



Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region

Chairperson's Report (1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012)

Introduction

The Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA), incorporated in 2008, is an independent non-profit making organization with the aim to serve as the regional hub for networking with similar organizations/interested professionals with the mission of 'Converging Professional Wisdom For Family Well-Being'. Its 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.

WE have witnessed significant development in the work of CIFA, which continued to serve as the platform for sharing and networking in the Asian region. CIFA is gradually gaining more recognition and support from various sectors in the region and laying a solid foundation for further development. The annual report is going to highlight these achievements that CIFA had made in 2012.

Corporate Governance

The CIFA Council, the decision-making body which exercises all the powers conferred by the Memorandum and Articles of Association (MAA), had been busily engaged during the year. With the staunch support and involvement of the Council members and the various sub-committees and working groups, we have strengthened the liaison between Hong Kong and other regions to facilitate collaboration in various areas of work to promote family well-being in the region.

On the financial front, the Council was pleased to have received funding support, especially that from Wofoo Social Enterprises to sponsor the 3A Project. With prudent financial management and continued support from the community, as well as efforts to organize fund-raising activities, CIFA is in a healthy financial position despite that there is a deficit in the period, resulting in a balance of \$47 to be brought forward to the next year. The Hon. Treasurer will give you a detailed financial report for the year, together with that prepared by our Hon. Auditor.

Membership

As at 31 December 2012, there were 55 Full Members and 21 Associate Members, coming from 8 countries/regions in Asia.

The membership renewal exercise for year 2012 and 2013 was in progress to follow up on outstanding payment of membership fees. Continuous efforts had been made such as provision of benefits, including reduced registration fee for Regional Symposium, and uploading information of agency activities onto the CIFA WEP etc. to attract more members. A newly designed pamphlet and souvenir items have been produced to introduce CIFA to a wider audience in order to raise interest and appeal for support.

Activities Highlights

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

The 3rd CIFA Regional Symposium

Following the successful 2nd Regional Symposium at the beautiful ground of the University of Tokyo in November 2010, The 3rd CIFA Regional Symposium with the theme of " Asian Families: Innovations in Practice & Policies " was successfully held from 11th to 13th December in Singapore, in collaboration with the National University of Singapore (NUS), Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society (THK), and the Social Service Training Institute (SSTI), and the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) as the supporting organization.



The Symposium attracted 350 participants from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, USA and Vietnam. It had received full support from the Singaporean administration, and honored by the presence of Mr. S. Iswaran, Minister of Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Home Affairs & Trade and Industry as the Guest of Honor at the Opening Ceremony, Mr. Sheah Kian Peng, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament as the officiating guest at the Gala Dinner, and Mr. Chan Heng Kee, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social & Family Development as the speaker at the Plenary Session on Policies on Family. Participants were impressed by their understanding of the family issues and their commitment to preserve the family as the foundation of a stable and harmonious society, which echoes that of CIFA.

The Scientific Program was full and of high standard. Two keynote speeches were delivered by world renowned experts on family therapy including Dr. Lee Wai Yung on "Exploring how Asian Couples Negotiate Differences: a Comparison of 5 Asian Regions" and Dr. Evan Imber-Black on "Healing Couple in Crisis: a Global Perspective". Dr. Lee shared interesting video clips of couples from HK, Korea, Mainland China, Japan and Taiwan, demonstrating the cultural similarities and differences, highlighting

the need to be sensitive to hidden messages in the interaction among the couples. Using a touching story of a middle aged couple and their son in coping with the deadly disease-cancer, Dr. Black beautifully illustrated how secrets once disclosed and openly addressed, and the rituals shared by family members can be a healing process. Dr. Black's presentation touched the hearts of the participants and at the same time reminded them of the role of the helping professionals, and the need to give the family sufficient space and time to work out their life issues.

Over 50 academics, researchers, policy makers and practitioners presented papers at plenary sessions and concurrent breakout sessions on various topics including policies on families; coping, strengths and resilience of families in facing crisis, challenges for innovation and change in addressing family issues including mental health, cancer, substance abuse, special needs children, care of elderly, families in poverty, development of family therapy as a profession and impact of information technology on family etc. There were also over 20 poster presentations displayed at the Symposium. The scientific program has stimulated much enthusiastic discussion and sharing with very positive feedback from participants. 8 Pre and post symposium workshops conducted by invited trainers and agency visits were fully enrolled with participants finding these training activities to be useful. With the consent of the speakers, presentation materials of the various sessions have been/will be uploaded on the CIFA WEP at www.cifa-net.org.

An auspicious moment of 12 noon on 12 December, 2012 in the middle of the Symposium was video-taped and uploaded on to Youtube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbyo_VoRyms&feature=youtu.be. Those interested may like to access it to share this special moment.

Apart from the scientific program, the participants had ample opportunities to network and exchange during the tea breaks, lunches, Welcome Reception and the Gala Dinner at the Grand Ballroom of the Resort World Sentosa when participants enjoyed delicious food and wonderful performance by staff and service recipients of the Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society and the Hong Kong delegation. The climax of the evening was the award presentation ceremony of the 3A Project 2012 which was exciting and filled with joy and applause.



Many are already looking forward to the 4th Regional Symposium when another opportunity will be made available for sharing and exchange among policy-makers, academia and professionals in new and innovative ideas and experience in meeting the challenges faced by the Asian families.

4th Regional Symposium in 2014

Continuous efforts had been made to identify a co-organizer for the 4th Regional Symposium in 2014. A 4 person delegation led by the chairperson was made from 12th to 15th June 2012 to visit the Soochow University and the Suzhou Mental Health Association, both of which had indicated interest in co-organizing the 4th Regional Symposium in 2014. It provided an opportunity to meet the Vice-President and the Head of the School of Education. The visit was a fruitful one when all parties expressed enthusiasm on the possibility in co-organizing the 4th CIFA Regional Symposium in Suzhou in 2014. Site visits had also been made to the convention facilities, both within the campus and in the city. Opportunity was also taken to visit 吳江市心理衛生協會 and 吳江市未成年人健康成長指導中心. The delegation was impressed by the variety of innovative programs and activities organized by the centre since its inception in 2011. |



However, due to change of personnel and other reasons, the Soochow University finally informed CIFA in October 2012 that it had decided not to co-organize the 2014 Symposium. As a result of continuous efforts among the Council members to identify a co-organizer, a bid was received from the East China University Of Science and Technology indicating interest to co-organize the 4th Symposium in Shanghai in 2014. On-going dialogue is being carried out to work out further details in organizing the event and a formal announcement will be made in due course.

Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-being 2012 (3A Project 2012)

Building on the success of the 3A Project 2010, CIFA is pleased to receive sponsorship from the Wofoo Social Enterprises for the second time to organize the 3A Project 2012.

The 3A Project 2012 received a total of 31 entries from social service units of government and non-governmental organizations, tertiary institute, as well as from the private sector from various parts of the region. Having gone through the process of vetting these projects, 16 projects had been short-listed to enter into the second round. After the Interview Session held on 16 and 17 August 2012, 8 of the 16 shortlisted teams were chosen to enter into the Final Round Adjudication held on 12th December 2012 at the 3rd CIFA Regional Symposium in Singapore to compete for the Gold, Silver and Bronze and My



Favorite Project Award.

The 8 finalist projects covered a wide variety of topics including lesbian/gay/bisexual & transgender youth and families; working with bereaved children and their families affected by natural disasters; promoting positive life attitude among families with special needs children; women wellness scheme; family based counseling and support for families with mental illness; family friendly policies and practices; family development account to end poverty, and health start home visit for parents from disadvantaged background to enhance the healthy development of pre-primary children. All the teams had put up a very good performance with carefully chosen audio visual aids and power point presentations and at the same time demonstrating close team work. After a very keen competition, the adjudication panel and the participants at the session finally selected the project on Hope - Starts from the Home Working with Bereaved Children and Their Families Affected by Disasters of the Child Welfare League Foundation R.O.C. to be awarded with both the Gold Award and "My Favorite Project" Award.

Two Hong Kong teams, i.e. Heep Hong Society with the project on Promoting Positive Life Attitudes among Families with Special Needs Children and the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals with the project on Healthy Start Home Visit Program got the Silver and Bronze Award respectively. The Award Presentation Ceremony was held in the evening at the Gala Dinner of the Symposium.

To provide an opportunity for sharing of knowledge, experience and practice wisdom to fulfill the objective of the 3A Project; 7 of the finalist teams presented their projects at a Sharing Session held on 14th December, 2012 (Friday) at the Auditorium of Social Service Training Institute Singapore, stimulating much discussion and exploring how the experience and practice wisdom can be replicated. The session, attended by over 60 local professionals, including teachers, social workers, medical personnel as well as parents, indeed provided a golden opportunity for sharing and exchange.

To sustain the momentum and synergy created so far, another opportunity for sharing will be provided in Hong Kong on 25 June, 2013 at the Chinese University of Hong Kong when the finalist teams, together with winning teams of 3A Project 2010, will present their projects and share how they have furthered their work with the families. Representatives from the Korean team will also be invited to conduct a workshop on 3SEM (Smart, Smiling, Sharing Eating Movement) for related professionals in Hong Kong to learn how the experience can be replicated. Details of the 3A Project have been uploaded onto the CIFA WEP at www.cifa-net.org.



Promotion & Fund-raising activities

During the year, preparatory work was underway to organize the Walk for Family Well-being to be held on 13th January, 2013 and the Charity Concert For Family Harmony to be held on 24th June, 2013. Both fund-raising activities are co-organized with the Academy of Family Therapy (AFT), another non-profit making organization aiming to promote a systemic approach in working with families and the development of family therapy as a growing profession in the region.

A set of CIFA souvenir including a specially designed pencil case with CIFA logo and CIFA pin had been produced for sale at CIFA activities including the 3rd Regional Symposium and Sharing Session in Singapore. A new CIFA pamphlet has been designed and printed to provide updated information and will be widely distributed to publicize the work of CIFA.

Several attempts were made to publicize the work of CIFA through the mass media. E.g. Mrs. Patricia Chu, Chairperson of CIFA, Ms. Agnes Ng, Convenor of 3A Working Group and Ms. Eliza Cheng, Service Director of ELCHK Life Angel Education Center, Bronze Award winning team of 3A Project 2010 attended the radio program “政好星期天” hosted by Mr. Law Fai and Ms. May Chan at Commercial Radio Hong Kong 1 on 22 January, 2012 to promote the work of CIFA, further publicize the 3A Project 2012 and appeal for support from interested organizations.



With the assistance of the Secretariat of the Family Council, Mrs. Patricia Chu, Ms. Agnes Ng, Ms. Lo and Ms. Cheung from Hong Kong Family Welfare Society (Gold Award Winner of 3A Project 2010) joined the program “甜心家族”, hosted by 王書麒, 程潔瑩, 何嘉露 on RTHK channel 2 on 13 February, 2012 to promote CIFA, the 3A Project 2012, as well as sharing of the award winning project of Family Oasis with the public.

For further information and the program replay, please go to:

<http://programme.rthk.hk/channel/radio/programme.php?p=3977&e=168729&d=2012-02-13&m=episode>

Cross country study

As a result of the hard work of the research team headed by Dr. Lee Wai Yung, with representatives from Korea, Japan, Mainland China and Taiwan, an article for the cross-regional research entitled “Exploring How Contemporary Couples Negotiate Differences – A Comparative Study Among Five Asian

Regions” had been accepted by Family Process, a high impact journal on family issues. The findings of the study was presented both by Dr. Lee as a keynote speech and the research team at a plenary session at the 3rd Regional symposium, stimulating a lot of interest and discussion, especially on the cultural similarities and differences in the ways couples negotiate differences.

Revamping of the CIA Newsletter

Since the first issue of the CIFA E-Newsletter was uploaded onto the CIFA in November 2008, it had served as a platform for sharing of information on the work of CIFA and its members, and other related family issues. The Council was of the view perhaps its time to revamp the E-newsletter to tie in with the latest development of CIFA to serve a better purpose.

A new Editorial Group for the revamped CIFA newsletter was formed, with Dr. Miranda Chung being the Chief Editor and Dr. Herman Lo as key member. The group has made suggestions to improve the CIFA newsletter with the view to make it a professional journal in the long run. With the endorsement of the Council, it was decided that a revamped newsletter, CIFA-NET, will be issued on a quarterly basis in printed and electronic versions. The first issue of CIFA-NET for April – June 2013 will be published to tie in with the 5th Anniversary celebration in June 2013.

Growing recognition & formation of strategic partnership

CIFA is getting increasing recognition and support from various sectors in the community, Apart from those supporters and strategic partnership built up in the past few years, CIFA continued to receive support, both in terms of sponsorship e.g. from the Wofoo Social Enterprises to fund the 3A Project, and professional input e.g. Professor Joyce Ma of Department of Social Work, CUHK on the 3A Project, Ah Chung , a famous artist, on advocating messages on family by giving permission for CIFA to publish his master pieces in cartoon displayed in a solo exhibition in the CIFA E-newsletter, and Dr. Julie Bees, a professor in piano and guest performer at the last Charity Concert For Family Harmony to promote family harmony through music.. Moreover, we were deeply grateful to Ah Chung and Mr. Joseph Lee of WSE, both of whom had kindly agreed to do a video recording which had been uploaded onto the CIFA WEP to appeal for support to CIFA.

Celebration of 5th Anniversary of CIFA

As CIFA is entering into its 5th year of operation, a series of events have been planned to be held in June 2013, including the Charity Concert For Family Harmony on 24th, Exchange Program on 3A Project on 25th and 26th, and the Anniversary Dinner on 27th. All those who have contributed to the development of CIFA in the past 5 years, including its Council members, member organizations, associate members, sponsors, supporters and strategic partners will be invited to join these activities to celebrate this important milestone in the development of CIFA since its inception in 2008. Moreover, opportunity will

be taken to arrange meetings with members of Family Council and government officials to explore and appeal for future collaboration and support, to be followed by a retreat of the CIFA Council to map out the strategy for future development of CIFA.

Conclusion

To sum up, CIFA has witnessed significant development in 2012, thanks to the unfailing efforts and support of the members of the Council, Committees and Working Groups. We are thankful to all the stakeholders in various sectors for sharing our dream and rendering growing support and recognition to our work in Converging Professional Wisdom For Family Well-being. I am sure with commitment and concerted efforts, we can make best use of this regional platform to build a more harmonious, stable and sustainable development of the Asian Region, which will benefit all.

I look upon your continuous support, advice and encouragement so that we can march forward into another successful year in 2013 when we celebrate the 5th Anniversary of CIFA.

Patricia CHU (Mrs.)
Chairperson, CIFA Council

Presented at the CIFA AGM on 26th April, 2013