

Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs December 2015

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Mar 8-11, 2016: Executive Committee and Related Meetings 2016

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

The celebration of Christmas reminds us that Christ came to this earth to offer the fullness of life to us and especially the marginal people of our communities.

The degrading situations still exist in our communities today. People still suffer from hunger, disease and are without shelter, they are victims of violence and social injustices in various forms.

Let us all work together to bring peace and justice in our communities so that all people can enjoy the abundance of life as Christ has assured us.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

↑ The Members of the Staff of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

Greetings from the New General Secretary

As new General Secretary of the APAY, I wish to extend my warmest greetings to you; firstly to my new Officers and Board Members, and the lay and volunteer leaders, professional staffs, and ecumenical partners, like-minded civil society leaders and various supporters in our region and beyond.

At this moment, I am so thankful to God for guiding me to a new journey of mission – a journey I cannot accomplish without accompanying you. As was an African saying, “To journey fast, you may go alone. But to journey far, you should go together”, our journey in mission should be collective in the spirit of togetherness that will lead us into oneness - unity in diversity.

As you would all agree, our region is full of diversity in many aspects. Is the diversity weakness or strength in the midst of intensifying process of globalization? I am confident that it is definitely

a strength, a powerful strength if we develop it in a relevant and sustainable way. As I begin a new journey with you, I ask you and myself a fundamental question “Can our region become a seedbed for a new future of the world?” I think this question is all connected to the ensuing questions: “Through what window, do we perceive ourselves? Can we shape a new collective vision as a regional community? How can you evolve with the richness of our cultures and identities so as to offer the world future-oriented values derived from our own cultures?” These questions are to be sought by us collectively and ceaselessly as long as we maintain the APAY as a regional entity.

In this regard, I sincerely invite you to this exciting journey – a journey of the collective quest for meaning in life – both individual and of the community. It is, in my view, a pilgrimage with God in extending the reign of God, full of justice, peace and compassion among humanity and the creatures in our oikumene and beyond.

Lastly but not the least, I deeply appreciate all the works done by my predecessor Yamada san with such a ceaseless dedication. What he has done for the last six and half years will definitely be a firm basis on which I can build more blocks gradually.

Once again, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for your full support and trust in accepting me as the new GS of the APAY. Thank you very much.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

~ Nam Boo Won, General Secretary

The 33rd Advanced Studies Program of APAY

The Advanced Studies Program is one of the flagship programs of APAY, this was launched in the year 1982, since then APAY have successfully completed 33 batches of Advanced Studies Program throughout these years. The exception was the year 1983, when the Advanced Studies Program could not be held.

With the completion of the 33rd Advanced Studies Program in 2015, now the total number of YMCA professionals, who have successfully completed this program stands at 424. Most of these YMCA professionals are from various YMCA movements of our region of Asia & Pacific. This also includes 19 YMCA professionals participating from Africa and 17 from Latin America and the Caribbean.

This year the 33rd Advanced Studies Program started from 2nd November and ended on 27th November. The participants were Ashim Mondal from Bangladesh, DeChang Liu and BaoHong Li from China, Chi Kwan Shan (Vivian) and Po Tin So from Hong Kong, Kurian Paul from India, Takeshi Murakami from Japan, Shirly Bondoc from Philippines, Leslie Sudirikku from Srilanka, and Mei-Wen Sue (Susan) from Taiwan. A total number of 10 participants.

The subjects covered during 33rd Advanced Studies Program are (i) the YMCA Mission, (ii) Contextual Theology & Social Responses, (iii) Social Realities & Analysis, (iv) Global Citizenship Education, (v), Interfaith Dialogue, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, (vi) Alternative Tourism (vii) Movement Strengthening, (viii) Organizational Review (ix), Good Governance in the YMCA, (x) YMCA as a Movement, (xi) Resource Mobilization, (xii) Strategic Planning Process, (xiii) Gender Mainstreaming, (xiv) Youth Empowerment and (xv) Spiritual Exercises.

The faculty comprised of Dr. David Suh from Korea, Prof. Elmer Ferrer from Philippines, Max Ediger from Cambodia, Ron Coulombe from Canada, Dr. Hope Antone, Hassler Lee and Carman Wong from Hong Kong and Nam Boo Won, Kohei Yamada, Chan Beng Seng, Duncan

Chowdhury from APAY.

We are grateful to the Y's Men International for financially supporting with subsidies for some participants and the Hong Kong Council of YMCAs for subsidizing the participants from mainland China.

We are also indebted to the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and YMCA of Hong Kong for their continuous support to host the Advanced Studies Program here in Hong Kong, especially hosting the entire program at Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Graduation Ceremony and sumptuous dinners including the Welcome Dinner.

↑ Group picture taken at the Graduation Dinner hosted by the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

↑ BBQ night at Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village

↑ Picture taken at WU Kwai Sha Youth Village

~ Duncan Chowdhury, Executive Secretary

A Special Moment of Succession

There was a touching moment in the evening on 9 November 2015 in Hong Kong. Each and every one of the two cohorts of Change Agents and Youth Representatives from YMCA of Hong Kong gathered at the Salisbury for a special purpose – farewell the outgoing APAY General Secretary Mr Kohei Yamada and welcome the incoming APAY GS Mr Nam Boo Won.

Young people were invited to share experience with the President, Board members and General Secretary of YMCA of Hong Kong, while paying tribute to the APAY leaders. This was an example of youth empowerment embraced by the YMCA. Alvin KAN, one of the first cohort of change agents, sent the gratitude on behalf of YMCA of Hong Kong to Yamada san and described that “If Youth Empowerment was a soccer match, Yamada san plays at the forefront—he organises and takes part in programmes and services. He is also the midfield player—he motivates young people and creates chance for young people to pursue dream. Nevertheless, he is the goalkeeper who safeguards the core value.”

Yamada san shared his first-hand story in South Asia where he met a teenager following his family's footsteps and becoming a drug addict. Yamada san challenged the young people and the YMCA to break the chain and bring hope to these communities. The “Change” we are looking for is happening inside and outside YMCA.

Another highlight of the evening was the welcoming for the incoming APAY GS Mr Nam. Mr Nam shared the vision and challenge in the Asia and Pacific Area — diversity in terms of economic development, language and culture among the Asia and Pacific countries and regions. He requested YMCA in the Area to join hands in facing diversified social issues. The YMCA works to bring social justice and peace to young people and their communities, regardless of religion, race, gender or culture.

As we see the group of senior leaders and young people together with the outgoing and incoming APAY General Secretary in the same room, we can feel the succession of YMCA commitment and continuous effort in striving for spiritual, intellectual and physical well-being of individuals and communities; as well as empowering all, especially young people and women towards an equitable society.

↑ Group photo with YMCA of Hong Kong Board Members, Change Agents & Youth Reps

Executive Committee Meeting (ECM) 2016

The Executive Committee of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs will be held on March 9 to March 11, 2016 at the Chinese YMCA in Hong Kong, 23 Waterloo Road, Yaumatei, Hong Kong. We have planned to hold the Mission Review Conference before the ECM on March 8, 2016. Please plan this as well. Details will be announced later.

Circulars related to the meetings will be sent to the National Movements & will be available for download in our website www.asiapacificymca.org

e-Learning on Tourism and Climate Change

Sustainable tourism development will be a focal point of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the next few years. And Climate Change is one very serious challenge in process of developing alternative and sustainable models of tourism.

An e-Learning course on Climate Change and Tourism has been developed with the help of Bread for the World. This e-Learning tool is currently being used to help Youth Representatives, Change Agents and other youth leaders to increase their awareness level as well as overall knowledge on Climate Change issues as well as to empower them for advocacy and lobby work to combat Climate Change.

There will be nine modules covering the following topics related to the issue of Climate Change.

- * Climate Change
- * International Climate Politics
- * Climate and Global Justice
- * Tourism and Climate Change
- * Climate friendly business operation
- * Climate Justice concrete
- * Lobby and Advocacy work
- * Communication and cooperation
- * Carbon Footprint/Climate accounting

Currently, 38 Youth Representatives and Change Agents are enrolled for this e-learning programme and 10 members of the Adhoc Resource Group on Climate Change have volunteered to mentor these youth. They are expected to complete the e-learning course by April 2016 and then embark on some action plans.

Those who are interested to try the e-learning by themselves can access the website using the following information below. We would also like to hear from you your experiences and comments regarding this e-learning program. Please email your comments and questions to bengseng@asiapacificymca.org

<https://apay-elearning.org/moodle/>

Username: test.apay

Password: #Apay2015

~ Chan Beng Seng, Coordinator of GATN

Mini-SOP Concludes in Timor Leste

Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) helped facilitate a mini-School of Peace (SOP) from Oct. 12 to 21 in Dili, Timor-Leste.

Fourteen students from Indonesia and Timor-Leste from different faith backgrounds gathered for nine days of workshops on peace, justice and transformation led by Max Ediger and SOP alumni from Timor-Leste, Indonesia and the Philippines.

According to one of the organizers and SOP alumni, Julio da Costa, it was a successful and life-changing workshop.

“After nine days of learning together at the mini-SOP, the participants were very much changed and inspired by the lessons and sessions they got from the facilitators,” he said. “Most of them in their personal reflections shared their dreams of what they will do for their community where they live. They want to fight for justice and work for peace to eliminate the injustice that’s happening in their own communities.”

For Leonardo Gamboa Marel from Timor-Leste, the mini-SOP was impactful.

“I could share about conflicts and problems in my village. This was the first time for me to have the opportunity, and it was very encouraging for me that people listened with interest and concern,” he said.

~Rachel Bergen, ICF intern from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)

One Million Voice

“What We Need To Know” is the culmination of the YMCA’s first global research program-the biggest ever undertaken. The research was conducted among YMCAs in 60 countries, 55 of which achieved the minimum sample size. The total sample size of 17,247, aged 15-24 who were either members of the YMCA or participating in YMCA activities, were reached with the goal of setting out a platform to hear the views of the world’s young people in order to better understand their needs.

The Voices who spoke to us on an average are:

55% In school 65% Connected to the YMCA

44% Have a secondary education 30% Using Internet 11+ hours a week

75% Living in urban area 90% Have mobile phone

60% Christian 98% Unmarried

77% Struggling to get a job 80% Think the YMCA is youth friendly

The Voices speak about the untold stories of injustices experienced by the young people in areas of employment, health, human rights and environment. Thus, it is noteworthy to share the

research's recommendations on how the YMCA could play a strategic role in facilitating the following:

- * Transition to employment - YMCAs could liaise with local employers to ensure more systematic information; and could make a more systematic and focused contribution to the development of employment-related skills through the various extensive opportunities for volunteering.

- * Emotional transition- YMCAs could provide a more systematic and conscious approach to developing aspects of activities to deal with issues of emotional transition.

- * Civic Engagement – YMCAs could review its processes to have more focused approach to the development of employability skills and developing maturity as the youth gets involve in organizations and decision making.

The Call for Action is a contextualized engagement. What we have heard from the One Million Voices (OMV) is part and parcel of the realities faced by the young people. The research is an invitation to respond to this call of focusing on actions that are anchored on the needs of the youth. The research indeed has its own scope and limitation that might not address each of the movements' realities and context in relation to its youth work. Nevertheless, this initiative of knowing and hearing what the youth have to say in a scientific way is a milestone in the life of the movement. It brings hope and encouragement because OMV does not only serve as a catalyst to continue our common purpose of empowering the youth. More equally important, it has opened more opportunities for the movement to empower itself.

To learn more about the specific presentation of data, its interpretation and analysis, visit the YMCA One Million Voices Report by the World Alliance of YMCAs through the web at omv.ymca.int.

~ Maria Cristina Miranda-Lastima, Executive Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENT: APAY Secretariat Year-End Break

The APAY office will be closed from 24 December 2015 to 3 January 2016 for Christmas/Year-End Break. In case of emergency, please communicate with us by e-mail.

Not interested any more?