



# HEADLINES

Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs ~ No. 60/January 2007

## UPDATE: Philippines YMCA Relief and Rehabilitation in Santo Domingo, Albay

### Impact of Typhoon Utor in the Bicol region on Thursday, 30 November 2006:

- Devastated by mud and volcanic ash flows: some 1,500 villages
  - Directly affected: 14,871 residents
  - Confirmed dead or missing by Red Cross: 1,080
  - Affected: National Disaster Coordinating Centre declared, about 1.14 million people
  - Power, communications and water supply remain out of service across the region
- (summarised, from ABS-CBN interactive)

A National YMCA Rehabilitation Programme Team led by Elsie Borreo, the Atg. National General Secretary of the YMCA of the Philippines, and consisting of staff from Federation Office, YMCAs of Manila, Quezon Province and Metro Naga, visited the disaster area on 6-8 January 2007 and met with leaders of the local Albay YMCA. Initial relief goods including water containers, cooking pots, rice, coffee, sugar, canned goods, noodles and used clothings were delivered to YMCA of Albay and local agency partner, the Bicol Center for Community Development (BCCD), some contributed by the YMCAs. The staff team, YMCA of Albay and representatives from the BCCD, and some local YMCA Board Members, discussed the YMCA relief and rehabilitation work to be carried out with 100 selected families in the area. A second visit was made on 15-17 January.

This was also seen as an opportunity to rebuild capacity and strengthen the local YMCAs in the Bicol area. They will be the lead organization and coordinate the project implementation, thus regaining a positive image for the YMCA and creating impact in the community.

Phase 1 – Intervention: Relief Distribution for 100 families	P 36,000
Phase II – Shelter Rehabilitation & Community Rebuilding for 100 Families	1,194,000
<b>Total Phase I + II</b>	<b>1,230,000</b>
(1 US\$=P48)	<b>US\$25,625</b>

On behalf of the YMCA of the Philippines and the Community of Sto. Domingo, Albay, we thank the YMCAs of Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Vietnam; World Service ~ YMCA of Germany; World Service ~ YMCA of the USA; Y-CARE International, for their timely and generous response to the rehabilitation programme appeal.

**We are still in need of approx. US\$6,000 to fully implement the proposed programmes.**

## 1. Chiang Mai Proposed to be Venue for 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 2007

Following the withdrawal of the Sri Lankan YMCA as Assembly Hosts, the Officers' after deliberations had instructed the Secretariat to carry out discussions and negotiations for the new venue of the 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The Thai Alliance of YMCAs meeting on 7 January has accepted the responsibility of hosting the Assembly. Endorsement of the Thai Alliance of YMCAs as the National Hosts and the Chiang Mai YMCA, the Local Hosts is being sought from the members of the Executive Committee.

The proposed venue of the Assembly from **5-10 September 2007** will be the Empress Hotel ([www.empresshotels.com](http://www.empresshotels.com)), close to the heart of Chiang Mai city.

*Details of the General Assembly will be circulated to the Movements after endorsement of Chiang Mai as the venue via a circular vote.*

Reflecting on the theme “*Strengthening Spirituality, Solidarity and Sustainability*” in the setting of Chiang Mai’s cultural and socio-economic milieu, and experiencing their community-based initiatives will deepen the reflections and experiences of participants of the Assembly. Participatory sharing and interactions will strengthen our relationships and connectedness with each other, focus our mission on the realities in the region, and broaden our perspectives of the life of the movement and the communities. We look forward to envisioning together new expressions of God’s mission for the YMCA in our current context, developing fresh responses to being the YMCA in transforming the individual, the community and society.

## **2. Executive Committee to Focus on Moving Forward in our Mission**

We are expecting about 100 YMCA leaders, volunteers and professional staff, at this last annual Executive Committee Meeting of the Quadrennium on 8-10 March 2007 in Hong Kong. The Executive Committee and Related Committees will consider the work implemented so far. Focus will also be on the 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The President will share his thoughts on the crucial issue of ***Leadership and Governance Towards a Strong Movement and point to ways to fill existing gaps.*** (Circular: 8 December 2006)

With the shift of venue for the 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the Planning Committee will review the proposed programme and strategies. Following up the Workshop on Participatory Worship and Faith, a core Worship Team planning meeting will be held. The National General Secretaries will also meet as a group to deliberate on relevant concerns. We will also be reviewing updates on our movement strengthening work in East Timor, Cambodia and Mongolia; and other key concerns within the focus areas of Leadership Development.

***National Movements are requested to register their participants before 8 February 2007.***

## **3. Workshop Explores Ecumenical Worship**

The Participatory Worship and Faith Workshop brought together 12 resourceful YMCA leaders on 10-14 January 2007 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Together with main resource person, Mr. David Selvaraj, Executive Director of *Vishtar* in India, they explored and experimented with creative contemporary participatory liturgies reflective of the region’s diverse cultures and resources. The experiences and reflections of the participants in the daily participatory contextual reading of the Scriptures and reflections in the context of the Asia Pacific region were important bases for developing meaningful ecumenical worship experiences that were carried out during the workshop.

Another resource person, Ms. Cora Tabing-Reyes, Executive Secretary at the Christian Conference of Asia, shared her experiences in doing ecumenical worship within the region. Mr. Song Jin Ho, Senior Executive Director of National Council of YMCAs of Korea also experiences in worshipping ecumenically, particularly celebrating the richness of our cultures through the use of music, symbols and creative movements and actions.

#### 4. Tsunami Response Partners' Meeting in Sri Lanka

The 3rd Sri Lanka Tsunami Response Partners' Coordinating Group (PCG) Meeting will be held from 26 January to 1 February 2007 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Participating partners are the YMCAs of Australia, Germany, Singapore, USA; Y CARE International, the World Alliance and Asia and Pacific Alliance. From 27-19 January, they will visit several YMCAs in the eastern parts of the Sri Lanka where the rehabilitation programmes are ongoing, e.g. Batticaloa, Ampara, etc. Following the visits, the PCG will meet at the YMCA International Center from 30 to 31 January 2007 to review work progress and follow-through actions. A key focus of discussions will be on strengthening of the Sri Lankan YMCAs.

#### 5. REMINDER ~ Nominations for Election as APAY Officers in 2007

National Movements are reminded that the Nominations process for the election to the positions of President, Vice Presidents (4) and Treasurer for the Quadrennium 2007-2011 will close **on 28 February 2007**. The Nominations Committee will meet on 7 March 2007 in Hong Kong to review the Nominations received.

#### 6. Networking in Solidarity with Migrant Workers

This Networking Workshop on Migrant Workers from 1-4 February 2007 is a joint initiative of the Manila Downtown YMCA and the Philippines YMCA Migrant Resource Centre. The APAY hopes that a solidarity network of YMCAs in South-east Asia and East Asia for support of migrant workers in those sub-regions can emerge from this workshop. Representatives from the YMCAs in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, and Taiwan, will address the needs and concerns of the migrant workers in the light of increasing cases of unfair treatment and abuse. It is expected that partnerships for joint action will be formed at the Workshop.

Our appreciation to the Philippines YMCA Migrant Resource Centre for their technical expertise in this networking initiative, and the Manila Downtown YMCA for hosting the workshop and providing participation support for YMCAs in the Philippines.

#### 7. Partnering Mission in Action Programmes (MAP)

The Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs' Mission in Action Programmes (MAP) was introduced in 2004 to build multilateral partnerships for national or local action programmes that will impact and bring transformation within the community. So far it has provided multilateral sharing of experiences and resources in 14 such action programmes. National Movements that have been involved include those of Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

We are inviting National Movements to submit local or national proposals for ***Mission in Action Programme (MAP)*** partnership support. Maximum support for MAP proposals will be between US\$4,000 – 5,000.

Applications may also be made for the ***Y's Men International Time of Fast (TOF)*** support for programmes on Peace-building.

***Please refer to the relevant documents that have been sent to National Movements.***

## 8. Young Professional Home-movement Based Support for the Region

We share here a fresh initiative to developing youth leadership and participation in the region. Instead of having a young professional based at the APAY Secretariat at high costs, we are initiating the APAY home-movement based Young Professional Programme that will entail the participation and collaboration of local and/or home movements. *(Please refer to HEADLINES 59, December 2006)*

We would like to invite applications from young people with the collaboration and support of Movements in the region for this fresh initiative. The APAY Secretariat and home movement of the individual participant will jointly determine his/her terms of reference of work.

Up to five (5) participants may be accommodated for this pilot programme scheduled to begin by **July 2007**. Support for allowances, office space and participation in at least one international programme should be borne by the Home Movement.

*More details are included in the Programme Circular sent to the National Movements. Applications may be submitted until 31 March 2007.*

## 9. Interfaith School of Peace ~ February to May 2007

The second Interfaith School of Peace of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum, joint programme of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the APAY financially supported by the EED, will take place in Bangalore from February to early May 2007. There will be 20 grassroots participants who are directly engaged in peace-building initiatives from the main faith traditions in this year's School.

## 10. Upcoming Events ~ January to March 2007

DATE	PROGRAMME	VENUE
Jan 10 – 14	Faith and Worship Workshop	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Jan 26 – 31	Sri Lanka PCG Tsunami Response (Meeting/Site Visit)	Colombo, Sri Lanka
Feb 01 – 04	YMCA Networking Workshop: Working with Migrant Workers	Manila Downtown YMCA, Philippines
Mar 07 AM PM	- APAY Nominations Committee - NGSs Meeting	Chinese YMCA, Hong Kong
Mar 08 – 10	- APAY Executive Committee Meeting - Standing Committee Meetings	Chinese YMCA, Hong Kong
Mar 25 – 30	India PCG Tsunami Response (Meeting/Site Visit)	Chennai, India

**Note:** *The Proposed Partners' Solidarity Visit (11-15 March) to the Ulaan Bataar YMCA, Mongolia is now proposed for 6-9 May, to tie in with their 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 8 May.*

### OUR CONDOLENCES

We extend our condolence to our colleague Lakshan Dias on the loss of his beloved mother, Swarna Dias. She passed away peacefully on the morning of 1 January 2007 at the age of 63. She had served as a secretary of the Moratuwa YWCA from 1985 to 1992. She was also actively involved in women's work in the church. Besides Lakshan, she leaves behind a daughter and a younger son.

We join Lakshan and the family in thanking God for her life and her service to God in the community. May she rest in peace and the children continue to remember her life of sacrifice and love.

## 11. Concluding Remarks ~ “He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak”

Once again, we come to the beginning of a new year. A year of new challenges, new opportunities. This is also the time of the year, from January 18 to 25, when Christians worldwide celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This is a special time each year when the global ecumenical movement commemorates a common commitment, prayer and aspiration to Christian unity.

The theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity this year is “*He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak*” (Mark 7:31-37). The theme, “for us here..... speaks of our need for healing from pain that cuts across our denominational, ethnic and religious differences.” We are broken, just as Christ’s Body was broken for all humankind. But, we are “broken because of our lack of acceptance of our differences, and sometimes due to rivalry and competition. Indeed, the theme reminds us of our calling to be the arms and feet of Christ today, working together, travelling with Christ, to wherever there is human need and suffering.” (CCA Letter)

Looking back to the year past, we see the brokenness that has befallen some of us....some of our movements.... We have seen struggles. Now, in the New Year, we see the need for healing, for rebuilding relationships, our connectedness with one another, with the community, with God’s creation.

We need the spirit of change in us, in our movements. For too long, we have been blinkered by our own agendas and interests to see the realities of our lands and her peoples.... ***when will we see?*** The spirit of transformation is around us, touching our lives, changing our lives. The poverty, the suffering, the abused, the victims of HIV and AIDS, those who are trafficked for selfish gain.....the cries of these among us ....***when will we see, hear and speak up?***

The year before us offers us opportunities – to “**see**” to “**hear**” and to “**speak**”. This is the continuing journey we have started on when we “put our hands to the plough”, to join in this great Mission Journey of Christ .....on earth. Together, with the spirit of change, let us *strengthen Spirituality, and in Solidarity with people around us, build Sustainability in our lives, our movements, our community and our society.*

The Lord bless us and keep us all, as our ears are opened, our eyes opened and our mouths opened.....to respond.....

**Yip Kok Choong**  
*General Secretary*

**Sheila Quezada-Zagada, Lakshan Dias**  
*Executive Secretaries*