

Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region

Chairperson's Report (1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021)

Introduction

2021 was a busy and eventful year in the midst of the continuing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. With positive spirit and commitment to continue our efforts in advancing the well-being of families in the Asian Region, the CIFA Council remained active and productive as illustrated in this report. With the new normal of applying new technology, the Council and various Committees attended online meetings as scheduled. With flexibility, perseverance, high team spirit and good will, we managed to charge ahead with our plans, though with adjustments to cope with the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

We are most excited to receive formal recognition from the United Nations, with the granting of Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council. This is a key milestone in the development of CIFA since its inauguration in 2008 and establishing contact with the United Nations in 2014 when we shared the commemorative publication on 'Converging Professional Wisdom For Family Well-being' to echo the call from UN to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. With this recognition, it puts CIFA onto the international arena and allows us to participate actively in the global efforts to advance family well-being.

Granting of Special Consultative Status to CIFA by the United Nations

Background & Development

During the visit by Mrs. Renata Kaczmarek of the Focal Point on Family, Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DISD/DESA) of the United Nations to Hong Kong to officiate at the Exchange Programme of Wofoo 3A Project 2016 and Charity Concert For Family Harmony in July 2017, the idea of application for consultative status was first raised by Ms. Elsie Leung, Hon. Advisor of CIFA at the dinner hosted by her. The idea was supported by Renata.

After lengthy deliberation, CIFA Council endorsed the idea and application for Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations was eventually submitted on 30 June 2019, in response to a call for submission from the NGO Branch. Formal approval was given by ECOSOC on 21 July 2021, granting Special Consultative Status to CIFA.

Implications

Consultative status for CIFA enables it to engage in a number of ways with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, the Human Rights Council and, under specific conditions, some meetings of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as with the United Nations Secretariat.

The letter dated 30 September 2021 from the NGO Branch, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs sets out clearly the Privileges and Benefits (including attendance at meetings and access to the United Nations, written submissions and oral presentations at ECOSOC, consultations with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, and use of United Nations facilities), Responsibilities and Obligations (including the submission of Quadrennial reports, keeping of detailed records of participation in UN meetings and events, as well as cooperation with UN funds and agencies for inclusion in reports, suspension and withdrawal under conditions as stipulated by ECOSOC) and Strict prohibitions against misrepresentation (including misuse of UN name or logo for endorsement of an organisation's activities in any way, not entitled to any privileges such as tax exemption, diplomatic passports and travel privileges, forbidden to use the UN logo on stationery, business cards, websites etc) If organisation wishes to display consultative status on its letterhead, the statement of 'Organisation in (category of consultative status) with the ECOSOC since (year status granted) can be adopted.

The CIFA Council feels very much honoured and encouraged to have been granted the Special Consultative Status from the ECOSOC. It is a formal recognition of the vision/mission and work of CIFA in enhancing family well-being in the Asian Region. During the Council meeting on 17 December, 2021, it unanimously endorsed the motion to include 'Organisation in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council since 2021' below the name of CIFA on its letterhead.

Webinar II on Impact of Pandemic on Family Life in Asia (3 February)

Through the connection of Mrs. Renata Kaczmarek, Social Affairs Officer of the Focal Point on the Family located in the Division for Inclusive Social Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations, CIFA was honoured to have been invited to co-host this webinar on 3 February 2021, a great opportunity to build up linkage with other likeminded people in Asia.

We find the webinar a very fruitful one when Renata provided the background of the International Study on Impact of Pandemic on Family Life Across Cultures and its significance in contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promulgated by the United Nations.

The presentation by Dr. Anis Brik, the coordinator of the study, provided an overview of the exercise, involving 72 countries in 5 continents, 21 international partners and 28

researchers. He also highlighted issues deserving special attention such as mental health of family members, especially that of the single parents and adolescents.

The sharing of insights and experience by Prof. Yeung and Mr. Lee was thought-provoking, helping us to put things in the right perspective within the conceptual framework, and seeing the possibility of turning crisis of the pandemic into opportunities. Their thought on building bridges between practitioners and academia echoes our belief on 'Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-Being' which is fundamental to the sustainable development of society.

The Webinar had attracted a total of 110 participants from 11 countries from various sectors, including policy makers, academia and professionals from various disciplines. There was a consensus for collaborative efforts to disseminate the findings widely and to advocate for evidence-based policy formulation. CIFA was much encouraged to hear readiness to work together towards a common goal.

Corporate Governance

The Council

At the election of Council members during the Annual General Meeting held on 25 June, and the special Council meeting on 23 July to elect the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, office bearers and appointment of co-opted members and Chairmen of Committees, we are pleased to welcome new members to join the Council to carry forward our work in CIFA. We are most thankful to Ms. Elsie Leung, Ms. May Tsui and Mr. Edwin Chiu who have kindly agreed to serve as our Hon. Advisor, Hon. Legal Advisor and Hon. Auditor. Their staunch support and involvement whenever their input is called for is much appreciated.

As mentioned above, with close collaboration and readiness to walk an extra mile, the Council and various committees have been busily engaged in various aspects of work of CIFA, with the support of the Secretariat. This involves a lot of coordination with concerned parties, including funding bodies, member organisations, collaborators in specific projects etc. In the spirit of accountability and transparency, reports to funders and information on events and announcements of upcoming activities have been regularly included in CIFA-NET, the quarterly newsletter, and uploaded onto the CIFA website. All these are made possible due to good will and understanding in achieving a common goal to strive for improvement and excellence.

Several members have left the CIFA family due to various personal reasons and professional commitments. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. Machiko Ohara, Moses Mui and Margaret Wong who have served in the CIFA Council as Vice-Chairperson (Japan), Hon. Secretary and chairman of the Membership Committee respectively and contributed a lot in our endeavours in strengthening and uplifting CIFA as the regional platform in

advancing family well-being. Upon their departure, I wish them all the best and to keep in contact with us to promote our work in the region.

Financial Management

We are thankful to the Wofoo Social Enterprises (WSE), the Title sponsor of the Asian Award For Advancing Family Well-Being (3A Project) since this regional initiative was launched in 2010. We are also thankful to the Family Council for its approval of funds and to co-organise the Exchange Programme on Wofoo 3A Project 2020. With their generous support, we have been able to provide opportunity for sharing of knowledge, experience and good practice, and to conduct the Study on the 3A Project. Through close dialogue with concerned parties and monitoring by the 3A Committee led by Dr. Agnes Ng, the funding bodies are very satisfied with the deliverables and the financial management of the various activities under the Wofoo 3A Project umbrella.

On the front of fund raising, we have been unable to organise activities where participants can join in person due to social isolation and restrictions caused by the pandemic. Thus efforts have been made by the Publicity & Fund Raising Committee under the chairmanship of Ms. Alice Wan, to develop activities that can be conducted online, both to raise funds as well as to promote the message of relaxation and spending quality time with the family during the pandemic. Through the trial-and-error process, the activity was eventually organised in April 2022 and raised some money.

With prudent financial management and continued support from various quarters, I am pleased to report that we are in a healthy financial position. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Lam Yee Mui, the Hon. Treasurer to work closely with the Secretariat in overseeing the financial management of CIFA.

We will continue to adopt a prudent approach in financial management as well as complying with the principle of transparency and accountability to gain the recognition and trust from our supporters and members.

Membership

As a result of unflinching efforts of Membership Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Margaret Wong, a resolution was passed during the AGM on 25 June, with effect from 1 July 2021, new members (Full and Associate) will only be charged a one-off Membership Initiation Fee (MIF) of HK\$2400/HK\$240 (US\$300/US\$30) for Full/Associate members respectively. Once the individuals or organisations have paid the MIF, they will become 'Life Members' of CIFA. The same principle applies to existing CIFA members, and so they do not need to pay for the membership renewal fee in every 2 years anymore. All members will be requested to update their individual or organisation information once every two years so that the Membership Database will be updated.

CIFA members will enjoy benefits, including access to Membership Corner to be created in the revamped CIFA website for sharing and exchange, an Archive on various family related subjects to facilitate professional sharing, and to enjoy special rate when registering for training activities and symposiums organised by CIFA.

A Buddy system has been put in place to establish closer contact with Vice-Chairpersons in order to enhance regular exchange and sharing, and ownership towards CIFA. A one-on-one 'MC and VC' matching has been made where one MC member will connect with one VC on a regular basis.

The 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+3)

Having been granted Special Consultative Status by UN, CIFA is in a better position to echo the call from UN to celebrate IYF+30. CIFA has been invited by UN to plan ahead in preparation of the celebration of IYF+30 in 2024. Several megatrends that have impacts on families have been identified, namely new technologies, migration and urbanisation, demographic changes and climate change. During the year, CIFA has been invited to join Expert Group Meetings on parenthood, new technology and family and migration. To take the matter forward, CIFA has submitted some preliminary proposals to UN including for example an Asian Family Summit, Cross Country Study, Training Programmes, and production of a commemorative publication etc. On 25 June, the CIFA Council endorsed the formation of the Working Group on IYF+30 to work out details on activities to be organised upon receiving further information from UN. We will keep all informed of development and appeal to all to join this important celebration in 2024, hopefully by then the situation will be much improved to enable active participation.

6th CIFA Regional Symposium

The 6th CIFA Regional Symposium on Family First: Supporting Asian Families in the Era of Inclusive Growth was successfully held from 10 to 11 June, 2021 online. It was co-organised with the National Taiwan University Children and Family Research Center Sponsored by CTBC Charity Foundation (CFRC), Child Welfare League Foundation (CWLF), Department of Social Work of the National Taiwan University, International Council on Social Welfare, Taiwan (ICSW), Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation and Taiwan NPO Self-Regulation Alliance. The Symposium was a great success with 730 participants from 11 countries/regions, breaking the record of registration of all previous CIFA regional symposiums.

The Opening Ceremony was officiated by Mr. Ying-Jeou MA, the 12th - 13th President of the Republic of China, Taiwan, together with Prof. Ming-Syan CHEN, Executive Vice President, National Taiwan University, Taiwan and Head, Council Board, National Taiwan University Children and Family Research Center, Taiwan and Mrs. Patricia CHU, Chairperson of CIFA.

The Scientific Programme consisted of 3 keynotes, 3 plenary sessions (with 9 presentations), and 5 concurrent sessions (with 16 presentations), as well as the Final Round Adjudication

of the Wofoo 3A Project 2020. All sessions were attended by around 400 on-line participants. Despite the fact that speakers and participants could not meet face-to-face to share and exchange directly, the high-quality presentations had stimulated much discussion, generating much energy for future exchange and collaboration.

The three keynote speakers including Dr. Anjali DOSHI-GANDHI, Former Deputy Director General of The National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia on the topic of “Family Well-Being (FWB) Index – Implications on Policy and Practice’. It was followed by that of Dr. Susan WALKER, Associate Professor of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota, USA on the topic “Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and the Family” and Prof. Chien-Jen CHEN, the 14th Vice President of the Republic of China, Taiwan and Distinguished Research Fellow of Genomics Research Centre, Academia Sinica, Taiwan on the topic of “Supporting Families in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Inter-generation Approach”. Apart from the very informative and stimulating keynote speeches by these heavy weight speakers, over 28 academics, researchers, policy makers and practitioners from 7 countries/regions including Australia, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and USA delivered presentations on a wide variety of topics, and many other issues faced by the families in different economic and social settings in Asia had been discussed in the Concurrent Sessions.

During the lunch break of the Symposium, three sets of videos had been shown, including CIFA activities from 2008 to 2017, the Asian Family Summit in 2018 (which had been uploaded onto the United Nations Portal), and the greetings from CIFA Chairperson and Vice-chairpersons from China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan, appealing to participants at the Symposium to support the work of CIFA and become one of its members.

We had received overwhelming positive and encouraging feedback from different fronts, fully appreciating the opportunity for sharing useful information and insightful analysis of family issues. They fully appreciated the chosen topics as well as the high quality of papers being presented. The Symposium had provided invaluable opportunities for various stakeholders to raise thought provoking questions on many issues affecting the quality of life of nowadays families.

With the kind approval from the Editors of the International Journal of Social Welfare (IJSW), quality papers presented at the Symposium submitted for review by the Editorial Group will be published in a Special Issue. The theme, namely Family First: Supporting Asian Families in the Era of Inclusive Growth has been adopted.

An announcement of the CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022 to be held in Singapore in November 2022 was made by Mrs. Chu at the Closing Ceremony. Ms. Ruth Chin and Ms. Swan Keng from the Ministry of Social and Family Development of Singapore presented a powerpoint to extend invitation to all to join the next regional event to be co-hosted by the Ministry of Social and Family Development and National University of Singapore. Everyone was excited and looked forward to further details to be provided on the event website to be developed in due course.



Group photo of speakers and guests after the Closing Ceremony

CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022

Preparatory work had begun with a fruitful meeting held on 1 September among representatives of co-organisers to work out details of the event. These included the formation of Organising and Scientific Committees, main theme and sub-themes to be adopted, scientific and hospitality programmes, invitation of speakers, registration fees and development of website etc. as well as setting out the timeline for these. It was decided that a hybrid mode will be adopted in view of the pandemic, to be held from 8-10 November 2022 with the theme of Empowering Asian Families: Embracing Challenges & Building a Better Future, with sub-themes on Innovations, Inspirations & sustainability of Asian Family Services, Changing Asian Families in the New Era, Good Family Practices, Globalization and Asian Families, and Family Research and Policy Impact. The programme includes Opening and Closing Ceremonies, 3 keynote speeches, 3 plenary sessions, concurrent sessions, Final Round Adjudication and Award Presentation Ceremony of Wofoo 3A Project 2022.

Wofoo 3A Project

Wofoo 3A Project 2020

Following the second round adjudication held on March, 8 teams have been shortlisted to enter the Final Round Adjudication which was one of the highlights of the 6th CIFA Regional Symposium held online in June 2021, including those from Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan to compete for the Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards, Most Innovative Award and Best Collaborative Award. These projects covered a wide variety of topics including community housing movement, anti-bullying education promotion, inter-generational community engagement, trauma treatment service for children, family resilience, co-parenting among

divorced families, youth mental health issues, and vocational development project for indigenous adolescents. 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.

Since the Final Round Adjudication was conducted online, My Favourite Project which requires online polling of participants had been suspended this round. In recognition of prompt and active response to the crisis caused by COVID-19, Certificate of Appreciation had been presented to 2 projects from Malaysia.



Group photo of Dr. Joseph Lee, 3A Project Committee members and the finalist teams after the Award Presentation Ceremony

A Study on Best Practices and the Social Impacts of the Wofoo 3A Project

Wofoo 3A Project, occurring every other year since it was launched in 2010, has been recognised as one of CIFA's most significant, valuable and sustainable activities. With ten years of establishment and remarkable success in creating a platform for transdisciplinary collaboration and exchange while recognising outstanding, innovative family related initiatives, a study was conducted to identify the best practices and consolidate the social impacts of this initiative under CIFA, in collaboration with Prof. Vivian Lou and her team at the Sau Po Centre on Ageing (CoA) of The University of Hong Kong. The study adopted a mix-method design involving document review and in-depth interviews.

A Six Best Practices model adopted by the award-winning teams in congruence with CIFA's mission was demonstrated, namely the PIE-ISI (i.e. Project rationale, Implementation, Evaluation, Innovation, Sustainability and Replicability, and Institutional Synergy). This practice model is developed and promoted, in the regional and international arena. On the other hand, it confirms that the Wofoo 3A Project encompasses professional, organisational, community, regional and international impacts. It has provided a platform for sharing and exchange, serving as a hub of learning marked by sustainability, scalability and replicability.

The findings of the Study confirms that the Wofoo 3A Project has achieved its mission and vision to “provide a platform for transdisciplinary collaboration with the ultimate goal to strengthen family functioning and promote family health”. It provided a solid foundation for continuous efforts to expand from 3A to 4A, with a reinforced “Alliance” for the consolidation of collaborative knowledge and practice wisdom among organisations to create greater impact.

For the full report on the study, please visit: [http://cifa-net.org/files/news/Study/3A%20Project Study%20on%20Best%20Practices%20and%20the %20Social%20Impacts.pdf](http://cifa-net.org/files/news/Study/3A%20Project%20Study%20on%20Best%20Practices%20and%20the%20Social%20Impacts.pdf)

To echo the International Day of Families, a press release had been issued on 15 May to share the findings of the Study. Furthermore, a paper on the study had been presented by Prof. Vivian Lou at the Plenary Session 1 of the 6th CIFA Regional Symposium, generating fruitful discussion.

Mrs. Chu, together with representatives from HKCSS and AKA, Gold and Bronze Award winners of Wofoo 3A Project 2020 attended the radio interview “政好星期天” of the Commercial Radio on 22 August. The content of the interview was widely covered in newsletter and radio news. In an attempt to further brief Ms. Melissa Pang, Chairman of Family Council of the work of CIFA and get support from the Family Council, a lunch meeting had been arranged with her and Dr. Joseph Lee, President of Wofoo Social Enterprises. We are pleased and thankful that Ms. Melissa Pang is very supportive of our application for funding and to co-organise the Exchange Programme in December and joined the event in person.



Group photo of Mrs. Chu and representatives from HKCSS and AKA at the radio interview

Exchange Programme of Wofoo 3A Project 2020 & Launching Ceremony of Wofoo 3A Project 2022

The Exchange Programme on Wofoo 3A Project 2020 & Launching Ceremony of Wofoo 3A Project 2022 had been successfully held online on 10 December with Ms. Melissa Pang, the

new Chairman of the Family Council and Dr. Joseph Lee, President of Wofoo Social Enterprises, the Title Sponsor of Wofoo 3A Project as the Guests of Honour at the Opening Ceremony.

The programme was attended by around 110 participants from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, India and the Philippines. The response from participants had been very positive, generating fruitful discussions on follow up action to build linkages and sharing of experience. The event had been recorded and could be viewed on <http://cifa-net.org/content.aspx?urlkey=FVnAikT17T1af8qR> by those who were unable to join the programme.

During the Launching Ceremony, Mrs. Patricia Chu presented an overview and highlights of Wofoo 3A Project since 2010, and Dr. Agnes Ng, announced the details of the competition. Following that, invitation letters had been sent out to social service organisations, religious/professional groups, caring companies and academic institutes to appeal for their support and participation in this new round of competition. Announcement had also been made in the CIFA website at <http://www.cifa-net.org>.

The Final Round Adjudication and Award Presentation Ceremony of the Wofoo 3A Project 2022 will take place at the CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022, scheduled to be held on 8-10 November, 2022 in Singapore. Subsidy will be given to members of the finalist teams to attend the Symposium.



Photo of Mrs. Chu and Ms. Melissa Pang at the Exchange Programme

Website revamping

With the endorsement by the Council, the WEP Development Committee, under the leadership of Mr. WK Kwok, initiated action within the year to revamp the CIFA Website in order to make it more user friendly with additional functions. Work involved developing an

archive of papers, reports and projects in the CIFA website for a more systematic knowledge management to facilitate sharing and learning, and put in place new functions for online registration and payment, etc. A Member Management System and Resource Corner will also be included for members to facilitate application and sharing. The ITRC of the HKCSS had been selected, through a tendering procedure, to undertake the revamping exercise. Apart from the Project Management Committee, a Project Steering Committee had been set up, with the Chairperson and Chairmen of the WEP Development Committee and Membership Committee to steer the exercise. The revamping exercise is expected to be completed with the new website to be launched in September 2022.

Research & Training

During the year, members of the Research & Training Committee had been making efforts to collect data in the cross-regional study on “Challenges to Ageing Society: Impact of Carer Support on Family Well-Being in Asia”. However, due to the impact of the pandemic, only Taiwan and Korea were able to collect sufficient data for analysis. The findings of their study had been presented at the 6th Regional Symposium held in June.

Members of the Research & Training Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Miranda Chung, have been actively involved in organising the 6th Regional Symposium as members of the Scientific Committee in vetting submissions of abstracts, serving as plenary speakers and moderators during the symposium. With their hard work and staunch support behind the scene, the 6th Regional Symposium was a great success.

With the formation of the Organising Committee and Scientific Committee for the CIFA Regional Symposium & MSF Asian Family Conference 2022, members of the R&T Committee began to get involved in recommending sub-themes for the Plenary Sessions and Concurrent Sessions, and inviting speakers and submission of abstracts. With their unfailing support and input, everyone is looking forward to another exciting and successful regional event.

Enhanced Involvement of Regions and coordinated efforts among various committees

In order to achieve the goal of enhancing the involvement of regions/countries to reflect the regional nature of CIFA, taking forward the initiative from 3A to 4A (Alliance) among teams that have participated in the previous rounds of the competition and developing online activities under the new normal of the pandemic to attract new members and sustain the interest and involvement of existing members, the 3A Committee, R&T Committee and Membership Committee had met on 4 October to brainstorm on ways to collaborate in order to achieve the greatest impact. After each committee presenting their plans and making suggestions for cooperation, follow up action will be taken up with concerned parties. One example of close collaboration between R&T Committee and Membership Committee is organising the Webinars, involving Vice-chairpersons and invited speakers, with the Membership Committee designing the posters and backdrop for the webinar and

producing the video to appeal for support and participation. Continuous efforts will be made on this front to sustain the momentum.

CIFA WEP & CIFA-NET

In the year, CIFA-NET continued to be published on a quarterly basis to include reports and announcement on CIFA activities and its member organisations. With the continuing impact of the pandemic on family life and delivery of services, the Editorial Group decided to continue the series on “Helping Families to meet with the challenges of COVID-19”, inviting member organisations to share their experience in coping with the situation with innovative approaches, adopting new technology to keep in touch with their service recipients to alleviate their stresses and difficulties, and distribution of anti-pandemic materials. We are most thankful to CIFA member organisations to contribute articles to CIFA-NET.

Conclusion

The year has been a most exciting one, with support and recognition from all quarters, especially that from the UN, granting us the Special Consultative Status bringing CIFA to a new height. Our efforts in developing and maintaining this regional platform is a most rewarding and fulfilling one. It is a testimony of concerted efforts, with common goal, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. With positive energy, flexibility, sense of commitment and comradeship, we have been able to move forward on different fronts as illustrated in this report.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed significantly to the development of CIFA, and we have demonstrated that despite adversities, we are able to survive and make a difference, changing challenges and crisis to opportunities. With shared vision and firm believe in the importance of the family, we will continue to strive for improvement, in the spirit of the Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve the long term sustainability of human kind.

Patricia CHU
Chairperson
CIFA

22 June 2022