



HEADLINES

Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs ~ No. 62/March~April 2007

URGENT REMINDER ~ Nominations for Election as APAY Treasurer 2007-2010

When the Nomination Committee for Election of Officers of the APAY met on 7 March 2007, no nominations had been received for the position of Treasurer. The Executive Committee has endorsed the Nominations Committee's recommendation to extend the Nomination Process for the post of Treasurer till 30 April 2007.

For details, please refer to National YMCA Offices.

1. Executive Committee Focus on Leadership and Governance ~ Highlights

About a hundred lay and professional leaders met for the last Executive Committee Meeting of the Quadrennium 2004-2007, on 8-10 March 2007 in Hong Kong.

Rev. Samuel D. Stephens, the President shared thoughts on *Leadership and Governance Towards a Strong Movement* a key concern for YMCAs. He pointed to ways of filling existing gaps in our *Leadership and Governance*, to strengthen our constituent movements and thus the APAY. He reminded the leaders of the importance of clarity of Vision and Mission, and a clear road map to develop mission-driven members, socially intelligent leaders and organizational strength and stability.

He asked: "*Who are the implementers of the mandate given in our General Assemblies? Who are the ones that will execute the decisions we make at our Executive Meetings?*" He expressed that "One of the flaws in our thinking, as far as my observation goes, is that we have created the corporate mind-set that a few paid professional personnel will effectively execute these decisions. This faulty thinking is not just one sided. The professionals on the other hand, have also carried this same framework of mind. Their success and failure is measured by their personal performance and the success of the programmes. It may be true of the corporate world. But I don't believe it is for a movement of people, and particularly the YMCA. The success of the professional leadership lies in how successfully they have enabled, empowered and equipped 'everybody' to carry out the mission and the mandate."

"We as YMCA leaders and stakeholders – everyone, are implementers. *What must I do? What can I do? What will I do?* These are the critical questions that must be on everyone's

mind as we move forward. Each one of us must take responsibility. *Whose job is it?* He reminded us of our tasks ~ *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)*

Leadership for Mission was the focus of daily devotions with reflections from Ms. Cristina Miranda, Chair of the Youth Participation Committee, Dr. Rose Wu, a Hong Kong feminist theologian, and our President Rev. Stephens. In her reflection, Dr. Rose Wu drew attention to the *“discipleship of equals”*. She shared her thoughts on two major models of power: power over others and power with others. She encouraged the YMCA to exercise power with others rooted in a relationship where authority is communal and shared. This power respects the difference and diversity of each member, and seeks justice for all in the community, especially those who feel left out, silenced and abused.

In his **General Secretary’s Report**, Mr. Yip Kok Choong, APAY General Secretary shared key aspects of the Alliance’s work, in 2006. He drew attention to our increased solidarity and oneness as a family as engaged in community building and movement strengthening. He also called on members *“to see our own and the community’s cluttered life, to see with the eyes of Christ, to empty ourselves through our own spirituality to be transformed. To be a new vessel, to be a light for Christ in the world today.”* He encouraged everyone to count our blessings and to catch the vision of hope in doing the Mission.

The main programme contents of **Programme Plan 2007** endorsed by the Executive are:

- 17th General Assembly, with Youth and Gender Equity Caucuses (5-10 Sept)
- Second Leaders’ Quadrennial Roundtable (6-9 Dec)
- Micro-financing for Sustainable Development (12-17 July)
- Solidarity Networking for Migrant Workers’ Issues (1-4 February)
- Emerging Movements’ Development and Solidarity Visits (To be determined)
- Youth/Gender Exchanges/Home-YMCA-Based Young Professional (On-going)
- 25th Advanced Studies Programme (30 Oct-4 Dec)
- 25th Anniversary Celebration Advanced Studies Programme (3-5 Dec)
- EASYNet National Gatherings (Ongoing) and Youth Week Celebration (Oct)
- Mission in Action Programmes (July 2007-June 2008)
- Interfaith Cooperation Forum’s Programmes (To be determined)

World Alliance Executive Secretary, Ms. Jenny Aris, shared some key outcomes on vulnerable children and youth, global citizenship and movement strengthening from the last World Council, Durban, South Africa in July 2006. She also shared the proposed strategic priority of strengthening the movement with the world movement acting on a collective basis in responding to the issues of young people, and access to additional resources.

2. Appreciation, Farewell, Welcome

We bid farewell to our Executive Secretary Shella Quezada-Zagada and family (husband Manny, sons Stephen and Matthew) and wish them God’s blessings as she completes her 5-year term of service with the APAY. An active leader in the Philippines and at the APAY, Shella joined the APAY staff team, with specific responsibilities in Youth and Gender

concerns in 2001. She has been very committed to Youth Participation and Development, and Gender Equity, and other responsibilities. We thank her for the progress made in these focus areas and the dedication in carrying out her work.

We welcome the Cristina A. Dalope as the new Executive Secretary. A YMCA Secretary since her graduation, she has served as General Secretary of the Pangasinan YMCA, Philippines since 1995. She brings useful experiences in related work with other NGOs.

3. General Assembly ~ Gathering for Collective Reflection, Inspiration, and Learning

The General Assembly of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs is a quadrennial event. We hope to bring together more than 300 YMCA members and leaders from the YMCAs in the region for fellowship, inspiration, sharing and learning from 5-10 September 2007. The Theme is “*Strengthening Spirituality, Solidarity, Sustainability*”. It opens up new vistas, challenges and opportunities of our mission expression, of transformation for a new tomorrow, a new world. Together we will examine and reflect on how we, as the YMCA, have responded to issues and concerns that touch not only our lives, but also the lives of the whole community, and indeed, the whole world. The theme will provide the space for studies, sharing and experiences in:

- ❑ *Spirituality* touching on our connectedness to God, to nature and to others, and giving us fundamental orientation and meaning in our lives ~ to be life-giving and life-affirming, rooted in Jesus Christ and the Bible.
- ❑ *Solidarity*, the act of being at one with the cause, the marginalized, the vulnerable, the discriminated against, etc. to share in their struggles for justice, peace and harmony.
- ❑ *Sustainability* of God’s whole creation, our lives, our commitment to the mission, “in every way enriched in him (Jesus Christ) in all speech and all knowledge”, and sustained by him.

Worship at the Assembly: The core members of the Assembly Worship Team led by Mr. Song Jin Ho, Korea, met on 11 March to further work on the worship framework developed at the Faith and Worship Workshop in January. The worship will bring about a collective reflection on the theme as well as our historical journey as a movement for the transformation of self and community in the midst of our realities.

Closing date for registration is 15 July 2007. Please contact your Local or National YMCAs for participation details.

4. Solidarity Visit to YMCA Mongolia

As announced during the Executive Committee Meeting, a Solidarity Visit has been planned for 7-11 May 2007 for Movements that wish to join the Partners’ Support Group (PSG) for the development of the Mongolian YMCA. The YMCA Mongolia celebrates its 6th Anniversary on 8 May. We are working on the visit with the support of the Mongolian and Korean YMCAs. *Kindly contact the APAY General Secretary at yip@asiapacificymca.org for details.*

5. Young Peace Builders E - Forum

Interested in Building a Culture of Peace? A Young Peace Builders E-Forum to further share and deliberate on peace through sharing of stories and experiences, will begin in June 2007. It will link participants of the Young Peace-builders training programme in Galle, Sri Lanka, last year, with YMCA Youth on the APAY YouthNet. Youth Members will facilitate this E-forum. Language should not hinder participation, as we encourage the use of creative media such as Photo-Share, etc. Interested youth should e-mail lakshan@asiapacificymca.org or cristina@asiapacificymca.org (after 15 April) for registration to participate, if you are not already registered with APAY YouthNet.

6. Gender Equity ~ Sustained Emphasis on Gender Responsiveness

Inspired and motivated to promote a sustained emphasis on gender equity and responsiveness in the movement, participants of the Regional Capacity Building Workshop for Women held on 5-10 November 2006 in Chiang Mai will develop an awareness resource guide/manual on capacity building for gender equity. It will incorporate the workshop contents and discussions. Participants will also continue their electronic discussions in the e-Forum. Networking for sharing of information and resources will take place at the Gender Caucus on 5 September, the first day of the 17th General Assembly. The Committee on Gender Equity also plans to organize more activities and explore ways to realise the YMCA vision to be a model movement for gender equity.

7. India YMCA Tsunami Response – Focussing on Community Rebuilding

Mr. John Varughese, Chief Project Coordinator Indian YMCA Tsunami Response, reported that 604 houses have been completed, with 19 nearing completion in South, South West and South East India Regions. Work will now focus more on community building: livelihood, children in crisis, vocational training, health care, women empowerment, and construction of community centres as focal points for the community in affected areas. The long-term vision is for YMCAs to be established where YMCA had undertaken tsunami responses. Visits were made by different representatives to Madras (Children in Crisis Centre), Kanyakumari, Martandam, Koonimedukuppam, and Port Blair (Andaman islands).

Representatives of Y Care International (Chris Roles, Wumi Onadipe) the YMCA of Germany (Marianne Clauss), the Indian YMCA Tsunami Response Team including National President Mr. J.A. Alexander, and NGS Mr. T. Thomas, the APAY President and I attended the Partners' Coordination Group (PCG) Meeting. The PCG Meeting was chaired by Emile Stricker, Executive Secretary of the World Alliance on 27-28 March in Chennai.

8. Update: Philippines YMCA Rehabilitation Work in Albay

NGS Elsie Borreo reported that a follow-up visit was made on 20 and 28 February to meet with the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office. They reviewed the most affected and less-attended to families for the YMCA shelter rehabilitation support. Fifty-five families

were selected for the home-rebuilding plan in 3 *barangays (villages)*. Site visits were also conducted to verify the damage to houses of the selected families. YMCA Staff facilitated a workshop to enable the families to identify and prioritise rebuilding needs to avoid conflicts with other community members not part of the programme. Initial plans for a work camp and the possible rehabilitation of the YMCA of Albay were also discussed.

9. Partnering for Mission in Action Programmes (MAP)

The Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs’ Mission in Action Programmes (MAP) introduced in 2004 aims to build multilateral partnerships for national or local action programmes for transformation within the community.

We are again inviting Local and/or National Movements to partner YMCAs implementing *Mission in Action Programme (MAP)*. Please see Table of MAPS below:

YMCA	PROGRAMME TITLE
Cambodia YMCA	Capacity Building for Social Transformation
National Council, Philippines	Professional Leadership for Transformation and Movement Strengthening
Myitkyina YMCA, Myanmar	Rebuilding Lives of Children at Risk - Centre of Hope for Vulnerable Children
YMCA of Vietnam	Social Reintegration Through Education for Migrant Families
National Council, Philippines	Community Rebuilding and Empowerment for Sustainable Development
Bangkok YMCA, Thailand	Community Participation in HIV/AIDS Prevention and Promotion of Reproductive Health
Mogaung YMCA, Myanmar	Community Building Through Micro Finance and Savings Groups
National Council, Philippines	Youth Leadership Training for Social Transformation
Medan YMCA, Indonesia	Entrepreneurial Training for Young School Leavers

Local YMCAs wishing to be a MAP Partner, please contact your National Council Secretariat for relevant information or documents.

10. Reminder ~ Young Professional Home-movement-based Support for the Region

Youth leaders who are committed to a leadership role in the local/national YMCA are invited to participate in a fresh initiative, the APAY Home-YMCA-based Young Professional Programme. We believe the one-year programme from July 2007 to June 2008 will benefit both the home movement and APAY in developing YMCA youth leadership. Up to five (5) participants will be selected for the pilot programme to begin in **July 2007**. Support for allowances, office space (as necessary) and participation in at least one international programme should be borne by the Home Movement.

The selected youth leader (volunteer or professional) will be provided with exposure to regional YMCA youth and mission-oriented work and thrusts. Participants will gain experience as they carry out designated work with the APAY under the mentoring of a Local or National Executive Staff and an APAY Executive Staff. **National YMCA endorsed applications should reach the APAY Secretariat by 20 May.**

11. World Alliance Adopts Strategic Plan

Movement strengthening was the main agenda at the recent World Alliance Executive held in Geneva on 22-24 March. The Executive Committee approved the Global Operating Plan (GOP) II for movement strengthening on a collective basis to build the capacity of YMCAs to respond to the needs of communities. Ways were discussed to make this a reality for all movements. The Strategic Plan 2007-2010 comprises 3 components: Capacity Building; Dialogue/Advocacy on issues relevant to Young People; and, resource development and mobilization. It recommended that all Areas and national movements integrate at least 30% of young leaders in their decision-making bodies. Plans for 2007-2010 include increased advocacy efforts on children's rights and a Global Citizenship Forum.

Our Area's representatives to the World Alliance (WA) Executive Committee (EC): Rev. Samuel D. Stephens (*WA Deputy President/Chair, Christian Mission Committee*); Mr. Eraj Wijesinghe (*APAY Vice President*); EC members Ms. Helen McEwan, Ms. Cristina Miranda (*Chair, Youth Committee*), Ms. Hiromi Nagao (*Gender Sub-group Convenor*), Dr. Park Jai Chang (*Global Citizenship Sub-group Convenor*); Dr. Philip Kwok (*Chair, Resource Mobilisation Committee*); and myself (*Global Staff Team*).

12. EASYNet – Training for Grassroots Ecumenism

The EASYNet annual National Ecumenical Team Coordinators' Training was held on 5-9 February 2007 in Quezon City, Philippines. Representatives from 9 countries participated. The training covered the foundations and history of ecumenism, challenges and prospects of the ecumenical youth movement, sharing and discussion of national ecumenical issues, challenges and responses in the context of regional realities, and interfaith cooperation.

The EASY Net Core Team (representatives of member organisations) met on 9-10 February, to review past actions and decided on strategies for mobilisation of support and participation from national movements in the EASYNet's ecumenical journey for transformation of societies, and the ASYG 2008.

13. Upcoming Events, April – August 2007

DATE	PROGRAMME	VENUE
MAY 7-11	Movement Strengthening Visit to Mongolia	Ulaan Bataar
JUNE 12-18	Indonesian Tsunami PCG/Site Visits	Medan & Nias Island
JUNE (date to be fixed)	Cambodian YMCA Annual General Meeting	Phnom Penh
JULY /AUGUST	Review/Evaluation of QPP 2004-2007	Area-wide

14. Concluding Remarks ~ Building Connections, Relationships, Community

The past month and the early part of April 2007 have been busy and important in the life of the YMCA in the region. The Executive Committees of the Asia and Pacific Alliance and the World Alliance both met in March. More than just a constitutional governance requirement, they are an important part of the life of area and world movements. Through these meetings, locals and national movements touch base with the areas and the world movements, face-to-face. They take on vital importance in our thrust towards our goal of movement strengthening

~ encouraging and building up one another. Connections are built or renewed. Relationships develop or are strengthened. Our YMCA as a whole is sustained through community learning. Participants become engaged with one another in dialogue ~ sharing, reflecting, and learning. The organisational learning at these meetings paves the way for more meaningful, fresh expressions and pursuance of our common purpose.

This process is also in the sharing of lives, blessings or struggles with people and communities in times of disaster and after. At the India Tsunami Response Partners' Coordinating Group (PCG) meeting, we learnt that two long-feuding communities have stopped their feuds and come together to sustain one another through the difficult times. The YMCA was with the people, and acted as the glue to cement the re-connections, as relationships were rebuilt as one large community.

In the Executive Committee Meetings, PCGs, and seminars/conferences of YMCA leaders, like the Korean YMCA Leaders' Conference (13-14 April) that the President and I just returned from, members and staff come together, have lively exchanges and dialogue. Whether in our response to disaster situations or in our own YMCAs gatherings, we need to consciously and mindfully reach out to each other – to connect (or re-connect) and build relationships for strengthening community where love, justice and peace reign supreme. This is our calling.

May the Lord bless us and keep us as we seek to strengthen and renew our connections, relationships for rebuilding communities and lives.

Yip Kok Choong
General Secretary

Shella Q. Zagada, Lakshan Dias
Executive Secretaries

17th General Assembly of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
5-10 September 2007 ~ The Empress Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand

STRENGTHENING SPIRITUALITY, SOLIDARITY, SUSTAINABILITY

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REGISTER BY 15 JULY 2007 WITH YOUR NATIONAL COUNCIL
Registration Fee: US\$150 (50% for Spouse) + Participation Fee: US\$300

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