

Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
Regional Workshop: Gender Concerns and Migration 2009
Summary Report and Recommendations

A Regional Workshop on Gender Concerns and Migration was held on 14-17 December 2009, hosted by the Metropolitan YMCA Singapore, Singapore. This was participated by twenty-four select participants from the YMCAs of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Key Points

1. There were 2 major components of this programme ~ gender concerns and migration.
2. Starting off with the Communities of Practice, good practices were shared by the YMCAs of Kaligram, Bangladesh; Chiang Rai, Thailand; NCY Japan and NCY Myanmar. YMCAs of Vietnam and Salatiga, Indonesia were the panelists for action responses on migrant workers/migration issues.
3. Dr. Patcharawan Srisilapanan, APAY Gender Equity (GE) Committee Chair 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.
4. Keeping us updated on the complex issues, responses and strategies in the Asian region on migration/migrant work, Mr. Rex Varona, Executive Director of the Asian Migrant Center (AMC) and Executive Committee member of Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), provided the necessary input and clearer understanding of Migration and Development on a human rights and gender-based perspective.

The General Manager of UNIFEM Singapore, Ms Pia Bruce shared an input on the Gender Dimension of Migration and their responses/advocacy programmes on the issue.

5. Participants indeed appreciated the exposures specially arranged in PAVE (Centre for Promoting Alternatives to Violence) and in HOME (Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics).

On Gender Concerns

1. Affirming the 2009 Gender Equity Survey results and analysis, the participants concluded that:
 - There may be **some similarities** but generally gender issues **differ** from country to country due to economic, social, cultural, religious beliefs, values and customs.
 - Difficulties involve the following -
 - Individual understanding of the issues also differ
 - Very difficult to change mindset. There will be resistance – How can a male dominated society willingly accept the increased role of women in society? Eg. Myanmar, husband perceived as lord and son as master. To change attitudes and culture cannot be achieved overnight. This may take years. Involvement of Government is important as it has the resources
 - Economic power – Providing for the family is traditionally seen as a male role. In cases where women are the breadwinners, their status has increased.

In Bangladesh, roles are reversed: women provide for the family. Ability to earn income to support family is seen as an important factor.

In Japan, men are expected to work hard which means work overtime. The setback is that they are helpless in the home, and kitchen and are not involved even in upbringing of their children. All this is left to the wife. <i>Women although educated do not assume any leadership positions in politics and workplace</i>
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- Caution - use of numeric values in survey may not be an effective measure. In some surveys the number of women involved in leadership and decision-making positions is no clear indication of increased participation of women. They can be put there just to make up the numbers.
- Involvement of participants in the whole process

2. Recognizing the important roles and participation of individuals, local and national movements towards gender responsiveness in our YMCA's life, expression and Mission, the participants shared and deliberated on the next steps ~ *what needs to be done and how to do it?*

What needs to be done?	How to do it?		
	Individual	Local YMCAs	National YMCAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build awareness • Advocacy • Involvement of government/YMCA leaders to get things done – change laws and constitution • Work life balance • Development of human well being, mental, physical and spiritual ~ <i>Build sense of (women's) self-esteem</i> • Education & Vocational development – help them to get a job and also in finance management • Building relationships / fellowship with program participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage initiative in the individual • Encourage joint decision-making • Employment opportunities must not be gender biased • Self transformation to accept that sexist mindset must change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set realistic targets in the increased membership and leadership of women • Work with Government to change regulation at work. • Local YMCA leadership to address the issues and concerns of the Gender Equity program ~ <i>Review local YMCA procedures to create equal participation of men and women</i> ~ <i>Increase gender sensitivity awareness programs</i> • Organise family oriented programs ~ <i>Develop child care centers</i> ~ <i>Get fathers to participate</i> • Give more emphasis on Women Empowerment Programmes in YMCAs and communities • Exposures / Exchanges / Partnership programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National initiative for gender equity awareness ~ <i>mainstream the gender issues into the structures and programmes of the YMCAs</i> • Share outcome of the workshop to the local YMCAs ~ <i>start with the understanding gender-related terms as provided in this workshop</i> • Organize special gatherings for women • Disseminate information and updates on global women issues • Create an evaluation/monitoring system

The **APAY** will continue to:

- assess, monitor, evaluate and follow-up outcomes of gender equity strategies/responses biennially.
- encourage constitutional change at local and national levels to make them in accordance with Challenge 21
- develop programmes/training to build women's capacity
- provide workshops/forums that will stimulate more discussions and responses on various gender issues in our societies and within YMCAs (e.g. migration, domestic/family violence, ageing society, climate change, poverty, etc)

On Migration

1. Having deliberated on and understanding the complex issues, responses and strategies in the Asian region on migration/migrant workers, participants collectively agreed to undertake efforts in awareness building/education, welfare services, empowerment, advocacy, capacity-building/training, community development, re-integration and other specific collaborative efforts.

2. Participants acknowledged the multi-level migration programmes and strategies (ranging from welfare/crisis services, to organizing/capacity-building, advocacy/lobbying, and livelihood/reintegration development projects) already provided by various partners, groups and networks in the region, e.g. AMC and MFA. Therefore, *the programmes of the YMCAs should not duplicate but rather enhance, complement and partner with these as much as possible. The unique niche/role of the YMCAs will be in optimizing the facilities, services, presence and community base of the various YMCAs in providing rights-based and gender-based services for migrants.*

3. Thus, the following had been proposed:

A. Recommended Actions <i>towards strengthening the image / mission / unique role / capacity of YMCAs across Asia-Pacific in responding to migration concerns</i>	
1. In <u>SENDING</u> countries: provide pre-departure training, information, education services for potential migrants	1. In <u>RECEIVING</u> countries: develop YMCA's image as place where migrants can get information; referral / information / help desk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>local YMCAs to create migrant help desk; coordinate or collaborate with above partners/networks/agencies especially for information, referral, training</i> • <i>give information for potential migrants – booklets, information</i> • <i>provide trainings (on livelihood/vocational, skills, economic development etc.)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>local YMCAs to provide migrant help-desk services; can be linked with relevant groups / NGOs / agencies especially for information, referral, training</i> • <i>give migrants information – booklets, info</i> • <i>provide trainings (vocational, skills, etc.)</i> • <i>monitor, support livelihood trainings, economic development, reintegration programs</i>
2. YMCAs in receiving countries (RC) can support YMCAs in sending countries (SC) – through partnership, capacity-building, information, coordination, referrals (jointly identifying/accessing resources)	
3. For information materials: coordinate, share between SC and RC to ensure these are relevant; can do joint IEC (information, communication, education) materials as necessary	

B. Recommended Actions <i>towards developing the capacity of YMCAs to do the above program (A)</i>
1. APAY/National YMCAs ~ provide technical support for YMCAs (skills training, etc)
2. All levels ~ link with NGOs/partners/groups (migrants, human rights, community development)
3. All levels ~ Get support from UN agencies/partners/networks
4. APAY to organize a follow-up for networking/multi-lateral partnership (SC and RC with NGOs/partners/groups)

Note:

1. Power point presentations/related documents and resources can be downloaded from our website (Report on Gender Concerns and Migration Workshop 2009)