



APAY NEWS

Monthly e-Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

No. 03 ~ April 2008

1. Regional Roundtable on YMCA as Global Citizens in Mission 21

A Regional Roundtable on *YMCA as Global Citizens in Mission 21* will be held from 25-29 June 2008 at Indah Inn, YMCA Philippine Building, Manila, Philippines. The Roundtable will focus on the changing global trends and impact of globalisation on individual and community life; and the renewal of our Asia-Pacific mission contextually. The Roundtable will deliberate, debate and develop contextual perspectives of the YMCA as a Global Citizen and its responsibilities in the milieu of a globalised world. There will be space and opportunity for defining strategies and strategic action plans for the Quadrennium at appropriate levels in response to the three Quadrennial Thrusts and related global issues and challenges in the Asian and Pacific context.

2. Partnership in Mission: Triangular Deliberation of YMCA /YWCA / Y's Men

During the Roundtable in Manila, a Triangular Deliberation of YMCA/ YWCA /Y's Men leaders/representatives will be held on 28 June. The aim is to strengthen our common ties and partnership in mission. We are inviting these partners to join us in the Roundtable to review and identify for collaborative initiatives,

- a. *Our common mission imperatives and areas of concern.*
- b. *Our current programme expressions linking the imperatives and APAY-QPP Thrusts.*
- c. *Avenues and strategies for strengthening partnerships for mission at different levels.*

3. YMCA Youth in a Globalised World

Key YMCA youth leaders, volunteer and professional, are expected to participate in the Regional Youth Roundtable to be hosted by the National Council of YMCAs of Japan, in Tozanso, Japan on 7 to 11 July. It will focus on *Globalisation and Global Citizenship: Its Impacts on Youth in Society*. This Youth Roundtable will seek to develop a common framework on the concept of social responsibility to each other and to the community. It will seek to develop practical local and national responses to, and engagement in the challenges to youth in a globalised world. Participants will share and deliberate on specific youth concerns and responses. *Details will be sent to National Movements soon.*

4. Asia and Pacific Uni- Ys to Form a Coalition

An annual Regional Uni-Y conference has been proposed in the QPP 2008-2011. On 2-8 August, Uni-Ys from the Asia and Pacific are invited to share and reflect on the issue of 'extreme poverty and disparity' and our responsibilities in today's context. A major

outcome is the formation of a network of Uni-Ys in the region. The Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong is hosting this Regional Uni-Y Gathering. *Invitations will be sent to National Movements soon.*

5. Sub-regional Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Workshop

The National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka in partnership with Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism is organising a South Asian Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Workshop from 25-29 June in Galle, Sri Lanka. The aim is to share the lessons learnt and best practices in the work undertaken by the Sri Lanka YMCA in natural/human-made disasters, preparedness, mitigation and rebuilding of communities. The participants will have learning experiences on enabling communities to understand the interconnectedness of nature, conservation and sustainable lifestyles. Those interested in participating may write to Mr. Chrisantha Hettiarachi, NGS, YMCA Sri Lanka, at srilankaymca@eureka.lk

6. YTRP-PCG Meeting in Nias, Indonesia

The YMCA Tsunami Response Programme (YTRP) will have its final Partners' Coordinating Group (PCG) Meeting from 14-19 July in Medan and Nias, Indonesia. An overall review of the past 3 years' work and 2 days of site visitations will be made. The PCG will assess impacts of youth and village cooperatives/farming, livelihood agriculture improvement, and, women and children programmes. A post YTRP follow-through sustainable community development plan will be finalised as the YTRP ends in June 2008.

7. Asian Students and Youth Gathering (ASYG) 2008

The Asian Students and Youth Gathering is scheduled on 25-31 August 2008 in Korea. More than 100 participants from the 6 EASY Net partners are expected. The theme is "Youth Across Boundaries Redefining the Culture of Peace". National Movements are requested to coordinate with the National Ecumenical Teams to develop and initiate related programmes in preparation for the ASYG. *Details will be sent to National Movements soon.*

8. Task Forces for Strategic Actions in Response to Quadrennial Thrusts

The Executive Committee in March formed the following task forces to formulate strategic actions on Ageing Population, Global Citizenship, Fair Trade, Leadership Development and Constitutional Review.

Task Force	Focus	Members
Ageing Population	YMCAs actions on Ageing Population	Mr. Liew Mun Khai (Malaysia/V President, APAY), Mr. Timoci Qionibaravi (Fiji) Dr. George Varghese (India), Mr. Louis Tong (Hong Kong), Dr. Patcharawan Srisilapanan (Thailand)
Global Citizenship	Defining the concept of Global Citizenship	Mr. Chrisantha Hettiarachi (Sri Lanka), Mr. Greg Hebble (Australia) Ms. Ayano Inami (Japan), Ms. Phanonwan Yoodee (Thailand) Mr. Nam Boo- Won (Korea), Dr. Pretesh R. Kiran (India)
Fair Trade	Development of Global YMCA Fair Trade System	Mr. Takao Nishimura (Japan), Mr. Ishi Hideki (East Timor) Mr. Wichian Boonmapajorn (Thailand) Ms. Naline Pussateva (Thailand)
Constitutional Review	Streamline and Update Constitution	Mr. Paul Le Gros (New Zealand/V President, APAY), Dr. Park Jai Chang (Korea, President, APAY), Mr. Ravi Algama (Sri Lanka), Rev. Jack Young (Hong Kong, V President, APAY) Ms. Cristina Miranda (Philippines)
Leadership Development	Planning for Leadership Development and Curriculum	Prof. P.J. Oommen (India, V President, APAY), Dr. Park Jai Chang (Korea, President, APAY), Mr. Ramon B Cardenas (Philippines), Mr. Ric Odom (New Zealand)

9. YMCA Rizal Youth Leadership Training Institute Renewed

The Philippine YMCA revived its Rizal Youth Leadership Training Institute (RYLTI) in April 2007 under the Mission in Action Programme system, supported by YMCA Korea. The RYLTI was a leading youth leadership development programme patterned after Dr. Jose Rizal's leadership of honesty, justice, and excellence and love of country. This year's RYLTI on 21 April to 7 May with 11 youth leaders focuses on *Imperatives of Training Young Leaders Towards Good Citizenship*.

10. Philippine YMCA Holds Regional Movement Strengthening Roundtables

Regional roundtables and planning workshops are being implemented in the 5 regions of YMCA Philippines as a follow-through of the National Roundtable held in February. From 6-7 April, 31 lay leaders and staff participated in the South Luzon workshop in San Pablo City. The Mindanao Region met on 13-14 April in Tagum City with 26 YMCA key leaders. These workshops are to acquaint local YMCAs with the APAY Quadrennial Programme Plan for 2008-2011 and to align their work to be socially relevant, viable and sustainable. The North Luzon and Manila Bay Regions are scheduled to meet on 17-18 April and on 23-24 May, respectively.

11. Bangladesh YMCA Successfully Holds AGM

The 30th Annual General Meeting of the National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh was held on Friday, 25 April 2008 as per constitutional provisions, at the YMCA Training Centre, Savar, Dhaka. Sixty representatives from 10 Local YMCAs attended the Meeting. The election of officers was held and Mr. Symon P. Adhikary elected President.

We congratulate Mr. Symon P. Adhikary the newly elected President, other leaders, and the National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh on this significant breakthrough towards renewed efforts for its Mission in Bangladesh.

12. Sri Lanka YMCA Addresses Leadership For A Strong Movement at 43rd AGM

Congratulations to Mr. Ravi Algama on his re-election as President of the Sri Lanka YMCA at their 43rd Annual General Meeting held on 26 April. It was hosted by the Kalmunai YMCA in eastern Sri Lanka.

A Peace, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Seminar was held a day prior to the AGM. The APAY General Secretary gave keynote addresses on *Youth Leadership For Movement Building* and *Leadership For A Strong Movement* at the 3-day Pre-AGM National Youth Conference, and at the AGM, respectively.

13. Singapore Uni-Y Members at World Volunteer Youth Conference

Singapore YMCA Uni-Y members Alan Ang and Oliver Loke of the Singapore Management University participated in the 20th International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) and the World Volunteer Youth Conference in Panama City on 31 March to 4 April. They were jointly organised and hosted by YMCA Panama with the theme

“Volunteering for Human Development: More Solidarity, Less Poverty”. The IAVE is the leading global body championing volunteerism to empower and develop worldwide networks of representatives and resource pools to equip volunteer organisations for social change. Singapore is hosting the 21st IAVE World and Youth Conferences in 2011. *For More Information, see www.iave.org*

Oliver, a member of the APAY Youth Participation and Leadership Development, who attended both conferences, shares:

The IAVE World Volunteer Youth Conference was held over the course of 3 days, attracting over 200 youths. Youth Representatives from around the world shared projects covering issues such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), bridging the racial divide, and E-Service networks in this short span of time. The objective was to unite ideas and issues that could be tackled using volunteerism as the tool for social change. Frameworks were drafted and networking platforms were created through informal events, e.g. Workshops. Panamanian parties ensured that strong linkages between youth leaders were forged. In so doing, greater collaboration and the exchange of ideas were facilitated via increased dialogue and the possibilities of initiating exchange programmes. Aside from making new friends, the experiences also enriched and broadened my understanding of issues, and allowed me to discover new approaches in viewing our local volunteerism, in issues such as youth engagement and bridging the wealth gap.

Over 500 representatives of volunteer bodies worldwide participated in the 20TH IAVE World Volunteer Conference held after the Youth Conference. Topics such as Volunteer Research, Role of Governments, Volunteer Centres and Corporate Volunteerism were actively discussed. Various regions presented their current volunteerism schemes and programmes.

Debate was lively. The exchange of ideas through dialogues showed a great degree of interest in this field projected into the forefront of the UN agenda. It therefore remains a pertinent call for us to bring forth and intensify the interest of ‘service without reward’ in all fields to advance the noble aspirations of mankind - alleviating poverty, closing income gaps, renewing societies and improving our health conditions.

The work of many others around the world showed me the potential and the immense diversity of ideas and experiences we can learn from even as we strive to be better individuals and on a larger scale, humanity.

14. Gender Equity in a 3-Step Continuum

As we heighten our efforts to create greater responsiveness and our commitment to gender equity, the Quadrennial Gender Equity Programme Plan has proposed a 3-step continuum:

- *Gender Equity as a ‘good idea’’, accepted in theory,*
- *Gender Equity taken on board as policy, and*
- *Gender Equity fully integrated into structures and practise.*

We trust the 3 practical steps will help us towards greater actualisation of gender responsiveness in a focussed, holistic and integrated manner. *More details soon.*

15. Concluding Remarks~ Stretching and Stimulation to Deal With Stiffness

The Executive Committee Meeting at the end of March saw new and younger leaders amongst the representatives. This was an encouraging sign. We look forward to more meaningful exchanges and interaction, sharing of ideas, ideals. To seek innovative ways to bring the membership and the movement at all levels to a common shared Vision and to partnerships with mutual values as we work our shared Mission.

I was at a chiropractor soon after the Executive Committee Meetings to seek treatment for a stiff neck that had been troubling me for some time. The stiffness was to say the least,

causing me discomfort and irritation. The chiropractor, a Dr. Saed Rasheed, explained the causes of the stiffness after reviewing the MRI film I had showed him. He used a stimulator and then ultra-sound to stimulate the blood flow. Then on a traction machine that stretched and I guess also stimulated blood flow. Well, I do not know the medical/technical aspects of the treatment, but I was much relieved and felt release of tension in the affected spots.

As I lay on these machines that stretched and stimulated, with the chiropractic carefully manipulating the troubled spots, the words Stiffness, Stretching and Stimulation came to mind. I reflected on these words in relation to the YMCA and its state in our region. Was the YMCA at more that 160 years worldwide, and more than 100 years in some countries in our region, like my neck – stiff due to natural degeneration because of age? Unable to regenerate to meet the challenges of the day? It came to me that we do need to stretch our way of looking at realities, challenges and issues in the YMCA as we seek to be relevant to society. Learn how to stretch our imagination on how we could innovate to keep our Mission relevant and responsive to society. Surely, the realities that surround, envelope us, that tend to cause us stiffness, can stimulate us to new action as we get ‘shocks’ from what we experience daily. Stimulate new thinking, to changed mindsets as we respond to God’s Word?

We look to the new leaders to spur us, to awaken us to our stiffness. Will we be challenged to stretch our thoughts, to expand our scope and perspectives? To be stimulated for action in response, to act responsibly to the realities that surround us?

The Lord bless us and keep us as we seek to respond to the stretching and stimulation by God, to regenerate our passion and commitment to the YMCA mission of the 21st Century.....

Yip Kok Choong
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4 June: International Day of Innocent Children Victims Of Aggression

This day acknowledges the pain suffered by children throughout the world who are the victims of physical, mental and emotional abuse. It affirms a commitment to protect the rights of children. Over 2 million children have been killed in conflict in the last two decades; around 10 million child refugees are cared for by UNHCR; in the Latin America & Caribbean region 80 thousand children die every year from violence that breaks out within the family. Humanity is organising as never before to put children first in the process of building a better world, and this Day also celebrates the millions of individuals and organizations working to protect and preserve the rights of children. [The Global Movement for Children](#), with leadership from Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel, is an inspiring force for change that involves 'ordinary people' and families in all parts of the world. The '**Say Yes for Children**' campaign, which has been endorsed by over 94 million people, calls for 10 positive actions to be taken to improve the lives of children.

5 June: World Environment Day

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on 5 June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The World Environment Day slogan for 2008 is **Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy**. Recognizing that climate change is becoming the defining issue of our era, UNEP is asking countries, companies and communities to focus on greenhouse gas emissions and how to reduce them. The World Environment Day will highlight resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and life-styles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption. The day's agenda is to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership, which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. World Environment Day can be celebrated in many ways, including street rallies, bicycles parades, green concerts, essay and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, recycling efforts, clean-up campaigns and much more. In many countries, this annual event is used to enhance political attention and action.

17 June: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly declared June 17 the "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought" to promote public awareness and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. Ever since, country Parties to the Convention, organizations of the United Nations System, international and non-governmental organizations and other interested stakeholders have celebrated this particular day with a series of outreach activities worldwide. 17 June constitutes a unique occasion to remind everybody that desertification can be effectively tackled, that solutions are possible, and that key tools to this aim lay in strengthened community participation and co-operation at all levels

As the 16th and 17th sessions of the third implementation cycle of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) will focus on the issues of Agriculture, Rural development, Land, Drought, Desertification, and Africa, this year's celebration of 17 of June be focused around the themes of **Combating Land Degradation for Sustainable Agriculture**. This will certainly constitute a concrete way to support the discussions of the 16th and 17th sessions and provide useful inputs that could be brought to the attention of the CSD, in the current cycle.

20 June: World Refugee Day

First observed on 20 June 2001, World Refugee Day commemorates the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention. The Convention and the UNHCR, was in response to the crisis of an estimated one million, mainly European, displaced people in the aftermath of World War Two. Since then the refugee crisis has spread to many parts of the world. Today an estimated 19 million people have been forced to leave their homes as a result of persecution, wars or natural or man-made disasters. The refugee crisis represents an enormous human tragedy. Today people not just flee persecution and war but also injustice, exclusion, environmental pressures, competitions for scarce resources and all miserable human consequences of dysfunctional states. Yet the crisis also offers a great opportunity for we human beings to act on our sense of interdependence. The task facing the international community in this new environment is to find ways to unlock the potential of refugees who have so much to offer if they are given the opportunity to regain control over their lives.

26 June: International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Since 1987, 26 June has been observed as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The slogan of the UNODC anti-drugs campaign to be launched on 26 June, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, is **"Do drugs control your life? Your life. Your community. No place for drugs."** With this campaign, UNODC aims to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society. No individual, family or community is safe where illicit drugs take control. Drugs may control the body and mind of individual consumers, the drug crop and drug cartels may control farmers, illicit trafficking and crime may control communities. The campaign's goal is to inspire people and mobilize support for drug control. The proposed overarching campaign and the generic slogan are flexible. For example, variations on the slogan could be used to suit different contexts

26 June: International Day In Support Of Victims Of Torture

Rehabilitation centres and programmes and human rights organisations around the world celebrate the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June, the day that the Convention against Torture came into force. The day reminds us that torture is a crime and provides us with an opportunity to stand united and voice our opinion against torture, a cruel violation of human rights. It was also the day that the United Nations Charter was signed - the first international instrument to embody obligations for Member States to promote and encourage respect for human rights. The IRCT has selected **"Help us erase torture"** as the theme of the 26 June global campaign for 2008. The goal is to encourage participants in this year's events to think of actions that they and others can take to eradicate the man-made scourge of torture from our world. Let us remember this as the day on which we pay our respects to those who have endured the unimaginable, on which we support the many victims and survivors of torture around the world.