

## Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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## Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs Feb 2013

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5 - 8 March, 2013:

Executive Committee

Meeting

8 - 10 March, 2013: Change Agents' Training

17 - 22 April, 2013:

GATN training for operators, Philippines

## APAY Green Ambassadors Training 2013

Preservation of the nature & environment has become the biggest challenge for us in the post-modern era. In the name of development we have plundered the earth with the dawn of industrialization, but the degree of destruction of our natural resources has exceeded all records since the last century. Carbon emission has reached new heights. Global warming has resulted in climate change which has poised much negative impacts in human lives. Concerted efforts of all quarters are required to reverse the situation in order to save the earth from the threat of imminent danger.

The APAY had been always a proponent to bring awareness amongst the people for the conservation of the nature. One of the flagship programs of APAY Green Team is the Green Ambassadors Training Program. The APAY Green Team initiated this program to educate the young people to bring changes in their behaviors in order to reduce carbon footprints and also advocate for eco-justice, with an emphasis on the YMCAs operation also. The APAY has initiated a four year process of Recruiting, Training and Accompanying YMCA Green Ambassadors from various YMCAs in our region of Asia & Pacific. These Green Ambassadors shall take the initiative for Green Programs in their respective YMCAs, to reduce the carbon footprints of their YMCAs and eventually lead the YMCA to a carbon 'zero' organization.

The first Green Ambassadors Training took place during 21-25 May 2012 in Chiangmai, Thailand. Fifteen enthusiastic volunteers and staff members participated at the Training Program. As a part of the curriculum,

the participants were made acquainted with scientific consensus about climate change,

greenhouse gases, global warming, impact of the climate change and also the social economic, cultural and political dimensions of environmental issues. They were exposed to various endeavors in their field trip where efforts were being made to reduce carbon footprints through various energy saving devices and utilizing renewable energy sources and like solar energy, biogas plant, etc. The participants committed themselves to work for carbon footprint reduction in their own YMCAs. It is a matter of pride that we could see that most of the participants have started green activities in their own YMCAs after the training program.

Inspired by the success of the 1st Green Ambassadors Training, APAY now do plan to hold a 2nd Green Ambassadors Training during 8 – 14 May, 2013, at Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong. We envisage that about 25 participants from various National Movement shall participate at the program, especially from the YMCAs of East Asia.

We hope that the YMCAs of Asia & Pacific Region be more, sensitive towards the ecology, responsive towards preservation of the environment, reduce carbon footprints in their respective YMCAs & work towards climate justice.

As such the Green Ambassadors Training Program shall focus to impart climate education to the participants in order to comprehend the impact of carbon emissions, learn the methodology of offsetting carbon footprints, share the best environmental practices of the YMCAs, learn about the usage of renewable energy, energy saving appliance and use of carbon calculators. Participatory Workshop will be held with Competent Resource Persons as facilitators, exposure trips will be organized to various environment preservation initiatives, renewable energy, etc.

The venue of the training program, Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, situated at Ma On Shan, Shatin, New Territories, is a model YMCA Camp Site and Retreat Center with modern training facilities belonging to the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong. This has been remodeled recently towards becoming a carbon free facility. We highly recommend this center for its engagement in carbon emission reduction initiatives. This center was chosen for the venue of the training, with a view that our Green Ambassadors have a first-hand experience in carbon emission initiatives in the YMCAs.

This Training Program is financially supported by the Council of YMCAs of Hong Kong. Details information has been sent to the National Movements, inviting participants for the Green Ambassadors Training.

### An Unforgettable Experience in Timor Leste

Timor Leste was liberated from Indonesia in 2002, before that it had been colonized by Portugal since 1976. It is situated south to Indonesia near Australia. Country of 10 million people, 97% Catholics, 2% Protestants & 1 % Muslims and others. Tetum is the lingua franca in Timor Leste. 85% of the population live in the rural area. Unemployment, Natural Disasters are common and UN presence is prominent there in Timor Leste. Development initiatives are in process, but seems to be slow. The economic situation is not good, most of the people live less than one dollar a day. Prices of commodities are soaring since almost everything has to be imported except vegetables. Recently, Duncan Chowdhury and Richard Kaing from APAY had visited the YMCA of Timor Leste.

The official name of the YMCA of Timor Leste is Assosiasaun Nasional Juventude Christian Timor Leste (ANJUCLIT) and it was formed in 2005. In Dili there are centers, one in Terra Santa and the other in Aimutin.

The program center of the YMCA is in Terra Santa, where they have a kids program, football

coaching center, library and community place for the community. Around 100 children are enrolled in the non formal school, which mainly imparts skills to the children in art, culture and bible sharing. The football club has more than 300 members, who are trained regularly in football skills. Each year the YMCA of Timor Leste organizes a Football Tournament which draws huge attention of the local population in Terra Santa.

The Peace Coffee Project, operated by the The National Council of YMCAs of Korea is a praise worthy program in Timor Leste, having its office in Aimutin. Coffee harvested in the rural areas in Letefoho and Rotuto are purchased at a fair price then exported to Korea for processing and packaging and marketing in the Korean Market. Ms. Yang, Dong-hwa is the Resident Director of this project. The project started seven years ago and now able to export about 30-40 tons of coffee a year to Korea. This project directly or indirectly benefits 500 families at the community of Same. This year the Peace Coffee Project is planning to start coffee processing and packaging in Timor Leste, targeting the local market. They also plan to open a Café in the vicinity of the University targeting the youths. The YMCA in Timor Leste will be immensely benefitted when both these programs are in operation.

A Workshop on Peace Coffee Project was held on 18 to 20th February at Com Beach. There were 14 project staff. The purpose of the workshop was to promote YMCA awareness, the structure of the project and the role and responsibility of the staff. The methodology used at the workshop was a participatory approach.

The Youth Peace Camp would be held during the month of August for 10 days in Dili or in its vicinity. The theme of the camp is "Saving the Environment" focusing the 350 ppm. Youth participants mostly from Japan and Korea shall be participating in the program along with the local youths of Timor Leste.

The YMCA also plans to organize a School of Peace, under the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICP). Youths of various ethnic and religious background could participate in the Mini SOP. This was planned to be held during the month of September with about 25 youths participating.

We remember with deep gratitude, Rev. Agostinho de Vasconcelos and Mr. Orazio Mendes, the President and General Secretary of the YMCA, respectively, for their care and hospitality extended to us during our stay in Timor Leste. □

DUNCAN CHOWDHURY

### World Alliance NGS Meeting in London

The NGS meeting was held in England in February 2013, of the middle part of the World Alliance quadrennial (2011-14). The participants (about 40) were pretty balanced in the areas of the world. From Asia & Pacific, NGS of Korea (Nam), Bangladesh (Nipun), India (John), Lahore (Samuel), Australia (Ron) and APAY (Kohei) attended.

Main purposes of the NGS meeting were to review the first two years and NEW WAY policies, and also to envision the next two years and beyond the 2014 World Council.

We all realized that the YMCAs all over the world are strong locally but weak in the global level. Three initiatives by the World Alliance as global and collective actions are 1) World Challenge in October 2012, 2) Change Agents and 3) to conduct Global Research (One million voices on the global youth issues).

One of the impressive speech was by Archbishop (from Uganda) John Thomas who is also the President of YMCA England. He mentioned that "Greed and self interest are main domination in our humanity. Jesus met with Wise men in cradle and he died in Cross. We need to show true

humanity to young people.” “Young people need community where learning can be provided to see the love of God”. “A group of goose is flying with changing leadership. They protect weaker ones and every bird becomes a leader in some point. Can we learn from them in the YMCA?”

The NGS meeting is not official function of the World Alliance. However, people felt the sharing the global vision together would be very important. Therefore they decided to hold another NGS meeting in Feb 17-21, 2014 in Germany.

KOHEI YAMADA

## YMCA in Vietnam

The YMCA has been registered as a company and use the YMCA title as HOP TAC TRE that translates as Young Movement for Cooperative Activities (YMCA) and has been registered under the Ho Chi Min City People’s Community of Planning and Investment since 2000. The YMCA in Vietnam chose to form the YMCA with local people and therefore they registered as a local company because there has been no way to register as a local NGO by law. Although the status the YMCA has been a private company, they have been doing a lot of charity works.

There are mainly six main activities in five locations. (A total of 48 staff members)

### 1) International Exchange (Travel arrangement)

They conducted 20 or more work camps in 2012 alone. A total of 400-500 young people participate in these programs in a year. The work camp projects include building schools or fixing some community programs and English education to children.

### 2) Hope Sewing School

There are 25-30 young girls attend-ing the sewing training program every 6 month. They learn sewing techniques and actually produce various clothes and uniforms when orders come to the YMCA through the local dealers. The girls are mostly coming from rural villages and have a dormitory in the YMCA building and live together.

### 3) Hope Vocational School for youth

There are motorcycle repair course, computer courses, refrigerator/air conditioner repair shops, etc and each course lasts 6 months for 150 youth from mainly rural villages of minorities. After they graduate from the trainings, 90 % of them were able to get jobs. For those who need accommodation, the YMCA offers the facility used as a dormitory for free.

### 4) Kindergarten in Dong Nai Branch

Many migrant families live in the area and the parents both work. The kindergarten opens 6:30 am and closes at 4 pm everyday (usually 5 pm).

### 5) Love Class for Street Children in Da Lat Branch

There are many orphans and street children in the tourist city. Those street children need to work long hours for their livings and therefore tend to drop out the schools unless YMCA protects and guides them. YMCA offers protection to those 50 children and helps them go attend schools, high schools and some in universities.

### 6) Vocational Orientation Club for Disabled Youth

There are computer courses (6 months), Basic English, Music class, Handicrafts, and recreational programs for disabled people who live in local communities. All programs are managed by the disabled staff members.

The president, Fr. Tu, is one of the top officials representing the Catholic community in the country. The Christianity is about 10% of the population, of which Catholics are consisted of 90%. The Christianity has been growing. Fr. Tu has been very active in expanding services to

handicapped people, the poor especially from minority communities. He has many influential positions in the central government as well as in Ho Chi Min City. Fr. Tu mentioned his first priority is to have closer relationship with the rest of the world among the YMCA families. In order to do that his priority should be set for gaining a NGO status through the central government. He wants to promote services to the minorities and handicapped as well as youth and children.

The Vietnam YMCA is a model in a way to conduct such independent management of the YMCA. Their income generation programs are kindergarten, sewing business and Travel business. Their business model could be studied by some other small YMCAs in South-Asian movements. □

KOHEI YAMADA

#### Alternative Tourism Program Managers Training Workshop

The next Training Workshop for the Program Managers of Alternative Tourism shall be held in Pangasinan, Philippines, during 17 - 22 April, 2013. The YMCAs who have already hosted alternative tourism sites are expected to participate at the Training Workshop and the YMCAs who are planning to host alternative tourism sites in near future can also participate in the Training Workshop.

Renowned resource persons in the field of Alternative Tourism shall be conducting the workshop. Detailed program information shall be disseminated soon to the National Movements.

The Pangasinan YMCA has hosted an alternative tourism site, which complies with the code of ethics of APAY Alternative Tourism, as such this site has been selected, to impart on-site training to our Program Managers of alternative tourism sites. For further details, Mr. Duncan Chowdhury can be contacted at email: [duncan@asiapacificymca.org](mailto:duncan@asiapacificymca.org) ( <mailto:duncan@asiapacificymca.org> ).

#### Youth Participation and Leadership Development Fundraising activity at ECM

The Youth Committee of APAY has been planning to raise fund through selling "Change-Agent T-shirts" to the ECM honorable attendees and guests. The cost of the T-shirt is HKD 100. We solicit any amount above that as donation. The fund will be used for the youth empowerment programs especially for the YPLD exhibition at Europe Youth Festival in Czech Republic.

We thank you for your continuous support and contribution to the youths.

Not interested any more?