

**Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA)  
Survey on Challenges Faced by Families in Hong Kong**

**Background**

Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) conducted a survey on challenges faced by families in Hong Kong in June to September 2007.

Objectives of the survey were to provide a baseline on the current situation in HK and as a basis for similar survey in other countries in the region to facilitate cross country comparison on family challenges.

**Methodology**

With the technical support from Public Opinion Programme (POP) of the University of Hong Kong, the survey was conducted by telephone interviewing randomly selected samples. Phase I was carried out in late June 2007 and "exploratory open-ended" questions were used to explore the general public concern over family issues. 263 respondents were successfully interviewed. Findings of the first phase of survey were compiled and used to formulate the questions and items to be covered in the second phase conducted in late August 2007. 512 respondents were successfully interviewed. Respondents were requested to grade the named challenges faced by families as very common / common / average / not common / very not common. For the demographic information of respondents, please refer to the Appendix.

**Summary of Findings**

Please refer to the attached Appendix for the summary of findings.

The most common challenges faced by families in Hong Kong are as followed:

1. Long working hours / heavy workload was the most common problem respondents or their friends or relatives are facing with, indicating that unbalance between work and family life is common among Hong Kong people. Long working hours and heavy workload cause damages to family and doubtlessly, respondents would normally have little time and energy to play their roles in the family. Consistent long working hours and heavy workload bring immense stress, and would seriously affect the individuals' physical and mental health.
2. Most respondents' families or their friends / relatives worried about how they could do their best to nurture their children as well as provide their children with best educational opportunities. It seems that most Hong Kong people could see the importance of education to the next generation, while feeling helpless to get any support.
3. Some respondents would also feel stressful due to illness or suspected that they might have problem with physical or mental health.

## Recommendations

### 1. Creating Positive Family Dynamics

Creating an environment for family well-being enables family members to contribute more to the family. While harmonious family life is the base for constructing a harmonious society, we strongly recommend the Family Council to be established by the Government to consider the suggestions from different sectors of the society, take appropriate measures to ensure that social policies are in line with the goal to enhance family well-being in Hong Kong.

Relieving the stress faced by individuals may allow family members to contribute more of their time and energy to perform their unique and important role in the family, which is the fundamental factor for family well-being, creating positive family dynamics in facing individual and family difficulties. We would suggest the Government, employers and employees to collaborate for better family dynamics through policy formulation and legislation, e.g. setting the highest daily working hours, reinforcing family-friendly policy and providing flexible working environment and conditions. When employees can attain work life balance, work productivity may be optimized and thus enhances the competitive power of the company. Every individual should also try his/her best to sustain the quality of family life, learn to cope with different stresses and to maintain a harmonious family life.

### 2. Nurturing the next generation

Educating and nurturing the next generation is not simply a concern of individual families but a shared interest of the society. The Government should ensure that voices of the parents are heard when developing education policies.

Collaboration between teachers, parents and students is the key to success. Parent education should be strengthened and popularized, with more training for teachers to promote the psychological well-being of students and to facilitate their healthy growth and development.

### 3. Physical and Mental Health

An affordable medical system should be secured for every family member to meet their health care needs. The Government should evaluate, review and improve the existing medical provision, to ensure that every member in the community will be protected and cared for, with no worry over their economic situations.

Furthermore, each individual has the responsibility of taking good care of oneself and to maintain a healthy living. A good physical well-being can certainly lower the public medical cost and ensure a better life for the whole family.

### 4. Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA)

CIFA is established to support and enhance family well-being in the Asian region through sharing of clinical experiences and advocating formulation of public policies in support of families. It provides a platform for trans-disciplinary collaboration with the ultimate goal 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.

**Survey on Challenges / Problems / Difficulties faced by Families  
Preliminary Data Analysis (Phase 1)**

**Table 1. Summary table on challenges reported from the telephone survey (N=263)**

Challenges/Problems/Difficulties n = 121	Number	Percent	Rank
Financial issues	54	30%	1
Employment	40	22%	2
Education	24	13%	3
Relationship amongst members	16	9%	4
Housing	14	8%	5
Health	9	5%	6
Work Stress	8	4.5%	7
Parenting	8	4.5%	7
Others: Individual Concern/ Loneliness	4	2%	9
Policy and Environment	3	2%	10
	180	100%	

**Note: 139 people reported no challenges, 2 did not know, 1 refused to answer**

**Table 2. Distribution of challenges according to 1st -4th responses recorded\***

\*No respondent had given 5 answers. 121 respondents had expressed at least one concern related to family challenges. 41 respondents provided a second concern. 15 people had named 3 challenges while only 3 provided a fourth one.

Challenges/Problems/Difficulties	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	Total
Relationship amongst members	11	4	0	1	16
Parenting	5	3	0	0	8
Education	14	3	6	1	24
Housing	9	5	0	0	14
Financial issues	32	14	7	1	54
Employment	30	8	2	0	40
Policy and Environment	3	0	0	0	3
Work Stress	6	2	0	0	8
Health	8	1	0	0	9
Others: Career dev't, Self Adjustment	3	1	0	0	4
<b>Total = 180</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>180</b>

**Profile of Respondents**

**A. Sex**

	Male	Female	Total
Existence of Challenges / Problems / Difficulties	43	78	121
No Challenge	50	89	139
Don't Know / Hard to say	-	2	2
Refuse to answer	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>263</b>

**B. Age**

	18-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 & up	DK	Total
Existence of Challenges / Problems / Difficulties	11	15	24	34	19	16	2	121
No Challenge	17	17	20	28	25	31	1	139
Don Know / Hard to say	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Refuse to answer	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>263</b>

DK = Don know / Hard to say

**C. Education Level**

	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary or above	DK	Total
Existence of Challenges / Problems / Difficulties	26	66	27	2	121
No Challenge	26	74	39	-	139
Don Know / Hard to say	-	1	1	-	2
Refuse to answer	-	-	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>263</b>

DK = Don know / Hard to say

**CIFA Stage 2 Survey**  
**Challenges Faced by Hong Kong Families**

**I. Summary of Findings**

Rank	Issue	Mean	非常普遍 (5)	普通 (4)	一半半 (3)	不普遍 (2)	非常不普遍 (1)	唔知/ 難講	Total	拒答
1	工時過長 / 工作量過重	3.5591	102	198	79	88	21	24	512	-
2	難以管教子女	3.3573	86	177	76	120	27	26	512	-
3	擔心子女得不到最好教育機會	3.2824	74	191	53	120	41	33	512	-
4	自己患病 / 擔心自己健康問題	3.1757	54	188	78	153	27	8	509	3
5	有親人患病需要照顧	2.8187	35	146	61	206	50	13	510	2
6	財政緊絀	2.7999	40	128	86	187	61	10	511	1
7	夫婦關係出現問題	2.7621	35	125	78	201	56	17	511	1
8	姻親 (如婆婆、翁婿) 關係出現問題	2.6707	28	131	63	204	74	13	512	-
9	親子關係出現問題	2.6465	31	101	86	217	60	15	510	2
10	失業 / 開工不足	2.5310	22	108	58	225	79	19	511	1
11	負債	2.5106	32	86	80	195	97	22	512	-
	<b>Total Frequencies</b>		<b>539</b>	<b>1579</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>1916</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>200</b>		<b>10</b>

## II. Profile of Respondents

### A. Sex

Sex	No.	Percentage
Male	239	46.7 %
Female	273	53.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100 %</b>

### B. Age

Age Group	No.	Percentage
18 ? 20	23	4.5 %
21 ? 29	78	15.2 %
30 ? 39	99	19.3 %
40 ? 49	115	22.5 %
50 ? 59	88	17.2 %
60 or above	100	19.6 %
No Information	9	1.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100 %</b>

### C. Educational Level

Education Level	No.	Percentage
Primary or below	79	15.5 %
Secondary	276	54.0 %
Post-secondary or above	152	29.8 %
No Information	4	0.7 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100 %</b>

### D. Occupation

Occupation	No.	Percentage
Administrative / Professional	110	21.5 %
Clerical / Service	127	24.8 %
Laborer	64	12.4 %
Student	28	5.5 %
Housewife	80	15.6 %
Others	98	19.2 %
No Information	6	1.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**E. Monthly Income of Respondent (excluding CSSA)**

Monthly Income	No.	Percentage
Below HK\$ 5,000	20	3.9 %
HK\$ 5,000 ? 9,999	77	15.0 %
HK\$ 10,000 ? 19,999	117	22.8 %
HK\$ 20,000 ? 29,999	40	7.9 %
HK\$ 30,000 ? 39,999	13	2.6 %
HK\$ 40,000 ? 49,999	7	1.4 %
HK\$ 50,000 or above	16	3.1 %
No Income or No Information*	222	43.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100 %</b>

\* Respondents with no income or no income information include the students, housewives, and those of other occupations and refused to answer.

**F. Size of Household**

Size of Household	No.	Percentage
One	23	4.5 %
Two	88	17.2 %
Three	125	24.4 %
Four	147	28.8 %
Five	79	15.4 %
Six	22	4.3 %
Seven or above	17	3.3 %
No Information	11	2.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**G. No. of Generations living together in the same household**

No. of Generations	No. of Households	Percentage
One	111	21.8 %
Two	332	64.8 %
Three	61	12.0 %
Four	4	0.7 %
No Information	4	0.7 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100 %</b>