



# APAY NEWS

Monthly e-Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs No. 07 / 09 ~ December 2009

*This special Christmas issue of our eNews focuses only on our regional programmes and Season's Greetings. We will have more news and updates in the next January 2010 issue. We appreciate all YMCAs that shared stories/good practices that we tried to feature in the previous eNews. We encourage all of you to keep on sending your reports/news for information sharing and learning.*

## 1. From the Desk of the General Secretary...27<sup>th</sup> Advanced Studies Programme

We had the 27<sup>th</sup> Advanced Studies from Oct 26 to Nov. 28, for 35 days in YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong. 11 participants from 9 countries participated. They were from China, Hong Kong (2), Japan, Korea (Timor Leste), Myanmar (2), Philippines, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. They learned from various resource persons, shared experiences and opinions, went on field studies, and thought and questioned the values of YMCAs, etc. Finally all participants wrote and presented a proposal each on a challenging area of work, that he /she faced and impacted.

Being together for one month, we realized that we are working in very different social and cultural backgrounds and so are our programs very wide range. So many unique individuals, some strong and challenging all the time, some quiet and rather watching and listening to the others, and some always being and going my pace. It is really interesting to see dynamism of people working together in the YMCA. We are not at all the same but something there to bind us together. We are struggling for our own survival but at the same time we exist for the others who are suffering and who are weak in our society. In the proposal writing, every participant thought their targets as migrants who are treated unfairly, migrants being looked down by neighbouring people, youth who are looking for any opportunity to get their lives little better, people in constant conflict, youth and children who are not open their minds to outside world, autistic children who are not given proper education for their needs, etc. Hearing all of those proposals, I really felt this is the basis of YMCA spirit.



One Bangladesh staff spoke about the situation of the women in his country. Men can marry several women, but women are strictly confined in the community and watched by their people. According to our HUMAN RIGHTS concern, this is not acceptable at all. However, at the same time, women in their society have been protected very well from society even they live in poor and sometimes very violent social conditions. That custom comes from their cultural background. It is a local wisdom. One lady has been working in the Timor Leste (East

Timor) YMCA for nearly three years, and feels that the local people have their local wisdom to manage everyday lives. The country is one of the smallest and newest in the world and has been going through a lot of conflict from outside as well as within themselves. People are used to assistance from INGOs (International NGOs) and of course village people always seek for whatever YMCA does for them. They have been struggling for their YMCA sustainability but are still far behind. Being there as an assistant in such country, she feels local wisdom, which is not easily seen by foreigners who visit for a few days. The YMCA work should be coming from understanding this local wisdom, I thought from her talk.

Here is a good message introduced by Song Jin Ho (Senior Executive Director of NCY Korea) when he concluded his input. Some of you may have heard about it which is taken from the credo of rural reconstruction ~ “Go to the people. Live among them. Learn from them. Plan with them. Work with them. Start with what they know. Build in what they have.”

Being a YMCA staff, I should be always humble and listen to people and God's voice.



### *We congratulate the graduates of this year's Advanced Studies Programme!*

Kaligram YMCA, Bangladesh	Swapan Baroi
Hangzhou YMCA, China	Feng Xiaojuan
Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong	Hui Yik Piu
Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong	Lee Man Key
Jabalpur YMCA, India	Ramesh Paul
Osaka YMCA, Japan	Mitsuhiro Uno
Suncheon YMCA, Korea/ET	Yang Dong-hwa
Peace Coffee Project Manager	
NCY Myanmar	Nant Daisy Hlaing
Mandalay YMCA, Myanmar	Naw Thet Htar Win
Albay YMCA, Philippines	Ianne Christine Aquino
NCY Sri Lanka	Charith De Silva
<i>(ASP participants with Dr Cecil Chan, President of Chinese Y of HK, Graduation Speaker, APAY GS Kohei Yamada and APAY Executives, 26 Nov 2009)</i>	

## **2. S2S Campaign 2009 Draws Support**

We thank all of you and your YMCA for the most encouraging support that you extended during the launching of our S2S Campaign on December 12. We will gladly wait to receive all your updates as we commence our 1<sup>st</sup> APAY S2S Day. Our campaign continues and we encourage all YMCA members to join and participate. Together we can do much for the YOUTHS!



*Chinese YMCA of HK's campaign poster pasted on their donation boxes distributed in all their centers*

### ***We wish to remind all YMCAs the following:***

- 50% of the total amount raised be transferred to APAY account by check or bank transfer before 10 February 2010 to enable us to make a report at the Executive Committee Meeting in March 2010.
- The remaining 50% is for your Movement specifically for your own youth development programmes and activities.
- We encourage you to do your campaign within your own appropriate time and programmes
- We envision continuing this event next year in more bigger and wider scale with all your support and participation.

## **3. Recently Held ~ Workshop on Gender Concerns and Migration**



Twenty-five select participants from the YMCAs of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam were together for this workshop in Metro YMCA Singapore. Starting off with the Communities of Practice, good practices were shared from the YMCAs of Kaligram, Bangladesh; Chiang Rai, Thailand; NCY Japan and NCY Myanmar. There were 2 major components of this programme ~ gender concerns and migration. Dr. Patcharawan Srisilapanan, APAY Gender Equity (GE) Committee presented a summary of the analysis/outcome of the GE Survey 2009.

The participants actively shared self-assessment and constructive critiquing in their own YMCAs and

clarified their own PCGs ~ progress, gaps and challenges. Collectively, they were able to create some concrete follow-up actions/initiatives towards greater responsiveness and gender balance in our YMCA's life, expression and Mission.

Keeping us updated on the complex issues of migration/migrant work, Mr. Rex Varona, Executive Director of the Asian Migrant Center (AMC) provided the necessary input and clearer understanding of Migration and Development. The General Manager of UNIFEM Singapore shared about their responses and advocacy programmes on the issue. Participants indeed appreciated the exposures specially arranged in PAVE (Centre for Promoting Alternatives to Violence) and in HOME (Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics). All participants actively engaged themselves in work group discussions. They shared and formulated mutual support programmes/practical actions among (YMCA) sending and receiving countries. All recommendations shall be circulated to the Movements early next year. The workshop was held from 14-17 December 2009.

*Our sincere appreciation to Metropolitan YMCA Singapore for hosting the workshop and our thanks to YMCA of Singapore for extending also its support. Special gratitude to the GE Committee Working Group.*

#### **4. Global Warming Forum To Develop YMCA Response**

The Forum on Global Warming on 18-22 January 2010 at Christ Church, New Zealand will bring together YMCA members from across the region to discuss about global warming and the impact realities of climate change. It will also serve as an important regional platform for YMCAs to enter into discussion on positioning YMCAs stance on Global Warming and strategise its involvements in addressing this issue. Ms. Lister Cheung, an environmental expert from Hong Kong who attended the Copenhagen Climate Conference representing APAY will share about the concerns from the UN Climate Conference and will facilitate a workshop in the forum. Apart from the inputs through keynote address, theological underpinning through eco- theological reflections, case stories and good practices from different YMCAs and other community based organisations, brainstorming group works, eco – tour to witness sustainable practices will lead towards developing framework for a common action plan for the YMCAs in the Region. *The deadline for Registration for participating in the forum will be 31 December 2009.*

#### **5. Executive Committee Meeting 2010**

The Executive Committee and Related Meetings will be held on 10-13 March 2010 at the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong. The National General Secretaries will meet on 9 March.

A Workshop on Resource Mobilisation will form part of the Executive Committee as we further our work in this endeavor focusing on Capacity, Programme and Communication. We enjoin all National Movements and members of the Executive Committee to participate learn and share from each other. This will bring wider input and greater participation.

Circulars related to the meetings have been sent to the National Movements. Registration ends on 31 January 2010. Kindly visit our website [www.asiapacificymca.org](http://www.asiapacificymca.org) for more details.

#### **6. Reminders!**

***APAY Partnership Project Seeking Consideration for Support.*** Invitation to support a project has already been circulated and we hope to receive interested partnerships by **15 January 2010.**

***Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on 18-25 January 2010. Theme: You are witnesses of these things, Luke 24:48***

***Regional NGOs/Ecumenical Networks Meeting on 29 January 2010***

**7. Notice ~ Announcement! APAY Secretariat Holidays**

The Secretariat of the APAY will be closed from 24 December 2009 to 3 January 2010 for the Christmas/Year-end Break.

**8. Merry Christmas! Season's Greetings!**

*Merry Christmas!*

*We thank you and your YMCA for supporting our APAY work in many different ways.*

*Being in Hong Kong away from home, I have realized the importance of my work especially when I travel to countries where there is only one YMCA in the country. They need partnership with the countries nearby. I deeply appreciate all of your warm responses to my proposals to step in further to make some difference in the future.*

*The other day I saw Chinese style writing on the wall of the chapel at the YMCA of Hong Kong. It was a writing from the letter of Paul to the Philippians, Chapter 4:6-7. It says, "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

*This is Paul's message. I wondered how strong his belief on God. He is totally relying on God's will on whatever he did. When I think of this, I realized that I often worry about how I should do these gigantic problems in front of me. I wish I could be like strong Paulo completely with God and trust the God's will.*

*We tend to leave God when we are only depending on ourselves. But when we feel that we are not strong enough to solve big problems without this and that .... We really need the guidance from God.*

*Paul was not strong as we thought, but he accepted that he could not do anything himself. From that he learnt to rely totally on God.*

*We wish you all a Blessed and Joyous Christmas, and  
Have a Great and Enjoyable New Year, 2010!*

**Kohei Yamada**  
*General Secretary*

**Cristina A. Dalope & Jose Varghese**  
*Executive Secretaries*