



HEADLINES

Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs No. 48 / December 2005

Update on South Asia Quake in Pakistan

We are awaiting the response/rehabilitation work plan from the Lahore YMCA that has undertaken some relief work during the days following the Quake. An advance contribution has been sent as solidarity support. YMCA Partners from the region have pledged support for mid-term rehabilitation programmes that may be undertaken.

Mr. Kazuki Yamane, a colleague from the National Council of Japan, will be visiting Lahore YMCA on behalf of his National Council and the Area Alliance from 11-17 December. He will follow up on the Afghan Refugees (children) Programme supported by local YMCAs in Japan through the National Council of Japan, and hopes to discuss the earthquake response programme plan with the Lahore YMCA on our behalf.

1. REMINDER: Executive Committee and Related Meetings 2006

Please note the dates for our Executive Committee and Related Meetings, 2006 to be held at the International House, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong:

15 March *	Special Session on Emerging YMCAs (Cambodia, East Timor, Mongolia)	16:30 – 18:30
16 – 18 March	Executive Committee Meeting Standing Committees Meetings	09:00 – 18:00
19 March	National General Secretaries' Meeting	09:00 – 17:00

Please note the change of focus of the Special Session on 15 March. The Session is planned to share development of these emerging YMCAs and to build greater support for the efforts for their further growth. The Tsunami Response Reports will be taken up on 16 March.

A Session on Leadership Development will take place on 16 March. The Session will examine **Visionary Leadership for Mission Relevance.**

On the same day, a **Sub-Regional Review of the Implementation of the Quadrennial Programme Plan** will also be held. This has been planned for wider input and more participatory deliberation in the Standing Committees.

Further details and registration Forms will be sent to National Movements soon.

2. Announcing ~ First Asia and Pacific YMCA Youth Assembly, 2006

Young people, leaders of today and tomorrow, are able catalysts of transformation in societies. As a movement we value the participation and leadership of youth. We want to inspire, to empower and develop their potential and capacities for leadership to be actively engaged in the mission of the YMCA.

The Youth Assembly will aim to provide a platform for young people in the YMCA “to recognise their role in social transformation, study together the contemporary issues and youth concerns, and to search together for meaningful YMCA responses.” It will also bring youth leaders together “to reflect on the process of connecting regional and global perspectives to sub-regional, national and local priorities on youth participation and leadership.

This Assembly will replace the 2-day Youth Forum normally held preceding a General Assembly. This will mean that there will not be a Youth Forum preceding the 17th General Assembly in 2007.

YOUNG LEADERS, keep a date with us in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia ~ 26-31 August 2006.

3. 23rd Advanced Studies Programme ~ Leadership for Movement Strengthening

The 23rd Advanced Studies Programme concluded with a Graduation Ceremony officiated by Dr. Prawate Khid-an, General Secretary of Christian Conference of Asia. He called on participants to share in the ecumenical vision to transform communities and build a world of peace and justice.. Dr. Prawate also encouraged the YMCA to continue its Leadership Development work for mission.

Fourteen senior executive staff from Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, and Taiwan participated in the Studies. Contemporary theological perspectives, the impact of Globalisation (with special reference to economic justice), fostering civil society and the Contemporary Mission of the YMCA were the main components of their 35 days of sharing and learning together. Exposures sensitised them to listen more to the poor and marginalised, and the need to be socially relevant. The focus of most of their contextual responses were aimed at empowering marginalised peoples in their communities and strengthening youth participation in the YMCA and society.

4. Leadership for Mission

Ten YMCA volunteer leaders and professional staff and the 14 participants of the 23rd Advanced Studies Programme met on 10-14 November 2005 to examine the status of the YMCA Leadership and the crucial need for its development. Participants examined the present leadership situation in the context of the diversities and disparities in social conditions across the region. It was acknowledged that these diversities and complexities call for a YMCA leader that empowers people to transform their lives, not merely a manager who oversees charity and welfare services.

Many YMCA Movements in the region organise training and capacity building programmes for both lay members and staff. However, concerns were raised about gaps in mission understanding and orientation. There were examples of exclusive leadership core groups leading to a lack of planned leadership development and succession. Some leadership offered only tokenism for youth and women. There was still much emphasis on management and service delivery over leadership that fosters empowerment for transformation. The deliberation affirmed that YMCA leadership should be mission-oriented, transformative, prophetic and visionary, exercising mutual accountability and respect, within an environment of openness and trust.

The Review recommended that the APAY should continue to proactively consolidate training and capacity building programmes and resources in the region. It should coordinate responses and networking processes among YMCAs. It was mandated to develop this agenda of developing and advocating leadership for transformation for the region.

5. Tsunami Response ~ Selected Updates

5.1 Partners' Coordinating Groups (PCGs) To Meet for Review

The PCG for India will meet on 25-27 January 2006 and the PCG Sri Lanka meets on 1-3 February 2006. The PCG for Indonesia will be held in May 2006. Notices and Agendas have been sent to PCG members.

Site visits may be arranged prior to/or after the PCG Meetings. Emile Stricker, Executive Secretary of the World Alliance, and the respective National General Secretaries will coordinate these visits.

5.2 Tsunami Response Programme in Indonesia Moves Forward

The Medan YMCA has intensified its activities for the Community Rebuilding component of their YMCA Tsunami Response Programme. The Community Rebuilding team held comprehensive discussions with the villages in the 4 districts of Nias Island. They were told that many organisations have come and left with empty promises. The organising work included dealing with these frustrations and clarifying that the YMCA would be involved in a more planned, participatory and strategic manner.

The capacity building programme conducted in November yielded jointly refined response programme directions initially developed soon after the disaster. Livelihood activities, educational programmes/ learning exchanges or exposures and pilot or demonstration projects on livelihood rebuilding were clarified. Mutual assistance and formation of support groups were discussed. Environmental and health issues and other concerns had been brought to the table for practical implementation.

6. Ecumenical Responses ~ Economic Justice and Social Sustainability

6.1 Ecumenical Regional Conference on Economic Justice and Social Sustainability

In conjunction with the 6th Ministerial Session of the World Trade Organisation, a Regional Ecumenical Conference will be held on 9–11 December 2005 at the YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong. Organised by a consortium of regional and Hong Kong ecumenical bodies, including the APAY, the faith-based Conference is themed “*Globalising Economic Justice and Social Sustainability*”. As co-organisers, we are entrusted to organise workgroup presentations and discussions on Human Security and WTO. Representatives from the Philippines and Cambodian YMCAs and the APAY Secretariat will participate in the Conference.

6.2 Students and Youth Caucus on Globalisation and World Trade Organisation

A Students and Youth Caucus will be organised by our ecumenical partners on 15-16 December 2005 in the Hong Kong University. The theme will be “WTO Out of Education: Asserting our Right to Education and Work”. The Caucus aims to provide a space for students and youth to study, reflect on and to express their views on the impact of globalisation and WTO in the lives of the youth.

The Caucus programme includes discussions and presentations on the Asia Pacific economic, political and social aspects and situation and regional trends. Workshops will focus on thematic concerns such as women, food sovereignty, intellectual property rights, HIV/AIDS and health, social services, indigenous peoples, environment and General Agreement on Trade in Services. Actions, campaigns and alternatives will also be shared among the participants. The Caucus will commence with a Youth March on December 18.

Members of the Uni-Y of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong will participate in the caucus.

7. Focus on Gender Equity

7.1 India YMCA Holds Regional Women’s Assembly

In its efforts to empower and build stronger women leadership in the YMCA, a Regional Women’s Assembly and Forum was held from 2-4 December 2005 by the YMCA of India. The theme of this historic first-ever Regional Assembly was “Leading Change”. Several gender equity topics were discussed, including the Domestic Violence Against Women – Prevention and Protection Bill.

The Assembly was organised by the YMCA North India and hosted by the New Delhi YMCA in their recently opened YMCA Geater Noida Programme Centre, Greater Noida, 45 km. from New Delhi.

It was my privilege to inaugurate the Assembly enroute from an Interfaith Cooperation Forum Planning Workshop in Hyderabad.

7.2 For the Health of Women, For the Health of the World: NO MORE VIOLENCE

The theme for this year's "*16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence*" Campaign (November 25 to December 10, 200) is "For the Health of Women, For the Health of the World: No More Violence". It emphasises the connections between women's human rights, violence against women and women's health, and the detrimental consequences on the wellbeing of the world as a whole:

- **For the health of women:** physically, psychologically, emotionally, socially, at home, at school, at work, at worship, in their communities and in their nations.
- **For the health of the world:** its peoples, its cultures, its environments; in protecting human rights; in fostering sustainable development and creating peace.

NO MORE VIOLENCE ~ LET US IN THE YMCA ACT!

YMCAs are encouraged to bear the theme in mind as they plan for gender responsive programmes in the coming year. For more details about the 16 Days of Activism and ideas for actions please visit: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>

8. Reminder ~ Human Rights Day, 10 December

Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) is a significant event especially where Human Rights violations are rampant. The International Day for Human Rights is observed to provide strength and courage to many people and communities facing difficult situations. We commend those local and national YMCAs in our region that have been commemorating this day over the years. We encourage other movements to consider commemorating this day in the future in solidarity with affected peoples and communities.

9. Interfaith Cooperation Forum Plan for Peace Education for Children and Youth

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) of which we are a joint-coordinator with the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) held a planning workshop on Peace Education for Children and Youth from 26-30 November in Hyderabad, India. Ten representatives from the APAY, CCA, invited educators and personnel involved in peace education participated in the workshop. The workshop examined the current trends and status of peace education among children and youth. Teachers from the Aman Shanti Centre in the Sultan Shahi area, a conflict-prone part of Hyderabad, were on hand to provide grassroots experiences to enrich our deliberation and search for principles and guidelines for peace education among children and youth. The full report on the deliberation will be posted on the Website when available.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT ~ SECRETARIAT CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR

Please note that the APAY Secretariat will be closed for the Christmas Holidays in Hong Kong from 24 – 26 December. The Secretariat will be closed from 27 through 30 December and the colleagues will be on annual leave till after the Hong Kong New Year Holidays (January 1-2 2006). However, you may e-mail us if there is a need to contact us.

8. Concluding Thoughts

This has been a year when humankind has been put to the test, over and over again. In various parts of the world, natural and human disasters occurred as if they were part of our daily lives. Earthquakes, typhoons, cyclones, floods, drought, acts of terrorism, fires, mine disasters, plane crashes etc. hogged headlines for many month during the year. But as we have seen, compassion runs strong and deep among humankind. Identification and solidarity with the suffering, the weak comes naturally to peoples around the globe, our own YMCAs and their members included. However, in this culture of solidarity and giving, we among many who implement emergency relief and rehabilitation programmes will have to remain faithful and true to our mission call – to care, to serve, to transform and empower. We are people of faith. Accountability, Transparency and Governance must become our hallmark characteristics of our responses.

The principle of subsidiarity we hold so dear reminds us that mutual accountability is still key to any bilateral or multilateral relations to deliver the services we are called to. The local and the national YMCAs know best how to respond, how to engage the community in determination of needs and their own future. Let us remember the mutuality we need in accountability, transparency and governance when working alongside people in programmes we run to build a sustainable community where justice and peace prevails. The principle of subsidiarity should strengthen our solidarity and sustainability.

As we come to the end of the year, it is the special time to also time we give thanks to God for the way we have been led and guided by the Holy Spirit.

We thank you Mr. President and Officers, Executive Committee Members, Standing Committee members, and all of you for the way you have been part of the life of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, and with us the Secretariat. We thank you for your support, cooperation and collaboration in the overall thrust of the year, especially at the local and national levels.

Together we shall renew our vision for the mission of tomorrow! Transforming, building; and renewing our commitment of building strong movements and communities of love, justice and peace in the New Year!

A meaningful Christmas and blessed New Year to allmay the Love and Peace of God ccontinue to bind us together and bless us all in our mission journey in the New Year.

We thank you all for the Christmas Greetings received – as in the previous year, we will not be responding with Greeting Cards as an environmentally-friendly gesture.

Yip Kok Choong
General Secretary

With Executive Secretaries Shella Quezada-Zagada and Lakshan Dias

Visit our Website : www.asiapacificymca.org