

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
August 2016

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August 15-28: Global Citizenship Institute, Sri Lanka

APAY National General Secretaries meet in Yangon, Myanmar

The National General Secretaries of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs gathered at the historic city of Yangon, Myanmar, during 13 - 15 July, 2016 to participate at the APAY National General Secretaries Conference. The participants of the conference were from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka & Thailand.

The Union Minister for Religious and Cultural Affairs of the Government of Myanmar, His Excellency Thura U Aung Ko, was the guest of honor at the opening ceremony of the NGS' Conference. The youth members of the YMCAs performed a colorful cultural presentation at the opening ceremony. The opening ceremony was also attended by the Board Members of the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar, local dignitaries and high government officials.

His excellency Thura U Aung Ko, in his inauguration speech praised the motto of the YMCAs "That they all may be one" and expressed that God wants all of us to be united as one body. He also shared his government's untiring efforts to achieve democracy in the country and the national reconciliation and peace process under the guidance and leadership of honorable State Counselor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Mr. U Tha Sein, President of the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar delivered the words of felicitations while Mr. Nam Boo Won General Secretary of APAY welcomed all at the conference and gave a brief background, the purpose and the expectation of the conference.

The current Quadrennial Program Plan of the APAY was presented at the conference which was adopted at the Executive Committee Meeting of APAY last March. The QPP was elaborately discussed and the NGSs explored the ways and means how the thrust areas of the QPP could be followed out in their respective YMCAs. It may be mentioned that the initiation of the QPP was primarily formulated during the APAY Leaders Round Table held in Chiang Mai, Thailand during December 2015. The lay and professional leaders of APAY took active part in

the formulation the QPP.

One of the important components of the NGS' Conference was the sessions on Social Economy. The NGSs took part in an extensive session on Social and Solidarity Economy led by Rev. Song Kyong Yong from Global Social Economy Forum (GCEF), Seoul, Korea. This was an opportunity for the participants to learn more about Social Economy and explore the possibilities to promote social enterprises in their own YMCAs.

Each of the participating National General Secretaries shared their respective national reports during the conference on the final day. This was a brief report of their national YMCA movements, their main programs, their challenges, financial state of affairs, etc. This was an opportunity for the NGSs to learn more about other YMCA movements and also share ideas and solutions to issues being confronted by the YMCAs.

Rt. Rev. Metropolitan Geevarghese Mor Coorilos from the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Kerala, India led the morning devotions of the conference. Each day, in his biblical reflections he focused on a theme that relates to the present thrust areas of APAY Quadrennial Program Plan. These were Social Economy, Gender Mainstreaming and Ecological Concerns. In his reflections he shared the biblical and theological perspectives of these issues and challenged the participants to work on these issues considered as biblical imperatives for our organization.

The participants also had the opportunity to experience the work of a local NGO working on social issues in Yangon and also visit famous pagodas in Yangon.

We wish to express our deepest appreciation to the NCY Myanmar, particularly Mr. Maung Maung Win, National General Secretary and all his staff team for their relentless efforts to host the conference in the most successful way.

~ Duncan Chowdhury, APAY Executive Secretary

Youth for Peace Building

Forty-one student YMCA members from seven national movements actively engaged in the various learning activities during the recently concluded APAY Asia and Pacific University YMCA (APUY) Regional Conference held in Wu Khai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong last July 19-25, 2016 with the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong as this year's host. Under the theme 'Peace and Justice Towards Sustainable Society', the youth recognized their important role as instrument of building a culture of peace.

The event highlighted that peace and justice are building blocks of a sustainable society and this process requires a facilitating leader who could provide alternative visions and means towards achieving an inclusive society. Through the awareness raising on issues of discrimination on ethnic minorities, sharing of local realities, visiting urban poor communities and simulating refugee life, the participants were encouraged to continuously promote, organize and mobilize youth-led actions in their communities that address social injustices. They commit to spread the values of respect and love by doing similar conferences, community voluntary work, and advocacy to fellow students and youth.

The APAY is confident that through these groups of YMCA youth constituents, significant development of youth-led and youth-initiated programmes will continue to contribute to strengthening the social relevance of the movement.

↑ APAY Participants reflect and share about their role as agents of Peace and justice

↑ Participants of the APUY Regional Conference 2016 together with Chinese YMCA Board Members, Mr. Karl Lau-GS Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, Mr. Peter Ho-GS YMCA of Hong Kong, Prof. Angela Wong-Keynote Speaker, APAY YPLD Chair Peter Chan and APAY Executive Staff and APAY GS Mr. Nam Boo Won

~ Maria Cristina Miranda-Lastima, APAY Executive Secretary

Mini-SOP for Guangzhou YMCA &
Philippines National Forum Meeting

From July 18 to 28, a group of 22 friends from the Guangzhou YMCA visited Cambodia. The visit was initiated by Yolanda You, SOP 2015 and facilitated by Ms. Jessie Tsang.

For three and a half days the group visited historical sites around Phnom Penh and spent time at YMCA slum projects where they played games with the children and enjoyed homestays.

On the 21st they boarded a bus for Siem Reap to participate in a five-day mini-SOP organized by ICF. The short course included discussions on conflict management, resolution and transformation, Socratic Circle, identities, critical and creative thinking, engagement and dialogue and transformation.

Short field trips were also made to help participants reflect more deeply on what they were learning in the sessions. The first visit was to the Cambodian Circus, Phare. Here they observed how music, drama, art and acrobatics can be effectively used to tell important stories which can move people to transformation.

The second was a visit to the War Museum to learn about the consequences of allowing conflicts to escalate to violence and war.

Even though the time was very short, many of the participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn through the creative processes of SOP. This was the first time for ICF to have a program directly related to China and we look forward to more occasions in the future.

↑ Visit to the War Museum to learn about landmines

↑ Presentation of learnings on the final day

In the Philippines, the national forum held its annual meeting between July 29 and Aug. 1 in Davao on the southern island of Mindanao. Much of the time was devoted to making plans for programs in the upcoming year. The national forum members decided, for instance, to hold a mini-SOP for two weeks in February next year in Cotabato City that will help them expand their national network beyond Mindanao. They also discussed holding a one-week workshop on journalism for education and advocacy in July 2017 prior to next year's national forum meeting. At the conclusion of this program, the national forum hopes to create a communications team that can produce videos, photographs and articles for education and advocacy for issues related to justpeace in the country.

The national forum also agreed to participate in this year's regional campaign by Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) to share the insights of children about peace to commemorate the U.N. International Day of Peace on Sept. 21. The contribution of the national forum in the

Philippines will be to produce a video of interviews with grassroots children about what peace means to them.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the national forum elected a new national coordinator—Abdurazaq Madale.

~ Max Ediger, Director of ICF & Bruce Van Voorhis, Coordinator of ICF

National GATN Training

The YMCA of Albay, Inc. hosted the Global Alternative Tourism Network (GATN) Training with the collaboration of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY) and the YMCA Philippines which was held last July 8-10, 2016 at Mayon Backpacker's Hostel, Legazpi City, Albay, Philippines.

The National GATN Training was participated with a total of twenty one (21) participants, together with an international delegate, Mr. Stefan Diwan low Tzu Yang, from YMCA Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Local participants in the training were from YMCAs of Albay, Baguio, Los Baños, Manila, Downtown Manila, Pangasinan, and Quezon City.

The training culminated successfully because of the active participation of the delegates during the discussions on Alternative Tourism. They have highlighted the needs to promote and strategies to strengthen ties between local communities and global citizenship. Albay is considered as one of the places where the main objective of Alternative Tourism can be shown by promoting community-based tourism through community exposure.

Sessions started with a morning devotion led by Ms. Dorothy Joy Barcenas from YMCA of Albay, Inc. and Mr. Pablito Tabucol, the NGS Philippines, welcomed and introduced the participants and outlined the training matrix and schedule. Mr. CHAN Beng Seng Chan from APAY and Mr. Juanito Bacani from YMCA Pangasinan were the main facilitators for the training.

We learned that Mass Tourism is developing at an alarming rate with the advancement in air travel and globalization, thus, raises serious questions on sustainability of the environment and our cultural heritage. Mr. Jimmy Bacani shared that GATN is Community-Based Tourism where community development is a tool being used to strengthen the ability of rural communities to manage tourism resources while ensuring local community's participation as well as benefiting from the activities.

Mr. Chan also added that the GATN is also a big help to YMCA through mobilizing available resources and programs for Movement Building, Youth Empowerment, Global Citizenship, Community Development and Income Generation. After the discussions, it was then followed by a workshop.

It is hoped that through GATN, we can change tourism by

- * introducing better motivations for travel
- * raising awareness of carbon footprint in tourism
- * introducing sustainable travel activities and programs; and,
- * in the long term, changing to whole nature/concept of tourism

On the second day, participants were given an opportunity to engage and witness how tourism is being steered in Albay. We were able to see the Majestic Mayon Volcano which painted smiles on their face. We also witnessed how a fishing community near Embarcadero de Legazpi was hidden behind a large wall to bar them from coming close to the scenic sites of the place. It stirred some issues that became part of a fruitful discussion.

On the last day of the training, participants worked at developing alternative tourism sites in their respective areas. Each YMCA then shared their proposed Alternative Tourism Sites and the marketing strategies they plan to use for their own GATN program.

The training culminated with a short program led by the National General Secretary and each YMCA chapter was given an opportunity to share their experiences in line with the 3-day activity. Awarding of certificate and token to all participants followed. Participants bid farewell with smile on their faces as they once again saw the Majestic Mayon Volcano in the last day of their training in Albay.

↑Belfry of Cagsawa Church - built in 1724, was buried by
Mayon Volcano eruption in 1814

↑Discussion with leader of the "Community hidden behind the wall"

~ Dorothy Barcenas, YMCA Albay

APAY Green Team

The APAY Green Team has been reconstituted this year with the commencement of the new APAY Quadrennial. The members of the APAY Green Team for this quadrennial are Ms. Patcharin Aviphan (Thailand), Ms. Sol Marie Ucab (Philippines), Mr. Lee Man Key (Hong Kong), Dr. Surajit Sahu (India), Mr. Kim Kyung Min (Korea), Ms. Rita Hettiarachchi (Y's Men Int. Sri Lanka), Mr. Colin Lambie (Y's Men Int. Australia), Mr. Nam Boo Won (APAY) and Mr. Duncan Chowdhury (APAY) who is the related secretary of the Team.

The APAY Green Team is responsible for the environmental programs of APAY. It promotes the formation of Green Teams at the YMCAs and encourages the YMCAs of our region to be actively involved in green activities to protect to the environment. The APAY Green Team also organizes the APAY Green Ambassadors Trainings both at regional and national level. The APAY Green YMCA Award program also falls under the purview of the APAY Green Team. This committee also administers the APAY Green Fund for environmental projects materialized purely for carbon emissions.

~ Duncan Chowdhury, APAY Executive Secretary

Young people creating global impact with Osaka YMCA

Whilst world leaders often come together to discuss solutions to global issues, the views of young people are not necessarily heard.

But what if there was a platform for them to debate and find solutions themselves?

From 7 – 11 July this year, over 100 young leaders from around the world gathered to raise their voices in Japan at the Osaka YMCA Global Youth Conference (GYC).

The five day event was cultural experience with a mix of serious debate and problem solving. Through workshops on the refugee crisis, media rights, and online privacy – young participants

developed global solutions which are representative of a worldwide community.

“It was amazing to see the similarities and differences of views, especially on topics such as press freedom,” said Dominic Pangrazio, Associate Director of the Osaka YMCA Global Department.

“Despite these, everyone worked well together to workshop ideas for change, and agree on global resolutions together.”

After plenty of discussion, participants gathered for the finale of the GYC – a general assembly where everyone had a chance to vote for resolutions to the issue of press freedom.

Whilst Australians, Americans, and many others agreed with that all press should be free, others from Singapore and China were quick to disagree.

“The government has been a voice for peace in my country, and the media regulations have meant our society has continued to be the way it is,” said Keefe, participant from Singapore.

After two hours of discussion, all resolutions were passed with some amendments – showing how young people can come together and work out their differences.

Now, it's time for change.

“The GYC is open to all young people who are passionate about creating a better world and want become global citizens – but may not know how,” said Dominic.

“Through our social enterprise imitative, Osaka YMCA will be providing funding to participants who have ideas for change in their communities.

We hope that they can change the world for the better – and be local leaders creating global impact.”

To find out more about the GYC, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/Osaka-YMCA-Global-Engagement-447119588697072/>

~ Calcum Smyth, YMCA Victoria in Australia
(working temporarily with the Osaka YMCA in Japan)

Visit to Myitkyina YMCA and its ongoing Kachin Drug Rehabilitation Project (KDRP) in response to prevalent drug addition of young people

A visit to Myitkyina, Kachin State, was made from 16th to 18th July by Mr. Nam Boo Won, GS of APAY, to observe the ongoing Kachin Drug Rehabilitation Project (KDRP) implemented by Myitkyina YMCA. The visit was kindly accompanied by Mr. Maung Maung Win, NGS of Myanmar YMCA and Ms. Daw Lu Ja, Treasurer of the National YMCA.

Upon our arrival at Myitkyina YMCA, there was a warm welcome by the Myitkyina YMCA board including Mr. Saw George Makklar, President and Mr. Gun Shawng, General Secretary. During the meeting with board members, Miss Khon Mai, Executive Secretary in charge of the KDRP presented an impressive report on the project: current economic , social and environmental situation in Hpakant jade mining area; the YMCA's work to seek alternatives for drug-addicted youth such as counseling, job training and prevention campaign through drama; achievements and limitations of the project; and future plans.

We visited two drug rehabilitation centers – All Nation Drug Rehabilitation Center and The Light of the World KBC Rehabilitation Center. Therein, we witnessed the struggles of not only the operators of the centers for helping the addicts, but also young inmates who tried to overcome their drug addiction with the support of the facility operators. During the dialogue with the facility managers, we recognized that it is really difficult to get out of the ‘vicious circle’ of poverty, a

get-rich-quick dream at mining, a temptation to easily accessible drugs and falling into poverty again. We also found there is strong need for a stricter control of the drug use which has been widespread partly due to corruption and government mal-functioning.

There was also an opportunity to visit a Kachin Baptist Church-run IDP (Internally Displaced Peoples) Camp near Myitkyina city. It was an eye-opening visit through which I was able to witness the harsh life struggles gone through by those people displaced against their wish by the prolonged civil war between Kachin Independence Army and Myanmar government military force. I realized the long-standing ethnic minority issues in Myanmar need prime attention not only from the newly elected democratic government, but also international GOs and NGOs working for humanitarian causes, including world YMCA family.

During the visit, a dialogue meeting with the YMCA Youth English Conversation Club members was organized to share political situation and social issues affecting young people in Kachin state. It was very impressive to discuss with YMCA young people, most of whom are graduates or currently in universities or colleges, on their perspectives of their nation and society as well as their dreams and aspirations for their communities and country. Many of them expressed frustrations of the difficult situation they face with, and at the same time high expectations on their democratically elected government. They were very active, willing to learn from each other and eager to contribute to their communities with their God-given talents.

I appreciate very much Myitkyina YMCA and National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar for organizing this meaningful visitation to the YMCA, its valuable work and also to the realities of the people and community. Special thanks go to Y's Men International for its continuous willing support for the KDRP implemented by Myitkyina YMCA.

↑ Discussion with YMCA Youth English Conversation Club Members

~ Nam Boo Won, APAY General Secretary

APAY Publishes 19th General Assembly Report

The Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs is pleased to announce the publication of the book "Anchored on our Rock: Building a Sustainable Future" the final report of the 19th General Assembly of APAY, held during 7-11 September 2015 at Daejeon City, Korea.

This 168 page report is a compilation of all papers presented at the General Assembly by the distinguished resource persons, including the keynote address, biblical reflections of the daily devotions, Assembly Mandate, Resolution of Cheorwon Peace Conference, Youth Assembly Mandate, acceptance speeches, summaries of Strategic Dialogues, work group sessions and workshops, list of participants, etc.

This book is available for all national movements for free, however, the mailing costs needs to be borne by the national movements. To order your copy please contact, Ms. Irene Chan at office@asiapacificymca.org

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