

↑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 2017

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The 35th Advanced Studies Program

The APAY Advanced Studies Program concluded here in Hong Kong on 28th of November with the graduation dinner hosted by the YMCA of Hong Kong. It was a memorable event for the participants of the 35th ASP batch as they were handed over the course completion certificates at the ceremony.

The ceremony commenced with the welcome address delivered by Ms. Sheila Chaung, Honorary Treasurer of the YMCA of Hong Kong. At the ceremony APAY General Secretary Mr. Nam Boo Won, APAY Treasurer Mr. Ronald Yam and the General Secretary of YMCA of Hong Kong Mr. Peter Ho also spoke on the occasion, encouraging the participants to be dedicated in accomplishing the mission of the YMCA based on the servant leadership teachings of Christ. The speakers also underscored the need of YMCA's involvement in the socially relevant programs in order to meet the present day challenges.

The participants committed to dedicate themselves to work for the YMCA with the spirit of compassion through the expression of "Act of Commitment" in unison. Mr. Ming Shibin, General Secretary of Xiamen YMCA expressed his gratitude on behalf of the participants to APAY and particularly to Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and YMCA of Hong for hosting the welcome dinner and graduation dinner, respectively.

This year the ASP commenced on 3rd November, at Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong with ten participants representing the YMCA movements of China, Hong Kong, India, Korea, Myanmar and Sri Lanka from our region. We also had participants from the YMCAs of Brazil, South America and Haiti of the Caribbean.

The sessions of the Advanced Studies Program broadly focused on the contemporary mission of the YMCA, based on contextual theology, global socio-political & economic realities & issues and in search of answers how the YMCAs could address these issues with alternative responses. The other areas of studies were the Good Governance in the YMCA, Movement Strengthening & Organizational Review. Social Enterprises & Global Citizenship Education were found appropriate for the YMCAs to adopt in their own context as alternative responses in

combating the demerits of globalization. The participants also studied the UN Sustainable Development Goals and their targets for 2030. They realized the need of the YMCAs to be more proactive in various development programs to attain the SDGs.

Dr. Kim Yong Bock from Korea conducted the sessions on Contextual Theology, Mr. Nam Boo Won was responsible for sessions on YMCA Mission and Good Governance in the YMCA, Mr. Max Ediger, Dr. Hope Antone, Mr. Beng Seng Chan and Mr. Duncan Chowdhury were responsible for conducting sessions on other remaining topics.

The total number of ASP alumni have now reached the magical number of 444 with the completion of 35th Batch this year. We expect that all the participants shall devote themselves for the betterment of their communities through implementing community oriented programs at their respective YMCAs.

~ Duncan Chowdhury

Formation of YMCA at Luang Prabang

For the past eight (8) months since the YMCA in Luang Prabang, Laos was initiated, the organizing committee endeavored hard to make the people become aware about the YMCA . They engaged in some activities coordinated with other groups as a way of introducing the YMCA and invited initially some close friends to take part in their undertakings. In the same manner, through the support of YMCA of Hongkong, one of the Laos-PSG members, the organizing committee was given opportunities to have exposure in Chiangmai YMCA for them to understand more deeply how YMCA work depending on its own context. Other members of the committee were likewise invited to attend some other international programs providing them more familiarity in the YMCA and its various responses to different concerns . This way, they will have more ideas on how to advance and speed up the growth and progress of the YMCA in Luang Prabang.

A follow-up visit and meeting with the committee was held from November 3-5 in Luang Prabang by MS Coordinator Thelma Juntereal. A long day meeting /discussion and exchange of ideas was conducted to see and evaluate what have been accomplished in the months that passed and how far they have gone based on the YMCA development work plan. They reported the different activities they engaged in such as their “empower to read” program in an Orphanage, tree planting and garbage/ trash segregation in Phanom School. They mentioned that while they have exerted their best to implement the plan of developing the YMCA, they have a hard time to work full blast simply because, until now they are not registered yet as an organization.

In terms of organizational set-up, they agreed on appointing key persons to different position for clearer function, delineation of their roles and responsibilities and determining accountability. A sub committee on youth, program and membership was also created to provide other members a greater involvement in expanding the work and enable them to share more of their skills and talents.

↑ Some of the members of the Organizing Committee

↑ Discussion and sharing

Meanwhile, they will continue to implement their scheduled activities such as the Cleft lip/ palate surgery, Green School program and attend to the preparation of the documents for the

YMCA registration. They will also work on enhancing furthermore their knowledge and consciousness about the YMCA, build-up and strengthen their commitment and develop strongly their team work.

~ Thelma P. Juntereal

New Faces, New Life

Eight children suffering from cleft lip and cleft palate in Luang Prabang was given new life through the free surgical operations administered by YMCA of Daegu Board Member Prof. Han Ki-Hwan and Prof Choi Tae-Hyun. Both medical experts are from Seoul National University. It brought tears of joy to see the children and the parents' happy faces after the successful operation last November 19, 2017 at Lao Friend Hospital for Children.

The project has given these children a chance to live normal lives and have better outlook in life. There is no more fear of being judge based on their physical appearance. This great opportunity started through APAY Partner's Support Group (PSG) Meeting with the purpose of developing Lao YMCA. Knowing this purpose, Professor Han Ki-Hwan offered volunteer medical services to facilitate connection with the community through helping children improve their condition. As such, Mr. Kim Kyung-Min, General Secretary of Daegu YMCA coordinated the idea with APAY and together with the PSG Group, visited Lao Friends Hospital for Children to see whether the facilities and equipment available are suitable for surgery procedures. The visit resulted positively with the conduct of the 1st free cleft palate and cleft lip operation.

However, there are still a number of children suffering from this condition. Due to the remoteness of the area that is surrounded by mountains, people still have no access to adequate medical treatment. Many families are likewise with limited knowledge and understanding of the possibility of surgery. Thus, we believe that through the support of YMCAs in the region, we can continue to reach out to more children and families. We, the Organizing Committee of Luang Prabang YMCA, are so thankful to Dr. Han and his medical team for their wholehearted volunteer service to the suffering children of Laos.

~ Arianna Peak, Organizing Committee Member of Luang Prabang YMCA

Newly Elected President of the YMCA of the Philippines

Atty. Eduardo P. Pilapil, President of Nueva Caceres (CamSur) YMCA and representative of the South Luzon Region, was elected as the New President of the YMCA of the Philippines during its 47th Annual National Council Meeting and 106th Anniversary Celebration held on November 10-12, 2017 at the Manila YMCA Auditorium, Manila Philippines.

Before his active involvement with the YMCA, Atty. Pilapil served and held various public offices such as Congressman of the 3rd District of Camarines Sur, Philippine Congress (1987-1992); Postmaster General of the Philippine Postal Corporation (1992-1995); Secretary of Tourism of the Republic of the Philippines (1995-1996); and VPP Partylist Representative, Philippine Congress (1998-2001). He also served as member of the Board of Directors of the Philippine Veterans Bank (2002-2013) and an elder of the Greenhills Christian Fellowship in Naga City, Camarines Sur.

Atty. Pilapil believes that shared leadership anchored and guided on the fundamentals of the YMCA as a true Christian organization, transparency and accountability could make a stronger

and viable YMCA Movement in the Philippines that can truly deliver its mission of empowering the young people and become better partners in nation building.

~ Pablito A. Tabucol, NGS, YMCA of Philippines

APAY Green YMCA Awards

The Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs is proud to announce the APAY Green YMCA Awards 2017. The APAY Green Team is continuously working towards promoting environmental programs in the YMCAs in our region. With a view to recognize and reward the YMCAs who are engaged in green activities, this award program was launched in the year 2013 and since then it has become an annual event of APAY.

This year this award shall be presented to a maximum of three local YMCAs from the region of Asia and Pacific. National YMCA movements operating with only one unit of YMCA shall also be eligible to participate in this award program. The awards shall be adjudged, considering the YMCAs involvement in the past year in promoting environmental programs.

The deadline for submission of entries is on 15 January 2018. The awards shall be declared and presented during the APAY Executive Committee Meetings held during 14-18 March 2018.

In the past years the YMCA of Geelong, Australia, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, YMCA of Chiangmai, Thailand, YMCA of Hong Kong were the recipients of this award.

We urge the YMCAs of our region participate in this program, especially who are proactively involved in implementing environmental programs.

Details of this award program is available at our website www.asiapacificymca.org or please contact us for any other information about this environmental award program.

~ Duncan Chowdhury

Kedah YMCA and the Changing Trend in Travel

As the world advances, excitement becomes elusive and traveling turns into a means to fulfil our desires and vanities. Hence, the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs aspires to introduce a new trend of travelling – one that is responsible and sustainable.

Stepping out of our comfort zones and experiencing the world, we do not only admire and appreciate the beauty of the nature and creation but we learn how to love and to sustain it. We do not only visit the places but we experience the culture, the living and we know about the needs of the local community. We do not just learn about these needs but we try to contribute in ways we can. However, we also begin to realize that our travel exacerbates global warming and so, we begin to ask ourselves, what can we do as a global citizen and as travellers?

YMCA of Kedah has been working with the APAY in developing GATN Sites that promote Alternative Tourism. Kedah, which is located in the northern part of peninsular Malaysia, holds a great potential for alternative tourism. Often referred to as the 'Rice bowl of Malaysia', travelling around Kedah will let one marvel over the stretches of paddy fields (padi in Malay) and lush green rainforests on highland. About two thirds of the state is still forested with some open to the public as recreational parks. Rubber, oil palm and fruit plantations cover the edges of these forests. Kedah has a mixture of kampongs (villages), fishing villages, small urban centres and many nature parks that are sure to indulge its visitors.

↑ GATN Participants engaging through arts with the children in the NTA School for Refugee

The alternative tourism being developed by YMCA Kedah focuses on various services among its diverse communities. Participants can have various activities with the refugee children through the NTA School for Refugee Children in Alor Setar. This school started in 2012 when a humble living-room in a humble home was transformed into a place of learning for refugee children. The school focuses on simple yet wholesome education that emphasizes on the basic 3Rs and basic living and social skills including hygiene, health, communication and confidence building.

Another service opportunity is for participants to learn about the plight of the homeless and assist the Soup Kitchen prepare and serve lunch for the destitute. A third service opportunity is working with the Super Hope Training Centre, a training centre for physically and intellectually challenged adults ranging from ages 16 to 55. The Centre provides these adults with basic job skills that will help them become financially independent.

Nature and heritage conservation is also one of the highlights of the GATN programs in Kedah. At the Merbok River and Bujang Valley Museum, participants learn about mangrove swamps and the important role they play in protecting the natural habitat of tiny creatures like crabs, insects, and fishes. With the presence of these animals, the area becomes a perfect destination for migratory birds such as Herons, Egrets and Seagulls. Moreover, the mangrove provides protection for coastal erosion and tsunami. This experience also allows the participants to get to know a local organic oyster farm providing knowledge transfer to residents about oyster farming.

↑ The visit to the organic oyster farm where a local organization teaches the community oyster farming

↑ The GATN participant conducting a program at the Super Hope Training Centre

The Bujang Valley Museum is an active archaeological site with remnants of an old Hindi/Buddhist civilisation considered to be a historical puzzle of lost civilisation in South East Asia. Aside from the above mentioned, there are other opportunities for exploring and learning like the organic rice farm and the Beris lake.

Through all these activities, the GATN programs of YMCA Kedah aspire to introduce a new trend of travelling- a sustainable and responsible kind. Traveling GATN style is perhaps one of the best ways to get to experience intimately the country you are visiting.

~ Dorothy Ong, Honorary Secretary of Kedah YMCA

Job Vacancies at APAY

APAY is now in the process of recruiting (i) one ICF Coordinator (ii) one ICF Program Officer for the Interfaith Cooperation Forum and (iii) an Intern for Global Alternative Tourism Network. The deadline for submission of applications are on 15th December 2017 and the successful candidates are expected to join by the beginning of January 2018.

Details of these recruitments are available in the Job Vacancy Section of our APAY website www.asiapacificymca.org

Not interested any more?