

Breaking Barriers, Transforming Lives

**Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
18th General Assembly
6-10 September, 2011, Penang, Malaysia**

Exposures to the Community and Issues
8 Sept 2011 from 2 o'clock in the afternoon

General Information



With the aim of increasing awareness of and strengthening the move towards the need for greater engagement in the community, its life and struggle, a Community Exposure is provided as part of the 18th General Assembly. The community exposure will seek to provide a direct interaction with issues and people's experiences of them in the local context that will broaden our understanding and enable us to better immerse ourselves in the realities and issues that impact the community. It shall be an opportunity for people-to-people dialogue while attempting to create a learning platform into the inner issues, or the "hidden issues," impacting the community. Furthermore, the exposure is expected to affect attitudes and mindsets, not only of ours, the "guests," but also of the "hosts" in the community through these lively interactions and narratives.

The community exposures aim to give us a more comprehensive picture of Penang, how its realities impact on children, youth, women, indigenous and multicultural populations, the environment, etc. The responses to such realities in the selected communities will reveal the local YMCA's social relevance and bring us closer to the people, their lives and their struggles while we experience the beauty and joy of God's Creation and hope for the future.

1. HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE WALK – Conservation and Preservation

The walk will take you to Georgetown in the inner city, which is well known as a UNESCO World Heritage Site of the 18th and 19th century colonial era, to see a variety of architectural forms of buildings, houses, shops and mansions built by the early settlers. One of the destinations on this walking tour is the Cheong Fatt-tze Mansion, which is one of only three Chinese architectural buildings built outside of China. The private visit to Cheong Fatt-tze's home will give a detailed explanation about its conservation and preservation while throwing light on architectural designs and the history of the buildings, houses, shops and mansions along the street. Built in 1890, the legendary Cheong Fatt-tze Mansion is an indigo-blue Chinese courtyard house in Georgetown that housed the private quarters of Cheong Fatt-tze, a prominent figure in the newly established Penang Straits settlement during the 19th century. The mansion, covering an area of 3,000 square metres, was built by master craftsmen who were brought to Malaysia especially from mainland China. Its layout is based on *feng shui* principles and filled with rare collections of sculptures and carvings, porcelain, tapestries, embroideries, lacquers, bronzes and other antiques.

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 30 people. Participants are advised to wear walking shoes and to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun, e.g., take an umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat.)

Travel Time: Walk only (4 hours)

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2. STREET OF HARMONY WALK – Interfaith and Multicultural Understanding

Penang's society was shaped by waves of migration. Traders, workers and adventurers from the Malay kingdoms, Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, China, India, Sri Lanka, Europe, the Middle East and Japan all came to the city to settle. With a history of more than 200 years of ethnic and religious coexistence, Penang demonstrates exchanges between these communities that go beyond a mere tolerance of diversity. The Street of Harmony is a special neighbourhood of Penang that houses places of worship representing various world religions. The area illustrates a history of peaceful religious coexistence and cultural exchange among followers of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity as well as the Chinese faith traditions, like Confucianism and Taoism.

There will also be a special visit to Khoo Kongsi, a Khoo clan house established in 1851 and reputed to be the most magnificent in Southeast Asia.

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 30 people per walk. There will be two walks so thus a total of 60 people. Participants are advised to wear walking shoes and to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun, e.g., take an umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat.)

Travel Time: Walk only (3 hours)

3. ECO-ORGANIC FARM (Fruits and Vegetables), NUTMEG FACTORY (Cottage Industry), Asia Community Center-Stepping Stone (Social Entrepreneurship)

Balik Pulau is an old rustic town which showcases a glimpse of slow-paced life that is fast disappearing in Penang due to modernization. It is also a town famous for its durian orchards.

3.1. Eco-Organic Farm: The five-acre farm adopts natural farming methods and uses compost manuring extensively. Such vegetables and fruits as water spinach, kale, cabbage, corn, claw bean, melon, banana, passion fruit, pepper, etc., are cultivated on this farm. The owner of the farm shall explain and demonstrate how the crops are cultivated after which the participants may have some hands-on experience.

3.2. Nutmeg: Delegates will be introduced to the different growth stages of nutmeg plants, one of Penang's native products, and shall witness how nutmegs are processed into food, snacks and medical products. In addition, a demonstration on rubber-tapping will be arranged at the rubber estate next to the nutmeg factory. Durian sampling and seasonal fruits will be available.

3.3. ASC-Stepping Stone: The centre provides an opportunity for mentally and physically challenged people to have jobs to help them sustain themselves. The centre uses recycled and natural materials to produce mats, papers, candles, etc., while promoting batik painting and pottery-making. Most of the centre's workers are from the Malay community in Balik Pulau and are trained to work independently.

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 40 people. Participants are advised to wear walking shoes and to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun, e.g., take an umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat.)

Travel Time/One-Way Travel: 1 hour by bus

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4. TELUK BAHANG: MAI HOMESTAY VISIT – Cultural Program

Integration with local people and their families through participating in activities is the overall experience of this programme, which will also help to improve the lives of the rural people by getting them engaged in planning and the development of programs. Activities will include a visit to the local batik factory. There will also be a demonstration and participation in traditional cake-making, handicrafts, dances and games besides planting flowers in conjunction with the “Plant a Tree Program.”

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 40 people. Participants are advised to wear walking shoes and to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun, e.g., take an umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat.)

Travel Time/One-Way Travel: 1 hour by bus

5. PENANG WATER AUTHORITY: Botanical Gardens – Environmental Conservation

The Botanical Gardens waterfall used to be one of the most famous waterfalls in Malaysia. It was an important source of water for ships calling at the port of Penang in the early part of the 19th century. The quality of the water, filtered through the aged rocks of Penang Hill, was very high, and was described by the early sailors as “sweet.” In 1804, the first water treatment plant in Malaysia was set up here to meet the needs of Penang’s population of 10,000 people. The oval-shaped reservoir of the Penang Waterfall was constructed in the gardens in 1892 and was reconstructed in 1950. Penang Island has one of the most efficient water management systems and the cleanest water in the region while enjoying the status of the cheapest water in Malaysia, if not in the whole world!

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 40 people. This exposure is suitable for those who do regular walking exercises or hiking. Participants are advised to wear walking shoes and to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun, e.g., take an umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat.)

Travel Time/One-Way Travel: 1 hour by bus

6. NIBONG TEBAL: UNITED PALM OIL – Environment and Sustainable Development

Palm Oil is one of the major exports of Malaysia with 70 percent of Malaysia’s refined palm oil exported, making Malaysia one of the leading exporters in the world. In Penang, there are two palm oil processing mills located on the mainland. United Palm Oil is one of the mills that processes upstream crude palm oil that adheres strictly to environmental policy and standards. The crude palm oil process in this mill is organic. Delegates will observe the whole process of producing crude palm oil during this visit.

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 40 people. Participants are advised to wear walking shoes and to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun, e.g., take an umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat.)

Travel Time/One-Way Travel: 1 hour by bus

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7. BUKIT MERTAJAM: TAMAN DESA DAMAI – Community Project by Residents (Composting and Related Activities) – A GATN Model Tour*

Taman Desa Damai is a multiethnic community of 4,000 residents with 65 percent of the people being Chinese, 20 percent Malay and 15 percent Indians. The small middle-income community set up the “Go-Green” Project following encouragement from the Penang state government. The centre was formed through the collaboration of Rukun Tetangga (Neighbourhood Watch), residents and the Seberang Municipal Council, a local government body. Activities conducted by the centre include environmental monitoring of rivers and waterways, organic farming, kitchen-waste composting, producing garbage enzymes, making mud balls and *bokashi*, creating furniture out of pallets, recycling and research and development using banana trunk fibres to absorb oil from waterways. The delegates will be provided with an experience of compost burying and digging (“organic black gold”), making mud balls, *bokashi* and enzymes and testing the pollution level of a nearby river and waterways.

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 80 people. Participants are advised to wear walking shoes and to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun, e.g., take an umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat.)

Travel Time/One-Way Travel: 1 hour by bus

8. BUKIT TENGAH: RECLAIMTEK – Recycling Electronic Production Rejects – A GATN Model Tour*

Reclaimtek specializes in recycling and the reclamation of e-waste with a strict quality policy to protect the global environment by reducing, reusing and recycling material for the benefit of humankind. Delegates will be shown the process of recycling non-ferrous and precious metal from electronic products, such as computers and telecommunication equipment, as well as plastic material and the waste from these components.

(Please note that this exposure is limited to 40 people. Participants are requested to obey the safety rules and to note that picture-taking is not allowed in certain areas.)

Travel Time/One-Way Travel: 1 hour by bus

* GATN refers to Global Alternative Tourism Network, a new APAY program.