



# HEADLINES

*Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs No. 45 / September 2005*

## **1. Leadership Development Review**

Our Area Alliance has placed strong emphasis on leadership development for movement building and social transformation since the early 1980s. One of our key concerns now is the development and strengthening of our volunteer and professional leadership. This need was also highlighted and emphasised during the Leaders Quadrennial Roundtable in Bangkok last year.

The Leadership Development Review will be carried out on **10-14 November** with invited personnel from the sub-regions and resource persons, including some who have been leading study modules in the Advanced Studies Programme (ASP). This will be held at the YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village during the time of the ASP and the group will have interaction with the participants of the on-going ASP.

Besides reviewing the current curricula of the Basic Leadership Formation and Advanced Studies, the key focus will be on developing the curriculum for an Intermediate Studies, and how to strengthen our Lay (volunteer) Leadership.

## **2. Building Gender Responsiveness – Youth Exchange in Bangladesh**

From September to December 2005, an exchange programme focusing on youth participation and women empowerment through community organizing and micro-credit will be hosted by Bangladesh YMCA. Ms. Lalaine Lumpas, a young woman staff from the Philippine YMCA has been selected for the exchange. She will share her work and experience on women empowerment and development in the Philippines. She is expected to contribute towards the implementation of the work of the YMCA in Bangladesh with the community and learn skills and methodologies on micro-credit programme.

We thank the YMCA of Japan for their financial support for this Exchange Programme.

## **3. Nominations for World Alliance Officers and Executive Committee Members**

During the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the World Alliance in Mumbai, we had an informal meeting of the APAY Officers, National Presidents and National General Secretaries present to encourage National Movements to send in their nominations, if any, for election as Officers or Executive Committee Members of the World Alliance.

You would have received the reminder sent by Mr. Bjørn Solberg, the Chairperson of the Election Committee, dated 30 August “to reiterate my request, since we have not received a sufficient number of nominations to enable us to have a meaningful election at the 16<sup>th</sup> World Council in July 2006.”

He adds, “We particularly need nominations for young people and women, as you will remember that 8 of the Members of the Executive Committee must be under 30 years of age, and 8 must be women.

I rely on your good judgement to send us nominations of people who would make effective and valuable Members of the World Alliance Executive Committee, and look forward to receiving these **before 10<sup>th</sup> September 2005.**”

#### **4. Issue-based Disaster Response Youth Work Camp in Quezon Province, Philippines**

From 25 July to 2 August, 30 Youth Work Campers from Hong Kong, Japan, Myanmar and Philippines joined the community of General Nakar, Quezon, Philippines to dig a water channel to prevent flooding of the community’s elementary school. The Work Camp also contributed towards the building of a community multi-purpose hall as a platform for people to gather, consult and share difficulties, and plan their community’s development. Their concern and willingness to help rebuild the community was a source of hope for the community recovering from physical and psychological barriers caused by the devastating typhoons last October. The work camp also helped to cement the relationship of the YMCA with communities affected by the disaster, therefore setting the ground to help facilitate future development processes.

A forum on HIV/AIDS in relation to poverty, migration and gender responsiveness, as a learning component, raised participants’ level of consciousness and inspired them to involve in helping to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

Hosted by the National Council of YMCAs of the Philippines, the programme and the construction of multi-purpose hall were supported by the YMCA of Japan under the Mission in Action Programme (MAP).

#### **5. A Peace-Building Journey from East Timor**

Twenty-six youth from East Timor, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea embarked on a peace-building journey in East Timor during the Peace Camp on 25 July to 5 August. The participants interacted with the East Timorese youth and expressed solidarity with their past struggle for freedom, and current efforts for peace and reconciliation. They visited several civil society groups to discuss young people’s roles in building a culture of peace and justice.

In support of the East Timor people’s efforts in building sustainable communities, the participants helped in mangrove-planting on the coast, repairing community facilities, and packaging of coffee beans for export as part of Fair Trade Campaign.

They also carried out a Community Children’s Peace and Healing Programme. The campers were inspired to continue their peace journey in their home countries by their experience of the East Timor culture and life. The Camp was coordinated and supported by the National Council of YMCAs of Korea.

## 6. APAY Youth Forum Vision: Empowering Young People for Transformation

Forty-eight youth actively participated in the APAY Youth Forum in Mumbai, India on 14-16 August, prior to the Global Celebrations for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Alliance of YMCAs. The theme was “YMCA’s Heritage and Visioning for the Future”.

For some, it was a sad reflective glimpse at poverty as poor Mumbaikers live in slums around the city that prides itself as a financial hub. For many, it was an opportunity for understanding and even getting acquainted with the YMCA’s heritage, *Paris Basis* and *Challenge 21*, the very heart and mission of the Movement. It motivated a passion to know more about the YMCA, world issues that impact on the lives of young people, e.g. education for employment, peace building, HIV/AIDS, participation and leadership - to lead and transform, and to introspect on how they can contribute to empower youth and build a community of love, peace and justice. The Youth Forum was also a time for cultural sharing and forming friendships.

The participants expressed in their “Postcard from Mumbai”, “*There is nothing more critical to the survival of the YMCA for another 150 years, than the involvement and empowerment of youth at all levels of our Movement.*” This is the youth’s call for a shared leadership to achieve a common vision and mission together.

## 7. Rediscover Peace With Justice: Challenge for the Next 150 Years

Around 500 delegates from 41 countries met in Mumbai, India on 16-22 August for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the *Paris Basis* and founding of the World Alliance of YMCAs. The torch lit in Paris at the launch of the Celebrations in March and brought from Paris through Germany to Mumbai was lit, symbolising the long journey of 150 years, and the YMCA mission to serve and to be the light of the world.

The “Letter from Mumbai” signed at the closing worship expressed the spirit and vision of the gathering, reaffirmed commitment to the *Paris Basis* and *Challenge 21* in the context of globalisation and called for multilateral partnerships in building the future where Christ’s mission is fulfilled.

The programme included theme presentations, workshops on innovative YMCA actions on building peace with justice, capacity-building forums to equip members in translating their commitments to concrete actions. Evening fringe events gathered people around different interests and issues for debate and deliberations; or informal get-together and fun. The daily worship set the tone for deeper reflections, inspiring members to unite in Christ and go into the world, into the community with a renewed mission-orientation.

Invited speakers motivated participants with their deep insights. Dr. Ninan Koshy, well-known Asian ecumenical leader, challenged participants to “*rediscover peace in its true sense*”, with justice, “*through prayer, worship and concrete involvement*” such as exposing injustices. Gracia Violeta, from Bolivia, testified as a young Christian living with HIV, expressing her sadness and frustration at being stigmatized and discriminated against. She called on YMCAs to extend their love to those living with HIV/AIDS most of who are in situations of poverty.

Rev. Dr. Caesar Molebatsi, World Alliance President declared: "Today we are at a crossroads." He called on YMCAs to continue its march, following Jesus Christ into the next 150 years. He asked that YMCAs go forth with the blessing and mandate of Jesus Christ with a commitment to serve and make a difference."

## 8. Interfaith Co-operation Forum (ICF) Plans

The Interfaith Co-operation Forum (ICF) is a joint interfaith initiative of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), APAY and the Church Development Service (EED) of Germany bringing together persons involved in grassroots interfaith actions for justice and peace. The ICF met to deliberate on the programme plan for 2005-2007, in Jakarta Indonesia from 14-15 August 2005. Fourteen participants attended the meeting, representing the ICF Joint Committee, Continuation Committee, and resource persons. Mr. Lakshan Dias, Executive Secretary represented the APAY at the Meeting.

Among the main items discussed were the identification and networking of interfaith resource centres in each country for information sharing, declaration of an annual Asian Interfaith Week and the launching of an Interfaith School for Peace. Following the meeting, the participants attended an Interfaith Consultation to Overcome Violence Through Non-violence, organised by the CCA from 16-20 August in Cipayung, Indonesia.

## 9. Tsunami Response ~ Selected Updates

**Sri Lanka:** The Sri Lankan YMCA Tsunami Comprehensive Response Programme (CRP) was extended to include initiatives to empower tsunami victims at Human Rights Centres in affected areas such as Point Pedro, Trincomalee, Kalmunai, Galle and Dehiwala YMCAs, to assist those who need para-legal support to safeguard their basic Human Rights.

During the last four weeks, 32 houses have been repaired under the housing component of the CRP. Each received Rs.50,000 as support for their repairs. Forty-eight men and women from victimised families in 15 affected areas received Rs.15,000 seed capital to restart their micro-enterprises or for self-employment. Fourteen YMCAs are involved in the proposed 18-month Scholarship Scheme started in July for 60 students in each YMCA locality. Two housing schemes will be launched in August 2005 in Point Pedro (North) and in Matara-Dikwella in the South.

**Indonesia:** The implementation of the Trauma Healing Programme of the Social Services component of the Comprehensive Response Plan (CRP) commenced as the Medan YMCA organised the second Trauma Healing Training for 18 volunteers on 28-31 July in Brastagi. Resource Persons Aad and Mettie Kik from Netherlands facilitated the Training. Another 17 youth attended a similar training programme in Sibolga, Nias Island on 5-9 August. An evaluation meeting decided to facilitate the formation of a network of trauma healing volunteers to support the participants of the Trauma Healing Training Programmes in their work in Nias, Aceh and Medan. Plans are also being made to strengthen the Medan YMCA.

Financial support for the Tsunami Response components are now being finalised and the Medan YMCA is preparing to commence the economic and livelihood recovery responses.

## 10. Special Appeal ~ Mumbai YMCA's Flood Relief Programme in Slums

We express our appreciation to *Hong Kong YMCA, Japan YMCA, Kuala Lumpur YMCA, Metropolitan YMCA of Singapore, Myanmar YMCA, New Zealand YMCA, YMCA of Singapore, Tainan YMCA, Taipei YMCA* for generously responding to the Special Appeal to support the flood relief work of the Bombay YMCA in the slums of Ghatkopar and Navi Mumbai following the unprecedented floods on 26 July.

## 11. Reminders..... reminders..... reminders..... reminders..... reminders.....

### ▽ Regional Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Response Workshop, 1-6 October 2005, YMCA International Centre Colombo, Sri Lanka

Case studies and interactive sessions will be used for sharing of experiences and knowledge on emergency relief handling, disaster management, post-disaster rebuilding efforts and preparedness/mitigation strategies adopted by various national movements in disaster-affected areas. **Deadline for Registration: 16 September.**

### ▽ Survey on Migrant Workers Issues

We encourage all National Movements to return the completed preliminary survey forms to the APAY Secretariat (Attention: Mr. Lakshan Dias) by **15<sup>th</sup> September 2005**. The survey will help us plan appropriate responses and actions on the issues faced by migrant workers.

### ▽ Regional Conference on “Striving for Economic Justice and Social Sustainability”, 9–11 December 2005, YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong

Applications to participate (from YMCAs) in the above faith-based Conference should reach the APAY Secretariat by **10 September 2005** (for selection). The conference will be held prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on 13-18 December 2005.

*For all the above Contact National General Secretary or Visit [www.asiapacificymca.org](http://www.asiapacificymca.org)*

## 12. Concluding Thoughts

*“Today we are at a crossroads,”* declared Rev. Caesar Molebatsi, World Alliance President at the St. Thomas Cathedral in the heart of Mumbai city, remembering our heritage and recommitting to living out the *Paris Basis* and acting on the *Challenge 21* imperatives. He added: *“We are called to march on because the task is not yet finished.”* The task is not finished. The mission is not finished. It is continually renewed. In diverse Asia and Pacific, realities constantly change. New challenges emerge to test our commitment.

The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Global celebrations calling for a fresh vision and to build peace with justice touched lives in as many ways as there were celebrants present. Coming from diverse experiences and understanding of the founding principles of our unique movement and the modern day imperatives of *Challenge 21*, the YMCA *ecclesia* engaged in life together as a world-wide family. There was freedom to celebrate and the deep joy of fellowship. There were opportunities to explore the rich heritage of mission and challenges to envision how we could all make a difference to the community and the world. There were impassioned deliberations and debates on issues and concerns of peace and justice in various contexts. These made up the sum total message we take from Mumbai, back to the YMCAs we come from.

Our Youth Forum prior to the main Global Celebrations declared in their “Postcard From Mumbai”:

*“There is nothing more critical to the survival of the YMCA for another 150 years, than the involvement and empowerment of youth at all levels of our Movement.”*

*“Today, we gather in Mumbai as young leaders of the YMCA to revisit and reaffirm the Paris Basis, and its contemporary expression Challenge 21, to gain new understanding of its meaning in the present world and commit ourselves to their value for unity and transformation towards love and peace with justice.*

*We have come together to share and envision for the future of the YMCA. Our vision is for a YMCA in which young people are at the core of our Movement. We have a calling to be pioneers in bringing about positive change and to create a youth movement that is spiritually strong and socially relevant.”*

As we move forward from Mumbai, as we make our own personal commitment to our God-given Mission, we need to stay **Christ-centred**, remain **Contextually focused**; and renew **Consistently** our Mission expressions in the community where we find our being. These would be our challenges as we **recommit to BE the YMCA where we are and to bring change** for a better world.

May God bless and keep all of us.....

**Yip Kok Choong**  
General Secretary

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*With Executive Secretaries Shella Quezada-Zagada and Lakshan Dias*

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