



HEADLINES

Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs ~ No. 54 / July 2006

THAT PEACE MAY PREVAIL

In the past few weeks we have seen reports of unrest and renewed violence in the area. We have also seen hope for democracy and peace as another protracted conflict situation ended.

IN NEPAL, after more than 12 years of protracted conflict between the government and the Maoists, a ceasefire has been signed. Nepal's new parliament with all major political parties participating drafted a new secular constitution. Speaking in Kathmandu, on 4 July, Senior Minister Pradip Gyawali said, "We are busy holding informal talks with the Maoists. It develops the situation for the formal round of dialogue." (nepalnews.com pb July 05 06) The people of Nepal are optimistic and anticipating a sustainable and long lasting peace.

IN EAST TIMOR, during the last week of May and up to a week ago, the situation in Dili was one of great challenge for the country. The unrest and protests were attributed to tensions between regional groups following the sacking of 600 from the military of 1400. International assistance had to be sought to control the situation. The removal of the Defence Minister and the resignation of the Prime Minister have given rise to hopes for calm, and as an interim Prime Minister and Cabinet work to heal the wounds of the unrest among the population.

IN SRI LANKA, the ceasefire agreement that the Government of Sri Lanka and Liberation Tigers for Tamil Elam (LTTE) appears to be in danger of collapsing. There has been an increase in violence and clashes between the government forces and the LTTE, particularly in the east. The civilian deaths are unfortunate. The peace talks have come to a standstill. "The YMCA of Sri Lanka believes that the Ceasefire Agreement is the only available option at this time of hour that could create the process towards peace." (www.srilankaymca.org) The government has called for a return to the discussion table. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has "called upon the LTTE to come to negotiations, to sit and discuss as human beings to flesh out a peace deal that will ensure a lasting solution to the ethnic issue." (Daily News, Sri Lanka, 05.06.06)

IN SOLIDARITY with the YMCAs of Nepal, East Timor and Sri Lanka, let us continue to pray for peace and security for the people and the nations and that freedom and democracy will prevail.

1. Solidarity Visit to Villages Affected by the Central Java Earthquake

The General Secretary paid a visit to 4 affected villages in the quake area where the Yogyakarta, Solo and Salatiga YMCAs together with Ecumenical Solidarity Coalition have been actively providing emergency relief and support to the communities on 17 June, after a meeting with the National Board on 16 June.

(Report of Visit sent to all National Movements on 22 June. Also available on the APAY Website, with pictures taken in these villages.)



Dickson (in white T) and Kristanto (with sunglasses), Volunteers of YMCA Yogyakarta in discussion with villagers in Geneng, Sanggarahan District.

2. PCG Appraises Social Transformation ~ Core of Indonesia Tsunami Response in Nias

The Partners Coordinating Group for the YMCA Tsunami Response Programme (YTRP) in Indonesia met on 26 June to 1 July in Medan and Nias, Indonesia to review the work thus far, to plan and develop strategies for future responses. Representatives from the Medan YMCA, the National Council of YMCAs of Indonesia, YMCA Japan, Y Care International, World Alliance of YMCAs, and the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs participated in the Meeting.

(A full report will be made available to the PCG members and other related or interested persons upon request to the Secretariat.)



Kazuki Yamane (left) Sui (programme organizer) Yuri (local volunteer), Emile (WA) in discussion in Samaesi, Mandrehe District.

The implementing YMCA, the Medan YMCA's YTRP Team reported on the implementation of the three YTRP components: Community Rebuilding, Training and Development and Social Services, serving 18,806 people in the process. In the first 12 months of the implementation, the team had initially focused on much-needed psycho-social services including the trauma healing training, children's and women's programmes. It then engaged in community organizing and capacity building among farmers, fishers, traders, teachers and youth, to equip them with the necessary skills in facilitating the community's transformation. This has been a long and challenging process. Youth and adult groups have been formed in 14 villages, enabled to respond to their own community's needs.

In its second year of implementation, the YMCA will continue to focus on the three components. The capacities of volunteers and organizers will be further developed and strengthened, to empower them to become active in improving their quality of life and the society's. Farmers, fishers, traders, women, elderly and youth will be equipped through capacity building towards agricultural productivity, marketing, and cooperative development. Seed capital would be provided to cooperative groups, matching the group's savings. Development of educational skills will continue. Teachers will be supported to upgrade their skills as well as provide non-formal education to children. The YMCA will also strengthen its network with groups to provide legal support to those in need.

The PCG visited several groups affected by tsunami and earthquake in Nias and learnt first-hand of their participation in the community groups organized by the YMCA. Some of them expressed their appreciation for the process as they were empowered to develop themselves. They also voiced out their need for support towards building their capacities to develop their communities.

3. Integrated Leadership Development Programme Curriculum Planning

Six invited volunteer and professional leaders from the sub-regions engaged and experienced in training and human resource development further met on 9-12 June 2006 in Hong Kong. Their task was to develop the framework for the Integrated Leadership Development Plan together with the APAY Executive Staff Team.

The group defined the integrated curriculum contents and developmental courses for both the professional and volunteer YMCA members in a move to develop visionary leadership for movement strengthening and social transformation. It was recommended that professional staff would go through four stages of leadership development studies from Induction/Orientation, Basic Course to Advanced Studies, and Post-Advanced Studies. These would be implemented at the local/national to sub-regional and regional levels.

To strengthen volunteer leadership, opportunities will be created to deepen their understanding of the mission, context and contemporary social concerns. It was proposed that volunteer leaders would also go through an appropriate Induction/Orientation process and Basic Studies (local/national level). Advanced-level seminars would be at sub-regional or regional level.

A Leadership Development Policy framework was also proposed. The role of APAY as repository, depository, and disseminator of information and resources related to leadership development was re-emphasized. The importance of developing youth and women leadership in the Movement was also reiterated.

We hope to “test-run” some pilot programmes prior to the launch of the ILDP in the next Quadrennium.

4. First APAY Youth Assembly 2006 ~ Spirituality, Solidarity, Towards Sustainability

Young people will gather in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 26 August to 1 September, to explore the conceptual elements of the theme *YMCA Youth in Strengthening Our Spiritual Roots for Solidarity towards Sustainability* with **Dr. Chandra Muzaffar**, President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST).

Interactive and practical sessions have been planned to bring these concepts to life for young members. The aim is to achieve wider active participation and greater involvement of young people in the movement and society. The Youth Assembly will provide a platform for YMCA youth to discuss their role in the YMCA and society, in practical and contextually meaningful ways, and to prepare to participate actively the 17th General Assembly.

Mr. Gary Lim, an active local environmentalist will lead practical sessions on sustainability and facilitate the building of the sustainability pyramid with the participants. SUHAKAM, the Malaysian Human Rights Commission, will support us in the rights-based approaches to peace-building sessions. There will also be panellists from different faiths to explore peace-building efforts in a pluralistic society.

To address the practical issues of our YMCA Heritage and Solidarity with the community, the participants will share their country situation and sub-regional concerns to look at issues that could be responded to by YMCAs within the region. Youth leaders will also share actual programmes that are mission-driven and socially relevant at the Youth Village. This will also be an opportunity to strengthen their international solidarity so that they could respond to contemporary issues and support efforts in building a sustainable future collectively.

Participants will have the opportunity to witness and experience multicultural activities during the celebration of Malaysia’s 49th National Day on 31 August. Participants may participate in the KL YMCA’s Youth Band competition in the afternoon, or simply celebrate with local youth. Proceeds from the band competition are in aid of a Centre for Mentally Handicapped Children run by a local NGO. Details at the Youth Assembly website, or you may email to jaimetan@ymcakl.com to participate.

We thank the Movements that have already registered their youth participants or indicated their number of participants so far: Australia (1), *Bangladesh* (6), Cambodia (4), *East Timor* (4), Hong Kong (12), Korea (16), India (14), Indonesia (2), Japan (13), *Malaysia* (20), Myanmar (5), *Singapore* (10), Sri Lanka (2), *Philippines* (4), and Vietnam (2). We will also welcome 14

Advanced Youth Leaders in training from Ontario, Canada who will participate in the Assembly. *[Movements/figures in italics are, to be confirmed.]*

National Movements that have yet to select youth to participate are urged to do so by 25 July.

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

5. Youth in Community Building ~ Nias Island, Indonesia

The YMCA Love and Affection Youth Camp ~ 20-27 August 2006, Nias, Indonesia is an APAY Disaster Response Programme Tsunami Response Programme to express solidarity with those affected by the Asian tsunami. This programme will be conducted in Sirombu, the area most affected by the tsunami on Nias Island. Twenty selected young leaders from Japan, Hong Kong and Indonesia will engage in community building with Niasan children. The Medan YMCA and the YMCA of Japan are collaborating in its implementation.

YMCA Youth Peace Camp, East Timor, 2006 ~ CANCELLED

It is unfortunate that in the light of the recent unrest and security situation, we have decided to cancel the Peace Camp scheduled for 2-13 August 2006. We express our regrets for the cancellation.

6. IMPORTANT REMINDERS ~ TRAINING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Application for 24th Advanced Studies Programme from 30 October to 4 December 2006 at the YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong **WILL CLOSE ON 15 July 2006**. **Selection will be completed by end July and successful applicants informed by 1 August.**

Mission in Action Programmes (MAPs) focussing on Community Building: Ten short-listed proposals have been circulated to National Movements for their consideration and support *YMCA Australia* has indicated that it will extend its 2-year support of the Entrepreneurial Training Scheme (Hope Vocational Centre) of the Vietnam YMCA for another year. The *YMCAs of Korea and Japan* are in their second-year support of the East Timor YMCA Development Programme, besides some other on-going programmes in other countries. *Metropolitan YMCA, Singapore* has expressed interest in part-support of the MAPs in Myitkyina, Myanmar and Cambodia.

We encourage National Movements to support these socially relevant action programmes of YMCAs that need the multi-lateral support of partners in the region. Please return the MAP Response Form indicating the support, in part or in total, for the Programme(s) to the APAY Secretariat **by 15 JULY.**

7. REMINDER ~ Position of Executive Secretary, Vacancy 2007

Applications 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 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.

8. World Council – Youth Focus and AP Nominees for World Executive Committee

About 780 delegates from more than 80 Movements from around the world will be in Durban, South Africa from 10-15 July to meet, have 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).

Youth Council Focus

The Youth Council of the World Alliance prior to the World Council will bring together over 200 participants including 27 youth from the Asia and Pacific from 7-11 July. The Youth Council will focus on Transformational Leadership, Building Community, Gender Justice and developing regional strategies for action. With this space to deliberate and express their views on these key topics, youth leaders will be able to actively participate in the World Council.

Asia Pacific Nominees for World Executive Committee

The following are nominees for election to the World Executive Committee from our region:

Deputy President:	Rev. Samuel D. STEPHENS, India
Executive Committee Members:	Mr. John Joseph ALEXANDER, India
	Mr. Marcel GOMES, Bangladesh
	Ms. Helen McEWAN, New Zealand (Woman)
	Ms. Cristina Maria MIRANDA, Philippines (Youth)
	Ms. Hiromi NAGAO, Japan (Woman)
	Dr. PARK Jai Chang, Korea
	Mr. Kalume PERAMUNE, Sri Lanka

*As a region, we can have **three** representatives on the Executive Committee, not including the Officers. We will another member under the category of “Youth”. There is the possibility of another because of the Gender balance requirement as per the rules of the Election Committee.*

APAY REGIONAL MEETING

Date/Time: 10 July / IMMEDIATELY after the Official Opening

Venue to be confirmed

1. Informal discussion about the region's participation in the Council.
2. Introduction of our Nominees for election to the World Alliance Executive Committee

9. Upcoming Events ~ July to October

7 – 10 Jul	YMCA World Youth Council	Durban, South Africa
10 – 15 Jul	YMCA World Council	Durban, South Africa
20 – 27 Aug	Youth Love & Affection Work Camp	Nias Island, Indonesia
26 Aug – 1 Sept	1 st APAY Youth Assembly	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
1 – 4 Sept	17 th General Assembly Planning	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
12 – 16 Sept	ICF Peace-building in Indigenous Communities*	Jorhat, India
03 – 08 Oct	Regional Workshop on Community-based Approach to Poverty Alleviation	Manila, Philippines
15 – 19 Oct	APAY Roundtable on Membership and Mission	Singapore
15 – 21 Oct	Asia Pacific Students and Youth Week	Movements/EASY Net
19 – 20 Oct	APAY Nominations Committee for Election of Officers 2007-2011	Singapore
30 Oct – 4 Dec	24 th Advanced Studies Programme	Hong Kong

* ICF ~ Interfaith Cooperation Programme, joint programme of APAY, CCA and EED

10. Asia Pacific Students and Youth Urges Protection of the *Oikoumene*

YMCAs in the region are invited to prepare for and observe the Asia Pacific Students and Youth Week (APSYW 2006) on October 15-21, 2006 together with the EASY Net partners (CCA, IMCS, IYCS, WSC-AP, YWCA).

Youth Protecting the Oikoumene (*whole inhabited world*) is the theme of this year's Ecumenical Students and Youth Week. In the present-day "throw-away" and "instant gratification" society we need to deeply reflect on our relationship with and our role as *oikonomos* [stewards] of God's creation towards sustainable development and environmental protection. This year's APSYW is aimed at nurturing youth consciousness and sense of responsibility to protect and renew our relationship with the Earth.

A resource book and poster have been produced to encourage celebration of the Week. The resource book highlights humanity's responsibility towards the environment and the significance of Sabbath and Jubilee in renewing and redeeming the Earth's resources amidst the environmental crisis.

11. Christian Conference of Asia Secretariat Moves to Chiangmai

By decision of the 12th General Assembly of the CCA in Chiangmai in April 2005, the CCA headquarters will be relocated to Chiangmai, Thailand on 1 July. The CCA Secretariat will be located at the Payap University while their new centre is under construction:

**Christian Conference of Asia
Payap University
Muang, Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand
Tel: +66-(0)53-243906, 243907 / Fax: +66-(0)53-247303
E-mail addresses are unchanged.**

12. Interfaith Cooperation Forum Moves into APAY Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), a joint programme of the APAY, CCA and EED, that has since its inception been housed at the CCA will be temporarily located at the APAY Secretariat from July till the end of the year. We welcome Max Ediger, Trisha Niemeyer and Wahyudy Karaeng to our midst.

13. ContinuingUnited Nations Designated Days and Events to Remember

This section of brief notes on United Nations Designated Days and Events (adapted: UN Website sources) is an awareness-building feature.

International Day of Cooperatives, 1 July, is observed on the first Saturday of July. On this day, in 1895, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) an umbrella group of organisations with 760 million members of cooperatives in 100 countries was formed. This year's theme, "*Peace-building through Cooperatives*", highlights the growing significance of these enterprises in promoting peace and development. It underlines that economic growth shared by many, and democracy, are important factors for peace. The cooperative model of enterprise itself is based on procedures that promote harmony within diversity. Cooperatives are democratically operated requiring open discussion and identification of the common interest. They create conditions that promote understanding, conflict resolution and peace in the largest sense.

World Population Day, 11 July was inaugurated in 1988 by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to mark July 11, 1987, when the world's population hit five billion. The Day seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues, particularly in the context of overall development plans and programmes, and the need to find solutions for these issues. This year, UNFPA focuses on the youth. UNFPA has a vision of a world fit for young people, a world that promotes and protects their rights, provides opportunities to develop their full potential, welcomes and respects their voices and views, and where they live free of poverty, discrimination and violence. In such a world, young people possess the knowledge

and skills required to make informed, voluntary and responsible life choices, including decisions about sexual and reproductive health.

International Day of the World's Indigenous People, 9 August, is a sign of growing concern for the rights and welfare of indigenous communities. UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, noted: The world's indigenous people are remarkably diverse -- as groups and as individuals. But there are strong bonds of solidarity and historical grievance. Among the traditions I find particularly powerful is the respect given to elders as carriers of wisdom, to women as carriers of language and culture, and to children as carriers of the identity that is transmitted to future generations.

The period 2005 - 2014 is being observed by the United Nations as the [Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People](#).

International Youth Day, 12 August, was declared by the General Assembly meeting on 17 December 1999. The Assembly recommended that public information activities be organized to support the Day as a way to promote better awareness of the World *Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*. This year's theme is *Tackling Poverty Together*. Suggested activities include focus on what has been done to further the World Programme of Action for Youth; forums and public discussions in support of young people - on youth issues and how they can be addressed and taking action to further encourage the empowerment and participation of youth in the processes and decisions that affect their lives.

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, 23 August, celebrates humanity's achievement in abolishing the slave trade. UNESCO and the UN General Assembly chose this date to commemorate the insurrection on the night of 22-23 August 1791 in Saint-Dominique (today Haiti and Dominican Republic), which was to play a pivotal role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and the emancipation of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. In a press release, the UN Information Centre said "*Slave trade belongs to history, but remembering it helps foster an understanding of a present marred by the racism and discrimination handed down from this tragic chapter in history as well as promoting a vision of future multiculturalism.*"

14. Concluding Remarks ~ Building Communities, Networking for Social Transformation

Solidarity support was raised for the emergency relief work of the YMCAs following the 27 May Central Java Earthquake near Yogyakarta. I made a brief visit to Jakarta to meet with the YMCA Indonesia National Board on 16 June, and representatives of the YMCAs of Yogyakarta, Solo and Salatiga, in Yogyakarta on 17 June. Yogyakarta YMCA volunteers accompanied me to four affected villages. In each there were similar scenes of destruction and devastation. The tears were gone. And, the pain and suffering was being borne with great fortitude and strong community "oneness". The traditional community spirit of "*gotong royong*" ~ the connectedness of a community, the working together, assisting each other ~ to clear debris, rubble, salvage building material, etc. and to support one another, had sustained and strengthened them.

On the 50-minute morning flight from Jakarta to Yogyakarta on 17 June, I had picked up the **Suara Karya**, an Indonesian newspaper to read. An article titled “*Soccer and our Social Capital*” by Harun Ni’am caught my attention. Harun had quoted from the book by Robert Putnam of Harvard University, “*Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy*” (1993) regarding social capital, that it is “*the features of social organisation that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit that are embodied in networks and civil engagement*”. Social Capital is necessary to achieve objectives that may otherwise not materialise as long as people go it alone without working together in cooperation. There must be “*symbiotic mutualism that is coordinated*”.

The initial local YMCA emergency response to the Central Java earthquake was organised along these concepts ~ “*coordination and cooperationin networks and civil engagement*”. The local YMCAs there were playing important roles in this coordinated effort.

In our other post-disaster engagement in Indonesia, colleague Shella and I were in Medan and Nias Island for the Partners’ Coordinating Group (PCG) Meeting for the YMCA Tsunami Response Programme (YTRP), from 26 June to 1 July. We listened to the YTRP Coordinators and Field Organisers and Volunteers, and three communities where the YTRP is being carried out. We heard about the processes to rebuild community through painstaking group formation and strengthening in environments that were different from their own. But sensitivity, constant interaction and accompaniment have resulted in groups motivated to build a “*Nias Baru*” (New Nias). A community network is developing – connecting people and communities in West Nias, the most tsunami-affected area, and in South Nias. Connected for fostering sustainability, for building a new future. And, youth are taking a most active role in this push towards social transformation and a new future.

However, we all have to be cautious. This connection, this network of people and communities, in Nias and in the Yogyakarta quake area must not be fragmented by petty jealousies, by vested interests of individuals, groups or communities. Any fragmentation will limit the capacity and power to bring about the social transformation that the Nias YTRP and Yogyakarta quake recovery efforts seek to bring about. And, transformational change is very much needed at this time of rebuilding lives and communities in Nias and also in the Yogyakarta earthquake area.

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**

Visit our Website: www.asiapacificymca.org

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