

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
July 2017

1. Team APAY: Change Agent Regional Training
2. First SOP in Indonesia Begins
3. GATN Site Sampling in Malaysia
4. 27th Asia Pacific Area Convention of Y's Men International

Aug 15-28: Global Citizenship Institute, Manila, Philippines

Team APAY: Change Agent Regional Training

Thirty-three young staff and volunteers from our region bonded together during the Change Agent Regional Training held at YMCA International Youth Center, Tozanso, Japan last July 12-17, 2017 which was organized by APAY and hosted by the National Council of YMCAs of Japan. The event which was participated by 12 national movements paved way for the formation of a strong and solid relationship among Change Agents from Asia and Pacific region. The four day gathering included learning opportunities on Contemporary Christian Leadership which was presented by Rev. Masashi Sawamura of Hiroshima YMCA; Mission in Context: Christian and Ecumenical Identity and Legacy that was shared by Mr. Nam Boo Won, APAY General Secretary; and Youth Situation in Asia and Pacific as presented by Dr. Lee Hyei Jung, Deputy Chief of Youth Research Institute, YMCA of Korea. Those sessions were aimed to provide learning on regional realities, issues and concerns affecting youth and to facilitate appreciation of regional values, identity and principles. Moreover, the visit to Fureai-kan, a community that was originally established for Koreans in 1988 and now open for other nationalities and the film showing about the mothers affected by Fukushima Nuclear Power plant, gave opportunity to explore and understand multicultural and human rights related issues.

The event highlights comprised also of individual stories of involvement with YMCA, sharing of local programs and good practices and showcasing of traditional dances and songs. These spaces enabled recognition and respect for each other's strengths, differences in culture and at the same time a celebration of diversity. More importantly, the regional training was an avenue to strengthen the connections among the youth. This was concretely expressed as the participants showed concern for each other during the hiking activity at Gotemba Peak in Mt. Fuji. The participants made sure that no one was left behind. As part of the team, everyone expressed a word and action of encouragement that helped those struggling to reach the 'trail peak'. Indeed, it was their remarkable 'team' spirit that made the gathering a meaningful one and a foundation from which to anchor their journey as agents of change.

It is important to note that the current batch of Change Agents (2017-2018) is integrated with the APAY existing Youth Representative Program. This approach presents a wide-range of

opportunity to empower youth to represent the region and learn global perspectives in various levels of programs, leadership and advocacy activities after undertaking a specifically designed youth leadership formation and development training.

↑ Change Agents Regional Training during the community exposure

↑ Team APAY climbs Gotemba Peak Trail (photo by: Asher Leo)

↑ Rose, Change Agent from Myanmar, shares her YMCA story

↑ Participants enjoys getting to know you activities

~ Maria Cristina L. Miranda

First SOP in Indonesia Begins

Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) is conducting its three-month School of Peace (SOP) for the first time in Indonesia at Omah Petroek, a center located near Yogyakarta. This year's program—the eighth SOP held by ICF since 2006—has 16 participants from 10 Asian countries—Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. The previous SOP programs were held in India, Sri Lanka and Cambodia.

Since SOP began on July 15, the participants have had several interfaith field visits to meet with the prince of Surakarta, Gusti Dipokusumo, who shared how he uses local traditions and wisdom to promote peace in society; to a Catholic monastery to learn about interfaith issues in the country and how the monastery responds to injustice; and to the Buddhist temple complex Borobudur and the Hindu temples of Prambanan.

In addition to the field visits, the first sessions of the program have focused on culture, diversity and the multiple identities that all people possess.

Follow the activities of SOP at the blog that has been created at .

↑ The SOP participants visit the prince of Surakarta, Gusti Dipokusumo, seated in the centre

↑ Each SOP participant paints their river of life that explains their life journey

~ Bruce Van Voorhis

GATN Site Sampling in Malaysia

It has been estimated that each year about 4,500-5,000 YMCA youth from Asia Pacific travel for work camps, service learning trips, meetings and workshops – broadly described as Alternative Tourism. Program Secretaries are always on the lookout for new and interesting and exciting places for their youth groups to conduct their International Service Trips, Cultural Exchanges, Youth Exchanges, Exposures and Learning Trips, etc.

For more than 3 years APAY has been providing training to local YMCAs to develop Alternative Tourism programs so that our young people will learn to travel more responsibly and

sustainably. The GATN Site Sampling designed specifically for trip organizers and YMCAs Program Secretaries who are on the lookout for new and interesting sites to conduct their Service Learning Trip, Cultural Exchange, and other Youth Exchange Programs. The main objective of this GATN Site Sampling is for hosting YMCAs to introduce new and interesting alternative tourism programs to sending YMCAs.

The first GATN Site Sampling was held in Malaysia on 19-26 July 2017. The program was hosted by YMCAs of Kuala Lumpur, Kedah and Penang with participants from YMCAs of Guangzhou, Metropolitan Singapore and Daegu, Korea.

The three hosting YMCAs prepared various itineraries to highlight some of the activities that they could offer as programs for Work Camps, Service Learning Trips, Cultural Exchanges, Youth Exchanges and other programs.

↑ A new experience prepared by YMCA of Kuala Lumpur for the GATN participants to play blind football with the Malaysia National Blind Football Team

YMCA of Kuala Lumpur was the first leg of the program wherein heritage walk in the city, nature walk at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), and a cultural presentation at Malaysia Tourism Center (MATIC) were among the activities. One very memorable highlight was the Disabled Football experience at University Putra Malaysia. The participants had an opportunity to meet and play football with the Malaysia National Blind Football Team. Not only was it a new experience but it was also an inspiring one to realize how sports can empower even people with disabilities.

The Heritage Walk showed how multicultural Malaysia is, with worship places of different religious groups built in close proximity with one another. This showed that despite having various beliefs, people can still live harmoniously with one another.

After three days in Kuala Lumpur, the participants travelled to the north of Malaysia by train to visit the YMCA of Kedah for the second leg of the program. YMCA of Kedah welcomed the participants to its Y Café which is an inspiring testament of youth work in Kedah Y. The youth of Kedah Y painted and furnished the whole Y Café with recycled materials. The activities in Kedah YMCA include a visit to an experimental/research oyster farm and staying overnight on a boathouse, a 500 B.C. archeological site, an organic rice farm, and the NTA Refugee Home School that provides primary/elementary education to the Rohingya refugee children.

↑ The participants of the GATN program posed for a picture with the Rohingya refugee children in a community visit prepared by YMCA of Kedah

Indeed, the visit to these communities was very fruitful and an eye opening experience to see how community work by the YMCA and various NGOs go a long way to contribute towards building a sustainable and peaceful society.

The last leg of the Site Sampling was hosted by the YMCA of Penang. Several activities such as rambutan fruit picking in the YMCA Campsite, night walk at the Georgetown UNESCO World Heritage Tour, and a cultural exposure to a local Malay Community were prepared by the host.

The highlight of the itinerary was the visit to a local Malay community where participants ate with the locals and experience the traditional Malay rural lifestyle, like family sitting and eating

together, making handicrafts, and playing takraw among others. The local community also showed the participants how to make some Malay delicacies. Aside from this, the participants also visited a rice paddy field, a fruit farm, learned about rubber tapping and visited a former mining site that has now become a place for photo enthusiasts.

↑ Experiencing and enjoying a Malay rural lunch in a local Malay community visit prepared by YMCA of Penang

An unplanned bonus was the opportunity to visit briefly with the YMCA of Lahat Road, Ipoh to share our program and introduce GATN to them.

Though time was limited, the Site Sampling was a good opportunity to have a taste of what each hosting YMCA had to offer. The hosting YMCAs hoped that they have succeeded to show some of the activities and communities that sending YMCAs can expect when they come to conduct Work Camps, Service Learning Trips, Cultural Exchanges, Youth Exchanges and other programs.

For more information on these different sites, you may refer to www.ymcatourism.org (<http://www.ymcatourism.org>), or you may also contact their respective General Secretaries and GATN coordinators for each YMCA.

~ Karren Joy Fatelvero

27th Asia Pacific Area Convention of Y's Men International

The 27th Asia Pacific Area Convention of YMI was held in the Empress Convention Center, Chiang Mai, Thailand on 21st to 23rd July 2017 under the theme "One Happy World". Prior to that, the 2017 Youth Convocation and the 85th Southeast Asia Regional Conference were also held in Chiang Mai YMCA.

The Youth Convocation, held on 19-23 July, was attended by around 45 participants including 35 youth and Y's Men leaders from the Region and Area. The Convocation program included Opening Ceremony, ice breaking and Welcome Dinner, Excursion to the Energy and Environment Learning Center, outdoor activities with school kids at Wat Sri Don Chai School, visit to Srisuphan Temple, learning session on "Global Opportunities for Leadership Development (GOLD 2.0) program", etc. In the opening ceremony, a welcome speech was made by RD Prof. Patcharawan Srisilapanand; an opening remarks was made by ISG Takao Nishimura. Invited by the Convention Host Committee (Chairperson Dr. Patcharawan Srisilapanand) as guest speaker, Mr. Nam Boo Won, GS of APAY, spoke on the theme "Proud to be Y's Youth in partnership with YMCA" to the youth participants.

↑ IPIP Joan Wilson is carrying YMI flag at the Opening Ceremony

↑ Opening Ceremony of the Southeast Asia Regional Convention

Following the Youth Convocation, the 85th Southeast Asia Regional Conference was conducted on 20 July under the leadership of Dr. Pat, RD. The Convention comprised of the Opening Ceremony, Regional reports together with two District reports, Panel Discussion on youth power in Southeast Asia Region moderated by PIP Wichian Boonmapajorn, financial report by PRD James Kong, Installation of Southeast Asia Regional Director (2017-2018) Alexander Chan by AP Dr. Tung Ming Hsiao, Closing Ceremony and Iron Master Tournament.

As the main event, the 27th Asia Pacific Area Convention was held on 21-23 July with around 350 participants, among whom were IPIP Joan Wilson, IPE Moon Sang-Bong, PIP Wichian Boonmapajorn, AP Tung Ming Hsiao, IPAP Edward Ong, APE Hiroyuki Tanaka, Convention Committee Chair PAP Yaz Okano, Convention Host Committee Chair RD Patcharawan Srisilapanand, and ISG Takao Nishimura. The Convention programs were composed of Opening Ceremony and Cultural Performance; Keynote Speech by H.E.M.L. Panadda Diskul, Deputy Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand; IPAP Night (cultural night) hosted by IPAP Edward Ong; Morning devotions & Bible reading; Forums on diverse topics such as membership conservation & Y's extension support, YMCA Program & youth leadership & Y's Men mutual support, community service and environmental & green program; cultural and historical city tour; AP ball hosted by AP Tung Ming Hsiao, IBC ceremony, Youth Convocation report; 73rd Y's Men International Convention Promotion; YMCA World Council promotion; and Closing Ceremony.

↑ Marshals with ISG Takao Nishimura

↑ Youth Convocation participants presenting their program activities

At a forum on Y-Y's partnership moderated by Mr. Kohei Yamada, YMI Liaison to World YMCA, Mr. Nam made a panel presentation on the topic "for a stronger Y's-Y Partnership towards 2022" along with APE Hiroyuki Tanaka and ICM Russell Jones. The Convention was a great opportunity to deepen the long-standing fellowship between Y's Men Asia Pacific Area and APAY as destined partner working together for common mission. "To acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right" is the true spirit of Y's Men's movement, still very relevant in the context of global citizenship! The APAY will continue to work closely with Y's Men in our region so that Y's Men's movement will advance meaningfully towards 2022, the 100th anniversary of its history, in rendering true service to humanity through its collective enthusiasm and relevant programs.

~ Nam Boo Won

Not interested any more?