



Converging
PROFESSIONAL WISDOM
FOR Family Well-Being

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Message From Mrs. Patricia CHU, Chairperson CIFA



The quarter has been a very busy and yet exciting one, with everyone working very hard to prepare for the Asian Family Summit. With a strong commitment to make the event a success and with the unfailing support from all quarters, the Asian Family Summit turns out to be a most fruitful and memorable one.

Despite the thunderstorm and the amber rainstorm, the Summit had a good start blessed with the auspices lion dance. We are most honoured to have Mrs. Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of the HKSAR and Ms. Daniela Bas, Director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the United Nations as our Guests of Honour at the Opening Ceremony. Their presence denotes high level recognition and support to this important regional initiative to echo the international efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We have a record high of over 560 participants from 17 countries/regions, with over 100 academics, researchers, representatives from public, private and NGO sectors and practitioners delivering high quality presentations on a wide variety of issues faced by families in different economic and social settings in Asia. Apart from the Scientific Programme, other highlights included the Family Well-Being Expo and the Final Round Adjudication and Award Presentation Ceremony of the Wofoo 3A Project 2018 at the Gala Dinner to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of CIFA.

We have received overwhelming positive feedback from speakers and participants who fully appreciated the breadth and depth of the topics covered, and the attention to details in providing an invaluable opportunity for sharing, learning and networking. We are particularly encouraged by the remarks made by Ms. Bas and Prof. Poulton who are deeply impressed by the collaborative efforts among the various sectors on a common goal, with Hong Kong taking the lead in the region, setting an excellent example for other parts of the world.

In this issue, we have also included abstracts from two keynote speeches, one by Ms. Bas in setting the scene for the deliberations on SDGs, and the other of Prof. Poulton highlighting the importance of evidence-based policy formulation and service development as illustrated by the findings of the Dunedin Study.

I am pleased to inform that the video capturing the highlights of the Summit has been uploaded onto the United Nations portals and the Summit will be featured in the upcoming report on family issues in the United Nations. This is a recognition of the work of CIFA as regional platform and we will continue to strive for excellence to sustain the momentum created thus far. Before I sign off, I would like to inform you that the next CIFA Symposium will be held in 2020 in Taipei, Taiwan. Please mark your diary and we look forward to having you then!



Celebration of 10th Anniversary of CIFA



Sustainable Development & Family Well-being: Agenda For Action in Asia
家庭福祉・持續發展：亞洲行動綱領



To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of CIFA and to echo the international efforts on the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development, the Asian Family Summit on **Sustainable Development & Family Well-Being: Agenda for Action in Asia**, was successfully held from 19 to 22 August in Hong Kong. It was co-organised with the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong, the Family Council and the Social Welfare Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, with 24 social service organisations, professional associations and tertiary institutes as supporting organisations. It attracted over 560 participants from 17 countries/regions, breaking the record of registration of all previous CIFA regional symposiums.

High Level recognition from HKSAR and UN

The Opening Ceremony was officiated by the Hon. Mrs. Carrie Lam, Chief Executive, HKSAR and Ms. Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development of the United Nations, together with Prof. the Honourable Arthur Li, Chairman of the Council and Prof. Xiang Zhang, President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Hong Kong.





Mrs. Carrie Lam's presence denoted her recognition and support to this regional initiative. In her Opening Address, she confirmed the commitment of the HKSAR Government to be pro-child and pro-family, attaching importance to policies on family well-being. She also reminded us of the need for a shared belief to drive actions and the importance of cross-sector and cross-professional collaboration. This was echoed by Ms. Bas who highlighted the global consensus and commitment to work towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a view for Member States to submit a first report in 2020 on the progress made thus far. She also emphasised that the success of achieving these SDGs depended on how well family policy issues were integrated into the overall development planning and the degree of partnership and collaboration between various stakeholders in the society.

The Scientific Programme

The Scientific Programme was full and of high standard. Altogether we had 3 keynotes, 4 plenary sessions (with 16 presentations), 4 concurrent

sessions (with 58 presentations), 8 poster presentations as well as Post-Summit agency visits and Post-Summit workshops, all of which were well attended by participants. The scientific programme had stimulated much discussion and sharing among participants, generating much energy for future exchange and collaboration. Other highlights of the Summit included the Family Well-Being Expo held on 19 August and the Final Round Adjudication of the Wofoo Asian Award For Advancing Family Well-Being (Wofoo 3A Project) 2018, the details of which are covered in the paragraphs below.

The three keynote speakers including Ms. Daniela Bas from the United Nations on the topic of "Sustainable Development 2030 – An Agenda for World Action", setting the scene for deliberations. It was followed by that of Prof. Daniel Shek, Chairman of Family Council, HKSAR on the topic "Family Impact Assessment in Policy Formulation-The Hong Kong Experience" and Prof. Richie Poulton from the University of Otago, New Zealand on the topic "The Dunedin Study – Insights for Advancing Family Well-Being". Both keynotes have reminded that more emphasis should be put on scientific methods to

collect meaningful data for evidence based policy formulation and service development. The sharing by all the three keynote speakers has provided much stimulation on how things can be done differently to reap the biggest impact.

Apart from the very informative and stimulating keynote speeches by these heavy weight speakers, over 100 academics, researchers, government officials and practitioners delivered presentations on a wide variety of topics, including those on Alleviation of Poverty: Dependency Vs Empowerment (on Welfare Schemes in Hong Kong and China, and people empowerment in developing countries); Family Work Balance: Family Friendly Policies and Practices (in Singapore, South Korea, China and multinational private corporation); Family Health, Happiness and Harmony (on Hong Kong Jockey Club project to promote holistic health and family harmony, environmentally sustainable living for modern family, family in action against

Non-Communicable Diseases in Hong Kong, and a Cross-Country Study on adolescents perceived family functioning and quality of life in Asia); Population Ageing: Challenges and Opportunities (on strategies adopted by Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan) and many other issues faced by the families in different economic and social settings in Asia. These included, e.g. Family Life in the ICT Age; Gender Equality and Family Life; Migration/ Integration/ Inclusion; Good Practices in Family Work; Marriage and Parenthood; Carer Support etc.

We have received overwhelming positive and encouraging feedback from speakers and participants who fully appreciated the opportunity for sharing, learning and networking to achieve the common goal of advancing family well-being. The Summit has provided invaluable opportunities for various stakeholders to raise thought provoking questions on many issues affecting the quality of life of nowadays families. The interactive discussions



and sharing among participants throughout the Summit have not only inspired new perspectives and given fresh impetus to mapping out the way forward, but also generated much energy for future exchange and collaboration.

At the well attended closing ceremony, the co-chairpersons, in delivering their closing remarks, summarised the deliberations and outcome of the Summit, highlighted the directions for action and appealed for continuous collaboration and partnership amongst different stakeholders in the region to advance family well-being for the sustainable development of the society. A video capturing the highlights of the Summit was shown and everyone was excited about the memorable moments of the event.

Final Round Adjudication and Award Presentation of Wofoo 3A Project 2018

As mentioned above, one of the highlights of the Summit was the Final Round Adjudication of the Wofoo Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being (Wofoo 3A Project) 2018 when 8 finalist teams from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan competed for the Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards, My Favorite Project Award and The Best Collaborative Award. These projects covered a wide variety of topics including persons with dementia and role of caregivers; empowerment of underprivileged children; maintaining relationship between prison inmates and their families; families who lost their only child, home-based speech training programme for language impaired children and their families; educational project for media literacy etc. (for details of projects, please access the CIFA website at www.cifa-net.org.)

All the teams had put up a very good performance with carefully developed audio visual aids and powerpoint presentations and at the same time demonstrating close team work. After a very keen competition, the Adjudication Panel finally selected the project on “BeNetWise – Educational Project for Media Literacy” from **The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups – Media Counselling Centre** (Hong Kong) to be the winner of the Gold Award. The project on “Talk Right – Speech Therapy Training Kit and Home Program” from **Hong Kong Christian Service** (Hong Kong) won the Silver Award and The Best Collaborative Award and the “Person with Dementia and Caregiver Companion Project” from **Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service** (Hong Kong) won the Bronze Award. Upon appeal for support by the finalist teams, the **Hong Kong Christian Service** project was elected My Favorite Project by those who participated in the Final Round Adjudication session.

The climax of the Wofoo 3A Project 2018 was the Award Presentation Ceremony, with Mr. Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, Chief Secretary for Administration of HKSAR, Ms. Bas and Dr. Joseph Lee of Wofoo Social Enterprises, the Title Sponsor as the Guests of Honour to present the awards to the winning teams. Their remarks were most encouraging, giving recognition to the Wofoo 3A Project and generating synergy in the sharing of innovative projects and practice wisdom in addressing various issues faced by families on Asia

Family Well-Being Expo

Another highlight of the Summit was the Family Well-Being Expo held on 19 August as the prelude

of the Asian Family Summit. With the theme of “You are the Spring of Family Happiness”, it attracted over 1,300 family members of multi-generations, ethnic origins and ability/disability from 18 districts to participate in interactive games, themed workshops and performances to raise the awareness on importance of family well-being and ways to enhance quality of family life in various aspects of daily life, covering clothing (惜衣), food & nutrition (足食), living & environment (安居) and travelling & leisure (樂行).

We were honoured to have Mr. Bernard Chan, the Convenor of the Non-Official Members of the Executive Council, Hong Kong Government, Mr. Chan Ka Ho and Ms. Yiu Kit Ching, both Hong Kong gold medal distance runners, to share their experience and insights on enhancing family relationship and well-being.

While the families had an enjoyable day at the Expo, they had also acquired much knowledge and skills in maintaining happy and harmonious family life. Their feedback is most encouraging.

CIFA Regional Symposium in 2020

An announcement of the next CIFA Regional Symposium will be held in Taipei, Taiwan in 2020 was made by Mrs. Chu at the Closing Ceremony. She invited Prof. Joyce Feng, Vice Chairperson of CIFA, and her team to go onto stage to extend invitation to all to join the next symposium to be co-hosted by the National Taiwan University. A very attractive video on Taiwan was shown to appeal for participation and support. Everyone was excited and looked forward to another successful symposium in two years time.



Families & the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Ms. Daniela BAS

Director of Division for Inclusive Social Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations



2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 by the United Nations, a global consensus has been reached by the 193 Member States to come together to reaffirm and prioritise the imperatives of sustainable economic, environmental sustainability and social inclusion. The new Agenda focuses on strengthening of many aspects of social development to attain the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. The Division for Inclusive Social Development promotes social dimensions of the Agenda and offers policy advice to Governments to help them fulfil their goals and targets. (for the details of the Agenda and SDGs, please refer to the UN website at <http://www.un.org>.) The success of the 2030 Development Agenda depends on how well family policy issues are integrated into the overall development planning at national levels.

In the recent report on family issues, the UN Secretary-General encourages Member States to “Further recognise that family-oriented policies and programmes are integral to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, particularly in support of ending poverty and hunger, promoting well-being for all at all ages, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all and achieving gender equality.

Important Roles of Families Contributing to Sustainable Development:

Families are the first and most fundamental building blocks of society in the following:

1. Creation of peaceful, sustainable, and inclusive societies
2. Provision of not only basic economic support like food, shelter, and clothing, but identity and a sense of belonging that extend into the community;
3. Provision of connections and support networks that help insulate individuals against vulnerabilities; and
4. Provision of opportunities for advancement by nurturing resilient individuals and teaching sustainable patterns of behaviour

Family Needs are Similar Globally & Challenges are Different

1. Affordable quality housing
2. Decent education and jobs
3. Proper health care and sanitation facilities;
4. Accessible services; and
5. Leisure time and work-family balance so that they can thrive professionally and privately

Diversity in Asia

Asia as a region has a remarkable diversity of policies on families and tremendous differences in available resources and capacities, cultures and environments (economic, social, and ecological). There are several major issues that are common to all the Asian families, and sharing of knowledge and experience in policy formulation and service development among the various countries, as provided in the Asian Family Summit, is an excellent example of collaborative efforts in mapping out strategies and action to echo the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Challenges and Opportunities of Ageing Population

Population ageing poses significant challenges to governments and families alike in Asia. However, opportunities also abound through these challenges. In the care function, for example, the demand for quality and accessible childcare and care for older persons need not be totally detached. Examples like parks and day care centres that foster both planned and spontaneous interactions between generations can not only help Singapore to fulfil the growing demand for care at both ends of the ageing spectrum, but provide mutual benefits to both groups involved by promoting inclusion in society as opposed to isolating older and younger persons, two groups among whom loneliness is a significant problem.

Challenges of Urbanisation & Migration: Segmented/Split Families

Segmented and split families often occur along the lines of urbanisation and migration. As working age adults and labour concentrate in urban centres, children and older persons may be left behind in areas where support is primarily dependent on family members. Support from States must account for this phenomenon and enable families to retain close and secure relationships.

As regards split families, the responsibilities of care within the family may fall on those who may themselves require care, both children and older persons. This often creates a financial and mental burden to these families. Hong Kong's Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers has offered a promising vision for ways in which unpaid care work can be compensated and the burden on carers can be at least partially relieved.

Gender Inequality

Apparently gender inequality is still prevailing in Asian regions. Female labour force participation, education, fertility rates, marriage, care arrangements and public policies are all interrelated. Evidently the increasing responsibilities of work and caretaking affect women, who usually carry out the vast majority of work in caretaking, raising children and maintaining families.

Work-Family Balance

Families are resilient, but in order to be resilient they must be able to respond to the challenges that they face. This also reflects the importance to promote work-family balance

in both policies and practice, both in the public and private sectors alongside individual choices.

Families with Disabled Members

In Asia, persons with disabilities are far over-represented among those living in poverty, those that are unemployed and those that do not complete basic education. Without proper support mechanisms that enable persons with disabilities to contribute, whether that be adequate training, education and employment opportunities (as identified in the Incheon Strategy), accessible mobility systems, support in school and where needed in the home, persons with disabilities cannot contribute their talents, their passions, and their full potential to the family and to their communities.

New Measures in Helping Young Families

Some measures promoted in helping young families may seem more direct, like how addressing the extreme demands on time for young parents with flexible work arrangements like telecommuting, adaptable schedules, and allotted time for family care both aid the family and help to fight worker absenteeism, while also promoting well-being and productivity. Seemingly disconnected goals like affordable housing and subsidies for childcare and education, healthcare, care for older persons, gender parity, and decent, flexible labour likewise can help to support the young families in the contemporary society.

Systems Approach in Formulation of Family Policies in Asia

Family policies adopting a systems approach can enhance government responsiveness to the family needs collectively, and enable the governments to reach the most vulnerable families in the society, and to “Leave no one behind” as spelt out in the motto of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Conclusion

In future, we all must work together towards a greater cooperation between Governments, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector to empower families through appropriate social policies so that they can fulfil their numerous functions and thus contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and targets. We should always remember that:

We are one! We are family!

Note: This paper is an abstract of the keynote presentation by Ms. Daniela Bas at the Asian Family Summit held on 19-22 August 2018 in Hong Kong.

The Dunedin Study: Insights for Advancing Family Well-Being

Professor Richie Poulton, CNZM FRSNZ

Director, Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit;
University of Otago, New Zealand

The Dunedin Study

The Dunedin Study is a world-famous longitudinal study conducted in New Zealand since 1972. A total of 1037 subjects have participated in this longitudinal study and 961 (95%) still survive in 2012. It has shown how adverse events during childhood can have far-reaching implications for how people's lives turn out. Family is the key developmental context and needs to be safe, loving, stimulating, predictable, and have sufficient resources. The degree to which family factors act to directly predict good and poor life outcomes has been discussed, followed by consideration of how the family setting might serve as the springboard off which other risk factors could operate. Non-family risks that might be mitigated by a propitious family environment has also been described.

Family Context and Relative Poverty

The relationship between family context and relative poverty has been explored that the socio-economic status-health gradient is well recognised. Yet the questions "when does this gradient emerge", "does it have any generic or specific effects on health", and "will childhood disadvantage result in long-lasting damage" are still waiting to be seen. The Study has found that the family with relative poverty has doubling of risk for cardiovascular disease, trebling of risk for oral health disease, and specific effects on mental health and substance abuse. Three mobility hypotheses including upward mobility hypothesis, downward mobility hypothesis and childhood origins hypothesis have been developed and tested.

Familial and Non-Familial Childhood Risks

The Study has sought to understand why children exposed to different adverse psychosocial experiences are at elevated risk for age-related disease (i.e. NCDs)



It has tested whether adverse childhood experiences predict enduring abnormalities and stress sensitive biological systems: the nervous, immune and endocrine/metabolic systems. Three childhood predictors identified are socioeconomic disadvantage, maltreatment and social isolation. Three adult outcomes included depression, inflammation and clustering of metabolic risk markers. The enduring consequences of adverse childhood experiences were not explained by established developmental or concurrent risk factors.

Four Important Study findings are Apparent:

1. Groups of children exposed to different adverse experiences do not necessarily overlap. This suggests that the different interventions are needed to tackle each adverse childhood experience.
2. Children exposed to a greater number of adverse experiences have a greater number of age-related disease risks in adult life. The cumulative effect of adverse childhood experiences points to new opportunities for disease prevention.

3. Children exposed to adverse psychosocial experiences have enduring abnormalities in multiple biological systems. Although some specificity was observed (e.g. SES does not predict depression), the overall picture was that adverse childhood experiences may simultaneously affect nervous, immune and endocrine/metabolic functioning in adulthood.

4. Children exposed to adverse experiences are more likely to have age-related disease risks in adult life, regardless of their family liability for disease, birth weight, childhood weight, and adult SES and health behaviors.

Promoting healthy psychosocial experiences for children may be necessary to improve the quality of longer lives and reduce health care costs across the life course.

Childhood Self Control & Health, Wealth and Public Safety

Self-control is the ability to regulate one's emotions, desires, and behaviors in the service of later rewards. People with self control will think before they speak or act, resist temptations, give considered response instead of an impulsive one, resist saying something inappropriate or hurtful, resist hurting someone because that person hurt them, and resist jumping to conclusions.

Self-control is considered to be more necessary today than it used to be

- To avoid obesity in an era of ready food availability
- To Maintain fitness in an era of sedentary jobs
- To sustain marriages in an era of easy divorce
- To prevent addiction in an era of access to substances
- To resist spending in an era of sophisticated marketing
- To save for old age in an era without guaranteed pensions

Childhood Low Self-Control

- Impulsive, acts without thinking
- Can't wait his or her turn
- Low frustration tolerance
- Dislikes effortful tasks
- Fleeting attention, easily distracted

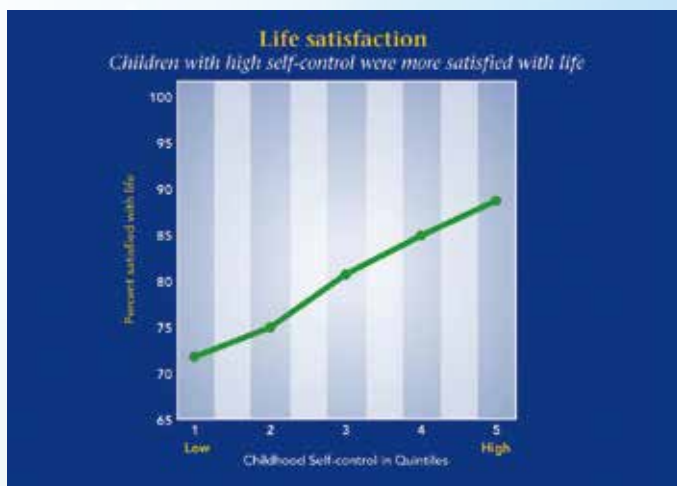
- Lacks persistence, easily forgets goals
- Often goes for risky thing
- Requires constant attention and motivation from an adult

Reporters of childhood self-control included staff from the clinic, parents, 4 different teachers, and children themselves. The ratings of childhood self-control were found persistent across ages 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 years.

Comparison of Children with Low Self-Control and those with high Self-Control

1. Children with low self-control had poorer health than those with high self-control;
2. Children with low self-control had more substance-use problem than those with high self-control;
3. Children with low self-control had less wealth than those with high self-control;
4. Children with low self-control had not begun planning for the future;
5. Children with low self-control had more financial struggles in adulthood than those with high self-control;
6. Children with low-self-control had more crime convictions than those with high self-control;
7. Children with low-self-control had more single-parent child-rearing than those with high self-control;
8. Children with low self-control were less warm/sensitive/stimulating parents with their own children; and
9. Children with high self-control were more satisfied with life.



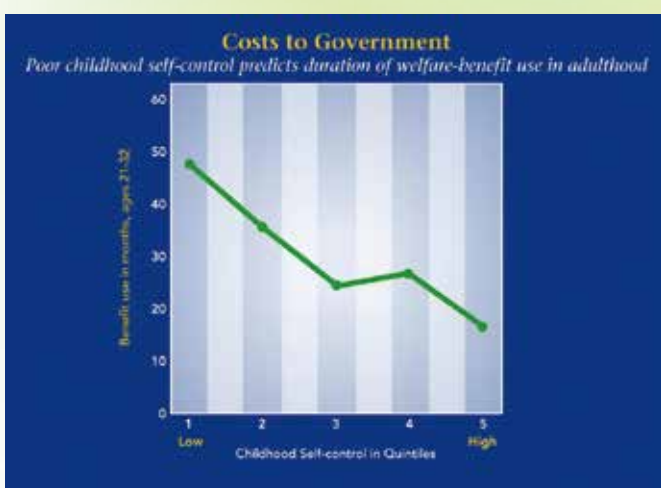


The children self-control gradients looked the same in children from high-income families, children with above average IQ, girls, and children without ADHD diagnoses.

Policy Implications & Recommendations to Government

1. Childhood Adverse Experiences Predict Longer Dependence on Welfare

Poor childhood self-control has predicted longer duration of welfare-benefit use in adulthood in this Study. Apparently, enhancing self-control might reduce costs of crime control, health care, social welfare, a healthy and financially secure old age and improve the life chances of the next generation.



2. Early Childhood Intervention is the Best Policy

Additionally, preventing adolescent mistakes is not enough to eliminate the gradient of life success. Since consequences of self-control start accumulating from early childhood, early intervention would lead to best cost-benefit ratio for the government.

3. Human Capital Investment

As regards human capital investment, programs targeted towards the earliest years of child development are of paramount importance and have the highest rate of return when comparing with the pre-school programs, school programs and job training.

Early childcare programs should be stressed and improved continuously.



4. Universal Enhancement of Children Self Control

Even children with above average self-control and come from well-to-do homes can benefit from better self-control skills. Apparently it is time for modern nations to teach self-control to all children. Universal enhancement of self-control of all children is recommended.

Conclusion

The science of human development has value insomuch as it contributes to a better understanding of etiology and/or the development of effective interventions. Translating the above findings into policy-related recommendations remains a challenge.

Note: This paper is an abstract of the keynote presentation of Prof. Richie Poulton at the Asian Family Summit held in Hong Kong on 19-22 August 2018.