



Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region

Chairperson's Report (1 January 2009 – 31 December 2009)

Introduction

The Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) is an independent non-profit making organization registered under laws in Hong Kong. It aims to serve as the regional hub for networking with similar organizations/interested professionals with the mission of 'Converging Professional Wisdom For Family Well-Being'. The goal is to strengthen family functioning and promote family health in the region while contributing to the body of knowledge in relationship science in the international arena. Its function is to support and enhance mutual interest in research and training initiatives, to share clinical experiences, information and knowledge, as well as contributing to policy formulation on families which are unique to the Asian Region.

Corporate Governance

The CIFA Council is the decision-making body of the Consortium and exercises all the powers conferred by the Memorandum and Articles of Association (MAA). At the last Annual General Meeting held on 9th February 2009, 15 full members were elected to serve in the Council for a term of 2 years. Subsequently, during the meeting held on 17th April, 2009, the Council unanimously agreed to appoint three associate members to join the Council. I have the honour to continue to serve as the Chairperson of the Council, with the able assistance and support from Ms. Agnes Ng as Hon. Secretary and Mr. Lai Chi Tong as Hon. Treasurer. We are grateful to Ms. Elsie Leung who has continued to serve as our Hon. Advisor, Ms Ivy Tong as our Hon. Legal Advisor, and Mr. Simon Ng of Simon W. F. Ng & Company as our Auditor.

In order to strengthen the liaison between HK and other parts of the region, apart from the four Vice Chairpersons to serve as coordinators for the various sub-regions, we have also invited four Council members in HK to serve as liaison persons to maintain dialogue with the Vice -chairpersons.

Throughout the period covered by this report, the Council has held regular meetings on a quarterly basis to steer the work of CIFA, while the four committees, namely the Research & Training Committee, Promotion & Fund-raising Committee, Membership Drive Committee and the Web-based Exchange Program (WEP) Development Committee have been working very

hard to take forward the various aspects of work of CIFA.

The full list of office-bearers and members of the Council has been uploaded onto the CIFA WEP for general information.

Membership

As at 31 December 2009, there were 45 Full Members and 39 Associate Members, coming from 7 sub-regions in Asia. Continuous efforts are being made to recruit more new members.

Finance

In the light of the financial tsunami affecting all sectors before and during the period, the Council decided to waive the annual subscription fee of all CIFA members upon the renewal of their membership for the year 2009. The Council considered this move, which was welcomed by members, to be appropriate and necessary although it meant a reduction of income.

Fortunately, we have continued to receive funding support from the community including those from the Hong Kong & China Gas Co. Ltd. which has been a staunch supporter of CIFA since its incorporation. We have also received sponsorship from the Asia Financial Group to conduct the Cross Country Survey on Challenges Faced by Families in the Asian Region. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of these sponsors to CIFA and we look forward to their continued support in the coming years.

With prudent financial management and continued support from the community, I am pleased to report that we are in a healthy financial position.

Activities Highlights

The following paragraphs will provide an overview of the work of CIFA during the year, witnessing the steady growth of CIFA as a regional platform in promoting family well-being.

1. CIFA WEP & E-newsletter

The CIFA WEP launched in June 2007 continued to serve as a platform for sharing information on the work of CIFA and its members. Since November 2008, a bi-weekly E-newsletter has been issued to update members on the latest development of family related issues and activities.

To sustain the effort and interest among members, strengthen academic exchange, and stimulate insights for research and training, a section namely the "Family Corner" has been introduced in the CIFA E-newsletter since April 2009, with contribution from members of the Research & Training Committee. These articles from various sub-regions have provided readers

with a better understanding of family related issues in the Region, and we are thankful to all those who have taken part in this endeavour for their sharing.

The WEP Development Committee has made continuous efforts to monitor the usage of the WEP and to explore ways to improve its attractiveness to users. I am pleased to report that through the kind assistance of the Design Institute of the Vocational Training Council, action has been initiated at the end of the year to enhance the WEP by phases, with the first one focusing on the design and layout to make it more attractive and user-friendly, whereas the second phase to enhance its function as a platform for exchange and knowledge management. We are thankful to the staff and students of the Design Institute for their interest and contribution in this exercise.

2. Cross country studies

So far, CIFA has taken the lead to coordinate two cross country studies, namely 'Survey on Challenges Faced by Families in the Asian Region' and 'Comparative Study on Theme, Interactive Pattern and Gender Issues in Contemporary Asian Countries Confronted by Inter-personal Conflicts'.

On the former, funding support has been secured from the Asia Financial Group. This is a first attempt of CIFA to coordinate a cross country survey involving four sub-regions, namely Mainland China (Shenzhen), Taiwan (Taipei & Kaoshing), Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur) and Hong Kong. The Working Group, headed by Mrs. Justina Leung, has made a lot of efforts in coordinating and ensuring consistency in methodology, sample, time line for completion of data collection etc.

The Working Group is pleased to report that data collection and analysis have finally been completed. The findings of the survey have enabled us to have a better understanding of the concerns in these sub-regions, although we are cautious not to make a direct comparison between various sub-regions. We hope that these will lead to further actions in examining the policies and practices in helping the families to cope with these challenges.

As for the latter study, Mainland China , Japan, Taiwan , Korea and Hong Kong have agreed to participate in the study, with Dr .Lee Wai Yung of HKUFI taking the lead as the Principle Investigator. Funding proposal has been drawn up to seek funding support and we are still awaiting for positive response. Protocol has been distributed to all participating countries and data collection is in progress. The preliminary findings of the study will be presented as a keynote at the second CIFA Symposium to be held in Japan in November 2010.

3. Training activities

Various training activities geared towards the needs of CIFA members have been organized in

the year. These include:-

Forum on Financial Tsunami & Families

In response to the concern over the impact of the financial tsunami on families, a forum was held on 9.2.2009 after the last Annual General Meeting when speakers from various sectors were invited to share their views and experience on the topic. Participants found the session to be very informative and stimulating.

Agency visit

To enable CIFA members to have first hand information in the latest delivery model of services for families in Hong Kong, a local agency visit to two integrated service centres in Tin Shui Wai was organized on 28.4.2009 attracting 20 participants. This provided an opportunity for them to understand the profile and service needs of residents and how service providers face the challenges by innovative approaches and program to address their needs. Feedback from participants have been most encouraging.

Workshop on Dealing with Sexual Problems in Couples

The 'Workshop on Dealing with Sexual Problems in Couples' held on 24.7.2009 in Hong Kong attracted 85 participants from various professional sectors. Prof. Ng Man Lun, Associate Director of the HKUFI and a renowned sex therapist served as the speaker at the workshop when the concepts and skills related to sex therapy were elaborated, with video demonstration of cases, role play, case sharing and discussion among the participants. Participants found it to be very useful and demanded for training activities on similar and related subjects in future..

Exchange Program with Brigham Young University

An Exchange Program was co-organized with the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), a CIFA member organisation and the Brigham Young University (BYU).including firstly a Public Seminar –Strengthening the Family: The Best Way to Raise Great Children held on 4.8.2009 attracting nearly 300 participants, with the active involvement of the co-organizers, as well as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and the House of Learning.

The second part of the Exchange Program was an Academic /Professional Exchange held on 5.8.2009 at the HKUFI, which was attended by over 25 representatives from the co-organizers. During the session, experience was exchanged and possibilities for future collaboration were explored.

4. 2010 Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-being (3A Project)

In recognition that families in the region are facing stresses of all kind and that human service

professionals, academics, NGOs, the private and government sectors in different countries are struggling to develop policies and practices to assist families to cope with the life challenges and maintain family well-being, CIFA initiated the 3A Project to provide the platform and opportunity for concerned parties to join hands to explore and share new solutions to address family issues. A Working Group was formed with Ms. Agnes Ng as the convenor.

During the year, a lot of efforts had been made to work out the details of the project and to seek funding support to make it a reality. The theme of the 3A Project "Aspiration for Sustainability, Innovation and Applicability" (ASIA) depicting the unique nature of the project has eventually attracted the generous sponsorship of HK \$200,000 from the Wofoo Social Enterprise. The project was formally launched in February 2010, with the final adjudication and Award Presentation Ceremony to be held at the 2nd CIFA Regional Symposium to be held in the University of Tokyo in November 2010.

5. 2nd CIFA Regional Symposium in Japan

The 2nd CIFA Regional Symposium to be hosted by the Japan Association of Family Therapy (JAFT) and Japan Association of Family Psychology (JAFP), in collaboration with CIFA, will be held from 26-28 November 2010 at the University of Tokyo, Japan. Dr. Shinichi Nakamura, the Vice Chairperson for Japan and Korea Sub-region is serving as the Chairperson of the Organizing Committee. The theme of the Symposium is 'Asian Families in Social Change'.

Throughout the year, efforts have been made for the preparatory work of the Symposium, and a website was specially designed for the Symposium to facilitate the dissemination of information and online registration. The Website was launched on 8th February 2010 when the first announcement was made, giving details on various matters, including the call for papers. It is anticipated that about 500 participants from various parts of the region will join the Symposium.

Conclusion

This is the second year after the inauguration of CIFA, and I am pleased to report to you on the above development that has taken place. . These achievements are made possible only with the unflinching efforts, staunch support and sense of comradeship of the members, especially the Council members who have been so generous in giving their time, energy and sharing their wisdom in maintaining and sustaining the momentum that we have got so far.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed to the work of CIFA, especially the Council members, members of the various committees and working groups, and the CIFA Secretariat. With everyone's hard work and commitment, we have been able to arrive at another milestone of CIFA. I am sure that the foundation that we have laid in the past two years will provide the bedrock for the steady development of CIFA and we will be able to

achieve the mission of 'Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-being in the Asian region.

Patricia CHU (Mrs.)

Chairperson, CIFA Council

19th March 2010

Presented at the CIFA AGM on 19th March 2010