, Best Wishes Charity Limited, Family Council, Wofoo Social Enterprises, Aberdeen Kai-Fong Association, Hong Kong Anti-Cancer Society and New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association. We are most encouraged to have received 306 entries, including those from China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

The Award Presentation Ceremony was held on 15 May to commemorate the at Home International Day of Families. CIFA is most honoured to have Miss Melissa Pang, Chairman of the Family Council to be the guest of honour on the occasion. The photos and works collected have been combined and presented in the form of a Family We-time at Home Photo Collage, which has been displayed at the Award Presentation Ceremony, as well as uploaded onto the CIFA website, and also shared with the Focal Point on the Family of the United Nations.

Making reference to this attempt, a Working Group on Planning for Regional Family We-Time Campaign was formed in January 2023 to organise a regional-wide campaign in 2024 with the theme of “Family daily: Spending quality time together in Clothing, Food & Nutrition, Living & Environment and Travelling & Leisure”. Preparatory work is underway.

## **Website revamping**

With the endorsement by the Council, the WEP Development Committee, under the leadership of Mr. WK Kwok, initiated action within the year to revamp the CIFA Website in order to make it more user friendly with additional functions. Our Committee Members, alongside with the vendor (ITRC) representatives in the Project Management Team (PMT), diligently worked together. We focused on clarifying the Users' Specifications for the various modules of the Website and Membership System (WMS). Upon the endorsement on the System Analysis and Design Document (SA&D), ITRC embarked on the system development and testing phase from February to September 2022. The dedicated ITRC team invested

substantial efforts to ensure the successful development and testing of the revamped website and membership system, ensuring their functionality and user-friendliness.

In October 2022, we finalized the User Acceptance Test (UAT) Plan, which outlined the procedures and criteria for testing the system. The WEP Development Committee actively engaged in conducting user acceptance tests, diligently reporting any identified bugs and retesting the fixes. By December 2022, we completed the second round of UAT and awaited ITRC's resolution of identified bugs, as well as the provision of the third UAT environment for further testing.

With our dedication to delivering a high-quality website that meets user and stakeholder expectations, we will prioritize thorough testing and validation as we move forward in 2023. We remain confident in achieving a successful launch and express our gratitude to all stakeholders involved in this endeavour.

## **Research & Training**

During the year, members of the Research & Training Committee had been making efforts to design another cross-regional study on “Application of Information and Communication Technology in Family Services in Post-Pandemic Era in Asia”, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The study, to be conducted in the course of 2023, aims to include participation from six key Asian regions, namely Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. We anticipate that this study will yield valuable insights and contribute to the enhancement of family services across the region.

Members of the Research & Training Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Miranda Chung, together with Prof. Vivian Lou of HKU, have been actively involved in organising the CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022 as members of the Scientific Committee in vetting submissions of abstracts, serving as plenary speakers and moderators during the symposium. Committee members have also initiated and organized the Webinar on Skills of Helping Asian Families Under Stress with input from the Membership Committee. With their hard work and staunch support behind the scenes, both the Regional Symposium and the Webinar were a great success.

## **CIFA WEP & CIFA-NET**

In the year, CIFA-NET continued to be published on a quarterly basis to include reports and announcement on CIFA activities and its member organisations. With the continuing impact of the pandemic on family life and delivery of services, the Editorial Group continued inviting member organizations to share their effort and practice wisdom in coping with the situation with innovative strategies, work approaches and new technology to keep connecting with their service recipients and to alleviate their stresses and difficulties. We are most thankful to CIFA member organisations to contribute articles to CIFA-NET.

Furthermore, the CIFA-NET also provided updates on the preparations and the progress of the planned activities by CIFA for the celebration of the International Year of the Family (IYF) +30. Alongside this, CIFA continued its active engagement, including responding to the UN Call for Comments on Enhancing Relationship with NGOs Granted Consultative Status. These important developments were highlighted within the pages of CIFA-NET.

## **Conclusion**

Given the accomplishments of the past year, we are filled with optimism and determination for the future. Looking ahead, CIFA will continue its unwavering commitment to advancing family well-being in Asia and beyond. The granting of Special Consultative Status by the United Nations further strengthened our dedication. As we approach the International Year of the Family +30, we are thrilled to seize this golden opportunity to showcase our long-standing commitment and passion. This milestone not only brings recognition but also unlocks doors for even greater collaboration, joint projects, and regional campaigns that will empower families and greatly enhance our impact. With our vast experience and expertise, we are well-positioned to navigate this new chapter and make a substantial difference.

Let me express our gratitude to all those who have contributed to the growth and success of CIFA. It is through your unwavering support, commitment, and shared vision that we have been able to overcome challenges and make a tangible difference in the lives of families. Together, we will continue to work towards sustainable development and the betterment of humanity.

Patricia CHU  
Chairperson  
CIFA

6 October 2023