

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
June 2018

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Aug 13-26: Global Citizenship Institute, Indonesia

GATN Site Sampling in Luang Prabang

Every year Global Alternative Tourism Network conducts a site sampling program to introduce new sites for international service trips, cultural exchanges, study trips for sending YMCAs. Through this program, hosting YMCA can showcase their community, culture program, heritage place for the purpose of the various type of tour and sending YMCAs can taste new sample site and program. During this site sampling program at Luang Prabang, the sending YMCAs and hosting YMCA could share their opinions, provide suggestions and recommendations for improving their programs to meet the expectations of each other.

This year, APAY showcased the youngest member of our GATN network. The Organizing Committee of Luang Prabang YMCA has been working hard to develop Alternative Tourism as part of their movement building and income generating project. This site sampling was held during 15th-19th June and was participated by program secretaries from Korea YMCA, Singapore YMCA, Hong Kong YMCA. Through three days of site sampling, they tasted how sweet Luang Prabang was.

On the first day, following the main street of Luang Prabang, we visited World Heritage place including Wat Xieng Thong, most beautiful and famous temple in Luang Prabang. The City preserved their historic place and buildings well and the magnificent architecture was influenced by Europe, colonial authorities in the 19th~20th centuries. Which is the fusion of Lao and Europe architecture, so their heritage is very unique and remarkable. It was a good time to feel the atmosphere of Lao culture. After this, we visited Phanom Elementary School and Orphanage connected with the Luang Prabang YMCA. The principal of school greeted us warmly. Phanom Elementary School has a plan to make their school as low-carbon school and give environment education to students. Luang Prabang YMCA will work together for this curriculum and the school will make a volunteer group for environment program that includes school gardening. In addition, the school hopes to improve its facilities for the better educational environment for the students.

The orphanage that we next visited was quite a big organization with 170 teenage orphans

living on the campus. This facility is supported by the local government but they have limited resource for students. So they are interested to invite volunteers to teach the students communication skills and to build relationship with people.

↑ Most beautiful temple in Luang Prabang 'Wat Xieng Thong'

↑ Conversation with Principal of Phanom Elementary School

↑ Longstanding tradition in Laos 'Morning alms'

↑ Ban Chan Village 'Pottery baking' site

We woke up very early on the second day to watch the morning alms giving(Sai Bat). This is a longstanding tradition in Lao Buddhist culture. People build virtue by offering food to the monks, monks receives food in a life of non-possession and share this food with other poor people. After the morning alms giving, we traveled to Nongheo village. Nongheo village is a well-organized village community. When we visited village we saw them working together to repair village road. The children in the village welcomed us with happy smiles. This remote village is very far from the town and has a problem with access to water. They need to improve the facility to store up more water especially during the dry season. They shared with us their need to build a second pipe and storage tank to get clean water from the mountain to the village. The villages also hoped to improve the facilities of the primary school in the village. The small number of students of this school comprise of children mostly left behind by young villagers who have moved to the cities or other places in search of work. Most of these children are being cared for by their grandparents.

After conversations with the village leaders we had lunch together, prepared by village people. We tasted 'real' local food and it was really good. We ended our second day with a trip to the most beautiful waterfall in Luang Prabang, the 'KuangSi' waterfalls. The water was clear and transparent and emerald in color. Local people enjoyed swimming and diving in the waterfall. Our participants played in the waterfall, too. We don't know from which country will next volunteer group come but everyone agreed that they must come to KuangSi waterfall.

On the third day we visited the Ban Chan Pottery village. We had a short tour of the village, the village school and the pottery baking site. The peculiar thing about the village is that despite its proximity to the city, the town's development has been delayed due to resistance of the villagers. Now they started to open their mind to strangers come into the village and they want to make a development of village slowly. This village has a drug problem among its young people and our host, the young leader of the pottery village, hopes to give a chance to those former addicts by teaching them how to make pottery. He hopes this skill will help them go back to normal life. Our participants also tried their hands on learning to make pottery. It was not easy to make but everyone enjoyed touching the smooth clay and spinning the flywheel.

Through the Luang Prabang site sampling, we tasted many unique cuisines, cultures, peoples, histories, and service opportunities. It was a very fruitful visit and we enjoyed very much. The reflections we had every evening were really helpful for sharing about our expectations for Luang Prabang volunteer trips and various viewpoints for a volunteer trips. Recommendations from each other were good opportunities for developing ideas and improving the program. I am confident that Luang Prabang will be a good site for the volunteer programs (work camps or service trips), cultural exchange trips and others. Most importantly, through such programs we are developing a network of sending and hosting YMCAs with a commitment for a sustainable

community and being responsible visitors.

After the GATN site sampling program, we conducted a few inspections on the volunteer service projects that had been carried out or were being carried out by the YMCA of Singapore. In one rural village, the YMCA volunteers had installed a bio-sand water filter system for a primary school with no access to clean water. Water from the bio-sand filter was also collected to be brought back to Singapore for analysis by a certified laboratory. In another village along the Mekong river, we visited a team of YMCA volunteers installing a solar power system to provide LED lighting and fan for classrooms in a primary school. On the way back, we also inspected few other schools to check if the solar systems installed in previous years are still in good running condition.

~ Lee Jiyeon, GATN Intern

Global Citizenship Institute 2018

As part of the regional youth empowerment program, the global citizenship institute will be held on 13-26 August 2018 in Salatiga, Indonesia. This gathering of young staff and leaders aims to educate the youth in understanding their social realities and engaging them on practical skills and competencies needed in initiating community-based actions. The program specifically aims:

- * to nurture youth to become globally responsible citizens capable of knowing one's identity yet respecting cultural differences
- * to promote critical thinking and understanding on local social inequities and injustices and its link with regional and global realities
- * to develop appreciation of and respect people-centered organization's engagement on actions that help promote people's rights and well-being
- * to provide skills in program management related to youth-led community based responses, actions and advocacies that would contribute to the efforts of re-building a sustainable community life

The GCI curriculum for this year has been conceptualized and developed to maximize the learning experience of the participants. The curriculum design addresses both the theoretical foundations of understanding the social realities in relation to globalized development framework and the practical experiences at the different levels of community life. The topics below provide an overview of the perspectives, concepts and experiential learning related to Global Citizenship, the global development agenda and the YMCA mission.

The program will provide comprehensive learning experience and competencies through interactive lecture/input presentations, case studies, community exposure, home stay, dialogue with local people and youth, reflections and journals, skills workshop, cultural exchanges and creative presentations. Thus, it is the invitation to select participants who are:

- * Involve in local/national YMCA programs for at least a year
- * Has strong interest in actively engaging on activities and advocacies that address the social

injustices through YMCA activities

* Possesses critical thinking on the prevailing social realities and injustices faced by the marginalized sectors of the society particularly the youth

* Creative in exploring and implementing alternative approaches that will uplift the lives of the affected sectors in the society

All participation matters can be emailed to Maria Cristina Miranda, Executive Secretary for Programmes through miranda@asiapacificymca.org.

~ Maria Cristina L. Miranda, Executive Secretary for Programs

YMCA Secretaries Basic Training Course

We are pleased to inform you that APAY is jointly organizing a three week long YMCA Secretaries Basic Training Course along with the YMCA of Philippines. This training will be held during 1– 23 September, 2018 at the YMCA of Manila, Inc., 350 Antonio Villegas Street, Ermita, Manila City. An additional optional exposure program to local YMCAs in Philippines will take place soon after this course which will end on 29th September.

Initiated last year, this is a basic training program for professional secretaries of the YMCAs of our region. YMCA secretaries, who do not have Basic Training facilities in their respective YMCAs are the targeted participants of this program. Registration details and program information can be obtained upon request from APAY office.

We urge the national movements having no basic training facilities to nominate suitable YMCA professionals for the program. The mandatory registration fee is US\$50 (including the Green Fee), the participation fee is US\$650 and for the participants who shall join the optional exposure program to local YMCAs in Philippines from 23rd September till 30th September needs to pay an additional exposure fee of US\$100. Limited subsidies are available from APAY for air travel and participation fee only for deserving candidates.

Applications with required documents should reach APAY on or before 31 July 2018 and successful candidates shall be notified soon after.

If you have any queries or need any clarifications please feel free to contact Mr. Duncan Chowdhury, our Executive Secretary for Programs at duncan@asiapacificymca.org for this purpose.

~ Duncan Chowdhury, Executive Secretary for Programs

36th Advanced Studies Program

We are pleased to inform you that the 36th Advanced Studies Program of APAY will be held during 5 – 30 November 2018 excluding days of arrival and departures. The venue shall be the YMCA Youth Village, Wu Kwai Sha, Ma On Shan, New Territories, Hong Kong.

Initiated in the year 1982, this is an advanced training program for the senior professional secretaries of the YMCAs of our region. The candidates should be a university graduate and have a least 3 years work experience in the YMCA's core administration, at policy making level.

The main objectives of this month-long training is to enhance YMCA professional secretaries' ability to critically analyze ongoing social processes, based on the life and teachings of Jesus

Christ and develop the YMCA professionals who are mission-responsive, socially relevant and effective institutional leaders.

We urge national movements to nominate suitable YMCA professionals for this program. Detailed program and registration information are available upon request.

Limited amount of subsidies are available only for deserving candidates for air travel and participation fee, all participants need to pay the mandatory registration fee and green fee. Subsidy requests should be sent all with the applications forms.

Applications with all required documents should reach APAY on or before 31 July 2018 and successful candidates shall be notified on or before 15 August 2018 by APAY.

If you have any queries or need any clarifications please feel free to contact Mr. Duncan Chowdhury, our Executive Secretary for Programs at duncan@asiapacificymca.org for this purpose.

~ Duncan Chowdhury, Executive Secretary for Programs

Kachin Drug Rehabilitation Project (KDRP) in Myitkyina YMCA

Purpose of the Visit

The Kachin Drug Rehabilitation Project (KDRP) of Myitkyina YMCA in Kachin State in Myanmar has been supported by Y's Men International and German YMCA through APAY. As the project approached its completion by June 2018, the visit was intended to learn about the project processes, success stories and challenges faced. It is also the aim of the visit to explore possibilities of continued partnership on projects that would create greater impact to the lives of the youth and the community that is greatly affected by drugs and other social problems.

Within the five day trip during 28 May-1 June 2018, a meeting with the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar was also included to learn about their programs, see the national office and to fellowship with the youth staff and volunteers particularly those who have joined APAY regional youth programs.

Visit Schedule

The schedule during the visit included the following:

- * Meeting with Myitkyina YMCA General Secretary and Board Members
- * Free discussion about current situation of Kachin State and YMCA activities with Youth leaders of Myitkyina YMCA during the hosted dinner
- * Meeting and dialogue with Clients
- * Visit KDRP project Site in Rehabilitation Centre
- * Community Visit and YMCA programs
- * Refugee Camps
- * NCY Myanmar Program Orientation headed by NGS Maung Maung Win and related program staff

* Fellowship with youth staff and volunteers

↑ Vocational Training beneficiaries of KDRD in Myitkyina YMCA

↑ NCY Myanmar Youth Staff and Volunteers

KDRP Project Background

The KDRP that started in 2015 was designed to provide vocational training to young people who are admitted at the various drug rehabilitation centers in Myitkyina, Kachin State. During its three year project phase, that is 2015-2018, KDRP was able to train 59 youth on hair cutting, sewing and hotel management and was able to link the former drug users to work based program outside the center. The project was particularly keen to motivate the youth to socialize through the work opportunities after completing the rehabilitation program. It must be noted that Myitkyina being the capital city of Kachin State and Myanmar's northernmost region is a central trading point between Myanmar, China and India. The state is also renowned for undercover industries and gold, jade, amber mining and timber and opium. Aside from the risks involved in the resources mining process, communities in areas of Kachin State where mining is taking place suffer from social problems such as drug abuse, gambling and prostitution. Accordingly, community leaders estimated 65 to 70 percent young people use drug here. Church and community groups are battling to help addicts rehabilitate. Even on the campus of Myitkyina University used syringes spill of mental garbage bins marked with signs urging users.

Moreover, government military pressure heavily fall in the State in reaction to the Kachin Independence Army rebellion and local resources. The conflict that escalated again on June 9, 2011, after a 17 year ceasefire has created thousands of internally displaced persons across the Kachin State. With this situation, the youth is the most affected vulnerable group.

KDRP Project Outcome

One of the positive project outcomes of KDRP included the opportunity for the young former drug users to move forward into their lives as productive members of the family and community. Through the vocational skills training, the youth in the rehabilitation centers have the chance to be gain confidence on their capacity to be self-employed and/or be employed after completing the rehabilitation phase. More importantly, the over-all rehabilitation process and the skills gained keep the youth out of the dangers of relapse. The challenges remain however on the social stigma that painted them as an unreliable workforce.

Reflections and Action Points:

On KDRP Myitkyina YMCA

The visit gave an overall picture of the seriousness and deeply rooted social problems on drugs and civil war that the youth and the general public faced Kachin State particularly in Myitkyina. Given this situation, there is a huge opportunity for the YMCAs at all levels to be instrumental in empowering the youth who have been victims of the circumstances. I believe that the impact of programs such as KDRP is long term as it facilitates personal development of youth who are former drug users. The vocational skills economically empower them to become productive members of their families and immediate communities. However, the challenge related to the social stigma as unreliable workforce remains particularly in the small local hotel industry. Likewise the skills on hair cutting and sewing could not be put into use. As such, it could be a sensible part of a continuous and comprehensive personal development program to include a start-up capital for those skilled hair cutter and sewer. In this case, YMCA can still contribute to the after care or post rehabilitation program for former youth drug users.

On NCY Youth Empowerment

The NCY Myanmar is blessed with a number of young staff and youth volunteers assisting its various programs. The youth I met are well converse with the use of English and full of energy and creativity. There currently have a youth hub program that recruit youths from universities and are interested to volunteer in the YMCA. It was learned however that a national youth gathering with the purpose to organize a national youth group coming from various local YMCAs has yet to be explored. This was also expressed by the youth I met in Myitkyina as they observed that most opportunities are concentrated to the youths in Yangon.

~ Maria Cristina L. Miranda, Executive Secretary for Programs

New National General Secretary of NCY Korea

We are glad to inform that Kim, Kyeong Min, has been appointed as the New National General Secretary of the National Council of YMCAs of Korea with effect from 9th June 2018.

Having completed his university studies in philosophy at Yonsei University, Kim Kyeong Min had joined the YMCAs as a secretary of Daegu YMCA in 1990, then he was promoted as the General Secretary of the same YMCA in 2008 and continued there until he was appointed as NGS of NCY Korea. Kim had also served as an executive secretary in various emergency committees in between.

He is well known for initiating the Demolishing Walls Campaign in the country in 1998, breaking boundary walls of homes, which was considered as symbol of isolation and distrust in approaching the neighborhood.

Kim now in intends to strengthen YMCA's historical and social responsibility as an ecumenical Christian movement with the collective power of the 70 local YMCAs in Korea. He also revealed his strong ambitions to create new discourse and path of the youth movement and global citizenship movement, focusing the student YMCAs.

The Korea YMCA anticipates that Kim, Kyeong Min's appointment as National General Secretary will open a new era in the civil society and the ecumenical movement full of vibrancy and activities in the coming days.

The APAY also congratulates Kim, Kyeong Min on this occasion and hopes that the YMCA movement will prosper further under his dynamic leadership.

Not interested any more?