

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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

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Nov 8-Dec 3: 34th Advanced Studies Programme, Wu Kwai Sha, Hong Kong

Visit to Nepal YMCA by
WAY & APAY

Mr. Nam Boo Won, General Secretary of APAY together with Mr. Michal Szymanczak, Executive Secretary responsible for emergency work at WAY, made a visit to Nepal YMCA from 4th to 7th October 2016 with a purpose of shifting the earthquake relief coordination work with Nepal YMCA from WAY to APAY. According to the YMCA Emergency Coordination Protocol, when the emergency phase of the disaster response is over, the coordination work will be transferred to Area Alliances for working towards 'developmental' phase of the response. The visit was made in view of this purpose.

On the first day, we visited YMCA School and welcomed by Mr. Mukti Nath Archarya, NGS of Nepal YMCA, and students and teachers of the school. At the gathering of students and teachers, scholarships were given to earthquake victims. The school children, as a warm gesture of welcome, performed traditional dances and songs they learnt from the classes. After lunch, we had a meeting with some of the Board members representing Birjung YMCA and Kavre YMCA, and youth leaders of Nepal YMCA. In the meeting, NGS Mukti shared the present situation of Nepal YMCA and progress of the earthquake relief work in nearby communities so far.

Next day on 6th October, we were guided by Mukti to the village called Khorsanibary, about two hour drive from Kathmandu to attend the inauguration ceremony of Community Development Center which is one component of the earthquake relief project. Several village leaders including village chief and the school principle attended the inauguration of the Center. They appreciated very much the contribution of Nepal YMCA to the re-building of the center as well as the construction of the road from the main road to the village entrance. They were eager to establish a local YMCA through the activities of the center such as vocational training and handcraft making. During the ceremony, certificates and scholarships were distributed to those who completed the sowing courses. Most of them were the earthquake victims.

On the 3rd day, a long discussion took place among Mukti, Michal and Nam on the shift of

coordination work towards the next phase of the earthquake response. The earthquake relief work (emergency phase) will hopefully be finished by the end of this year. From January 2017, the "developmental phase" of the earthquake response will start and the working partner will be shifted from WAY to APAY with the new phase started. Nepal YMCA and APAY will together prepare a next phase 'development' project plan for submitting to the partners for their approval. The following components were suggested: handicraft vocational training; candle making; agriculture project such as mushroom-farming; artistic performance training to be connected to job provision/employment; micro-credit programs such as goat-herding; some infra-structure components if deemed necessary. A "development" phase will focus on improving people's livelihood, income generation, increasing disaster preparedness and resilience, etc. Along with the new phase project proposal, an MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) on the new phase project between APAY and Nepal YMCA will be developed and signed by both parties to ensure mutual accountability and transparency. APAY expects that the development phase of disaster response work of Nepal YMCA will contribute to the movement strengthening of the YMCA.

↑YMCA School children performing a traditional dance

↑With vocational training graduates and village leaders at the inauguration of the Community Development Center

~ Nam Boo Won, GS

Visit and Partners Support Group Meeting in
Cambodia YMCA

Cambodia YMCA is one of the emerging YMCAs in Asia that is rapidly growing. It has responded greatly to the needs of the community through its Youth Empowerment Programs ,the Youth Institute, YMCA Learning Centers, Street Children Program and Working with the Elderly. They are also promoting Alternative Tourism providing meaningful experience to the participants by making them aware of their culture and traditions and involving and engaging them in their different areas of work.

To strengthen and build up more the capacities and skills of the board and staff to these various undertakings, a one day training was held on October 15 at the YMCA training room to provide orientation on the YMCA history, mission and thrusts, provide leadership skills to run the YMCA efficiently and effectively, and involve them actively in the movement strengthening process. The training was facilitated by Duncan Chowdhury , APAY Executive Secretary for Programmes and myself. As expressed by the staff after the training, they acquired new knowledge and better understanding about the YMCA and the very important role they have to play in fulfilling its mission. The Board, on the other hand, had a separate session in the evening, where discussion on volunteerism, constitution and by-laws and governance was taken up.

The PSG Meeting was conducted the following day, October 16. Present in the meeting were the CYMCA Board and some staff, partners from YUSA, Japan , New Zealand and APAY staff headed by the General Secretary, Nam Boo Won. Matters tackled were the Program Report from January-September 2016, their financial requirements for the last quarter of 2016 and their Operational Plan for 2017. Again, the PSG committed its support to the CYMCA for the coming

year, however, CYMCA is also expected to raise their financial counterpart to enable them implement and pursue their plan and address some concerns like membership growth and development. The “coming together” of the PSG was not only a show of their solidarity and cooperation to the CYMCA but they were stimulated and inspired as well from the good works the CYMCA staff and its board has been doing.

↑Cambodia YMCA staff attending the one-day staff training program

↑Classes in the Street Children Program

After the two-day staff training and meeting, I had the opportunity to visit the project sites. It was indeed very heartening to see the work they are engaged in- work with the elderly people living in the slum providing them some basic necessities and seeing to it that they are taken-care of by involving the youth to help through sharing some of their time to visit and talk with them ; the street children who, due to poverty cannot afford to go to the regular schools but are very eager to be educated to better themselves , the participants of the Youth Institute who are likewise very enthusiastic to gain new skills and the homestay program where their international friends and guests together with their local counterparts help in the construction and repairing of homes.

With their potentials, strong determination, team spirit and the support and cooperation of their volunteers as well as the PSG, CYMCA will certainly develop and advance into a very strong movement.

~ Thelma P. Juntereal, MS Coordinator

Visit and Partners Support Group Meeting in
Mongolia YMCA

The YMCA of Mongolia , established in September 2013, is one of the new YMCAs that is gradually and effectively charting its course as a movement. Their vision is to become the strongest national youth network in Mongolia that will create positive changes in their communities. To achieve this, they aim to inspire the youth to ensure their participation in the growth of Mongolia by personal holistic approach development and positive influence grounded on the values of compassion, integrity, accountability, servant leadership and respect for others. With its high spirited board, staff and volunteers, they are now positively making their impact in the community through their relevant and significant programs.

From October 27 - Nov 1, I stayed in Mongolia YMCA to see and appreciate how they are doing. The General Secretary, Munkhstog shared with me the different activities and projects they are promoting such as the GATN, English Class, YMCA Coffee shop, Youth work and how they are creating opportunities for young people to be active in the YMCA work. Presently, they are renting two-floors in a 5-storey building which serve as their office, meeting room, and activity room. They are planning to put up a Computer Learning Lab to help interested youth and young professionals enhance or upgrade their knowledge on information technology / programming and a Counselling Room which will provide support, encouragement and guidance to young people who are in need of help in terms of direction- setting and planning for their life .The YMCA Coffee Shop which is their social enterprise and is being supported by the YMCA of the USA is located on the upper floor of their office. It offers a nice and suitable space

to people who wants to spend some time studying and reading books while sipping hot coffee/ chocolate or meet some friends and colleagues. It also serves as venue for worship on Sundays . Two persons are manning the shop, the manager and the barista.

↑YMCA Coffee Shop

While the YMCA is still in this early stage of development, the leadership is making certain that they are on the right track. This was profoundly pointed out by the president, Mr Javkhalantugs Ganbaatar during the Partners Support Group (PSG) meeting held on October 30. In his report, he shared how the Board is making sure that people who wants to be a YMCA member should possess the right perspective and mind-set in joining the YMCA. Those who will be interested to serve the YMCA as members of the Board must be able to understand deeply the vision/ mission of the YMCA. To do this, they will be preparing a YMCA orientation package. As to their strategic goals and objectives beginning 2017 , their focus will be on youth empowerment, social relevance and impact, institutional viability and effective partnership. Mr. Nam Boo Won, APAY General Secretary was very much delighted to see and hear the positive development of Mongolia YMCA and the hard work the board and staff is putting in to achieve their mission and objectives. He believes that among the emerging YMCAs in Asia, Mongolia YMCA is one of those that is really coming out as a strong movement. The PSG committed a certain amount to support them in their operational goals and endeavors. Present in the PSG meeting are: Mr. Shigeru Shimada , NCY Japan, Mr. Wichian Boonmapajorn and Edward Ong of Y's Mens Cub, APAY staff and Mongolia YMCA Board and staff.

The next day, we visited one of the YMCA of Mongolia projects : "Healthy Future- Teenage Personal Development Programme " which is sponsored by the Y's Mens Club International through its Time of Fast (TOF) fund . This project is initiated by their active change agent and coordinated/ tied up with the RODEM Home, an orphanage that caters to wayward and abused children . It aims to assist the children understand how they should take care of themselves and become aware of the different infectious diseases since its incidence increased over the years. Youth volunteers facilitated the lessons and activities of the children. Some of them are young professionals who in one way or the other, find enjoyment and happiness in their active participation and volunteer work with the YMCA.

YMCA of Mongolia has so much way to go. The vibrancy of the movement, the commitment and passion of its leadership to serve will certainly bring them to greater heights. We will earnestly hope that they will succeed in all their endeavors for the benefit and welfare of the youth and the community they serve.

↑PSG Members, Board and staff and youth volunteers at the fellowship dinner

~ Thelma P. Juntereal, MS Coordinator

Japan YMCAs Accelerate Youth Empowerment

The 19th Japan YMCA Assembly held at the National Council of YMCAs of Japan International Youth Center in Tozanso last 8-10 October 2016 was joined by more than 300 participants, more than half of which were youth aged 18 – 35. The Assembly that happens every two (2) years adopted the theme, "Accelerating Youth Empowerment- Our Actions Change the Society"

and the following objectives:

- * to memorize/commemorate the YMCA Mission and Issues,
- * to unite/cooperate with the YMCA movement all around Japan,
- * to participate/engage in the global YMCA movement, and
- * to exchange/train/communicate within the YMCAs and one another.

As Rev. Dr. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, Secretary General of the World YMCA, emphasizes that “youth empowerment” is the YMCA’s engine room, the 19th Japan YMCA Assembly provided a platform for such goal. The Assembly’s organizing committee was mainly composed of young YMCA leaders from the Japan YMCA Youth Committee, APAY Youth Reps, and WAY Change Agents.

The event was graced by Mr. SUZUKI Yoichi, the co-representative of “Wake Up Japan”, a platform for young people to give youth opportunities to change the society. In his keynote session, Mr. Suzuki compared the mentality of youth in Japan with that in the USA, the UK or Australia. He emphasized that any one of us is a member of the society, so if he/she hopes for social change, then he/she needs to make action. Further citing from Roger Hart’s “Ladder of Participation”, he said that youth participation should be led by youth themselves.

Group discussions followed the succeeding two days. The purpose of which was to encourage the participants to talk to each other by sharing their thoughts about the society and the YMCA. The groups were basically divided into youth ones and senior ones (those who are over 35 years of age), and sometimes youth and senior combined to share each other’s opinions. The participants discussed and shared opinions about an ideal and ‘not’ an ideal YMCA and society for youth, the reality and barriers/difficulties of youth and how to take a step forward to empower youth. In the wrap up session, the participants gathered within their local YMCA to seek what needs to be done to empower youth in their respective context.

Other than discussion, there were some magnificent events such as the opening and the closing ceremonies with “drum circle” in which all the participants took seats in concentric circles and played the percussion instruments. Also, a jazz vocalist, a bassist, and a pianist who studies theology joined the Sunday service. One of the special features was a jazz concert on the second night in which the band added grace to the Assembly.

↑Opening Ceremony of the Japan YMCAs 19th Assembly starts with the "drum circle" where youth and senior felt that they all belong to the YMCA

↑A youth group talks about their future YMCA and society

According to the evaluation through questionnaires collected after the Assembly, most of the participants realized that communication with people of other generations was important to know each other’s issues and to empower youth more effectively.

It is hoped that the 19th Japan YMCA Assembly would be the real first step to accelerate youth empowerment in Japan.

~ NAGAOKA Misaki, Tokyo YMCA College of Human Care

Obituary

Douglas Charles Oxley, passed away peacefully on September 27, 2016 at the age of 82. Doug was Former Treasurer (2003-2007) of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY). Doug was Member of the YMCA Board of Directors for over 29 years and Life Member of the YMCA of Hong Kong since 2014. He was dedicated and devoted to the accounting profession and had made significant contributions in mentoring youth in the field.

His cremation ceremony was held on Kwai Chung Crematorium on October 13, 2016. The Memorial Mass was held on October 27, 2016 at St. Peter's Church in Marina's Club, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong, where he had attended almost every evening during his last months.

We give thanks to God for his dedicated life of service to the community and the YMCA as we remember him and his work.

Not interested any more?