

↑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 2018

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APAY NGS' Conference 2018

The present quadrennial program plan of APAY calls for the National General Secretaries of our region to meet at least twice during the quadrennial with a view to get familiarized with the on-going thrusts and policies of the APAY and with the purpose of sharing issues and concerns of the national movements and good practices of their YMCAs.

Keeping this in view the second APAY NGS' Conference of this quadrennial was held during 15-16 July 2018 at Chiang Mai YMCA, Thailand. This was held immediately after the 19th World Council Meetings of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Chiang Mai.

The two day long NGS' Conference was inaugurated by Nam Boo Won, General Secretary of the APAY. The chairperson of the APAY NGS Conference Ch. R. P. Mani Kumar welcomed all the NGS' at the gathering, while Rachan Maneekarn, NGS of the hosting Thai Alliance of YMCAs delivered words of greetings to the NGSs present.

On the first day, the resolutions adopted at the recently concluded World Council Meetings was elaborately discussed, this was presented by Cristina Maria Miranda. The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, the resolution in solidarity with Korea YMCA in its efforts towards de-nuclearization and peace-building in the Korean Peninsula as well as re-start of the YMCAs in North Korea and the resolution on Refugees and Migrants were points of discussion at the session. The Safe Space Learning Group Report presented at the 19th World Council was also discussed. Issues were raised that some contents of the resolutions might not be compatible with our Asian culture and traditions, as such there is need for cautious approaches in the follow-up of the resolutions.

↑ Inauguration of the NGS Conference

Duncan Chowdhury presented an overview on the preparation 20th General Assembly of the APAY, which is scheduled to be held during 2 – 6 September 2019 at Tozanso, Japan. The 4th Youth Assembly will be held during 31st August – 2 September 2019 at the Olympic Memorial Center, Tokyo. Considering the high living standard of Japan, the consensus was that the cost

of participation should be kept as minimum as possible. Each national movement was urged to encourage and facilitate more youths to participate at the General Assembly.

An appraisal of the accomplishments that has taken place in materializing the Quadrennial Program Plan by APAY for the last two years was discussed. An elaborate report of the accomplishments in the eight focus area of the QQP was presented by Duncan Chowdhury. This was appreciated considering the achievements so far. Nam Boo Won then discussed and shared the process of conducting an evaluation of the quadrennial program plan to be held early next year before the General Assembly.

On the second day, all the National General Secretaries presented a brief report of their programs that took place in their respective movements since 2016 when the first NGS' Conference was held. This gave them the opportunity to learn more about the good practices of the YMCAs of our region as well as emerging challenges.

↑ Sharing of national/territorial YMCA activities

↑ NGSs group photo

National General Secretaries representing 17 countries of our region participated at the Conference along with six staff members of APAY. The conference ended with a renewed commitment to fulfil the mission of the YMCA in this region with dedication and sincerity.

~ Duncan Chowdhury, Executive Secretary

19th YMCA World Council: Youth Empowerment for Good (#YE4Good)

↑ Group photo of the World Council Participants

Around 300 delegates from Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs participated in the recently concluded 19th YMCA World Council held in Chiang Mai, Thailand last July 8-14, 2018. Altogether, over 1,300 members and staff from 90 countries engaged in devotions, small group discussions, plenary sessions, excursions, fellowships and reflected upon the theme, "Youth Empowerment for Good". The theme was built upon the identity of YMCA as a global movement that empowers young people.

Being the highest governing body that meets every four years, the World Council has set the policies and direction of the World Alliance, elected its Officers and Executive Committee, with Ms. Patricia Pelton of Canada elected as the first female president, evaluated the work of the last four years and deliberated on priorities for the next quadrennial.

The World Council highlights also included the introduction of the first African Secretary General, Mr. Carlos Sanvee, launched the 4th cohort of change agents, shared the NGS' journey of discovery, released the One Million Voices 2 research and the 2018 Blue Book movement statistics, approved three (3) new member movements and the "Youth Empowerment 4 Good" Strategy 2018-2022 and accepted the Safe Space Group Report and resolutions from national movements.

In the said highlights of the 19th World Council, APAY is honored to be represented in the World Alliance through the following elected Officer and Executive Committee Members:

Treasurer: Ronald Tak Fai Yam, Hong Kong

Executive Committee Members: Alan Morton (Australia), Nagako Okado (Japan –Woman), Song In-dong (Korea), Karren Joy Fetalvero (Philippines -Youth), Chanita Maneekarn

(Thailand- Youth)

During the World Council, APAY also organized area meetings as platforms for the area delegates to share information and discuss matters related to the Council proceedings. Two of the said area meetings were organized by youth and gender equity committee. As the 19th YMCA World Council ended, the APAY, in solidarity with the global movement, will continue to journey to a mission driven YMCA.

↑ World Alliance elected Officers and Executive Committee for 2018-2022 during the 19th World Council held in Chiang Mai, Thailand,
8-14 July 2018 (Photo credit to World YMCA)

~ Maria Cristina L. Miranda, Executive Secretary

APAY Southeast Asia Gender Justice and Social Transformation Workshop: Gender injustices are violations of human rights

↑ Participants of the APAY Southeast Asia Gender Justice and Social Transformation Workshop
held in Manila, Philippines June 26-30, 2018

All forms of gender injustices are violations of human rights. This statement summarizes the learning and advocacy put forward by the participants of APAY Southeast Asia Gender Justice and Social Transformation Workshop held last June 26-30 , 2018 and locally hosted by the YMCA of Manila, Philippines. The participants comprising of lay leaders and staff from the National YMCA Movements of Cambodia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand strongly believe that personal and organizational actions must be geared towards resisting all forms of oppression, exploitation and discrimination against women.

The learning process started with self-reflection activities that focused on how each person has lived with the expectations on gender roles and responsibilities reinforced by various social institutions. Understanding on these personal experiences was followed-up by input presentation on the concepts of gender and situation of women in societies. Both these sessions affirm the current state of discrimination regarded to women in the region.

Among the injustices identified during the sharing of local/national realities include child marriage, women/girl trafficking, domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence, low salary of women, sexual exploitation, poor working conditions and limited participation of women in leadership roles. These realities were amplified during the dialogue with non-government organizations such as Migrante International and Gabriela that worked with grassroots women and girls in communities within and outside Philippines. The dialogue was combined with actual community visit and testimonials from women who were victims of exploitation and other forms of discrimination.

Migrante International is an active defender of the rights and welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) by raising public awareness on their plight and providing a critical analysis of the Philippine government's labor export policy program as the main factor responsible for the commodification of Filipino workers. Gabriela on the other hand is a grassroots-based alliance of Filipino women that aims to build a strong women's movement that fights for the rights of women against all forms of violence, discrimination, and oppression.

The workshop concluded with the sharing of YMCA initiatives addressing the promotion and protection of children and women's rights. A case study on Protect a Child Project of YMCA Bangkok Foundation was presented to highlight the commitment of the movement in community development work. The inspiration drawn from the sharing of YMCA initiatives has encouraged the group to propose for points of actions to continue improving its commitment towards working together for gender justice.

Finally, the workshop was attended by Under Secretary Hope Hervilla, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as keynote speaker; YMCA key leaders including APAY General Secretary Mr. Nam Boo Won, YMCA Philippines President Atty Eduardo Pilapil, YMCA Philippines 1st Vice President Atty Zoilo Velez, APAY Gender Equity Committee Member Mr. Emmanuel Chan, YMCA Philippines NGS Pablito Tabucol, YMCA of Manila President Mr. Danilo Sanchez and Manila YMCA GS Mr. Orlando Carreon.

~Maria Cristina L. Miranda, Executive Secretary

Upcoming Events of Interfaith Cooperation Forum: School of Peace and Thematic Workshops

Interfaith Cooperation Forum will be holding two thematic workshops and the School of Peace before the end of this year. The first workshop will be in Dili, Timor Lest on August 27-31, 2018. The second workshop will be in Kathmandu, Nepal on September 10-14, 2018. The School of Peace will be held in Yogyakarta for sixty days, from October 1, 2018 to November 29, 2018.

The Thematic Workshops

The thematic workshops are organized for the countries or regions to have five (5) days to delve into themes or issues they deem to be relevant in their respective contexts. Some of these themes were suggested during the meeting of some SoP alumni in Siem Reap in April 2018. During the workshop two or three main topics will be taken up. One day will be allocated for community visit. The last day will be spent for debriefing, reflections, and evaluation.

At the workshop in Dili, the themes to be taken up are Human Rights, in relation to the UN's Conventions on Women's Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Children, Gender Justice and Strategic Planning and Kathmandu there are also three main topics for the workshop. These are Human Rights, Peacebuilding and Conflict Analysis, and Non-Violent Communication.

The School of Peace

This year's School of Peace will be held once again in Yogyakarta because of the rich teaching-learning context it provides. ICF is grateful to Duta Wacana Faculty, who are supporting us to host the program with the preparations. The School of Peace will now run for two months, or sixty days, instead of the usual three months in the past. The reasons include difficulty of participants to leave their work or studies for a longer period, and another is the limitation in budgetary allocation. With the hope of equipping the youth and even the youth-at-heart with knowledge and skills to contribute to peacebuilding efforts in Asia and in the world, a curriculum is constructed with an effort to strike a balance between the heart, mind/spirit, and action.

In the introductory session of the SoP, the participants will be required to share the realities of their localities, highlighting the situation of unpeace in such contexts. They will be provided with tools to analyze the conflicts in their local communities, or in the national level. The participants will be introduced to some theories of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. A section is dedicated to the objective of understanding peace from different living religious traditions of

Asia, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, the Judeo-Christian tradition, Taoism, and indigenous spiritualities. It is deemed that understanding one's faith tradition along with other faith traditions will develop and improve interfaith cooperation among peoples. Visits to houses of worship and communities for teaching-learning experiences will be interspersed in time, along the way.

The second month will have the participants take up topics on practical realities and challenges such as Respect for Human Rights, Gender Justice, Health and Disability as Peace Issues, Exploring the Roots of Terrorism possible ways of addressing them, the Nexus between Neoliberalism and Climate Injustice. Another section will be on helping the participants gain more skills as peacebuilders, such as Non-Violent Communication, Peace Education, Peace Journalism, Trauma Healing, and Organizing for Peaceable communities. The last few days will require the participants to create their own program plans for echo training that they will implement in their own localities.

ICF therefore requests for the support of the local and National YMCAs not only through prayers, but to send participants to the School of Peace 2018 and support them. The application forms will be posted soonest in the both APAY and ICF Websites. Please direct your inquiries to Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro at muriel@asiapacificyma.org, or montenegromuriel10@gmail.com.

~ Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, ICF Coordinator

The Progress of the YMCA work in Luang Prabang, Laos

The Luang Prabang YMCA Organizing Committee has dauntlessly pursued its goal of developing the YMCA since its inception. They did not waver in their good intention to build it up though there were challenges along the way. Gradually, they were able to take off and achieved some small positive results. This year, as recommended by the Partner Support Group (PSG) in its meeting last April, they decided to rent a new YMCA office which is located near the Luang Prabang Technical and Vocational College in Ban Koiy. This was done to make the YMCA more accessible to potential members and volunteers and to possibly link future undertakings with the school. Likewise, a full time staff, in the person of Pingping Chanvilay was also hired in May to strengthen the YMCA operations, its day to day work, programs and activities.

Last July, MS coordinator Thelma Juntereal made a follow up visit to further assist the committee in the implementation of their plans, one of which is the YMCA registration based on the government's decree on Associations. The committee is in the process of preparing the requisite documents and filing those with the concerned government ministry within the month of August.

↑ Committee meeting and planning

↑ Staff mentoring

During this visit too, mentoring of Ping as a YMCA staff was done to help her gain more knowledge and understanding on her vital role to achieve YMCA goals. Discussion on her everyday task was tackled such as management of the office, keeping correspondence, doing reports, financial records and filing documents, tapping possible leaders and volunteers and most importantly, working harmoniously with the committee. She was also encouraged to continuously learn by heart the YMCA mission, vision and its history. The mentoring will be further supported with her 10- day training and exposure in Chiangmai YMCA in September.

In terms of program, there are two areas the YMCA LPB organizing committee is working on -

the Global Alternative Tourism Network (GATN) and the program for the Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate. For GATN, a group of young people from Taichung YMCA will come to Luang Prabang and stay there from August 10-20 for their 10-day program. One of the components of this program is the “service work” in the selected village and work with the children in the community. The staff and assigned member of the LPB committee will closely coordinate and work with the Taichung YMCA staff. To further enrich this work in Luang Prabang, the APAY GATN Site Sampling was participated in by some YMCA staff from Singapore, Malaysia and Korea, in which the participants acknowledged the place as a good venue for bringing YMCA members to promote understanding and appreciation of different culture and do volunteer work as well. In a way, this will contribute to enhancing the YMCA development in LPB. As regards the cleft lip and cleft palate program, Dr. Han, a volunteer doctor from Korea YMCA, will again come to Luang Prabang in October to determine the help needed by the children with said defects. This activity is coordinated with the Lao Children Hospital.

A brief planning on the undertakings the committee will pursue and implement for the coming months was also done. They intend to work deeply on Environment Protection through their Green and Clean Program to help the community be more aware of and concerned with taking care of their habitat and protecting mother nature. In the months to come, we hope that the small progress achieved by the Luang Prabang YMCA will flourish and will motivate them to incessantly build up the association.

~ Thelma P. Juntereal, MS Coordinator

CPCS Stakeholders Consultation on the Korean Peninsula Conflict

The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS) organized a consultation on 24-26 July 2018, in Siem Reap, Cambodia, inviting stakeholders – individuals, think-tanks and non-governmental organizations based in Asia, the US and Europe, as well as UN agencies which work to strengthen conditions for peace on the Korean Peninsula. The objectives of the meeting were: to connect and build trust among stakeholders working for peace on the Korean Peninsula in order to enhance cooperation; to share analysis, calibrate information and collaborate on methods to ease tensions around the Korean peninsula; and to determine gaps and challenges in existing work and identify areas for collaboration in the future. Nam Boo-Won, General Secretary of APAY was invited as participant and to share perspectives from a regional organization on the agenda.

The participants tried to approach the long-standing conflict by encouraging frank dialogue and engagement between the countries involved in the conflict, especially the United States, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, People’s Republic of China, and Japan. CPCS has observed that spaces for engagement are limited, as are opportunities for sharing information between stakeholders working on peace for the peninsula. The consultation has provided a meaningful space for the participants not only to understand each other’s work on peace building in the Korean Peninsula, but also to avail coordination and enhanced cooperation among those think-tanks and international/national CSOs working on the conflict, thereby strengthening the collective contribution to peaceful relations on the Korean Peninsula.

↑ Discussions on the role of NGOs in the peace process
in the Korean Peninsula

↑ Nam is sharing his idea on the Korean Peninsula peace building

At the close of the consultation, all participants echoed the need to continue such a consultation for building a strong network of stakeholders to maximize the impact of their engagement and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula peace building and reconciliation. They also were of the common view that ensuring lasting peace in the Korean Peninsula is pivotal to the stability and peaceful co-existence of neighboring countries in the Northeast Asia.

↑ Participants of the Consultation

~ Nam Boo Won, General Secretary

YMCA of Penang: See all of Asia on our island of Penang

Penang is often known as "The Pearl of the Orient", "花園" (Garden of the East) and Pulau Pinang (Penang Island). Penang is a city filled with a potpourri of variant cultures and ethnicities, as well as a lot of exciting attractions for you to explore. The island of pearl is a thriving modern city that still retains its traditions and customs with loads of arts and cultural activities.

With such a rich history and variant cultures, Penang is a great site for alternative Tourism. Participants would be able to explore and be involved in hands-on experiences during activity times and also interact with the local residences of Penang. You will find the locals here warm, friendly and welcoming especially towards guest of the island.

The heart of Penang, Georgetown is inscribed into the UNESCO Heritage List. The achievement of Penang was based on the certain sections of Penang has the most number of pre-war buildings in all of South East Asia which are still intact. That is why the island is known as Penang Heritage City.

↑ Interaction and hands-on learning

↑ Exploring the rich cultures and learning about various religious activities

Also, Penang is especially known as the best place to enjoy wonderful local dishes; it is seen as the food capital of Malaysia. The hawker food is as delicious as the finest gourmet experience in any city. Penang will give you a glimpse into a world where nature, tradition, and history blend into a rich cultural experience. Besides not just visiting these places of interest, you will be able to work out your program and share your expectations with us.

If you come to Penang, you have opportunities to make activities with Underprivileged Children

The YMCA Penang has been working with a group of underprivileged children at a low-income area. We found that the children here are mostly a child of single parents or some – even orphans. They are left to fend for themselves as parents or caretakers are busy trying to make a living. They are entrusted to a day center where they are taken care of with love and kindness. We are also working with a few orphanages and also children of spited refugees through the organizing of festive events such as Christmas.

Local villagers

Besides the awesome attractions in Penang, we are also working together with the local villagers to help boost their income via alternative tourism packages and the marketing of local

products. Visitors would be presently surprised to encounter an authentic cultural experience in the villages who are authentic in their warmth and hospitality.

Local volunteers

We are also working with youth volunteers who are still studying. We are a platform to connect them to other like-minded youths who also aspire to engage in fun friendly communication with visitors from other nations and are also quick to make friends while exploring the island – which is the foundation of a good communal platform.

↑ Breaking out from comfort zones

↑ Interaction and voluntary work

These interactions and cultures help develop a deeper connection and meaning to the whole alternative tourism program. It helps participants to understand the realities of the local context of the community and also the livelihood of the locals here. Participants would be able to share and also take back what they have learned for their own betterment or an inspiration to serve their own community better.

With GATN, relationships and bonding create long-lasting impacts on individuals and that's the aim of our Alternative Tourism experience. It is to connect people around the world while learning, growing and empowering each other for the betterment of all.

Come to see, learn and have an experience for a lifetime.

~ Michael Cheong, Assistant General Secretary of Penang YMCA

Not interested any more?