



Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region

Towards a Better Tomorrow for Families



Towards
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for Families



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Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region



FOREWORD

The Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) is a regional platform inaugurated in 2008 with the aim to network and collaborate with like-minded people and organisations in Asia to strengthen family functioning and promote family health, through research, training, sharing of best practices and information, and contribute to the formulation of family policies. Its mission is “Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-Being” highlighting the need for multi-disciplinary partnership and collaboration to advance the well-being of families which contribute to the long-term sustainability of society.

Ten years ago, when the United Nations celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014, CIFA took the opportunity to publish the commemorative publication *Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-Being* and sent it to the Focal Point on the Family of the United Nations to introduce the regional platform. It marked the beginning of networking with the United Nations, followed by its presence at CIFA activities in Asia since 2016 to witness our work on the ground and eventually granting Special Consultative Status in 2021 to give formal recognition to CIFA. From then onwards, CIFA has maintained close dialogue with the Focal Point on the Family and coordinated regional efforts to support the initiatives of the United Nations.

2024 marks the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30). In response to the call from the United Nations to commemorate this milestone at local, regional and international levels, CIFA has organised a series of activities, in collaboration with all those who are concerned about the well-being of the family in Asia to raise awareness on the importance of the family in playing a significant role in the sustainable development of society. We also take the opportunity to produce a second Commemorative Publication to be distributed at the Asian Family Summit (AFS) 2024 as well as to associates and organisations to share the work and achievements of CIFA over the years and to give an overview of our activities to celebrate IYF+30.

In preparation for the celebration of IYF+30, the United Nations has highlighted the need to address the challenges brought about by the four megatrends, namely Demographic Changes, Urbanisation & Migration, Climate Change and New Technologies, all of which are closely related to the well-being of the family. We have invited academics, researchers and practitioners in Asia to share their insights on these megatrends and their impacts on families, pointing to directions for action.

Throughout the years, we have been fortunate to have dedicated individuals and organisations to render unfailing support to our work, which is a force that drives us forward. In the section on “CIFA & I,” our Vice-Chairpersons, title sponsor of the 3A Project Dr. Joseph Lee, and many other friends share their thoughts on CIFA, encouraging us to continue to charge ahead for the well-being of families.

The production of this Commemorative Publication is a testimony of concerted efforts by many. I would like to thank Prof. Joyce MA and Prof. Yeong-Hee KIM, the Editors-in-Chief, and members of the Editorial Group for their input and advice. I am also thankful to all those who have contributed their pieces to make this publication a valuable “memoir” of CIFA.

On this significant milestone of celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, let us pledge to continue to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve the goal of “Towards a Better Tomorrow for Families!”



Mrs. Patricia P.Y. CHU
Chairperson, CIFA

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE



Families are important units in society, nurturing the next generation and fostering societal stability. Harmony within families also contributes significantly to the overall development of the community. Over the years, CIFA has established itself as a regional platform that facilitates collaboration among public, private, academic, professional and non-governmental sectors to advocate the importance of family well-being and enhance family functioning. In addition to organising regional symposiums encouraging the exchange of ideas and experience, CIFA has consistently dedicated itself to supporting clinical research and training activities across the region. CIFA's perspective on the healthy development of families aligns with the objectives of the Family Council which was established by the Government to promote family core values and a culture of loving families in the community.

I am delighted to note that, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and to echo the call from the United Nations to address the impacts of the megatrends on the family, namely new technologies, climate change, urbanisation and migration, and demographic changes, CIFA has pooled efforts to publish the Commemorative Publication titled “Towards A Better Tomorrow For Families” to highlight its progress in networking stakeholders in addressing family-related issues over the years. It has also collated contributions by academics, researchers and practitioners in Asia regarding families in the light of the current megatrends, as well as sharing from individuals who have supported CIFA's mission in various capacities. CIFA's achievements deserve full recognition, and I wish the organisation continued success in its future endeavours.



Ms. Melissa PANG
Chairperson, Family Council, Hong Kong SAR

ASIA – ALONG THE MEGATRENDS

Family is embedded in society. It is subject to changes brought about by internal and external factors. According to the United Nations (2024), there are four megatrends, namely demographic changes, new technologies, urbanisation and migration, and climate change, all of which have an impact on the well-being of families. Asian families have been going through similar changes as their global counterparts. Challenges and difficulties faced by Asian families are unprecedented, which points to the need for collaborative efforts from different stakeholders (e.g., government and non-government organisations) to help families better adjust to these changes.

In this commemorative publication, the editorial team of CIFA has invited academics and social work practitioners from different parts of Asia to share with us live examples of how these mega changes have affected families in their societies and their ways of dealing with hardship and challenges arising from these changes.

On the subject of Climate Change, LOH, ABBAS and BONADEI's article has described the impact of extreme weather and natural disasters in Asia, briefly reviewing psychosocial interventions such as the provision of psychological first aid, child-friendly and women-friendly space for the afflicted individuals and families. Christine LOH, an active environmental advocate in Hong Kong, perceived the importance of engaging young people to combat the unfavourable impact of global warming on individuals and families and move a step forward to preserve the planet's health.

Technological advancement in society has brought a lot of advantages to individuals and families; for instance, family members can communicate and connect with one another via digital media even though they live geographically apart. However, there is another side to the story. Children and young people become easily obsessed with playing electronic games. Gaming disorders have become common in Asian societies such as Singapore. A group of social work practitioners of TOUCH Community Services is aware of the rising number of youths addicted to electronic games and, has developed a range of services to help these youths. The cross-disciplinary team under the SMART Family-Link Project, initiated and funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, shares its experience in conducting this project, with the view to leverage advanced technology to support more effective and innovative family service delivery in Hong Kong. Specifically, the project helps to set up an online service management system "i-connect" within family services of the non-government organisations (NGOs) as well as cross-link the NGOs with the Social Welfare Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government, enhancing the digital capacity of social workers and service users in using the blended mode of services (both the onsite and online modes), and analyses service data across NGOs for service transformation and enrichment.



Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters in Asia: Impacts on Families

Sit-Fong LOH, Sharima Ruwaida ABBAS & Silviana BONADEI, Malaysia

Extreme weather events and natural disasters are often closely interconnected, influencing each other and exacerbating their impacts on human communities and the environment. Extreme weather events include phenomena such as hurricanes, typhoons, heat waves, droughts, heavy rainfall, and blizzards. Natural disasters encompass a broader range of events, including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and landslides. Examples of extreme weather and natural disasters that happened in Asia in the last two decades encompassed the devastating tsunami in Aceh in 2004, with over 167,000 people killed and more than half a million displaced. The earthquake in Sichuan in 2008 resulted in nearly 70,000 deaths and left millions homeless. Another powerful earthquake and tsunami hit Tohoku in 2011, causing 15,897 people deaths and 470,000 people displaced. Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded, struck the Philippines in 2013, caused over 6,000 deaths and displaced more than four million people. The Nepal earthquake in 2015 caused nearly 9,000 deaths and affected eight million people. Malaysia is seeing a measurable effect of extreme weather on the coastal areas, especially on the east coast of the peninsula. Year after year, floods come with an increasingly higher level of water. Coastal villages and houses near major rivers see families being displaced and their livelihoods affected.

This article examines the impacts of these extreme weather due to global warming and natural disasters on families, and how such events affect the functioning and well-being of individuals across different age groups. We will also highlight some of the systemic psychosocial interventions implemented during our humanitarian relief effort in some of these disaster-stricken areas.

The impacts of extreme weather and natural disasters often cause widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure. Families were left without shelter, clean water, and electricity. The trauma of surviving such catastrophes would lead to widespread mental health issues. Children and adults suffer from anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many lives were lost due to the disasters causing unimaginable grief among surviving family members. Many schools were destroyed or damaged, leading to long-term disruption in education. The lack of proper schooling facilities and materials hampered children's learning. On top of that, the loss of homes and livelihoods put immense financial pressure on families. Many had to rebuild from scratch with limited resources.

According to the population data insight by ESCAP (2024), the number of immigrants to and emigrants from Asia is on the rise. Through migration, people move from their original homeland to a strange land. Adjusting to a new homeland is never easy as they need to overcome difficulties such as language barriers and discrimination. Yi-Han WANG identified the adjustment problems faced by Vietnamese women who married men in Taiwan. The article argued for the importance of adopting a strengths-based lens in viewing Vietnamese women and advocated for the need for a culturally respectful society to help these women be better mothers and spouses in society. Kelvin LAM and Eric FONG discussed the linkage of urbanisation and international migration. Over 60% of people migrated from lower economic developing countries to economically more prosperous destination countries, aiming to better improve their lives. However, while appreciating the merits brought by international migration for the families, the challenges faced by these families should not be underestimated, which include integrating their children into the destination country and cross-nationally connecting with family members of their home country.

Late marriage, decline in fertility rate and ageing population form another megatrend of families. The rise of woman's educational attainment, their increased participation in the labour market and improved healthcare services would be reasons to account for such changes. Jian SONG and her team as well as Takeo Ogawa addressed these familial changes in China and Japan respectively, which calls for policy responses of these two countries to face the demographic challenges.

Although the majority of families are resilient to better cope and adjust to these changes, changes such as disaster and climate changes, and technological advancement are beyond families' resources and capabilities. Timely provision of psychosocial services and intervention for these families in society is necessary, which requires the continued collaboration among the government, the NGOs, business sectors and different professionals in helping these families live a better life and strive toward a better tomorrow.

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Extreme weather disasters require complex intervention. Multi-disciplinary approaches with a focus on the various ages of children and therefore also for their families. Humanitarian relief organisations play a significant role in addressing the often-overlooked aspect of mental health in post-disaster situations, through Mental Health Psychosocial Support Services. Providing psychosocial intervention through programmes like Psychological First Aid (PFA), Child-Friendly Space, and Women-Friendly Space shows a deep understanding of the emotional needs of survivors (Desai, 2019).

Child Friendly Spaces need to be provided to children and anyone needing support post-disaster. Activities aiming at restoring normalcy will be offered to different age groups with a therapeutic effect in mind (Barai & Faruk 2023). Identifying those resilient and those requiring further attention, be it young or older people, will offer a window of change from the disaster. Many types of support like projection activities, play, movement, and discussions to facilitate the expression of fears, grief, anger, and coping skills are provided on a regular basis. In the vicinity or inside the Child Friendly Space, the intensity of feelings perceived or expressed, about what happened, about their future or their worries create opportunities to provide further support be it from a psychologist or a doctor if necessary.

Similarly, a Women Friendly Space (WFS) is a designated area that offers women a safe and supportive environment where they can access services, information, and resources tailored to their needs. WFSs often focus on providing women with a place to rest, access healthcare, receive counselling, and interact with other women for mutual support. Both Child-Friendly Spaces and Women-Friendly Spaces play crucial roles in humanitarian responses, ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to the care and support they need during challenging times. Each of these programmes serves a unique purpose and can contribute to overall well-being and resilience. Additionally, systematic interventions can be done for families and communities by creating a safe space where it provides a safe and comfortable physical environment that can help individuals feel at ease and supported as they engage in learning and personal growth activities after a disaster.

Psychoeducation and coping skills group training can offer valuable insights and practical tools for individuals to better understand mental health, cope with stressors, and build resilience (Lee and Rawlings, 2022). Group settings can also foster a sense of community and support. Another programme is the livelihood support programme which through this initiative can help individuals develop skills, access resources, and explore opportunities for sustainable employment or entrepreneurship. By enhancing economic stability, this programme can contribute to overall well-being. Usually after the disaster, a lot of Community engagement programmes: Encouraging community involvement and collaboration can create a network of support, promote social connections, and empower individuals to work together towards common goals. This programme can strengthen the fabric of the community and enhance overall resilience.

Psychological first aid is another programme that helps someone who is experiencing a crisis or traumatic event (Wang et al., 2021). It involves providing practical and emotional support to help the person feel safe, connected, and supported. It is important to train first responders and other communities on this skill so that it will help to minimise the risk of mental health during a disaster. Some key principles of psychological first aid include establishing safety and providing comfort and support, encouraging connection, promoting self-efficacy, and providing information.

Humanitarian relief organisations need to focus on not just providing immediate relief support but also empowering individuals, families and communities to address mental health concerns in the long term. The approach is targeted at promoting individuals' resilience to cope with the catastrophe more adaptively and further enhancing resources within the surviving families and communities for healing and rebuilding. This sustainable systemic approach can have a lasting impact on the overall functioning and well-being of the affected populations.

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Planetary Health and Our Youth



Christine LOH, Chief Development Strategist, Division of Environment & Sustainability, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong

Climate change presents us with a different world. The public is mostly still unaware of the magnitude of change that has already been unleashed as Planet Earth continues to warm, edging closer to 1.5°C mark, compared to pre-industrial times.

Young people have a significant stake in the changing planetary conditions. They will be living with the long-term consequences for the longest time. Climate change poses direct threats to the well-being of everyone, especially vulnerable groups, including children. The impacts are in fact much wider – young people who like the outdoors and sports will also be affected as very hot days make it difficult to pursue those activities. Much as young people may enjoy nature, climate change is causing shifts in ecosystems and altering the distribution and behaviour of plant and animal species. What this means is their favourite hiking trails and waterbodies may well be affected, including the surrounding biodiversity. Places they wish to travel to around the world will also be affected. None of us can take Planet Earth for granted, as people had in the past with the climate conditions we got used to with the seasons.

Rising temperatures are one of the most noticeable effects of climate change. This rise in temperatures is leading to more frequent and intense heatwaves, which impacts humans, ecosystems, and agriculture. Climate change is causing an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as storms, floods, and landslides in sub-tropical Hong Kong. Other parts of the world are facing similar problems, including higher risks of droughts and wildfires in some regions. These events are resulting in significant social and economic disruptions, including loss of lives, displacement of communities, and property damage. As global temperatures rise, glaciers and ice caps are melting, contributing to sea level rise, which affects coastal communities and low-lying regions, such as the Greater Bay Area, leading to increased erosion, flooding, and saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources.

None of this may be new to young people as schools have included basic knowledge about the environment for quite some years. However, studying in a classroom is one thing but truly appreciating the cascading effects and disruptions of a changing climate is another matter altogether. Even many adults find it hard to appreciate what is already taking place – it may be that most of us just haven't experienced major disruptions yet to understand the magnitude of planetary change.

In Hong Kong, we are quite fortunate. The black rains of 2023 caused only minor and short-term disruptions. The water in flooded areas subsided quite soon, as our drainage system is robust. Transport stoppages, such as parts of our subway system, recovered quickly. Massive clean-up capabilities meant the affected areas were cleaned up within a short time. Normality returned quickly. That was because Hong Kong has invested in infrastructure to deal with floods and landslides. Although we have had major typhoons in recent years, our infrastructure withstood them well. The concern going forward is that storms will likely be even more severe, and with greater precipitation, the resultant risks of floods and landslides are also greater. Even our best efforts in the past will come under challenge.

Young people should keep in mind the impacts of climate change as they consider their future. We will have to take both offensive and defensive actions to avert the risks of extreme weather events.

On the offense, we must decarbonize our activities and become much more environmentally and socially sustainable even as we seek progress and advancement. We must use our imagination and ability to innovate to reduce carbon emissions and other pollution. New jobs are being created all over the world to decarbonize human activities, where science, technology, and communication are at the core of new jobs. Science and technology are easily understood. Why communication? This is because we must improve our education, and our communication abilities and methods to bring people together to solve problems. The world needs both science and the arts to deal with the onslaught of climate change.

On the defensive, we must lower the risks of climate change through adapting to the changing climate and becoming resilient to extreme weather events. This requires innovation in both creating new infrastructure, such as flood and landslide prevention, as well as to enable the community to recover from extreme events as quickly as possible. We will need to have new social arrangements to help each other when disaster strikes.

In other words, young people can dedicate their lives to the changing planetary conditions to create meaning for their personal development, which also presents economic opportunities. Young people can be at the forefront of innovation and entrepreneurship in the climate change era. Their innovation will focus on environmental stewardship, which will play an important role in achieving justice and equity too. The impacts of climate change disproportionately affect vulnerable communities and poor countries that have contributed the least to carbon emissions. Young people, as global citizens, have a responsibility to stand up for justice, advocate for climate action, and work towards a more equitable and sustainable world.

Young people are drivers of change because they are effective in raising awareness and demanding action. Do learn about climate change and get involved.

Technological Change

The Impact of Information and Communication Technology on Family and Interpersonal Relationships

TOUCH Community Services, Singapore

The pandemic has changed the way we live, work and play. To meet evolving needs during the pandemic, information and communication technology (ICT) has been developing rapidly and it does not show any signs of slowing down.

The evolution of ICT has profoundly transformed various aspects of our lives. The pervasive influence of technology extends beyond the realms of business, education, and entertainment, infiltrating the very core of our social fabric – our family and interpersonal relationships. This article explores the multifaceted impact of technological change and the rapid pace of ICT development on these crucial social units.

Today, it is almost impossible to disconnect from the digital world. From the advent of the internet to the proliferation of smartphones, social media, and instant messaging, technology has revolutionised the way we communicate and interact. The integration of ICT into daily life has brought about unprecedented convenience and connectivity, enabling people to stay in touch regardless of geographical barriers.

The Good and the Bad

While ICT opens a world of opportunities, information, connectivity and freedom of expression for users, it too has its pitfalls – causing some individuals to become more socially withdrawn and isolated.

This is why at TOUCH Community Services we have always emphasised that the internet is a double-edged sword and users need to equip themselves and their children with skills and knowledge to use it safely and responsibly.

Positive Impacts on Family and Interpersonal Relationships

1. **Enhanced Communication:**
ICT has facilitated constant and instant communication among family members. Platforms like WhatsApp, FaceTime, and Zoom allow families to maintain close contact even when physically apart. This is particularly beneficial for families with members living abroad or in different cities, fostering a sense of togetherness and connectedness despite the distance. Even for romantic partners or friends living apart, ICT helps bridge the gap created by physical distance, ensuring that relationships can thrive despite geographical separation.

2. **Broadening Support Networks:**
Online communities and support groups provide families with resources and emotional support. Parents can join forums to share experiences and advice on parenting, while individuals can seek support for various issues, from mental health to chronic illnesses. These virtual networks can strengthen familial bonds by providing a sense of community and shared experience. Social media platforms also allow individuals to connect with others who share similar interests, values, or experiences, fostering diverse and extensive social circles. This can lead to enriched social experiences and opportunities for personal growth.
3. **Educational Opportunities:**
ICT offers vast educational resources that families can access together. Educational apps, online courses, and interactive learning platforms enable parents to support their children's education more effectively. Additionally, families can engage in lifelong learning together, exploring new interests and skills through the wealth of information available online.
4. **Increased Social Awareness:**
The widespread availability of information through ICT has heightened social awareness and empathy. Individuals can learn about different cultures, social issues, and global events, promoting a more inclusive and understanding society. This increased awareness can enhance interpersonal relationships by fostering empathy and compassion.

Negative Impacts on Family and Interpersonal Relationships

1. **Lack of Effective Communication due to Reduced Face-to-Face Interaction:**
The omnipresence of digital devices often leads to a decline in face-to-face communication within families. The phenomenon of "phubbing" (phone snubbing) can create feelings of neglect and disconnect among family members or superficial connection with friends, as individuals prioritise their screens over real-life interactions. In addition, the absence of non-verbal expressions may sometimes lead to misunderstandings and conflicts.

Excessive dependence on technology for communication can weaken interpersonal skills. Younger generations may struggle with face-to-face interactions, emotional expression, and conflict resolution, relying instead on digital communication methods that lack the nuances of in-person exchanges.

2. **Digital Divide:**
Technological advancements can sometimes exacerbate generational divides within families. Older family members who may not be as tech-savvy can feel isolated or left behind, leading to misunderstandings and a sense of alienation. This digital divide can hinder effective communication and create barriers to familial harmony.

3. Online Harms – Cyberbullying, & Online Harassment:

The anonymity and reach of the internet can give rise to negative behaviours such as cyberbullying and online harassment. Anonymity on social media acts as a shield, removing the fear of being recognised or judged by family and friends. The "online disinhibition effect" can cause people to feel detached from others, making them less careful with their speech and more likely to use harsh words than they would in real life.

Issues such as cyberbullying and online harassment can have severe psychological effects on individuals, damaging their self-esteem and trust in others. This is especially so for the younger ones. The impact of such negative online interactions can spill over into offline relationships, creating tension and distress.

4. Excess Screen Time

The combination of easy access to mobile devices and increasingly intelligent social media algorithms has encouraged endless scrolling on social media platforms. As youths spend more time on such platforms, they are exposed to a plethora of content which they may not realise is highly curated. As such, we have observed that many of them compare themselves to the seemingly perfect lives of others and end up feeling inadequate, eventually resulting in low self-esteem and the need to keep up with appearances. The obsessive need to appear perfect results in them being absorbed in spending time curating the content they upload on social media and seeking validation from "likes" and "follows" on the platforms. This need for validation from online users and strangers affects youth's sense of self and social life as they spend more time online and neglect real-life interpersonal relationships.

With the pervasiveness of digital devices, we have also seen a rise in excessive gaming or pathological gaming, a condition that the World Health Organisation has classified as a disorder in recent years. At TOUCH, we have seen instances of youths neglecting their hygiene, health, schoolwork and relationships because of their excessive gaming behaviour. The inability to regulate emotions due to excessive gaming has also negatively impacted their relationship with their family members. We have encountered cases where youths would turn violent or threaten to harm themselves when their parents turn off the wifi connection or confiscate their mobile or gaming devices.

5. Privacy Concerns:

The pervasive nature of ICT raises significant privacy concerns. The sharing of personal information on social media and other online platforms can lead to breaches of privacy, misuse of data, identity theft and fall into different online scams. These issues can strain relationships, as individuals may feel vulnerable or mistrustful.

Balancing Technology and Relationships

To mitigate the adverse effects of ICT on family and interpersonal relationships, it is crucial to strike a balance between technology use and personal interactions.

As a pioneer in cyber wellness and new media literacy in Singapore since 2000, TOUCH Cyber Wellness has always advocated for this balance through educational talks and workshops for students, educators and parents; and counselling intervention.

Here are some strategies to achieve this balance:

- 1. Establish Boundaries:**
Setting boundaries for technology use can help preserve quality time with family and friends. Designating tech-free zones or times, such as during meals or family gatherings, encourages meaningful interactions and strengthens bonds. For children, it is also very important to set some ground rules with them at an earlier stage to form a healthier lifestyle.
- 2. Promote Digital Literacy:**
Educating all family members about digital literacy and responsible technology use can bridge the generational divide and enhance mutual understanding. Encouraging older family members to learn about new technologies can empower them and facilitate better communication within the family.
- 3. Foster In-Person Interactions:**
While digital communication is convenient, fostering face-to-face interactions remains essential. Engaging in real-life activities that promote direct communication, such as family outings, game nights, or simply spending time together without screens, can reinforce connections and improve interpersonal skills.
- 4. Encourage Mindful Technology Use:**
Practising mindful technology use involves being aware of the time spent on digital devices and the impact it has on relationships. Encouraging mindful use helps individuals prioritise meaningful interactions and avoid excessive reliance on technology.

Thriving in the Digital Age as an Informed Society

The rapid development of technology use has undoubtedly transformed the landscape of family and interpersonal relationships. While it offers numerous benefits, such as enhanced communication, support networks, and educational opportunities, it also presents challenges like reduced face-to-face interaction, digital divides, and privacy concerns. By establishing boundaries, promoting digital literacy, fostering in-person interactions, and encouraging mindful technology use, individuals and families can harness the positive aspects of ICT while mitigating its negative impacts. Striking this balance is crucial to maintaining healthy and fulfilling relationships within the family and the community in an increasingly digital world.

Beyond the family, safeguarding the digital and mental wellness of individuals requires a whole-of-community effort. It includes guidance from social and professional communities as well as support from the government sectors.

Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project: Transforming Family Services in Hong Kong along the Megatrends of Technological Changes

Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project, Hong Kong

Information and Communication Technology (“ICT”) has reshaped how we communicate, work, and interact. The United Nations has also identified and endorsed New Technologies as one of the four megatrends that affect family life. Its impact on society, particularly within the social service sector, has been profound. These technologies hold immense potential to further expand and enhance service delivery, addressing personal, familial, and societal needs in innovative ways to promote well-being and community resilience.

The Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project (“the Project”), initiated and funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in 2018, is a visionary initiative in facilitating digital transformation and harnessing the power of ICT to support more effective and innovative delivery of family services by the Integrated Family Service Centres (“IFSCs”) and Integrated Services Centres (“ISCs”) in Hong Kong, as well as fostering cross-sector collaboration of academia and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for improving family well-being. The key components include developing an online service management system “i-Connect”, coupled with a Data Analytics System, initiating a blended mode (online and face-to-face) of services, enhancing digital capacity and conducting analysis from service data across NGOs for service transformation and enrichment. The Project has convened the multidisciplinary expertise from prestigious institutions, including School of Computing and Data Science; School of Nursing; Department of Social Work and Social Administration from The University of Hong Kong, and Department of Social Work from Hong Kong Baptist University. Additionally, the Project involves 26 NGO-operated IFSCs and ISCs.

The modern era of digital transformation brings unique challenges and evolving needs for families. Over the past few years, the Project has made significant strides in transforming the landscape of family service delivery through several strategic measures, including leveraging ICTs in family service management, conducting insightful analysis of family service data, and facilitating innovative, ICT-enabled family services. Through the utilisation of online platforms and digital devices, the Project has facilitated family service operators' reaching and supporting a broader audience of service users. Current data attest to the benefits and significance of digital technologies in enhancing the well-being of families.

At the core of this project is the development of the “i-Connect” service management system, which is among the first systems capable of establishing software interfaces with the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) information technology (“IT”) systems enabling the electronic submission of Statistical Information System (“SIS”) reports and service referral forms. This system digitises the existing paper-based service operations within IFSCs and ISCs, improving operational efficiency and facilitating data-driven service planning. The system is deployed on a secure cloud platform, adhering to industry standards and incorporating various security measures to ensure data security and privacy. The development of a Data Analytics System offers various data analytics and visualisation tools tailored to IFSCs and ISCs for service transformation and enrichment, which has underscored the importance of data-driven decision-making among NGO partners. The shift in perspective is crucial for understanding clients' needs and improving service quality. These intend to empower individual IFSCs and ISCs to develop and evaluate digital technology-assisted services, ultimately enhancing the accessibility and efficacy of family services.

The Project's initiatives also include capacity building for the family services sector and the creation of blended mode service interventions and the e-assessment tool. Capacity building aims to provide training to professionals, equipping them with the skills necessary to integrate digital technologies into IFSCs and ISCs. For example, the “Certificate in Clinical Practice Innovation and Research Design Professional Training Series”, a hybrid training designed to bolster participants' abilities to analyse service effectiveness, measure impact, and strengthen their research knowledge and skills in project design and management, as well as the ethics of developing and running digital technology-assisted services. The Project has also successfully engaged IFSCs and ISCs in the development of innovative blended mode service models, which have demonstrated feasibility and efficacy, and offered significant advantages over traditional face-to-face modes, such as more flexibility for participants in time commitment, higher intensity of interaction, and a continued support network.

This cross-sector collaboration under the Project has facilitated the exchange of ideas and resources, leading to the development of innovative solutions such as the e-assessment tool, which enables social workers to effectively access and utilise digital screening instruments during intake, thereby improving support and identification of at-risk clients in IFSCs and ISCs. Covering six key areas - suicide, depression, psychosis, domestic violence, substance abuse, and special educational needs - the tool represents a significant advancement in family social work practice.



Seeing Parenting Strengths of New Immigrant Families in Taiwan

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Background

Since the 1990s, the impact of new market forces and the socio-economic development within capitalist globalisation have resulted in the prevalence of transnational marriage in Taiwan. According to the statistics data (National Immigration Agency 2024), around 90% of foreign spouses are female who mainly come from China (65.8%) and Southeast Asia (21.4% from Vietnam, 5.8% from Indonesia, 2% from the Philippines, 1.3% from Thailand and 0.8% from Cambodia). These women are called “female new immigrants”, and their family is named “new immigrant family.”

Initially, most transnational marriages were operated by profit-pursuing marriage brokerages. However, due to the association with commodification, the kind of marriage had been under a stigmatised gaze among Taiwanese and the involved women were viewed as victims or problem-makers. The brokerages therefore were transformed into non-profit marriage agents by the Immigration Act amended in 2007 (Wang, 2013). Even so, female new immigrants still suffer discrimination, encounter difficulties and are in a vulnerable position within Taiwanese society because of the intertwining of complicated factors, such as gender, class, race, nationality and global imaginaries, plus negative media images of female new immigrants as “run-away gold-diggers.”

A common discriminatory and sympathetic gaze is particularly upon the mothering role of these women; especially those from Southeast-Asian countries. The perceived backwardness of their origin from Southeast Asia and the language barriers in the mother-child interaction have made them and their children increasingly regarded as social problems. In addition, new Southeast-Asian female immigrants are viewed as powerless mothers. The marriage is centred around Taiwanese men’s desire to carry on the family name; besides, these women mostly get pregnant immediately after arrival (Tang & Wang, 2011). It is believed that they have no ability to assert the right to plan for childbirth; it is also believed that they have not adjusted to life in Taiwan and have not been ready for childbirth, but they have already been mothers. As for Taiwanese men who marry female new immigrants, they are also viewed as “incompetent” fathers because most of them are middle-aged, working-class and have low educational levels (Hu, 2011). Thus, the children of new immigrant families are easily labelled as “New Taiwanese Children” who tend to be developmentally disabled or falling behind in schoolwork (Lee, M.-H. & Chueh, 2018).

The Project also involves agency-based and aggregated data analysis with a large sample size of over 20,000 in IFSCs and ISCs with significant statistical power and generalisability. This data will enhance evidence-based service planning and programme effectiveness, contributing valuable insights to the limited international research and enhancing future global service planning. In addition to the i-Connect system, the Project will launch the DataBot tool under the Data Analytics System, which analyses open-source data by integrating advanced AI technologies to provide users with a natural language interface, bridging the gap between users and the complex data from open-source datasets.

A recent survey of over 4,500 Hong Kong residents conducted under the Project by the School of Nursing of The University of Hong Kong, highlighted the growing preference for online participation in family services, underlining the importance of leveraging ICT to meet evolving service demands effectively.

Despite these opportunities, one of the challenges encountered by the Project is the digital literacy gap among social workers and service users, that have emerged during the transition from traditional family services to an online and digital format. The Project will continue to identify and develop guidelines for the best practices and disseminate the protocols for use by operators of family services.

In conclusion, the Project represents a multidisciplinary effort to promote digital transformation for the welfare sector. By leveraging advanced ICT, the Project aims to support more effective and innovative service delivery, benefiting families and individuals across a wide demographic spectrum. The concerted efforts of multiple institutions and stakeholders promise a future where technology and human service are seamlessly integrated for the benefit of society. This innovation would represent a significant advancement in the integration of digital technology in family services, with the potential to transform the landscape of service delivery in the digital age.



New Perspectives on Parenting Practices of New Immigrant Families

Actually, educational and upbringing experiences of transnational marriages between Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries are always the focus of academics and helping professions. It is worth noting that more and more research has recently been presenting the parenting strengths of new immigrant families in Taiwan. For example, based on in-depth interviews with 18 female new immigrants, Wang (2010) reveals that these women's practices of motherhood are embedded in their motherhood ideology shaped by the gender culture in their homelands, in their transnational marriages associated with commodification, and in the patriarchal family lineage system prevalent in Taiwanese society. The common assumption indicating that these women are "incompetent" and "powerless" mothers has ignored their agency exertion and simplified their strong ties with their children. Analysing the daily socialising practices in seven Taiwanese-Vietnamese new immigrant families, Fung & Liang (2008: 88) found that although immigrant mothers conform to Taiwanese customs and use Chinese when educating their children, two culturally Vietnamese notions can be identified: "politeness training through *vòng tay* and affect cultivation through *thương*." These notions reflect the meaning of filial piety in Vietnam. New immigrant mothers bring their culture of origin to Taiwan through motherhood; they contribute to the reproduction of culture. The work of Teng (2016) indicates that the interaction between new immigrant mothers and teenagers changes from forced discipline to partnership, which not only promotes children to help each other but also makes teenage children become housework sharers.

As for Taiwanese men's fatherhood, the research results show that when children enter primary schools, most fathers will focus on daily care, routine teaching, leisure and entertainment, and academic guidance; furthermore, due to their new immigrant wife's limited Chinese literacy ability, Taiwanese fathers need to take over the responsibility of teaching children to finish homework (Hu, 2011; Wei & Chen, 2014).

The academic focus on the parenting experiences of new immigrant families is shortage, but the work of Chen & Wang (2022) shows that with related conditions such as co-parenting consensus, positive acts and cooperation of parents, good use of cross-cultural similarities, and acceptance of differences, it can form positive dynamic system and benefit parent-adolescent interaction in new immigrant families. They further indicate that the new immigrant mother is the main executor in parenting, and she will use strategies positively to pull her husband into a parenting alliance to facilitate the interaction between the Taiwanese father and adolescent children. In other words, new immigrant mothers can cooperate with Taiwanese fathers in parenting: the division of parenting work "the father is responsible for family economy; the mother is in charge of care work" is the main upbringing strategy in daily life or schoolwork.

Conclusion

New immigrant families have become one of the main family styles in Taiwan but the parenting practices of the family tend to be discriminated and stigmatised. Through this article, it is necessary to build a multicultural-respect society where the parents of new immigrant families can better perform their educational and upbringing abilities. It is also significant to see the parenting strengths of new immigrant families which helps to enrich the connotation of parenting practices in Taiwan.

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Urbanisation and International Migration: Merits and Challenges

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The study of the relationship between urbanisation and international migration is complex. Central to this discussion is the relationship between development and mobility. Urbanisation often parallels economic growth and modernisation as society transforms from a rural-agricultural base to an urban-industrial one (Davis & Henderson, 2003). Development makes migration journeys possible for people living in the least developed regions. Meanwhile, as a place develops, it attracts immigrants in search of opportunities. This notion is well documented in the immigration literature (Massey et al., 1993). Rapid urban expansion creates tremendous opportunities that not only attract internal rural-to-urban migrants to seek better prospects and an improved quality of life with enhanced services and amenities but also people from other parts of the world (Lerch, 2016). The past half-century has seen an increasing number of immigrants motivated by a desire to improve their well-being and access better opportunities. According to the latest World Migration Report, as of mid-2020, around 281 million people in the world lived in a country outside their place of birth, categorised as international migrants. Although they accounted for only 3.6% of the world's population, this number was twice as high as in 1990 and over three times the number in 1970. Around 60% (169 million) of international migrants are economic migrants (McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024). The prevailing trend is migration from lower-income developing regions to higher-income developed regions (Abel & Sander, 2014). We outline the merits and challenges underlying these migration trends.

With people migrating from less developed to more developed regions, this flow benefits destination societies by providing an abundant labour supply at a lower cost. East and Southeast Asian regions such as Hong Kong and Singapore are well-known destinations for migrant domestic workers. Each year, a considerable number of these workers are admitted to outsource domestic work (Fong & Shibuya, 2020). As of 2023, there were 356,231 migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, with the majority from the Philippines and Indonesia (Immigration Department, 2024). The number of migrant domestic workers admitted in Singapore is similar to that in Hong Kong. As of June 2024, Singapore had issued 294,800 work permits to migrant domestic workers (Ministry of Manpower, 2024). They not only provide essential services for households by taking care of children and elderly parents (Shibuya & Fong, 2023) but also contribute to the destination economy by increasing the labour force participation of native women who have young children to care for (Cortés & Pan, 2013).

Migrant domestic workers free women from household responsibilities, which enables them to balance work and family life. According to a report by Frost & Sullivan (2019), which quantified the economic impacts of migrant domestic workers, they accounted for nearly 30% of female labour force participation in Hong Kong in 2013. In 2018, migrant domestic workers contributed to 3.6% and 2.4% of the GDP in Hong Kong and Singapore respectively. Notably, migrant domestic workers contribute to both the economy of the destination and their country of origin, the latter through remittances. The same report (Frost & Sullivan, 2019) indicated that in 2018, migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia remitted a total of US\$ 1.1 billion to the Philippines and Indonesia. These remittances cover their families' expenses, children's education, and property purchases, collectively contributing to poverty reduction in their source countries.

The opportunities presented by developed regions also attract high-end immigration, which largely benefits destination societies as a stock of human capital that can be transformed into an impetus for growth and innovation (Bailey & Mulder, 2017). While highly qualified migrants are actively sought in the global competition for talent, there is little discussion on their and their family members' integration at the destination. They face challenges integrating into the host society, including finding secure jobs that match their skills (Zhan & Zhou, 2020). For highly qualified migrants who are parents, the quality of education and employment prospects for their children at the destination are also important considerations for settling (Khoo, 2014).

The trend of international migration can benefit both source and destination societies, but it may also pose challenges. For destination societies, the integration of immigrants is closely related to native-migrant relations and social cohesion. Inclusive policies play an important role in facilitating integration (Kende et al., 2022). The experience of immigrants and their family members at the destination shapes their intention to stay and establish roots (de Haas & Fokkema, 2011; Shui et al., 2023), aligning with the global policy agenda focused on talent recruitment and retention. Not all migrants relocate with their family members. For source countries and migrants themselves, maintaining transnational ties with family members and elders who remain is relevant to the well-being of both (Roosen et al., 2021). These factors should not be undermined in both policy and scholarly discussions.

Demographic Change

Demographic Change: Growing Family Changing Profile and Implications on Family

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Over the last 30 years, China has witnessed significant changes in its families. Various aspects of families, such as their structure, relationships, functions and culture have become more flexible and dynamic. Living arrangements of family members have become increasingly diverse, with a dominant proportion of nuclear households and a notable rise in single-person households. Family relationships have shifted from upwards to downwards, with children as the focus as well as conjugal relationships taking precedence over intergenerational ones. The functions of families, such as family care for the young and support for the elderly, have been somewhat weakened due to changes in family structure and culture. A new form of familism influenced by both Confucian values and individualism has emerged as the dominant model in Chinese families. The above-mentioned changes are labelled by scholars as “family transition” (Song & Zhang, 2021), which is a similar but relatively independent process as compared to the demographic transition. Family transition has been shaped by demographic changes, including a sharp decline in total fertility rate (TFR), significant internal migration within the population, and gradual shifts in family culture.

The TFR in China has declined rapidly under the influence of impressive socio-economic development and effective family planning programmes, from 5-6 in the 1950s and 1960s to 1.3 in the seventh population census in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Alongside the sharp drop in fertility level, population ageing has accelerated, and the natural growth rate has become negative since 2022. These significant changes in the demographic situation have greatly impacted various aspects of Chinese families. For example, the average household size has decreased from around 5 to 2.62 in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010, 2020). The percentage of one-person households has surged from 7.98% in 1982 to 25.39% in 2020 (Wang 2023). These shifts in family structure have somewhat impacted family relationships and functions. Both conjugal and intergenerational relationships have diversified in forms and arrangements. Rural couples are more likely to live apart, either because one spouse (of younger couples usually) has to work in cities or because one spouse (of older couples usually) has to look after grandchildren in their children’s home. Compared to the absolute authority enjoyed by their parents in previous intergenerational relationships, the younger generation now has a greater voice and autonomy. As families spread out and become smaller, many family functions are socialised or performed only on an ad hoc basis when needed, such as only when young parents need help will grandparents provide care for grandchildren. Despite Chinese families still demonstrating adaptability to major family responsibilities and events, they face substantial pressure to uphold stability and balance.

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Besides the drastic decline in fertility level, the historic largest internal migration has profound effects on Chinese families. In 2020, approximately 376 million people migrated internally, leaving behind 67 million children (Lyu et al., 2024). This massive internal migration has substantially altered the living arrangements, functions, relationships, and even the culture of Chinese families. As a result, living arrangements have become more flexible and volatile. Some studies have shown that families adapt their living situations to meet changing needs, especially for younger generations (Wu, 2017). The dramatic internal migration has also changed both marital and parent-child relationships. Marriage has been postponed and has become less stable, leading to the emergence of various forms of intimate relationships such as cohabitation and living-apart-together arrangements. Additionally, parent-child relationships now emphasise emotional connection and family solidarity over practical exchanges (Li & Zhang, 2023). The roles of daughters have become more crucial in providing support in old age, partly due to decreases in patrilocal residence caused by internal migration. In response to the shifting living arrangements resulting from internal migration, Chinese families have gradually developed resilience and adaptability, leading to a more fluid and dynamic family culture.

Another crucial but often overlooked aspect of demographic change is the evolving family culture, which exerts profound and enduring influences on Chinese families in various ways. Confucian values have long heavily influenced Chinese family dynamics. However, with the economic reforms of the 1990s came the introduction of individualism from Western societies, leading to a blend of Confucianism and individualism within Chinese families. This new hybrid family culture has been described in different terms, such as modern-traditional mosaic (Ji, 2015) and new familism (Yan, 2020), highlighting the complex interplay of Chinese and Western values. These shifts in family culture offer insights into the changing dynamics of Chinese families, including trends such as delayed marriage, increased cohabitation, declining fertility rates, rising divorce rates, evolving intergenerational relationships, and diverse living arrangements.

Dramatic demographic changes have profound influences on Chinese families. Chinese families have transformed in their various aspects and exhibited new forms and values in Contemporary China. These changes not only raise new challenges for the government, families, and each single individual but also reflect Chinese family's resilience and tenacity in response to the rapid social transformation.

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Demographic Change of Japanese Family

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Before World War II, Japan's family was a patriarchal-lineal extended family (Aruga, 1965). After the war, the Civil Code was amended to reject the pre-war family system and replace it with a system based on the so-called companionship family (E.W. Burgess, 1954). However, since then, the companionship family has also been subjected to criticism, and there has been a movement to replace the concept of the family with the concept of the "intimate sphere" (Kyoto University, 2008).

For verifying such changes in the family with statistical data, it is necessary to convert the commonly used concept of family into the concept of households that can be statistically grasped.

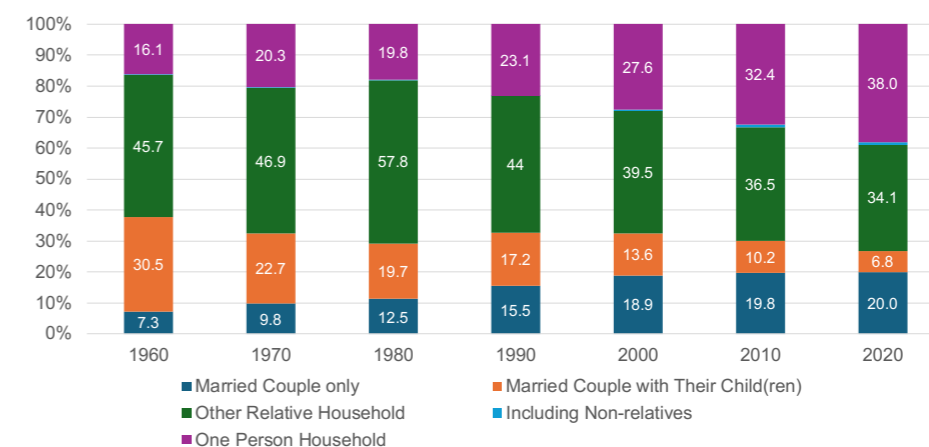
1. Patriarchal lineal extended family is the "other kinship household" among households with only relatives.
2. The companionship family is the "nuclear family household" among households with only relatives.
3. The Intimate sphere is defined as "single-person households," "households that include non-relatives," and "households in institutions," etc.

Based on this conceptualisation of operations, let's try to capture the changes in the family in Japan.

After World War II, Japan recovered its economic development and achieved high economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. Households during this period were statistically divided into quasi-households (reclassified into "institutional households" and "single-person households" after 1980) and ordinary households (including single-person households living in detached houses). The demographic data shows the change in the number of single-person households and other ordinary and quasi-households. Although the number of single-person households was already increasing rapidly, other ordinary households were still the mainstream, accounting for 90.6% in 1960 and 86.0% in 1975. In other words, it was a time when the "patriarchal lineal extended family" was still the mainstream, and the theory of the nuclear family which was related to the companionship family was developing as a criticism of the residue of feudalism in Japan.

From 1960 to 1980, the number of "other relatives households" (patriarchal direct extended families) had already begun to decline from 34.7% to 20.7% but still accounted for a large proportion of ordinary households. Nuclear families accounted for half of the households, ranging from 59.9% to 50.2% during this period. This is the background to the discussion of the companionship family and the nuclear family in relation to social changes such as modernisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation.

Figure 1. Transition of Rates of Private Households by Family-type



Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, CENSUS Reports.

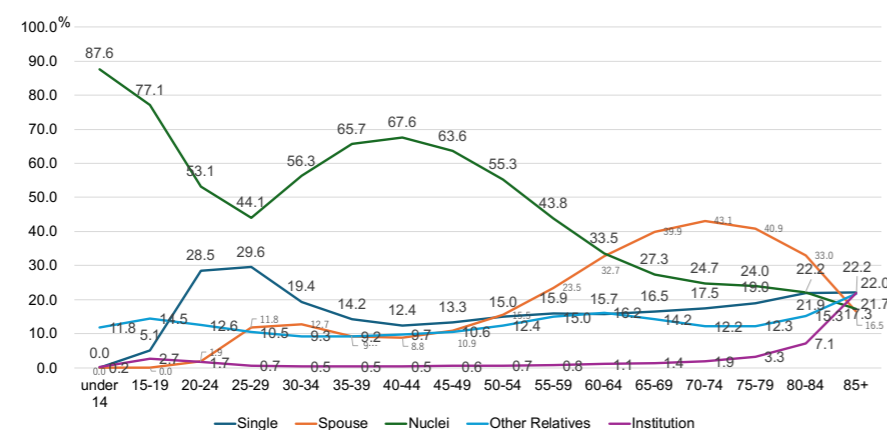
"Other relatives households" accounted for 45.7% in 1960, but has consistently declined to 34.1% in 2020. The proportion of "nuclear family households" was 30.5% in 1960, but it has consistently declined to 6.8% in 2020. During this period, the number of "couple-only households" increased from 7.3% to 20.0%. The fact that the number of "nuclear family households" is decreasing while the number of "couple-only households" is increasing means that the number of families that do not directly lead to birth and childcare even if they get married has increased.

The number of single-person households has doubled during this period. In 1960, it accounted for 16.1%, but by 2020, it accounted for 38.0%.

In 2010, more than half of the households were occupied by married couples and single-person households, and it can be said that the phenomenon of "empty nest families" among the elderly generation who have finished raising children, the new phenomenon of "intimate spheres" and the phenomenon of "loneliness and isolation" among the younger generation have become social concerns.

The households to which an individual belongs change with age. At birth, most of them belong to a nuclear family as an unmarried child. Therefore, this nuclear family is called "the Family of Orientation." Many children grow up, leave their parents, and become single-person households in adolescence. Eventually, the majority of young people get married and become a nuclear family that gives birth to and raises children. The nuclear family at this stage is called "the Family of Procreation." People in their late 20s to 50s have the highest proportion of nuclear families. However, if the child becomes independent, the nuclear family household will turn into a couple-only household, and after the widowhood of a spouse, it will become a single-person household. Elderly couples and elderly single-person households during this period are called "Empty-nest families." Households after the age of 60 are more likely to have Empty-nest families. After the age of 75, the number of people who belong to households such as institutions increases rapidly.

Figure 2. Population Percentage by Household Type in Japan



Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2020. Census Report.

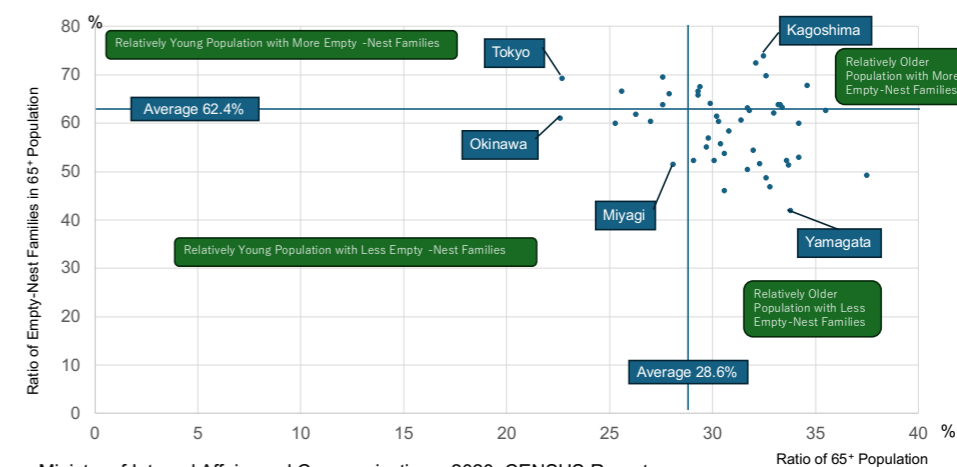
As “Family of Procreation” is decreasing, the fertility rate is also decreasing since 1965 (TFR=2.44). The common sense that men and women should marry, have children, and form families is crumbling in the face of the reality of diverse households. As a result, the total fertility rate, an indicator of population reproduction, has been on a long-term downward trend. TFR increased slightly from 2005 (TFR=1.26) to 2015(TFR=1.45) but began to decline again in 2020 (TFR=1.33).

The funeral ceremony is an important event in traditional Japanese families, where ancestor worship is the norm. Therefore, the place of death of Japanese people has long been their homes (65.0%, 1965). However, due to changes in the family/household, the place of death was changed to a hospital after 1975(47.7%). The rate of hospital deaths was increasing until 2005 (82.4%), but the rate of deaths at home (15.7% 2020) and the number of people dying in long-term care facilities (9.2%, 2020) is gradually increasing.

In other words, if we try to understand the family in terms of the nuclear family model, it can be said that the number of households that deviate from that model will increase with ageing. In light of the fact that older persons belong to a variety of household types, we should proceed with the discussion of the family.

Also, we need to take into consideration regional differences. Even within Japan, the view of family differs from region to region. Even though metropolitan areas such as Tokyo have relatively young populations, many households over the age of 65 live in areas with only single households or married couples. On the other hand, Kagoshima, which is said to be a typical example of depopulation area, has an ageing population and an increasing number of empty nest households. In the same way, even though the population is ageing, there are still areas in Japan such as Yamagata, where the traditional family view is deeply rooted culturally, and the empty-nest household has not been spread. Countries such as Okinawa, where the population is ageing relatively slowly and the transition to empty nest households is slow, are traditionally said to have a unique view of family. However, in the future, unless major social changes occur, Japan will undermine the foundation of the family's existence despite such cultural differences.

Figure 3. Aging and Empty-Nest Families by Prefecture



Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2020. CENSUS Report.

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CIFA in Asia

The Regional Hub



CIFA
in Asia
The Regional Hub

The Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) is an independent regional platform with the mission of "Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-Being" for networking and transdisciplinary collaboration among organisations and professionals in Asia. Its goal is to strengthen family functioning and promote family health in Asia while contributing to the body of knowledge in relationship science.

Registered as a company incorporated with limited liability and a non-profit making organisation under relevant ordinances in Hong Kong since 2007, CIFA was formally inaugurated in January 2008 to support and enhance mutual interests in research and training initiatives, sharing clinical experiences and policy formulation on families that are unique to the Asian region. With demonstrated efforts and proven achievements, CIFA was granted Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) in 2021, putting CIFA into the international arena.



Footprints of Converging Professional Wisdom for Families

CIFA's development can be traced by beautiful footprints from its inception in 2005 to the 16th anniversary of its current establishment in 2024.

2005 -
2007

- Conception of the idea of setting up an Asian regional platform at the International Conference on Couples in May 2005 in Hong Kong, followed by an exploratory meeting to discuss the forming of CIFA.
- First CIFA Provisional Council Meeting in November 2006.
- Incorporation of CIFA under Company Ordinances in Hong Kong and Election of the First CIFA Council in August 2007.
- Launching of CIFA Web-based Exchange Platform (WEP) and Membership Drive.
- Election of the first CIFA Council in November 2007.

2008

- Inauguration of CIFA at The University of Hong Kong on 24 January 2008, followed by a 3-day Inaugural Symposium.
- Inaugural issuing of bi-weekly e-newsletter in November.

2010 -
2011

- Launching of the Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-being (3A) Project in February 2010. The competition has been organised biennially ever since.
- 2nd Regional Symposium at the University of Tokyo in November 2010, with the Final Round Adjudication of the 3A Project incorporated into the programme and Award Presentation Ceremony held.
- Launching of the enhanced CIFA WEP in August 2011.

2012 -
2013

- 3rd Regional Symposium at the National University of Singapore in December 2012. Incorporation of the Final Round Adjudication of the 3A Project into the programme of the Regional Symposium and arranging the Award Presentation Ceremony in the Gala Dinner became a regular practice.
- Inaugural Issue of the CIFA-NET, quarterly newsletter of CIFA, published and circulated in June 2013.

2014

- Co-organised a Family Summit with government bodies and NGOs in Hong Kong in May to echo the call of the UN to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF).
- Renamed the 3A Project to be Wofoo 3A Project to recognise the long-term title sponsor Wofoo Social Enterprises.
- 4th Regional Symposium at the East China University of Science and Technology in Shanghai in November.
- Production and distribution of the IYF Commemorative Publication in November and submitting it to the UN.

2015

- Recognition of CIFA's work by the UN as a result of sharing the IYF publication with the Focal Point on the Family of the Division for Inclusive Social Development, putting CIFA on the international arena and initiating dialogue with UN officials.
- CIFA website revamped as www.cifa-net.org for more user-friendly and quicker access to CIFA information.

2016

- 5th Regional Symposium at the National Museum of Korea in Seoul in November. Ms. Daniela BAS, Director of the UN Division for Inclusive Social Development, attended personally to officiate the Opening Ceremony and delivered a speech.

2017

- Mrs. Renata KACZMARSKA of the Focal Point on the Family from the UN Division for Inclusive Social Development presented as the Guest of Honour at the Exchange Programme of the Wofoo 3A Project 2016 and the Charity Concert For Family Harmony in June in Hong Kong. Future development of CIFA was shared and discussed.

2018

- Asian Family Summit 2018 at The University of Hong Kong in August to mark the 10th Anniversary of CIFA and echo the international efforts on the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development. Ms. Daniela BAS of the UN showed up again as officiating guest and a Keynote Speaker. A Family Well-Being Expo was included in the Programme for families and the public.
- Round Table Meeting during the Summit with presence of UN representatives and world-renowned researchers in family and senior HKSAR government officials to deliberate on various family issues such as divorce, marriage and split families.

2019

- Study on Best Practices & Social Impact of Wofoo 3A Project conducted.
- Application to the ECOSOC of UN for Consultative Status in May.

2021

- 6th Regional Symposium originally planned for 2020 rescheduled due to global COVID-19 pandemic, held at the National Taiwan University, Taipei in June, with both physical and online attendance.
- UN Consultative Status formally granted by Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of UN in September, enabling CIFA to engage in several ways with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, the Human Rights Council and some meetings of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as with the UN Secretariat.
- A Six Best Practices model PIE-ISI (i.e. Project rationale, Implementation, Evaluation, Innovation, Sustainability and Replicability, and Institutional Synergy) was demonstrated by the Study on Best Practices & Social Impacts of Wofoo 3A Project, providing solid foundation for expanding 3A to 4A - "Alliance," to create greater impact.

2022

- CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022 (CIFA-AFC 2022) held in Singapore in November.
- The 4A Core Group was formed to actualise the planned development of "From 3A to 4A," members being 3A Project finalist teams of different years from different countries/regions.
- Family We-Time at Home Challenge held in April to promote quality time among family members under home-bound situation due to global pandemic. Award Presentation Ceremony held on 15th May to commemorate the at-home International Day of Families.

Highlights on the Work of CIFA

Biennial Regional Symposiums and Asian Family Summits

Regional symposiums are held biennially and have become the major and large-scale activities of CIFA for exchanges among like-minded professionals, scholars, NGOs and civil society in Asia who are concerned about family well-being. A Regional Symposium typically involves keynote speeches by renowned academics or senior policy-makers, plenary sessions by experts in related fields, and concurrent sessions for sharing new research findings and good practices for support and promotion of family health and happiness. There are also poster presentations on many of the occasions. A Family Well-Being Expo was organised as an official programme of the Asian Family Summit 2018. Pre- or post-symposium/summit workshops and agency visits are usually arranged to maximize learning opportunities and exposure of the participants.

In the past, attendance at a Regional Symposium was around 350-450 from different countries and regions in Asia. There was an attendance of nearly 600 at the Asian Family Summit of 2018 that reached a record high of 730 at the 6th Regional Symposium held during the COVID-19 pandemic period in Taiwan when online participation was available. The UN's presence started in 2016 when the Director of its Division for Inclusive Social Development, Ms. Daniela BAS attended in person to officiate at the Opening Ceremony and delivered a speech. Ms. BAS showed up again at the Asian Family Summit of 2018 and was one of the Keynote Speakers on the occasion. To encourage family work professionals from less-developed Asian regions to attend the symposiums to share what happened in their countries, and to facilitate their exposure to outside practice and international exchange, special subsidies were made possible to support their flight and accommodation in the Asian Family Summit of 2018. It is hoped that such practice may continue where possible to encourage the involvement of more Asian countries/regions.



2023

- Side paper of the Study on Best Practices & Social Impact of Wofoo 3A Project "Multilevel Impacts of the Wofoo Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being: A multimethod qualitative study applying a socio-ecological model" published in the *Social Sciences & Humanities Open Journal* (Volume 7 Issue 1, 2023).
- Paper on "Best Practices in Advancing Family Well-Being in Asia: A Multimethod Qualitative Study" published in the *Asian Social Science* (Volume 19 No.6, 2023).
- Expert Group Meeting (EGM) held in December at The University of Hong Kong as kick-start to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30). Fourteen experts from eight countries/regions in Asia, comprising former policy-makers, academics, researchers and practitioners from tertiary institutes and non-profit organisations exchanged knowledge and insights on "Ageing of Population in Asia" under the megatrend of demographic changes as promulgated by the UN. Ms. Renata KACZMARSKA from UN attended and delivered the Vote of Thanks.

2024

- "Family We-Time" regional campaign again conducted to promote family well-being and raise awareness of spending quality time with family members, involving 33 organisations from 18 countries/regions. 1,068 entries were uploaded onto a photo gallery launched on 15th May to echo the International Day of Families.
- Asian Family Summit 2024 held in December at The University of Hong Kong, with a Family Well-Being Expo included for the public.
- Production of the IYF+30 Commemorative Publication for distribution at the Asian Family Summit 2024 and sent to different stakeholders, interested organisations and individuals thereafter.



Basic information on the previous Regional Symposiums and Asian Family Summits are as follows:

DATE	NAME OF SYMPOSIUM	THEME	VENUE
2008 24th-26th January	CIFA Inaugural Symposium	"Families in Asia: Challenges and Opportunities"	Hong Kong
2010 25th-28th November	2nd CIFA Regional Symposium	"Asian Families in Social Change"	Tokyo, Japan
2012 11th-13th December	3rd CIFA Regional Symposium	"Asian Families: Innovations in Practice & Policies"	Singapore
2014 15th May	Family Summit	"Thoughts for Families: From Shared Vision to Joint Action"	Hong Kong
2014 13th-15th November	4th CIFA Regional Symposium	"Visioning the Future of Families: Policy & Practice"	Shanghai, China

DATE	NAME OF SYMPOSIUM	THEME	VENUE
2016 3rd-5th November	5th CIFA Regional Symposium	"Asian Families: Change & Consistency"	Seoul, South Korea
2018 19th-22nd August	Asian Family Summit 2018	"Sustainable Development & Family Well-Being: Agenda for Action in Asia"	Hong Kong
2021 10th-11th June	6th CIFA Regional Symposium	"Family First: Supporting Asian Families in the Era of Inclusive Growth"	Taiwan
2022 8th-10th November	CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022	"Empowering Asian Families: Embracing Challenges and Building A Better Future."	Singapore
2024 27th-29th December	Asian Family Summit 2024	"Towards A Better Tomorrow For Families: Partnership, Collaboration & Action for Sustainable Development"	Hong Kong



REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM & ASIAN FAMILY CONFERENCE 2022

PLENARY SESSION 2



MODERATOR
Dr Miranda Chung
Chairman of Research & Training Committee, CIFA Hong Kong



Dr Takeshi Tamura
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Marriage and Family Therapy, President of Asian Academy of Family Therapy



Prof Kim Yeong-Hee
Professor, Department of Child Welfare, Chungbuk National University, South Korea



A/P Esther Goh Chor Leng
Associate Professor, Head of Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore



The Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being (3A) Project



The 3A project has been conducted since 2010. With "A" symbolising excellence, the 3 "A"s denote the "Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being." Furthermore, "ASIA" was chosen to be its theme, highlighting the characteristics of "Aspiration for Sustainability, Innovation and Applicability."



Dr. Joseph LEE of Wofoo Social Enterprises has been a staunch supporter since the first launching of the 3A Project which is a regional initiative. To acknowledge our heartfelt thanks to the sponsor, Wofoo Social Enterprises has become the Title Sponsor of the Project since 2014, which was then renamed the "Wofoo 3A Project."



The purpose of the 3A Project is to recognise outstanding projects that have advanced an innovative idea, model or paradigm that improves the quality of life and enhances family well-being. It also serves as a platform to provide an opportunity for the exchange of valuable knowledge and experiences, to replicate and develop family work to suit the circumstances of the different parts of Asia without reinventing the wheel. Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards, the Best Collaborative Award, the Most Innovative Award and the Best Harmony & Abundance Award are given after a rigorous screening and adjudication process. The My Favourite Project is conferred by polling of the audience in the Final Round Adjudication.

Throughout the eight rounds of competition from 2010 to 2024, a total of 256 projects from seven countries/regions in Asia have been attracted to address issues and challenges faced by families under rapid social changes. Exchange programmes have always been organised as well since 2010 to provide opportunities for sharing and exchange, with the Family Council of the Hong Kong SAR being the co-organiser and sponsor. Project brochures were printed, and USBs of project contents were produced and distributed to interested parties and practitioners for wide sharing.





After running this project for more than ten years, the 3A Project Committee wanted to assess its impact on advancing family well-being. We were delighted to have Prof. Vivian LOU, Director of the Sau Po Centre on Ageing and Professor of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration of The University of Hong Kong to conduct data analysis for the winning projects from 2010 to 2018. Finally, a paper named "Multilevel Impacts of the Wofoo Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being: A multimethod qualitative study applying a socio-ecological model" was accepted and published in the *Social Sciences & Humanities Open Journal* (Volume 7, Issue 1, 2023). The paper "Best Practices in Advancing Family Well-Being in Asia: A Multimethod Qualitative Study" was also published in the *Asian Social Science* (Volume 19 No.6, 2023). With these publications, the value of running the 3A project was demonstrated.

From 3A to 4A, the 4A Core Group (4ACG) formed by 10 members from the finalist teams of 3A Projects in the past was set up to build up an "Alliance" among those professionals to sustain the impact of the 3A Project in promoting family well-being work. Representatives of the 4ACG presented a paper on "From 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 the audience.

The Wofoo 3A Project has developed and flourished in the Asian Region in the past year and become a signature activity of CIFA which is highly applauded by participants and family service professionals. We look forward to its further development and collaborative efforts to facilitate cross-regional/organisational collaboration to continue to promote family well-being in Asia and beyond.



Research and Training

Ever since its inception, CIFA has embraced its mission to promote family well-being and build professional knowledge in the Asian regions. It has also advocated a vision of establishing a more proactive, innovative and united family professional front in this changing new era, inviting the joint efforts from family professionals, policy-makers, NGOs and the general public to share their expertise and wisdom to meet challenges of the times to build a better future.

Challenges in the New Era

CIFA is aware of the challenges faced by the contemporary world, especially in the Asian region, which include:

1. Ageing Population – The ageing population has growing evidence leading to serious and wide-ranging impacts all over the world nowadays and in the coming years. Family functioning is severely hampered and in need of enhancement and assistance.
2. Caregiver Challenges – Challenges for carers are abundantly clear and the caregiver shortage issue is imminent and global.
3. Low Birth Rate – Rapid lowering of the birth rate is a serious and global issue, raising alarm to the families and sustainability of the world at large.
4. New ICT Era – In this ICT era, many unforeseen and serious impacts upon families are forthcoming and irrevocable. Innovative and effective measures would be needed to protect and enhance the wellness of families and sustainability and continuous development of the world.



Work of CIFA in Equipping Practitioners to Meet the Challenges

In light of the above, the Research & Training Committee has invited renowned scholars, family practitioners and researchers from different Asian regions including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea and Japan to join hands in promoting family well-being over the past years. The Committee members, with their enthusiasm and strong determination to promote family well-being, have launched several impactful cross-regional studies in Asia. Moreover, the Committee has also invested their efforts in launching training programmes for family professionals, policy-makers as well as related professionals and the public.

The following are examples of studies conducted in the past years:

- Cross-regional study on "Application of Information and Communication Technology in Family Services in Post Pandemic Era In Asia" in 2023/24 (Hong Kong, Shanghai and Taiwan)
- Cross-regional study on "Adolescents Perceived Family Functioning and Quality of Life" in 2018 (Hong Kong, China, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia)
- Cross-regional exploratory study on "Family Happiness in Asian Region" in 2016 (Hong Kong, China, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia)
- Cross-regional study on "Decoding How Contemporary Couples Negotiate Differences in 2010/11 (Hong Kong, China, Japan, Taiwan and Korea)
- Cross-regional survey on "Challenges Faced by Families in Asia Region" in 2010 (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia)
- Study on "Hong Kong Family Happiness Index Survey" in 2008
- Study on "Challenges Faced by Families in Hong Kong" in 2007

In addition, the Research & Training Committee is heavily involved in the organisation of the CIFA's biennial regional symposiums/Asian Family Summits, facilitating exchange among related professionals to review the existing policies and service provision upon evidence-based practice, to contribute to the formulation of future family policies and innovative measures coping with the changes, to achieve CIFA's goal of "Converging Professional Wisdom for Advancing Family Well-being."

The Committee also makes use of CIFA's quarterly e-newsletter, the CIFA-NET to share information on research projects and announce the training activities. Webinars were organised and often hosted by scholars among CIFA Council Members for training and exchange, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period to sustain the momentum.

During the pandemic period in 2021, CIFA co-hosted the "Webinar II: The Impact of the Pandemic on Family Life in Asia" with the Focal Point on the Family of the UN, sharing the findings of the international research project "The Impact of the Pandemic on Family Life Across Cultures," strengthening the relationship of CIFA with the UN and the international community.



Publicity and Promotion

CIFA endeavours to promote the family well-being messages through organising various publicity activities to enhance public awareness, which include the distribution of pamphlets, the use of website CIFA WEP and regular communication with stakeholders and interested parties, production of CIFA badges, pencil cases, the publication "Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-Being" in 2014, and organisation of the "Family We-Time At Home" Challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022. There are also fundraising events such as charity walks and family harmony concerts to pool donors to support CIFA and to enhance individual well-being.



Charity Concerts for Family Well-Being

With full support from the SAR Philharmonic Orchestra, the first charity concert was conducted in 2011, and it has become a significant event of CIFA thereafter. Distinguished world-class and local vocal singers, pianists and musicians have been invited to perform in the events impressing our enthusiastic audience and sponsors. We are very grateful to the SAR Philharmonic Orchestra and all performers for their pro bono services for the promotion of family well-being and fundraising of CIFA, and we look forward to continuous collaborations in the years to come.





Fund-raising Walks for Family Harmony

CIFA also organised charity outdoor walks since 2011 for fundraising purposes as well as providing participants with the chance to exercise their bodies in the fresh air. During these occasions, side activities such as game booths, warm-up exercises, eco-tours, group dancing, etc. are often arranged to add to the fun while encouraging donations to support the development of CIFA's work.



"Family We-Time At Home" Challenge 2022

Challenges to families posed by the COVID-19 pandemic

Asian region and the whole world were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from early 2020 to 2023, which led to social isolation, weakened family life and interpersonal relationships, and mental health issues. Many families experienced anxiety and fear facing the pandemic. Given this extremely challenging situation and in response to the UN celebration of the International Day of Families on 15th May, a new initiative named the "Family We-time at Home" Challenge was launched by CIFA in April 2022 to boost positive energy among family members amid the pandemic and to promote happy family times together at home.



"Family We-time at Home" Challenge 2022

The "Family We-time at Home" Challenge programme was held from April to May 2022, with the climax of the result announcement on the International Day of Families on 15th May 2022. The theme of this event was families spending happy time together, i.e. "Family We-time at Home." The purposes of the event were: (1) To provide an opportunity to encourage the public and all sectors in the community to relax and spend quality time with their families at home through family photography, colouring and drawing competitions; and (2) To generate positive energy in adversities brought about by the pandemic. The event actively promoted positive messages and quality family interactions. Families participating in the campaign would submit their family photography, colouring and drawing pieces to the adjudication panel and compete for various awards. Among all entrants, 10% were chosen for the Gold Awards, 15% for the Silver Awards and 20% for the Bronze Awards. For the other submissions, 25% got the Merit Awards, and 30% got the Participation Awards. All awardees were given an electronic certificate to credit their achievements.



"Family We-time at Home" Photo Collage cum Award Presentation Ceremony

The "Family We-time at Home" Challenge 2022 was a great success and received an overwhelming response from family-based participants in the Asian region. Over 300 entries were received from four participating regions. The photos and works collected from the three competitions were combined and presented to become a "Family We-time at Home" Photo Collage which represented a combination of positive energy from families in the Asian Region. The Photo Collage was displayed during the Online Award Presentation Ceremony held on 15th May 2022 to echo and commemorate the International Day of Families promulgated by the UN. It was also shared with the UN Focal Point on the Family.



CIFA and
IYF+30

In Celebration
of the
30th
Anniversary
of the IYF



CIFA in Celebration of IYF+30

CIFA was invited by the UN to participate in the kick-off meeting conducted by the International Federation of Family Development to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30) 2024 on 17th May 2022 and contribute towards the drafting of the Civil Society Declaration. CIFA also attended the World Family Summit on 28th to 29th June 2022 of the World Family Organisation in collaboration with various UN bodies. On top of these, to echo the call of the UN to celebrate the occasion at local, regional and international levels, a series of activities is organised by CIFA, which include:

EVENT	DATE / PERIOD	OTHER CO-ORGANISER(S)	REMARKS
Cross-Country study “Application of Information and Communication Technology in Family Services in Post-Pandemic Era in Asia”	2023-2024	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Findings presented at the Asian Family Summit 2024
Expert Group Meeting “Ageing of Population in Asia”	2023 30th November – 1st December	Focal Point on the Family, UN Centre for Family and Population Research, National University of Singapore Sau Po Centre on Ageing, The University of Hong Kong	Presentations and recommendations submitted to the UN and uploaded onto the UN website

EVENT	DATE / PERIOD	OTHER CO-ORGANISER(S)	REMARKS
Family We-Time Regional Campaign 2023/24	2023-2024	Child Welfare League Foundation, Taiwan	Family photos and colouring pieces collected from various parts of the Asian Regions which were developed into a collage for presentation on the IYF Day, 15th May 2024
Production of Commemorative Publication “Towards a Better Tomorrow for Families – In celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the IYF”	2024		For distribution in the Asian Family Summit 2024 and circulation to UN, CIFA members and various governments, academia and NGOs in Asia and other parts of the world
Asian Family Summit 2024 “Towards A Better Tomorrow For Families: Partnership, Collaboration & Action for Sustainable Development”	2024 27th-29th December	Social Welfare Department, HKSAR Family Council, HKSAR Connecting Hearts Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of Hong Kong Hong Kong Council of Social Service (Sponsored by the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project)	Target for 600 attendants

Expert Group Meeting



Date:	30th November – 1st December 2023
Theme:	Ageing of Population in Asia
Venue:	The University of Hong Kong
Co-Organisers:	Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) Focal Point on the Family, United Nations Centre for Family and Population Research, National University of Singapore Sau Po Centre on Ageing, The University of Hong Kong
Sponsors:	Social Welfare Department, HKSAR Best Wishes Charity Limited HKU Research Hub of Population Studies

This Expert Group Meeting (EGM) is the first event organised in Asia to kick start the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30) as promulgated by the United Nations. Fourteen experts from eight countries/regions, comprising former policy-makers, academics, researchers and practitioners from tertiary institutes and non-profit organisations exchanged knowledge and insights on the topic of “Ageing of Population in Asia”, under the megatrend of demographic changes.

The EGM included a pre-recorded Opening Address by Mr. Chris SUN, Secretary for Labour and Welfare of the HKSAR, providing an overview of the efforts made in Hong Kong to enhance the well-being of older persons and stimulating thoughts on initiatives and measures to cope with the challenges brought about by the ageing of the population in Asia. Prof. Ian HOLLIDAY, Vice-President of The University of Hong Kong delivered the Welcoming Remarks, and a Vote of Thanks was given thereafter by Ms. Renata KACZMARSKA, Social Affairs Officer, Focal Point on the Family, Division for Inclusive Social Development of the Department of Economic & Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations.

Scientific Programme Sessions of the Meeting comprised the following:

SESSION	TOPIC	SPEAKER
1	Demographic Changes and Impact on Family	Ms. Sabine HENNING Social Development Division, Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific, United Nations Prof. Ming WEN Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Hong Kong Prof. Wei-Jun Jean YEUNG Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore
2	Alleviation of Poverty among Older Persons	Mr. Eduardo KLIEN Asia Pacific Regional Office, HelpAge International Prof. Shih-Jiunn SHI Graduate Institute of National Development, National Taiwan University
3	Well-Being of Older Persons and Enhanced Quality of Life	Prof. Teresa B.K TSIEN Research Centre for Gerontology & Family Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University Prof. Jung-Hwa HA Department of Social Welfare, Seoul National University, South Korea
4	Enabling Environment and Innovations	Dr. Emi KIYOTA Centre for Population Health, National University of Singapore Prof. Shuzhuo LI Center for Ageing and Health Research, Xi'an Jiao Tong University, China



Family We-Time Regional Campaign 2023/24

Following successfully launching the “Family We-Time” Challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022, CIFA decided to organise another “Family We-Time” Campaign in the Asian Region to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the IYF. This time, over 5,000 submissions were attracted.



In response to the United Nations
International Day of Families on 15th May
響應聯合國
515國際家庭日



Submission of Photographs and Colouring Works

As before, the Campaign aimed to promote family values and the importance of spending quality time and happy moments together with family members to build family resilience, especially in the post-pandemic era while celebrating the IYF+30 in 2024. The Campaign was initiated and coordinated by CIFA and co-organised with the Child Welfare League Foundation with support from Lawrence S. Ting School, Douaikai And Aikawa Welfare Association, Buddhist Tzu Chi Charity Foundation, Caritas – Hong Kong and the Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong, in collaboration with like-minded participating organisations in Asia to advance family well-being.

The theme of the Campaign is “Family Daily: Spending Quality Time Together in Clothing, Food & Nutrition, Living & Environment and Travelling & Leisure,” conveying positive family messages and generating positive energy among families through participating in the submission of family photographs and colouring works, attracting over 5,000 entries from 18 Asian countries/regions.

SESSION	TOPIC	SPEAKER
5	Ageism and Age-Friendly Communities	Prof. Vivian LOU Sau Po Centre on Ageing, The University of Hong Kong Dr. Reuben NG Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore
6	Partnership in Achieving SDGs	Mrs. Renata KACZMARSKA Focal Point on the Family, DESA, United Nations Ms. Sabine HENNING Social Development Division, Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific, United Nations
7	Impact of Covid-19 and Recovery Roadmap	Prof. Peng DU Institute of Gerontology, Renmin University of China Dr. Mala Kapur SHANKARDASS Sociologist & Gerontologist, University of Delhi, India

At the Closing Session, Mrs. Renata KACZMARSKA and Mrs. Patricia CHU, Chairperson of CIFA gave the Closing Remarks on Conclusions & Recommendations for the Road Ahead. All participants found the EGM very fruitful and stimulating, with well-prepared presentations and active in-depth deliberations facilitated by experienced moderators. The presentations and conclusions/recommendations were compiled and submitted to the United Nations, for reflection in the Report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the IYF+30. They are also uploaded to the DESA website for a wider audience.





"Family We-time" Photo Collage cum Online Presentation Ceremony on the International Day of Families on 15th May 2024

An Online Presentation Ceremony of the Campaign was held on 15th May 2024 on the International Day of Families. A well-designed photo collage with 1,068 excellent pieces was staged in a Family We-Time Online Gallery featuring family-themed works collected from participating countries and regions, including Brunei, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. The audience was guided to view the Photo Collage. A short video was shown demonstrating the creativity and diversity of the submissions, as well as the heartwarming moments captured by families. The beauty of quality family time in different aspects of life was fondly revealed.



Presentation at the IYF+30 Celebration at the United Nations Headquarters in New York

On the same day 15th May 2024, Prof. Vivian LOU, CIFA Council Member, represented CIFA to attend the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family as well as the 2024 International Day of Families held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. During this prestigious occasion, Prof. LOU gave a brief report on the regional efforts coordinated by CIFA in celebration of the IYF+30 and took the opportunity to present the "Family We-time" Photo Collage and the short video that showcased the creativity and diversity of families in the Asian Region. The global audience was enabled to appreciate the meaningful moments captured by the participating families and the Asian perspective of quality family time, inspiring families worldwide to prioritise family well-being and create lasting family moments together. They were also very much impressed by the work of CIFA in Asia.

Asian Family Summit 2024



Objectives:

1. To examine the challenges faced by families in the megatrends of New Technologies, Urbanisation & Migration, Climate Change and Demographic Changes as reflected in the Reports of the Secretary-General (2020-2021) of the UN and endorsed by the General Assembly resolution in 2021.
2. To review the existing policies, service provision and evidence-based practice, to contribute to the formulation of future family policies and innovative measures of coping with these changes.
3. To raise awareness among Asian countries on the significance of the well-being of families and the need for collaborative efforts to achieve the goal of Converging Professional Wisdom for Advancing Family Well-being - A Key to Sustainable Development.

Date:	27th-29th December 2024
Theme:	Towards A Better Tomorrow for Families: Partnership, Collaboration & Action for Sustainable Development
Venue:	The University of Hong Kong (HKU)
Other Co-Organisers:	Social Welfare Department, HKSAR Family Council, HKSAR Connecting Hearts Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Sponsor:	Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project

DATE	SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME	OTHER PROGRAMMES
27th December 2024	<p>Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Guests of Honour (Pre-recorded Opening Address to be delivered): Mr. John LEE Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR Mr. Junhua LI Under-Secretary-General for Economic & Social Affairs of DESA, UN</p> <p>Keynote Speech 1 Impact of Urbanisation & Migration on Family Prof. Jean YEUNG National University of Singapore & Agency of Science, Technology & Research, Singapore</p> <p>Keynote Speech 2 Implications of Demographic Changes on the Family Structure and Intergenerational Relations in Asia and the Pacific Dr. Srinivas TATA Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations</p> <p>Plenary Session 1 Presentations on Urbanisation/Migration & Family Prof. Peng DU Renmin University of China, China Prof. Patrick NIP World Vision China, Hong Kong SAR Dr. Mine SATO, Yokohama National University, Japan</p> <p>Plenary Session 2 Presentations on Demographic Changes & Family Dr. Corinne GHOSH National University of Singapore, Singapore Dr. Mala Kapur SHANKARDASS Development, Welfare & Research Foundation, India Mr. Kai-Ming HO Labour & Welfare Bureau, Hong Kong SAR</p>	<p>Poster Presentations</p> <p>Welcoming Reception for participants</p> <p>VIP Reception Dinner for invited speakers and VIP guests</p>

DATE	SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME	OTHER PROGRAMMES
28th December 2024	<p>Keynote Speech 3 Environmental Sustainability in Asian Families: Striving for Clean, Healthy and Carbon-Zero Lifestyle Prof. Kin-Chung HO The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR</p> <p>Plenary Session 3 Presentations on Climate Change & Family Dr. John ARUTA De La Salle University, Philippines Dr. Ching-Choi LAM Council for Carbon Neutrality & Sustainable Development, Hong Kong SAR Prof. Dongmei JIANG China Carbon Neutral Development Group Ltd., China</p> <p>Concurrent Session 1 Best Practices Sharing in Asia - Family Well-being Project 2024</p>	<p>Poster Presentations</p> <p>Sight-seeing Activity</p>
29th December 2024	<p>Keynote Speech 4 Being Good Ancestors: Preparing a Positive Technological Future for the Family Prof. Susan WALKER University of Minnesota, USA</p> <p>Plenary Session 4 Presentations on ICT & Family Prof. Kelvin WANG Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project, Hong Kong SAR Ms. Joanne TAY & Dr. Xiaoxuan GUO Ministry of Social and Family Development & SingHealth, Singapore Dr. Herman LO The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong SAR</p> <p>Concurrent Sessions 2, 3 & 4 Closing Ceremony</p>	<p>Family Well-Being Expo</p> <p>Best Practices Sharing in Asia - Family Well-Being Project 2024 Award Presentation Ceremony cum Gala Dinner</p>

Post-Summit Workshops and Agency Visits on 30th December 2024

A. Post-Summit Workshops

1. Multi-Site Implementation Research and Practice in Supporting Informal Caregivers: A Comprehensive Workshop
2. An Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit Approach to Support Families: Finding Balance and Cultivating Compassion in Caregiving
3. Enhancing Couples Relationship for Family Well-Being
4. Introducing Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and its Role in Supporting Family Well-Being

B. Post-Summit Agency Visits

1. KeySteps@JC
2. Community Living Room
3. CIC-Zero Carbon Park
4. Green@Community
5. Carer Space





Ms. Bawany CHINAPAN

Vice-Chairperson (Singapore & Malaysia), CIFA
Clinical Director, Andolfi Family Therapy Center,
Malaysia

Since joining CIFA in 2013 as the Council Member representing HELP University, my journey has been a tapestry woven with enriching experiences and meaningful connections. Taking over from the late Dr Ng Wai Sheng marked the beginning of my involvement and in 2019, I was deeply honoured to accept Mrs. Chu's invitation to serve as the Vice Chairperson for Singapore & Malaysia.

Being part of CIFA has allowed me to delve into the heart of scientific inquiry and collaboration across Asia. The regional symposiums, which I have been privileged to participate in as a member of the Scientific Committee, have consistently been milestones of success. They provide a platform where diverse perspectives converge, fostering a vibrant exchange of knowledge and ideas across the continent and not forgetting the successes of Wofoo 3A Projects among Asian countries.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my journey with CIFA has been the warmth and enthusiasm that permeates our interactions. Each symposium is a celebration of friendship and camaraderie, where bonds are forged over shared passions and mutual respect and in June 2022, we embarked on a new phase with CIFA's inaugural online webinar, a testament to our commitment to innovation and collaboration. Serving as the first panellist was a privilege, and witnessing its success was immensely gratifying.

Through my involvement with CIFA, I have come to appreciate the profound importance of friendship, loyalty, teamwork, trust, and the spirit of unity that transcends borders. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to CIFA's mission and to be part of this vibrant community, with heartfelt gratitude and anticipation for the journey ahead.



Prof. Joyce Yen FENG

Vice-Chairperson (Taiwan), CIFA
Executive Board Member, Child Welfare League
Foundation, Taiwan

CIFA began in 2008 as a platform for practitioners, scholars, and institutions dedicated to enhancing family services in Asia. I had the privilege of joining this INGO as Vice-Chairperson at its inception. CIFA members from Taiwan have eagerly participated in its inspiring symposiums and successfully organised the 6th biennial symposium online in 2021, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also look up to the Wofoo 3A Project contest. Beyond professional seminars, the Asian Family We-time photo collage, which linked 18 Asian countries to promote family values in line with UN IYF+30, demonstrated the organisation's regional impact. I firmly believe that CIFA is crucial for advancing family well-being in Asia.



Prof. Yeong-Hee KIM

Vice-Chairperson (Korea & Japan), CIFA
Emeritus Professor, Chungbuk National University,
Korea

Since participating in the 3A Project in Tokyo in 2010, I have been connected with CIFA and currently serve as the Vice-Chairperson for Korea and Japan. Family has a special meaning to me, and CIFA has deepened my understanding of its values and interconnectedness with the individual and society. It has been a great honour to collaborate with scholars, practitioners, and policymakers from the Asian region for the well-being of families. My involvement at CIFA has been a precious learning experience for me. Not only have I learned academic and practical issues about family, but also from Mrs. Patricia CHU's leadership and personal relationship with CIFA members. Families are healthy when they have true connection and individuality, and CIFA has demonstrated this through its activities and organisations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone for the opportunity to learn so much. When the 6th CIFA Regional Symposium was held in Korea in 2016, it had a great impact on scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and students from other Asian regions as well as Korea, and it is still being remembered by many people even after a lapse of many years.

I look forward to gaining more experience while working with CIFA in the future.



Prof. Meihua ZHU

Vice-Chairperson (China), CIFA
Professor, East China University of Science and
Technology, China

My connection with CIFA came from its biennial regional symposium held at the East China University of Science and Technology in Shanghai in 2014. Since the preparation of this conference, I have met Mrs. Patricia CHU, Dr. Miranda CHUNG, Dr. Agnes NG and other core members of CIFA, whose enthusiasm for work and serious and responsible attitude deeply touched me. In addition, the purpose of CIFA – to strengthen family research and promote family welfare, also coincides with my research interests. So, then I joined in. During the nearly ten years of participation, the deepest feeling is to understand the unremitting efforts and difficulties of such transnational and trans-regional social organisations in promoting family research and family welfare in Asia, the leadership and cohesion of Mrs. CHU, and other Council Members who volunteer their time and wisdom to work together, especially in every symposium, in addition to professional sharing and exchanges at the theoretical level. There is also a 3A Project competition for family services. I hope that more colleagues will join in so that this alliance can exert greater international influence.

Dr. Joseph LEE, GBS, OStJ, JP

Founder and President, Wofoo Social Enterprises

Since 2010, Wofoo Social Enterprises (WSE) has proudly supported the Wofoo Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being Project (Wofoo 3A Project). We hold CIFA in the highest esteem, deeply admiring its multidisciplinary approach and unwavering dedication to strengthening family functioning, promoting family health across the region, and contributing to the global body of knowledge in relationship science.

CIFA's remarkable achievements have earned well-deserved recognition from the United Nations, extending its profound impact far beyond the confines of Hong Kong. We express our sincere gratitude to all those who have dedicated themselves to CIFA over the years, especially Mrs. Patricia CHU and Dr. Agnes NG, whose leadership and dedication have been truly inspirational.

The Wofoo 3A Project's international and regional endeavours in conducting family research have been pivotal in addressing evolving family dynamics and fostering sustainable family development, which strongly aligns with our motto "Harmony brings a family prosperity; cohesion makes a nation wealthy" (人和家富, 民和國富). We are grateful for CIFA's role in facilitating the exchange of ideas and best practices and nurturing a collaborative spirit.

As we look towards the future, WSE remains unwavering in our commitment to supporting CIFA, the Wofoo 3A Project, and programmes that promote family well-being. We believe that by working together, we can extend our shared vision of creating a better home, a better country, and a better world.

It is our fervent hope that in the years to come, more like-minded organisations will join hands with CIFA in this noble endeavour, contributing to the well-being of families and, by extension, the prosperity of our communities and nations.

Ms. Bee Lian ANG

Senior Advisor, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore

CIFA's vision to improve family well-being since its inception has been fulfilled. It has done so by galvanising academic research in the Asian region through active platforms to sharpen ideas. These platforms include the regular CIFA conferences, publications and workshops and the Wofoo 3A Projects which fuel the dynamism in practice research. These efforts continue to converge professional wisdom for family well-being. The projects at the ground that were evaluated and researched have over the years improved the well-being of many and in particular the more vulnerable and disadvantaged in some countries. CIFA in challenging practitioners and academics to present their knowledge for review to draw insights has built a community of cross sharing among CIFA participants.

The sharing of research and insights in the early years was about extending beyond conventional boundaries, embracing diversity and themes across research on supporting family functioning. The next bound of the insights from the research emanating from the CIFA platforms will likely be about the impact of climate change and the ever-rapid social changes across countries with the unstoppable social media interlaced into family lives.

CIFA will grow in importance as it builds a library that enables learners to draw from the past, research to draw insight from the present, to better prepare for the future of family well-being.

Mrs. Loretta CHIU

Director, Best Wishes Charity Limited, Hong Kong

We are a charitable foundation established in 2015 for the relief of the poor and needy, who by reasons of old age, misfortune or infirmity, require medical support, food provisions and remedial services. Over the years, we have been providing financial support to organisations that provide services to cancer patients in need, deliver free food provisions to the needy, or operate elderly nursing homes. Another objective of our foundation is to improve the environment for the upbringing of children.

Recently, we have started our collaboration with CIFA, which includes our support to their Charity Concerts of 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2024, the "Family We-Time at Home" Challenge in 2022, and the Expert Group Meeting in 2023 on Demographic Changes & Ageing Population in Asia to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family promulgated by the United Nations.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate CIFA on the recognition of its work not only in Asia but also in the United Nations. We wish CIFA every success in its further development and endeavours to actualise its mission of "Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-Being."

Dr. Michelle Hang-Yuet TSUI

Specialist in Obstetrics & Gynaecology

I first became aware of the significant work of CIFA when I had the honour of performing at their fundraising concert in 2013. I was deeply moved and inspired by the dedication of these individuals and professionals involved in promoting family health and harmony, particularly in addressing the unique needs and challenges in Asia.

Since then, CIFA has continued to grow and contribute, gaining momentum and recognition. I also had the privilege of performing for CIFA on a few other occasions, sharing my passion for music and commitment to family well-being with a broader audience.

As an obstetrician and gynaecologist, I have the joy of witnessing the beginnings of many young families. I have also seen how families can provide immense comfort and physical support when my patients face illness and ageing. I firmly believe that a healthy and harmonious family provides a secure environment where individuals experience unconditional love and support and is the cornerstone of a better world. As new solutions are always needed to help families negotiate this fast-evolving world, I sincerely wish CIFA all the best in the years to come.

Mr. Chi-Tong LAI

Council Member, CIFA
Adviser/Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association
Social Service, Hong Kong

CIFA was established to support and enhance family well-being in the Asian Region through the sharing of clinical experience and the advancement of public policies in support of families.

Since its establishment in 2008, I have been involved in CIFA's work of different natures. By now, it is almost 16 years. Over time, CIFA has organised many events relating to family well-being, like conducting trans-disciplinary training, workshops, service competitions, briefing and information sharing sessions, research, exhibitions, biennial regional symposiums, etc. and they all were well received.

I believe the work of CIFA, to a greater extent, has achieved its purpose just mentioned and developed as well as expanded quickly in several ways. Its success, one that impresses me most is its well-structured organisation administering the whole agency, in which the committees and working groups, with clear working objectives and division of labour, are working closely among members collaboratively and diligently. The committees and working groups are formed by individual professionals or service organisations interested in family matters coming from different cities or countries in the Asian Region. Under the outstanding leadership of the Chairperson, Mrs. Patricia CHU, members will be teamed up, steered and encouraged to contribute their professional knowledge and expertise voluntarily to CIFA while their resources are at the same time suitably mobilised. In doing so, the synergy of collaboration effectively functions and the spirit of converging professional wisdom for family well-being is naturally actualised. The working tasks of CIFA are then successfully accomplished.

I am sure CIFA will develop quicker and stronger in the future!

Ms. Eliza Yee-Wan LAM

Council Member, CIFA
Head of Caritas Academy, Caritas – Hong Kong

I am very impressed by the mission of CIFA in envisioning our service with a global vision collaborating to strengthen family functioning and promote family health. I got in close contact with CIFA at the Asian Family Summit 2018 in which I served on one of the organising committees. It enlightened me when I learned from different experienced professionals in the family service sector, their zest for sustaining the service, and their passion for fostering innovation in the next generation. As the past Head of Family Service of Caritas – Hong Kong, my staff team is always empowered by the Wofoo Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being Project (Wofoo 3A Project), which is the signature activity of CIFA. In the period when "succession plan" is the key focus of agencies in Hong Kong, CIFA plays an important role in the milestone of nurturing our next generation of successors.



CIFA
in Asia
The Regional Hub

CIFA Information

CIFA Mission/Vision

CIFA is a regional organisation in Asia that provides a platform for transdisciplinary collaboration with the ultimate goal of strengthening family functioning and promoting family health in the region while contributing to the body of knowledge in relationship science in the international arena.

It is registered as a company incorporated with limited liability and a non-profit organisation under relevant ordinances in Hong Kong. Independent and serving as a regional hub for networking with similar organisations/interested professionals, CIFA supports and enhances mutual interests in research and training initiatives and shares clinical experiences and policy formulation on families which are unique to the Asian region.

CIFA Slogan

"Converging Professional Wisdom
for Family Well-Being"

CIFA LOGO



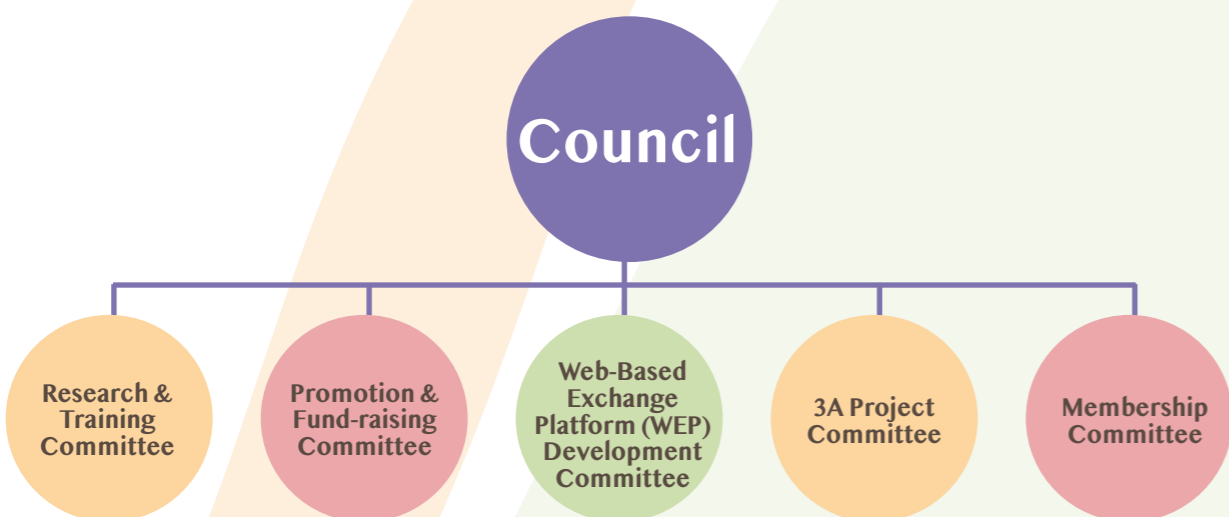
The design carries the vision and mission of CIFA. The logo graphics imply a SET-IN-MOTION, a MOVING-FORWARD, a CLOSE-LINK and SUPPORT amongst different realms. The colours portray a happy, healthy, joyful, optimistic and constructive attitude. Different colours in the logo symbolise components in four major areas:

1. Evidence-based Research
2. Clinical Practice
3. Transdisciplinary Training
4. Information Exchange

UN Special Consultative Status

CIFA was granted Special Consultative Status by the United Nations in 2021, which is a formal recognition of our efforts in enhancing FAMILY WELL-BEING in Asia.

Organisational Structure



Council 2023-2025

Honorary Advisor:	Ms. Elsie Oi-Sie LEUNG, GBM, JP, HKSAR
Chairperson:	Mrs. Patricia Pak-Yu CHU, BBS, Hong Kong
Vice-Chairpersons:	Ms. Bawany CHINAPAN, Malaysia (for Singapore & Malaysia) Prof. Joyce Yen FENG, Taiwan Prof. Yeong-Hee KIM, Korea (for Korea & Japan) Prof. Meihua ZHU, China
Honorary Secretary:	Ms. Cindy Yan-Yee YIU, Hong Kong
Honorary Treasurer:	Ms. Yee-Mui LAM, Hong Kong
Members:	Ms. Angie Hiu-Yuen CHAN, Hong Kong Ms. Brenda Yin-Ting CHUNG, Hong Kong Dr. Miranda Lai-Foon CHUNG, Hong Kong Dr. Steve Fu-Fai FONG, Hong Kong Ms. Tabitha Wai-Man HO, Hong Kong Mr. Wai-Keung KWOK, Hong Kong Mr. Chi-Tong LAI, Hong Kong Ms. Eliza Yee-Wan LAM, Hong Kong Ms. Wai-Fong LOK, Hong Kong Prof. Vivian Wei-Qun LOU, Hong Kong Dr. Agnes Kwok-Tung NG, Hong Kong Prof. April Chiung-Tao SHEN, Taiwan Ms. Alice Ngai-Teck WAN, Hong Kong Ms. Phoebe Tak-Yan WAN, Hong Kong
Honorary Legal Advisor:	Ms. May TSUI (Marie Tsang, Dustin Chan & Co.) (2023-24)
Honorary Auditor:	Mr. Edwin CHIU (T.C. Ng & Company CPA Limited)

Towards a Better Tomorrow for Families


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