CIFA-Net

Converging PROFESSIONAL WISDOM FOR Family Well-Being

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Message from Mrs. Patricia CHU, Chairperson, CIFA

Despite the continuous challenges posed by the pandemic, the work of CIFA continued with the support of new technology. The quarter has been a very busy and fruitful one with the Council and its committees taking up actions to follow through their plans and organising activities to actualise the various initiatives.

These include the revamping of the CIFA website, with a view to launch a more user-friendly one with new functions in September this year. The Organising Committee of the CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022 is taking active steps to finalise the Scientific Programme and development of the event website which will be launched in July to facilitate online registration. The 3A Committee has organised the Reunion Forum with representatives from award winning teams in the past rounds of Wofoo 3A Project. With the enthusiastic support from participants, the 4A (Alliance) Core Group will be formed to map out plans for further development. The Research and Training Committee, in collaboration with the Membership Committee, has organised a very successful Webinar on "Skills of Helping Asian Families Under Stress" generating much discussion and sharing. Last but not the least, the Publicity & Fund-Raising Committee has attempted, for the first time, to organise the Family We-time At Home Challenge, a new initiative to cultivate positive energy among family members in the midst of the pandemic. Details of some of these activities can be found in this issue.

Another very exciting development is the preparation for the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of Family (IYF+30) as promulgated by the United Nations. CIFA has been invited to join global efforts on this front, and the Working Group on IYF+30 set up by the Council has kick started the planning of various activities. The piece on this subject will provide information on these initiatives and we look forward to full support and active participation from various parts of Asia.

In this issue, we have also included two articles by member organisations on their efforts in helping families to cope with the pandemic and enhancing parent education to empower parents, giving us much food for thought in adopting innovative approaches in close partnership with practitioners and researchers in addressing family issues.

Enjoy reading this issue and think of ways in which you can contribute towards actualising the vision of CIFA in advancing family being. We need your continuous support and active participation!

Hong Kong Family Welfare Society (HKFWS)

Member Organisation of CIFA

HKFWS is a charitable non-governmental social welfare organisation established in 1949. With a family perspective, the Society is dedicated to provide a range of quality and professional services for families and individuals in Hong Kong and foster a caring community. Types of services include Integrated Family Services, Integrated Children and Youth Services, Elderly and Community Support Services, Child Care Services and Special Services. We have also initiated a variety of experimental and innovative services and approaches to meet the needs arising in the community.

New Challenges and Chances for enhancing social connection and social resources for families during and post COVID-19 Pandemic

"Fight Against Virus • Add Love to Families' Project"

Under the pandemic, "work from home" and "study from home" have become new normal and created tension among family members, particularly for those families staying at overcrowded home environment most of time. In response, the Society kicked off the ***"Fight Against Virus • Add Love to Families"*** *Project* to send positive messages to Hong Kong Families during these stressful times. Dedicated webpage was set up to offer tips from our professional social workers for using innovative ways of maintaining positive family relations and mental health.

Series of WhatsApp stickers, "Guide on Fighting Against COVID-19", "Mental Health Booklet" and "Learn at home Booklet" for parents were produced to facilitate family members to express their concern and support to fight against the pandemic.

Release the Findings of Hong Kong Family Wellbeing Index (HKFWI) during COVID-19 pandemic to trace and echo the families in need.

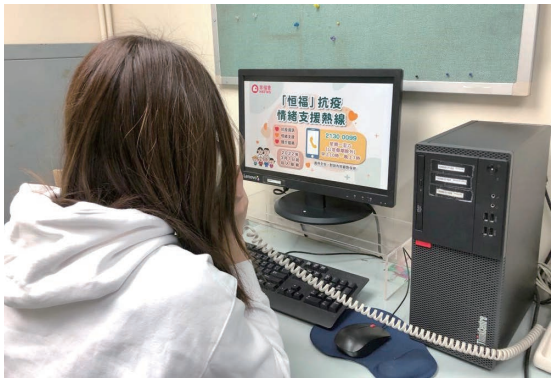
We recognise the importance of family well-being to the healthy growth of individual members as well as the sustainable development of society as a whole. In the absence of information on the level of well-being of local families in Hong Kong, we commissioned the Department of Social Work of The Chinese University of Hong Kong to develop an indigenous family wellbeing index to inform us and stakeholders of families about the level of family wellbeing in Hong Kong.

HKFWI—Online questionnaire (http://www.hkfws.org.hk/hkfwi)

Family getting worse in "Social Connection" and "Social Resources"

Hong Kong has experienced in the past 2 years when local families, like families all over the world, have been plagued by the economic and social impacts brought about by the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. The well-being of Hong Kong families has further deteriorated with the percentage of respondents scoring "average" on the overall HKFWI dropping from 6.31 (50%) in the first release of 2019 to 6.10 (43%) in the second release of 2022, mainly due to weakening in the areas of "social connection" and "social resources". Those scored "poor" has increased to 19 % during the same period. It is quite timely that HKFWI can play a vital role to chronicle the various aspects of family wellbeing at this moment to form part of the trend we have been tracing and match with our focus of the frontline service to enhance social connection and social resource, particularly important to support them under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enhancing "Social Connection" to support those deprived families, children and elders, strengthen their family resilience under COVID-19



- With the support and funded by Hang Seng Bank (Hong Kong), we have launched the project of Community COVID Support Hotline and Care pack Distribution, to give emotional support and care pack donation to those deprived families and individuals to breakthrough loneliness and social isolation, promoting hope and care in the community.

- Apart from receiving the call–in hotline service, approximately about 5000 Warm Calls to support were made by volunteers to HKFWS elder users to show concern during pandemic and to teach how to use RAT. Over 100 volunteers recruited including university students/Hang Seng staffs and 5,000 set of care packs had been distributed at 38 points over the territory.

- Our social workers also liaised with the private elderly home, particularly those greatly affected under the wave-5 which are located near one of our integrated service centres to arrange the volunteers of our Careline service to provide on-line visit to their elders, talking with elders and doing physical exercise via zoom. Our IFSCs also reached out to the deprived singleton elders who were being quarantined at home, by organizing volunteer to deliver daily necessity to them.

Connecting families with social resources of emergency fund and anti-pandemic materials

- HKFWS Love for Family" Anti-epidemic Fund was set up to provide financial assistance to families and those in need under the COVID-19 pandemic to get through the critical moments during their hardships. The fund supports the basic living expenses and consumption of anti-epidemic materials.

Connecting families to provide services by changing to the online or hybrid service mode

- Despite the pandemic, our Family Mental Health Service still strived to provide holistic support to the needy families and individuals. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) continued to be conducted in our 6 integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs), aiming at enhancing participants' understanding of their sources of stress, improving problem solving skills, specially under the stress of the pandemic.

- Maintaining family bonding for Children from Divorced Families to keep stable connection with their non -residing parents through various online platform under the Pandemic

Way Forward

Facing the rapid changes of local and global environment, the uncertainty for post-COVID-19 and the benefit of hindsight of the fifth wave pandemic in Hong Kong, we are encouraged to reinvigorate the concept of "mutual support of neighbours" and to enhance family social connection and social resources for family well-being. HKFWS, being one of major NGOs in Hong Kong, we are committed to walk hand in hand with families to face with unprecedented challenges and build caring community for families with innovative mode of service in the new era of technology advancement.

賽馬會你想家長搵力計劃
Jockey Club Project IDEAL

Organized by HKCSS 社聯75

Funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

Hong Kong Jockey Club's IDEAL Project

Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Member Organisation of CIFA

Introduction

IDEAL Project, a 3-year project funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, has been launched between September 2020 and August 2023. It is a joint collaboration project among The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), The Department of Social Work of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and different NGOs in Hong Kong.

Rationale

Families are the basic units of our society. When families are in trouble, the society will be at stake. In Hong Kong, parent education services are mainly provided by the education, social welfare and health sectors, and the formats normally would include public education through mass media, talks, small group programs and family life camps, etc. Parent education is empowering parents if it activates parents' strengths and capabilities such that they begin to appreciate the possibilities of positive changes. They would feel that they are being treated as active learners and competent parents who are striving to provide their children with quality care and family experience for positive child development. Therefore, the "transformative learning approach" which has a different set of assumptions about learning and the role of learners and educators has been adopted in the IDEAL Project. The goal of transformative learning approach is to develop individuals who can learn to critically reflect their values and perspectives. From the learning process, the parents could become more autonomous, socially responsible and informed decision makers who are able to arrive at more dependable viewpoints.

Project Objectives

1. To facilitate mindset change in the perception of parenting and parenting education among the professional sectors;
2. To promote joyful and empowering parent education through collaboration among NGOs;
3. To cultivate a pro-family culture and family-friendly environment by mobilising cross-sector concerted efforts.

What is IDEAL?

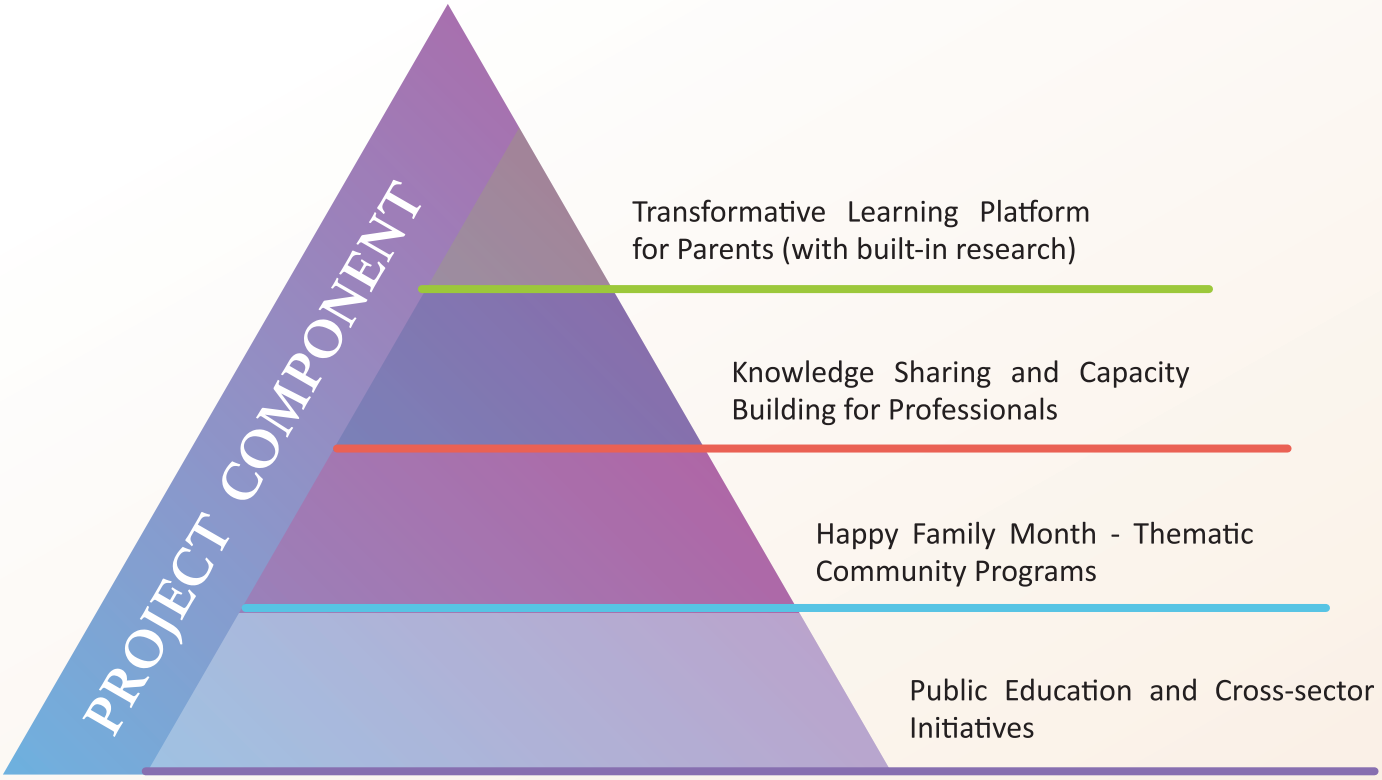
Inspiration – Inspire parents to think about meaning of parenthood and accompany their children through their growth and development.

Development – Help parents to connect and enhance parent-child relationships through reviewing their life development stories.

Empowerment – Empower parents' self-efficacy and confidence to face the parenthood anxiety.

Autonomy – Assist parents to guide their own life and be courageous to face challenges in society.

Transformative Learning – Encourage parents to take the initiative to learn how to become better parents and build up mutual support groups with other parents.



Specialist team of CUHK acts as the key trainer and consultant. Workshops and consultation services were provided for the professional staff of collaborating NGOs to equip them with professional attitudes, knowledge, and skills required for designing and implementing parent education programs adopting an empowerment approach

A total of 10 Collaborating NGOs have been invited to co-design and implement transformative learning platforms for parents, aiming to embrace the experiences of parenthood and facilitate critical reflection of life experiences by using transformative learning approach

List of NGO platforms

1. Caritas Hong Kong
2. Evangelical Lutheran Church Social Service-Hong Kong
3. Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council
4. Hong Kong Children and Youth Services
5. Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups
6. Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service - Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod
7. International Social Service Hong Kong Branch
8. St. James' Settlement
9. The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
10. Yan On Tong

Meeting the COVID-19 Pandemic Challenges

Witnessing all the Hong Kong families suffering a lot of pressures and encountering tremendous difficulties due to the severe COVID-19 pandemic attack, the JC Project IDEAL, with all collaborating NGO platforms, has the mission to empower parents to ride through all these challenges and to build a better future for Hong Kong.

JCProjectIDEAL

Preparation for celebration of the International Year of the Family (IYF) +30

The International Year of the Family (IYF) was first celebrated by the United Nations in 1994. In 2014, CIFA produced a publication namely "Converging Professional Wisdom For Family Well-Being" to commemorate the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of IYF. The publication was widely distributed and a copy was sent to the Focal Point on the Family of the UN. It was the first time that CIFA is made known to the UN and since then a close dialogue has been established between CIFA and UN.

In the subsequent years, representatives of the UN have officiated at the CIFA activities including the 5th CIFA Regional Symposium in Seoul, Korea in 2016 and Asian Family Summit in Hong Kong in 2018, as well as Exchange Programme on Wofoo 3A Project and Charity Concert on Family Harmony in 2017. There is growing recognition from UN with the work of CIFA included in the General Secretary's report to the General Assembly and uploaded onto the UN portal. As a result, CIFA has been granted Special Consultative Status by the NGO Branch of the Economic and Social Council of the UN in 2021. This is a formal recognition of the vision/mission and work of CIFA in enhancing family well-being in Asia and beyond and enables CIFA to participate more actively in the activities of UN and contribute its knowledge and experience on family work.

In May 2020, the Focal Point on the Family of UN has extended invitations to government and NGO world-wide, including CIFA, to plan ahead in preparation for the celebration of IYF+30 in 2024 at local, regional and global levels. In response to UN's call, a Working Group on IYF+30 has been formed to plan the following activities to be held in 2023-2024:

1. **Expert Group Meeting on a Megatrend in Asia - Ageing of population under the megatrend of Demographic Changes**
2. **Joint project in the spirit from 3A to 4A**
3. **Cross country study**
4. **Regional campaign on promoting family well-being**
5. **Asian Family Summit**
6. **Production of a commemorative publication**

To keep abreast of global efforts in preparation of the IYF+30, and through the connection of Renata of the Focal Point on the Family, CIFA has been invited and attended the Kick-off meeting in preparation of celebration of IYF+30 held on 17 May 2022, organised by the International Federation of Family Development (IFFD) and CIFA will contribute to the Civil Society Declaration. CIFA has also attended the World Family Summit on 28-29 June organised by the World Family Organisation in collaboration with various UN bodies on the theme of InvestInFamilies, highlighting SDGs 11—Sustainable Cities and Strong Communities-linked to the SDG 1,2,3,4 and 5, to consolidate views, beliefs and work towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals with NO FAMILY LEFT BEHIND. It has provided an excellent opportunity to learn about initiatives in various parts of the world for family well-being, generating enlightening sharing and exchange.

Let's gear ourselves up and join hands to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family!

Family We-time At Home Challenge

Hong Kong and the rest of the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to social isolation, affecting family life, interpersonal relationships and mental health. In this extremely challenging pandemic situation, CIFA has actively promoted positive messages and successfully organised the "Family We-time at Home" Challenge in April 2022, generating positive energy through family photography, coloring and/or drawing competitions. The smooth holding of the "Family We-time at Home" Challenge was made possible by the strong and generous support from Lee Kum Kee Family Foundation (Title Sponsor), Best Wishes Charity Limited (Diamond Sponsor), Family Council and Wofoo Social Enterprises (as Supporting Organisations), and Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association, Hong Kong Anti-Cancer Society and New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (as Advertisement Sponsors).

We are most encouraged to have received 306 entries, including those from China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. The Award Presentation Award has been held online on 15 May, 2022, to commemorate the International Day of Families promulgated by the United Nations. CIFA is most honoured to have Ms. Melissa Pang, Chairman of Family Council to be the Guest of Honour at the Ceremony.

The photos and works collected from the three competitions have been combined and presented in the form of a "Family We-time at Home" Photo Collage which represented a combination of positive energy from families in the Asian Region. The Photo-Collage has been displayed at the Award Presentation Ceremony, as well as uploaded onto the CIFA website. It will also be shared with the Focal Point on the Family of the United Nations.

Wofoo 3A Project: "Reunion and Relationship Building" Forum

The concept of from 3A to 4A, i.e "Alliance" of Wofoo 3A Project was conceived in 2020. Building on the findings of the Study on Best Practices and Social Impacts of Wofoo 3A Project led by CIFA and Prof. Vivian Lou of the University of Hong Kong, further efforts have been made to produce more synergy by appealing for active involvement from participating teams in the various rounds of competition, and to build upon the momentum created thus far for consolidating learning and sharing, both in terms of knowledge management and good practices, to bring it to another level and create higher impact.

The "Reunion and Relationship Building" Forum held on 6 June was the first step of moving from 3A to 4A. 19 teams (with 25 representatives) out of 48 teams (finalist teams from the past 6 rounds of 3A Project) participated in the Forum. The Forum went on smoothly and the participants showed much enthusiastic and full support to the formation of the Alliance. A Core Group will be formed by participants to map out the way forward in the development of the Alliance. A summary of the Forum is being prepared and will be sent to all the past 3A winning teams in order to keep them posted and motivate more teams to join this initiative. The second meeting is scheduled to be held in September 2022.

We look forward to your active participation to make this regional initiative, the Alliance a success!

Webinar on "Skills of Helping Asian Families under Stress"

CIFA has a plan to organise quarterly Webinars with the view to provide opportunities for professional learning and exchange among family practitioners, researchers, policy makers and University students from the Asian regions and beyond. The Webinars will be hosted by Vice Chairpersons from various regions/countries in Asia, together with invited speakers to cover family related issues and stimulate our thoughts on how we can provide evidence-based practice and formulate policies for the well-being of families.

The Webinar on "Skills of Helping Asian Families under Stress" was successfully held on 15 June, with 110 enrolments and over 80% participation throughout the session. Ms. Bawany Chinapan, Vice-chairperson of Malaysia & Singapore and Senior Lecturer in Psychology Department of the HELP University, Malaysia and Dr. Herman Hay-Ming Lo, Associate Professor of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University had been invited to speak and share with the participants on the topics of "Couples Communication" and "Application of Mindfulness-based Intervention in Supporting Families Across Family Life Cycle" respectively. Their enlightening presentations had generated much discussion and sharing. The overall response was very positive and encouraging remarks had been received. The video recording of the Webinar has been uploaded onto CIFA website for the reference of those who could not attend the event.

The next Webinar will be held in September 2020, exact date and theme to be announced. Please watch out for the announcement on CIFA website!