



HEADLINES

Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs ~ No. 53 / June 2006

WITH DEEP REGRET AND SADNESS, we wish to inform that retired **Bishop Rev. Dr. Andrew Myan Han**, passed away peacefully on 31 May 2006 after a long illness. He had served as the National President of the YMCA of Myanmar and as President of the Yangon YMCA. His funeral service was held at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Yangon on 2 June 2006.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Bishop Andrew, to the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar and the YMCA of Yangon.

1. Aftermath of Indonesian Earthquake of 27 May ~ Emergency Response



From BBC News

We convey our sadness and grief for those affected by the 6.3 magnitude earthquake that occurred in Central Java at about 5.55am on 27 May. Our prayers especially go to those who have lost family, loved ones, friends or neighbours. We also pray for those who now suffer from the effects of the earthquake and all our friends and colleagues in the YMCA of Yogyakarta, Solo, Salatiga and the National Board who have responded so quickly to this situation, motivated by their commitment to the people and Mission of the YMCA.

We hope and pray that the threat of a major eruption of the volcano Gunung Merapi would not occur.

Please see www.asiapacificymca.org
Updates and Pictures from the affected area.

Response to a Special Appeal upon has been very encouraging. We will be working out a rehabilitation plan for the post emergency phase. We thank the following movements from the region and outside the region that have responded (as at 2 June) to support the Emergency Response Proposal:

Australia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand.

National Council of Canada; Local YMCAs of Canada - YMCA of Greater Toronto, YMCA of Cumberland, YMCA-YWCA of Guelph, YMCA of Peterborough, YMCA of Belleville-Quinte; YMCA of the USA.

We express our appreciation to Mr. Tomson Siddik of the Metro Jakarta YMCA who sent 1,000 cartons of drinking water and a truckload of biscuits to the local YMCA for distribution.

2. East Timor Unrest ~ Ishibashi is Secure and Safe

	<p>Time Line of the Unrest in East Timor</p> <p>Feb: More than 400 troops strike over pay and conditions</p> <p>March: Government sacks nearly 600 of 1,400-man army</p> <p>April: Rioting by sacked troops leaves five people dead</p> <p>May: Violence intensifies; government appeals for foreign assistance</p> <p><i>From BBC News</i></p>
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We thank you for praying for the safety and security of our Colleague Hideki Ishibashi, Coordinator for the Development of the YMCA in East Timor, our friends and people of East Timor. In the wake of the unrest there are still reports of intensifying violence, people fleeing their homes “in fear of rampaging gangs who have been burning houses” in Dili, East Timor.

Ishi is safe. He is now at a Convent close to the airport, after moving first from his Terra Santa office/home to a hotel. Ishi had felt secure (enough) to stay on in Dili. He is in contact with the Japanese Embassy in Dili.

Colleagues from the YMCAs of Korea, Japan and we have been in telephone contact with him since he moved out from the hotel to the Convent on 26 May.

(The best time to call Ishi on his mobile phone +670-727 2892 is late at the night or early in the morning. We have discouraged him from venturing out to get to an internet café.)

A Partners' Meeting and Visitation with the local leaders scheduled for 25-28 May was cancelled at Ishi's advice.

Do continue praying for the safety and security of our Colleague Ishibashi and the East Timorese in these anxious times and that the parties involved will end the violence and *“participate in the democratic process, respecting human rights and refraining from any intimidation.”* We also pray that with the declaration of 30-day Emergency and the arrival of support from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Portugal, the situation will return to normal soon.

3. Movement Strengthening Visit to Lahore, Pakistan

In the current year's movement strengthening plans, the YMCA in Pakistan is one of the focus movements, together with Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. In this context, Mr. Lakshan Dias Executive Secretary for Programmes and Mr. Kazuki Yamane Director International Relations of the National Council of YMCAs of Japan visited the Lahore YMCA and the 8 October Earthquake-hit areas in northern Pakistan from 21-28 May.

They explored the possibility of long-term recovery support for the Earthquake victims. They visited Manserha, Balakot, Manserha, Muzaffarabad and Battagram - sites of the most severe devastation. They met Government officers, representatives of local NGOs, INGOs -UNICEF, Oxfam, Swiss Humanitarian Aid; Church World Service and Action of Churches Together (ACT).

Almost all the buildings in the Balakot township have been destroyed. In Balakot, Manserha and Battagram and Muzaffarabad, nearly 2000 schools have been affected with about 500 schools totally destroyed. The Government had agreed to provide US\$750 aid to those living in refugee camps to rebuild their houses. However, they were told that many have yet to receive this government assistance. Water, sanitation, roads and public utilities, e.g. hospitals, community centres and transportation, are yet to be reconstructed.

Most of the NGOs there are working in specialised areas with some providing multi- services. Lakshan and Yamane met the UNICEF Education Staff in Manserha District and discussed the possibility of future cooperation in the field of education. The three days spent in the affected areas were useful for gathering information and networking.

Meetings were held with the President Mr. Andrew McMullen, several Board members and Mr. John Shaffaq, the General Secretary of the Lahore YMCA. Among other matters, key issues discussed were in relation to capacity building, the school for Afghan Refugee Children at Mazoor Park, earthquake rehabilitation plans, and YMCA Pakistan.

4. Tsunami Response – Indonesia PCG to meet in Nias

The Partners Coordinating Group for the Tsunami Response Programme in Indonesia will meet on June 26 to July 1 in Medan and Nias Island, Indonesia to review the progress and future implementation of the Comprehensive Tsunami Response Plan. The Indonesian PCG members are the World Alliance of YMCAs, YMCA of Japan, Y Care International UK and Ireland, HorYzon, the Medan YMCA, National Council of YMCAs of Indonesia, and Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs.

The PCG will listen first-hand to the field workers in the Response Programmes. It will review implementation of the major components - Community Rebuilding, Training and Development and Social Services - started in September/October last year. A field visit is also scheduled to the communities where the response programmes are being implemented.

5. Cambodian YMCA Youth Leaders Visioning the Role of Youth in Community

Poverty, democracy, education and governance were among the concerns raised by the youth of Cambodia during the recent Leadership Development Forum on 12-14 May 2006. The Forum was organised by the Cambodian YMCA and Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs in Phnom Pehn. It was attended by 30 youth from the YMCA and the Student Christian Mission (SCM), our partner organisation there. A staff person from Himeji YMCA, Japan also took part in the Forum.

Mr. Heav Veasna, Deputy Executive Director, Center for Social Development, Cambodia shared his perspectives on Cambodian realities. He affirmed the role of youth in social development, and that they had the power to change the society. He encouraged them to secure a good education in preparation to assume responsibility in developing their society.

In the Leadership for Mission and Social Transformation Workshop, the participants discussed their visions about their leadership role in the transformation of the community and present social situation. To help the weak and powerless, the participants gained inspiration from Mrs. Sar Sakada, Executive Director of the Centre of Unaccompanied Associations which serves as a refuge for poor orphans and widows. Mrs. Sakada established the centre out of her suffering and experiences during and after the years of the Pol Pot regime, and her commitment to the needy and God.

The youth also learned more about the YMCA and its Mission. Mr. Yip Kok Choong, APAY General Secretary shared the YMCA's history, mission, thrusts and contemporary responses of YMCAs in the region. He called on the YMCA in Cambodia to respond to the challenges identified by the group and to develop the Cambodian YMCA Mission in response to the needs of society.

In the final session, they drew up action plans to develop the capacity of the youth to be active players in society responding to the issues of education and poverty and empowering the youth and the people towards self-reliance. Mr. Im Thano, Chairperson, Organising Committee of the

YMCA in Cambodia, and Ms. Shella Quezada-Zagada, APAY Executive Secretary for Programmes facilitated the Forum.

6. Plans Underway for First APAY Youth Assembly 2006

Young people will gather in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia soon to explore in various practical platforms, the conceptual elements of the theme *YMCA Youth in Strengthening Our Spiritual Roots for Solidarity towards Sustainability*. Their experiences and deliberations will be shared to the 17th General Assembly. Participants will therefore have opportunities for further actions leading to the 17th General Assembly and beyond.

The Keynote Address by Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST) will address the ideas of Spirituality, Solidarity and Sustainability. Several practical sessions linked to these ideas have been planned for the Assembly. The aim is to achieve the active participation of young members to widen the scope for greater involvement of young people in the movement and society, and particularly to actively contribute to the deliberations and outcomes of the 17th General Assembly.

Participants will have the opportunity to witness and experience multicultural activities during the celebration of Malaysia's 49th National Day on 31 August. To integrate the participants into some of the work of the host YMCA, they will join in the YMCA's Youth Band Aid on 31st August 2006. This is an annual band competition in aid of a Centre for Mentally Handicapped Children run by a local NGO. Youth Assembly participants may participate in the Youth Band Aid if they so wish. Details of the event will be posted at the Youth Assembly website or you may email to jaimetan@ymcakl.com for inquiries.

We urge National Movements to provide the opportunity for youth to participate in what we promise to be an enriching, learning experience. We encourage YMCA young leaders to take this opportunity to realise greater involvement and leadership in the YMCA. The closing date for registration will be **30 June 2006**.

Details available from your Local or National YMCA, at the APAY website, and Youth Assembly website ~ www.ymcakl.com/youth_assembly.htm

7. Youth in Community Building in East Timor and Nias Island, Indonesia

YMCA Love and Affection Youth Camp ~ 20-27 August 2006, Nias, Indonesia:

This is an APAY Disaster Response Programme Tsunami Response Programme to express solidarity with those affected by the Asian tsunami. This programme is aimed at inspiring young people to engage in community building through first-hand local experiences in Nias. The Medan YMCA and the YMCA of Japan are collaborating in its implementation.

We invite National Movements to send young people to have interaction with the children and the people of Nias in rebuilding their lives and communities after the recent disasters. Details

have been circulated and posted on the web. **Please send your registration to the National Council of YMCAs Japan.**

YMCA Youth Peace Camp ~ 2-13 August 2006, Dili and Same, East Timor:

This second International Youth Peace Camp is a concrete expression of our intent to be in solidarity and involved with the East Timorese community. This camp is planned to promote youth participation towards sustainable reconciliation, peace, and rehabilitation in East Timor whose peoples have had painful historical experiences. We hope this can be realised through regional youth involvement in YMCA collaboration on community building. It will also help strengthen the emerging YMCA movement in East Timor.

It is unfortunate, but in the light of the recent unrest and 30-day Emergency recently declared, we are monitoring the situation with Ishi about the situation in Dili. **We will keep you informed of the status of the Camp.**

8. FINAL REMINDER ~ Application for 24th Advanced Studies Programme

Applications are invited from National Movements for suitably qualified professional secretaries for selection to participate in the 24th Advanced Studies Programme. It will be held from **30 October to 4 December** 2006 at the YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong.

Closing date for application is 15 July. Selection will be completed by end July and successful applicants informed by 1 August.

9. Mission in Action Programmes (MAPs) to Focus on Community Building

The Mission in Action Programmes (MAPs), the APAY's multi-lateral initiative for engagement in the Mission imperatives of *Challenge 21*, have provided support to a variety of community building and issue-based programmes in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The focus for the 2006/2007 tranche of MAPs is on community building action programmes.

The short-listed proposals will be circulated to National Movements for their consideration for support by 9 June.

10. Position of Executive Secretary ~ Vacancy 2007

Invitations are invited for the position of Executive Secretary that will become vacant in 2007. The incumbent will be part of a staff team engaged in the major focus areas of the Quadrennial Plan, but will have **specific functions in the focus areas of Youth Participation and Leadership Development, and Gender Equity.**

Suitably qualified persons, with proven experience in the specific focus areas, and interest/experience in other focus areas of the APAY, should submit their application in writing to the General Secretary, Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs by **15 August 2006**.

Any enquiry about this invitation for applications may be directed to the General Secretary, Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs in confidence.

11. World Council – Preparing for Active Participation in Setting the Global Thrust

Over 800 delegates from more than 80 Movements from around the world will be converging in Durban, South Africa for 6 days from 10-15 July to meet, fellowship, discuss, and strategise for relevant thrusts to achieve the YMCA Mission. From the Asia Pacific region we will have 149 participants including 27 young people (18% of regional delegation).

National Movements are urged to prepare the delegations about the content and processes at the World Council using the Workbook that has been circulated. Several events and programmes including the sharing of Ubuntu: YMCA stories on strengths and success; Movement Strengthening Summit; debates on Economic Globalisation and YMCA Response; Building Community in Multi-Religious and Multi-Ethnic Contexts; Gender Justice and YMCA Responses; Social Exposures; Cultural Evening; Daily Worship and Prayers form the main body of the quadrennial global event.

Similarly, Movements are encouraged to assist youth delegates in the review of the preparatory guide that includes: South African realities and culture; Knowing the World YMCA; Global Operating Plan for Strengthening the Movement; Young Leaders in the YMCA; Capacity Building; Issues, YMCA responses and their impacts, and, Action Planning process. This will be an opportunity to promote greater participation and ownership of not only the Youth Council but also the World Council.

Details at <http://www.ymca.int/index.php?id=696>.

Delegates from the region are invited to an APAY Regional Meeting during the Council – we have requested for the evening of 10 July following the Official Opening programme, Venue to be confirmed. There will be an informal discussion about the region's participation in enriching the Council. The region's nominees for election to the World Alliance Executive Committee will be introduced.

12. United Nations Designated Days and Events to Remember

The introduction of this section of brief notes on United Nations Designated Days and Events (adapted: UN Website sources) is an awareness-building feature. We invite National Movements, to commemorate and support the following UN Days in June:

International Day Of Innocent Children Victims Of Aggression, 4 June

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. The list goes on. Let us recognise that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable right of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world is home to one-third of the world's people who are more vulnerable members of society.

World Environment Day, 5 June

The World Environment Day promotes worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The 2006 theme **Deserts and Desertification** and the slogan **"Don't Desert Drylands!"** emphasize the importance of protecting dry lands, which cover more than 40% of the planet's surface. This ecosystem is home to one-third of the world's people who are more vulnerable members of society. Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world, as in being able to remake ourselves." We need to remake ourselves as compassionate human beings, to learn and to teach the value of all life, because all life, not just human life, is sacred.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, 17 June

Up to one quarter of the world's surface is covered by dry land areas. The fragile environment of these areas is under serious threat - deserts are spreading at an alarming rate, and drought increasingly prevalent. More than 135 million people are at risk of being displaced as a consequence of desertification.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is held every year on 17 June to mark the anniversary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. This year is the **International Year of Deserts and Desertification**.

World Refugee Day, 20 June

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. Yet the crisis also offers a great opportunity for we human beings to act on our sense of interdependence. This year's theme is: **Giving 19 Million Refugees Reason to Hope**.

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, 26 June

Since 1987, 26 June has been observed as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime UNODC has selected **"Drugs Are Not Child's Play"** as the theme of its 2006 international campaign, in an effort to increase public awareness about the destructive power of drugs and society's responsibility to care for the well being of children. The anti-drugs campaign urges adults to protect children.

International Day In Support Of Victims Of Torture, 26 June

The International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was first observed on 26 June 1998. This date was chosen because on 26 June 1987, the UN Convention Against Torture came into force - and on 26 June 1948 the United Nations Charter was signed. 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.

13. Upcoming Events ~ June to August

Jun 26 – Jul 1	Indonesia Tsunami Response Partners' Coordinating Group	Medan, Sumatra & Gunung Sitoli, Nias Island
Jul 7 – 10	YMCA World Youth Council	Durban, South Africa
Jul 10 – 15	YMCA World Council	Durban, South Africa
Aug 2 – 14	East Timor Peace Camp *	Dili & Same, East Timor
Aug 20 – 27	Youth Love & Affection Work Camp	Nias Island, Indonesia
Aug 26 – Sept 1	1 st APAY Youth Assembly	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

** Final decision will be made based on the security situation.*

14. Concluding Remarks ~ Restoring Hope

Our colleague Lakshan was in Pakistan with Kazuki Yamane of the YMCA of Japan on a Movement Strengthening visit. They were also to explore rehabilitation programmes related to the South Asia Quake of 8 October that hit northern Pakistan and North-eastern India. Our colleague Ishibashi was in the midst of unrest in Dili, East Timor. Contact with Ishi was difficult. But thank God, we knew he was safe.

In Hong Kong, even as we were preparing this issue of Headlines, little did we suspect anything like the Central Java Earthquake of 27 May would suddenly shake us all. The earthquake of magnitude of 6.3 on the Richter Scale rudely and painfully aroused the people in the areas around Yogyakarta at about 5.55am. We soon learnt of the devastation in the Yogyakarta area, especially in Bantul. The media brought to us once again scenes of destruction, death, pain, tears and suffering reminiscent of the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004. We were concerned.

We contacted Rietsy Dandle, the Indonesian YMCA National General Secretary in Jakarta. We expressed our sadness and solidarity with them. Judith Lim, former Indonesian YMCA National General Secretary, now resident with her family in Yogyakarta, provided us with first-hand news of the ground situation. The YMCA of Yogyakarta networked with the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) and other ecumenical groups in response to the emergency. The YMCAs of Solo and Salatiga also responded. I was in contact with the Secretary General of the World Alliance on the situation and our response.

Even as I was contacting our movements across the region, I was remembering how YMCAs from far and wide moved by a deep sense of commitment to our Mission and compassion, had responded in solidarity with the affected. It also brought to mind a most recent experience that Shella and I, together with 30 Cambodian Youth Leaders, had just 45 minutes outside of Phnom Penh city. We were visiting a centre for poor orphans and widows. The centre was started by Mrs. Sar Sakada, herself now a widow with two teenage children. They live in the centre. Mrs. Sakada recalled how she and others had suffered during and after the Pol Pot Regime.

There were orphans, many of them in Phnom Penh and other regions of Cambodia. Then a Buddhist, but now a Christian, she decided to reach out to provide shelter and succour for these orphans. She sold her house and her land. She started the centre that now after 10 years, houses 104 poor orphans. Poor widows came. They became “house-mothers”. Churches started supporting her work. The centre now also houses a church. Tears roll down her cheeks as Mrs. Sarkada recalls her suffering before she found peace again doing what she has dedicated her life to now. She shares emotively about her mission and vision of **restoring hope** to the orphans and widows as they worked together at **rebuilding their lives**.

Again, as Rev. Samuel Stephens, our President and I saw in Myitkyina, Myanmar, the power of the belief and hope of ONE PERSON – **rebuilding lives and restoring hope** for the less fortunate of God’s children.

This is our inspiration, our hope, vision, mission.....
To comfort the comforted, the suffering,
To care for the uncared,
To love the unloved,
To bring wholeness to the broken,
To restore hope to the “hope-less”, and
To bring God’s love and our care to all.

May the Lord bless us and keep us all.....as we journey together in mission.

Yip Kok Choong
General Secretary

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

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