

Combating Family Poverty with Social Enterprise

MA Timothy
Project Consultant, Project Flame
The City University of Hong Kong

There are various causes of family poverty. It is even more unfortunate if the family member is not able to participate in the economic activity and the poverty continues, which at the same time may result in inter-generational poverty. This paper aims to discuss what leads to family poverty and tries to explore the feasibility of using social enterprise model to alleviate family poverty in Hong Kong.

Poverty in Hong Kong

According to the Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2012 issued by the Commission on Poverty in September 2013, up to 2012, the monthly income of more than 400,000 households i.e. 15.2% of Hong Kong population) are below the poverty line. 5.8 % of them are the working poor who fail to lead a basic life, without a job and income.

Multiple Causes of Family Poverty

There are multiple causes of Family Poverty in Hong Kong, namely: Influx of new arrivals, increase of family carers, unskilled workers, and continuous high living cost. All these have contributed to the family poverty in Hong Kong which require innovative solution to combat with the issue.

Social Enterprise: A Feasible Solution to Family Poverty in Hong Kong

To combat family poverty, both the government and non-

governmental organizations have strived to propose both short-term and long-term solutions in Hong Kong, such as set up of Commission on Poverty, funding support for food bank, and increasing subsidies for low-income families. Apparently the Hong Kong Government welfare system has provided only short-term solutions to family poverty. Long-term solutions could be found in new social enterprises aiming to provide opportunities for developing the poor's potentials and enhancing their working skills. It is believed that with increased self-confidence, self-respect and work ability of these family members, inter-generational poverty can be prevented in the long run.

Successful Social Enterprises in Hong Kong

According to local statistics, up to 2014, there are totally 457 social enterprise projects in Hong Kong, with an annual growth of 30%. Currently 40% of these social enterprises are related to food and 2/3 of them could achieve break-even or start to make profit. Reportedly, these social enterprises have employed 10,000 under-privileged people. The sustainability of the social enterprises is 25% against the general SME 20% in two years' time.

The Community Nanny Scheme, the Maternity Helper Service and the Easy Home Service are three successful social enterprises in Hong Kong that have brought changes and opportunities to the poor families. They

have applied innovation, marketing skills, high quality service, and IT techniques to alleviate the family poverty in Hong Kong.

1) Community Nanny

The Community Nanny Scheme targets on families with children under 6 years old. This Scheme aims to promote community cohesion, provide child care service to free working parents in the community and to improve the family income in the long term. All community nannies are well trained and possess qualities of maturity, responsibility, tidiness and orderliness. To ensure service quality, social workers would also carry out assessment of the nannies' home management abilities as well. In response to the positive feedback, the Community Nanny Scheme has been operated by various NGOs in 18 districts of Hong Kong.

Since the induction of this service, thousands of mothers have been able to join the labor market and contribute to improve their family situation.

2) Maternity Helper

Since nuclear families are predominant in Hong Kong, new and young couples are facing problems in taking care of newborn babies at home. In response to the growing service demand for maternity helpers, Hong Yat Maternity Helper Scheme is the first social enterprise that delivers this service in Hong Kong. This Scheme makes good use of the motherhood experience of unskilled women from low income families and empowers them to offer maternity helper service. They are trained to take care of new born babies, to support mothers both in physical and psychological aspects. This Scheme also assists the helper to build up their own mutual support network and develop their spirits in giving help and self-help. Moreover, it has also succeeded to promote community cohesion and precaution of post-natal depression as well.

In turn, these maternity helpers from low-income families have contributed to improve their family income and helped to alleviate their families from poverty.

3) Easy Home Service

Senior Citizen Home Safety Association (the Association), the biggest social enterprise in Hong Kong has been receiving requests for door to door home service for families with chronic disease patients, the disabled and families cannot provide accommodation for domestic helpers. Since 2008, the Association has succeeded to launch a new Easy Call System that sends SMS message/group message to the home service workers in the same district once the call centre receives request for service. Home workers can just send back a SMS to confirm whether they would take the order or not. In

case more than one YES message received for the same order, the System would perform screening and pick the most appropriate candidate by checking their previous experience, performance and capabilities.

The Easy Home Service offers incentive payment to attract and retain workers who have experience or qualifications in serving the challenging customers, such as demented elderly or people with incontinence. Currently, the Easy Home Service provides more than 5,000 hours home care service every month, enabling over a thousand Easy Home Service Workers to have stable income and alleviate them from poverty.

Investment Impact

According to a study on Social Impact on Investment, every dollar funded by the Hong Kong Government, the beneficiary would get HK\$7.2 in 9 years. By learning through working, many vulnerable persons working for social enterprises can gradually build up their self-confidence and enter the labor market in the long term. Investment impact will definitely be achieved if we could integrate social enterprise model, innovation, resources in the community together with the social service demands.

Conclusion

Family Poverty could be solved in many ways. The most important approach is to integrate information and communication technology, flexibility, creative / innovative strategies and motivation, encouraging members from the poor families to rebuild their self-confidence and re-enter the labor market in Hong Kong. Thus, the family poverty would be dealt with properly and effectively at the end of the day. Last but not least, it would effectively prevent the inter-generational poverty.

Note: This paper is abstracted from the plenary presentation of Mr. Timothy MA at the 4th CIFA Regional Symposium held in Shanghai, China in November 2014.



Newsletter of Consortium of Institutes
on Family in the Asian Region

Converging Professional
Wisdom For Family
Well-being



Message from Mrs. Patricia CHU Chairperson CIFA

In this quarter, both the Korean team and the CIFA secretariat are busily engaged to finalize the details of the 5th Regional Symposium, with the website launched in mid-May to provide information on the symposium, invite academics, government officials and professionals in the region to join the symposium, and to submit abstracts for paper and oral presentation. We are pleased to inform that Ms. Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Social Policy & Development of the Department of Economic & Social Affairs of the United Nations is actively considering to accept our invitation to be the Guest Of Honor at the Opening Ceremony and to officiate at the Award Presentation Ceremony of the Wofoo 3A Project 2026 in Seoul. We look forward to her presence which we believe will bring the profile of CIFA to yet a higher level.

In this issue, I will be sharing my Fond Memories of Seoul which have been accumulated over the years since I first set foot on Korean soil in 1992, and strengthened in recent years upon building up closer acquaintance with Korean people and culture.

There is a world-wide concern over family poverty and the topic had been chosen as one of the main themes in global efforts to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014. In this issue, Mr. Timothy Ma, Consultant of Project Flame of the City University of Hong Kong is sharing his insight and experience in adopting the social enterprise model to alleviate family poverty in Hong Kong.

The Wofoo Social Enterprises, a member organization of CIFA is continuing its efforts on the “Hands On Family” campaign to promote family bonding and foster social harmony. In 2016, WSE has adopted “Family Sports” to reconnect family members through exercising together to cultivate not only health, but Love and Care.

We look forward to seeing you at the exciting symposium in Seoul in November. Meanwhile, take a good summer break and be refreshed and revitalized for an important milestone in the development of CIFA.



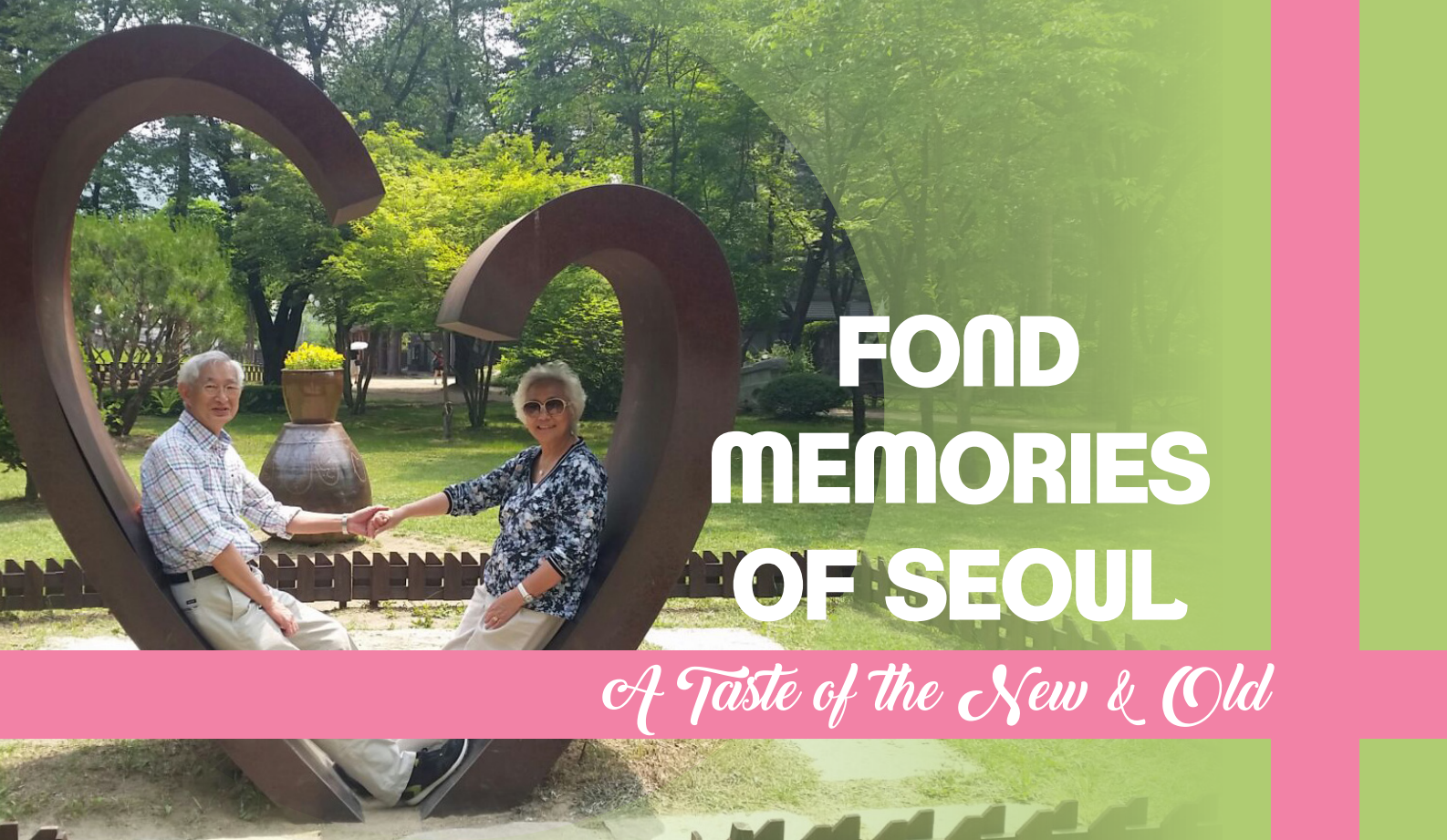
13TH ISSUE
APR - JUN 2016

CIFA-NET EDITORIAL GROUP MEMBERS:

Dr. Miranda Chung, Mr. Timothy Li, and Dr. Herman Lo.
Contribution of articles are welcome. Please express your interest to the editorial group through email info@cifa-net.org.

SECRETARIAT:

6/F, Tsan Yuk Hospital, 30 Hospital Road, Sai Ying Pun, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2859 5301 Fax: (852) 2559 1813
Email: info@cifa-net.org Web: <http://www.cifa-net.org>



I have visited Seoul for 5 times since 1992. For the first trip, I attended the 47th Meeting of the Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific of the United Nations as a representative from the Hong Kong Government. Then in 2004 I attended the Global Summit for Women and the Asia Pacific Forum of Human Rights as the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission. For all these three trips, I stayed at the grand Lotte Hotel which was told by many as the designated hotel for Korea to host international or high level official meetings in those days.

Busy attending sessions and meeting delegates from other countries, I had no time to see much of the beautiful city of Seoul, except to visit one of the old palaces where a reception was hosted by the mayor, to enjoy a traditional Korea BBQ in one of the local restaurants and strolled through the streets of the old night market of Dongdaemun and Myeong-dong. I was most impressed by the wide variety of kimchi available in the food hall of the Lotte Department Store next to the hotel, and the hawker sitting on the stool above a burning stove to keep himself warm from the cold in the night market. Although there was much work and little time for fun, I have fond memories of these visits to Seoul.

Having taken up the chairmanship of CIFA, I have more opportunities of meeting academics, professionals and government officials from various parts of Asia, and among them Prof. Kim Yeong Hee of the Chungbuk National University of Korea who was later elected as one of the Vice-chairpersons of CIFA. Through her dedication and networking for the development of CIFA, the Council

decided that the 5th CIFA Regional Symposium be held in Seoul in November 2016, after that in Shanghai, (2014) Singapore (2012) and Tokyo (2010). In preparation for the Symposium, I led a number of Council members to visit Seoul in Oct/Nov 2015 to meet co-organizers to work out the framework for collaboration. Apart from work, the group had a wonderful time in Seoul and nearby countryside, thanks to the kind arrangement of Prof. Kim. We were able to catch the glimpses of the golden ginkgo trees, the secret garden of the palace, visited the cultural streets and the busy shopping area in Myeong-dong and tried the traditional Korea food. It was a delightful experience of the old and new.

Korea has, in recent years, become a very popular destination for Hong Kong travelers, and with the full support of the Korean government and corporations, many of the international conventions are being held in Seoul. I took the opportunity of accompanying my husband Antonio to join the Rotary International Convention in Seoul in May this year, and to catch up with the Korean team in the planning of the Regional Symposium.

I had the chance of visiting the Sejong Hotel which is the Headquarters Hotel for Symposium officials and delegates. It is very conveniently located in the centre of city and in the vicinity of shopping areas. I tried the route from the hotel to the National Museum of Korea where the symposium will be held. It is an almost seamless one where delegates just walk out of the hotel and get onto the subway which brings you to the symposium venue without experiencing the hustle of changing of trains.



The National Museum of Korea is the flagship museum of Korean history and art in Korea and is the cultural organization that represents Korea. Thanks to unflinching efforts of the Korean team, CIFA is really honored and fortunate to have the opportunity to have the 5th Regional Symposium at this prestigious venue. It is spacious, well designed with facilities set in a relaxing environment with a lot of greens. We visited the Main Auditorium for the key sessions, the Education Centre for concurrent sessions, the Premium Food Court where delegates can use coupons to choose from a wide variety of cuisine. We even tasted the menu for the Gala Dinner at the restaurant where the Award Presentation Ceremony of the Wofoo 3A Project 2016 will be held. It is both reassuring and comforting to know that all things are well planned and organized under the able hands of the Korea team, and I am confident that we will have a very successful and exciting symposium in Korea.

I am particularly indebted to Prof. Kim for taking time, amongst her very busy schedule, to come all the way to Seoul to show me around, not only the hotel and venue, but seeing other interesting places such as the Art Village where every building is a piece of art, the Seoul Tower

where lovers tie their locks to pledge eternal love, and tasted a traditional Korean BBQ.

For the rest of the stay I have a further chance to taste the new and old of Korean life style by joining the Rotarians of my husband's club and continue the exciting journey such as learning to make kimchi, trying the traditional Korean costume, visiting the Nami Island and Samcheong dong where many of the Korean soap operas on TV were shot, and tasting the famous ginseng chicken and palsaik BBQ etc.

All these fond memories of Korea will be treasured by me and my husband. The upcoming symposium in Seoul in November will provide us further opportunity to explore the interesting culture of Korean people and many beautiful places which the Korean people are proud to share with the rest of the world. I would like to recommend you to join the symposium, and also take the chance to explore this interesting country which has a deep rooted link with the Chinese culture, and at the same time taking the lead in modern technology development. It is really a melting pot of the new and old!



5th CIFA Regional Symposium

Theme: Asian Families: Changes & Consistency
Date: 3 to 5 November, 2016
Venue: National Museum of Korea at Ichon-dong, Korea
Website: <http://cifa2016seoul.org>

Please note that upon popular request, the deadline for Early Bird Registration has been extended to 31 August, 2016. Please register online as soon as possible to benefit from the early bird rate. You are also invited to submit abstracts for oral or poster presentation on or before 31 July, 2016. Wish to see you at Korea in this November!

Wofoo 3A Project 2016

A total submission of 36 projects from 6 countries/regions has been received as at 31 March. Results of the First Round Adjudication has been announced and uploaded onto the CIFA website on 8 April. Interview Session for the 16 shortlisted teams will be held on 14 and 15 July at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. On 25 July, the 8 finalist teams will be selected to enter the Final Round Adjudication to be held on 4 November at the 5th CIFA Regional Symposium in Seoul. For more information of the Wofoo 3A Project, you are most welcome to visit our CIFA website at <http://www.cifa-net.org>.



Exercising with Family for Health and for Love

Wofoo Social Enterprises
(Member Organization of CIFA)

Family: An Important Building Block of Hong Kong Society

Over the past decades, the discordance of Hong Kong society has been ever growing while family harmony and social inclusion have been greatly neglected. Wofoo Community Service Network (WCSN), an arm under Wofoo Social Enterprises (WSE), which is a renowned Non-Governmental Organization in Hong Kong with its motto “Harmony brings a family prosperity. Cohesion makes a nation wealthy”, believes that family is an important building block of the society. In order to contribute to improve the social situation, WCSN has rolled out a three-year campaign entitled “Hands on Family” to remind the Hong Kong people the importance of family bonding in fostering a harmonious society. In the past two years, activities with the themes “Hands on Family” and “Let’s Go Home for Dinner” have been organized by WCSN to encourage families to express their love and care with their hands, and also have more enjoyable dinners together.

Exercising with Family

In 2016, WCSN has strived to promote “Family Sports” (全家動融), reconnecting family members through exercising together in Hong Kong. In order to develop a better understanding of the views of Hong Kong people towards family exercising, a survey has been conducted in March 2016. During the survey, 863 Hong Kong people were interviewed either online or over the phone. Results have shown that 50% of the respondents do exercises together with family members for not more than once in a month. 23% of them do not even have the habit of exercising with

family. However, 68% of them have a preference to do exercises with their family, which indicates a gap between the ideal and reality situations. Moreover, it is noted that a positive correlation exists between the family harmony and the frequency of exercising together as a family. As the Survey has showed no correlation between exercising alone and family harmony, it is presumable that through exercising with family members, Hong Kong people are adding value to their family relationship, and the more they do it, the better their families will become.

Family Exercising Cultivating not only Health, but also Love and Care

WCSN is now organizing “0-10” Sports Award Scheme, encouraging Hong Kong families to build up the habit of exercising with family members together. Family Olympics will also be held on 6th August, echoing the year of Olympics and providing an opportunity for families to experience the joy in doing sports together. The message is simple yet important: when we do exercise with family members, what we require and cultivate is not only health, but also love and care.

