



# HEADLINES

Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs ~ No. 64 / June 2007

## 17<sup>th</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEWS.....SUPPLEMENTARY PAGES

### 1. Announcement: Opening for Position of Executive Secretary for Programmes

We are pleased to announce the opening for the post of an **Executive Secretary for Programmes** with particular responsibilities for *Contemporary Mission and Social Relevance*, and *Building Community and A Culture of Peace*, that will become vacant in January 2008. The incumbent Mr. Lakshan Dias is returning to his home movement to take up a senior position with the National Council in January 2008.

The position is to be filled by 1 January 2008. The appointment will be for a contract of 3 years. The closing date for applications is **15 August 2007**.

Applications from suitably qualified persons should be addressed to the General Secretary of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, at 23 Waterloo Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR, by registered post. All applications and correspondence related to this matter will be considered confidential. However, the application needs to be endorsed by the National Movement.

*[This announcement and details regarding this opening have been circulated to National Movements on 21 May 2007, and posted on the APAY Website.]*

### 2. Partners In Solidarity With Ulaan Bataar YMCA, Mongolia

The Mongolian YMCA Partners' Support Group (MY-PSG) is meeting 28-30 June at the Taipei YMCA. This follows the Solidarity Visit to the YMCA of Ulaan Bataar, Mongolia from 7-11 May, in conjunction with the celebration of its 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 8 May.

The PSG will review the 3-Year Strategic Development Plan with the leaders of the YMCA of Ulaan Bataar, and formulate plans for its further development. It will also finalise and adopt the Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Commitment for the development and strengthening of the YMCA of Ulaan Bataar.

Members of the MY-PSG are: NCY Japan; NCY Korea; Seoul YMCA, Korea; YMCA of Hong Kong; Manila Downtown YMCA, Philippines; YMCA of Taiwan and APAY.

### 3. 25<sup>th</sup> Advanced Studies Programme – Leadership for Transformation

This is the 25<sup>th</sup> Programme! Applications are invited for participation in the 25<sup>th</sup> Advanced Studies Programme from **30 October to 4 December 2007**, at the YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, Hong Kong. Detailed documents have been sent to National YMCAs on 21 May 2007 and posted on our website. **Registration Fee is US\$200 and Participation Fee is US\$1,600. Application deadline is 15 July 2007.**

### 4. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gathering of Advanced Studies Alumni

A Gathering of alumni of the ASP from 1981 – serving, retired, “resigned” (*it does not matter*) will be generously hosted by the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong from 2-4 December (2 nights lodging/board) at the “home” of the ASP, the WKS Youth Village.

Dr. Bart Shaha, Secretary General, World Alliance (*then AAY Executive Secretary who initiated the ASP with the late Rev. Lee Soo Min, then AAY General Secretary*) has consented to grace the “Celebration” and deliver a keynote. We hope to welcome all former AAY/APAY Executive Secretaries who have served as facilitators for the ASP – Prof. Elmer Ferrer, Richard Kaing, Nam Boo Won, Shella Quezada-Zagada and Alumni to this Gathering.

**Details will be released soon.... do plan to be at this Celebration, to “relive” happy memories!!**

#### YMCA of Ulaan Bataar Student Mission Conference

The Ulaan Bataar YMCA in Mongolia is holding a Youth Mission Conference from **7-10 August** for 200 College / University students at the Gajort Retreat Center, Ulaan Baatar. The US\$50 Conference Fee covers programme/other costs at the Retreat Centre. Additional nights' stay/board and other visits/tours are at participants' own cost.

YMCAs interested in sending participants are requested to contact the APAY Secretariat, attention Christina A. Dalope.

#### Inaugural Young Peace Builders E - Forum

The Inaugural Young Peace Builders E-Forum on 25-30 June will examine the topic, “*Youth Participation in Peace Building*”. Stories and experiences on peace issues from YMCA youth from the region and some from Latin America and Europe, will lead in the forum's focus on building a culture of peace right ~ where they are. Be a Peace-Builder....a change-agent!

Interested? Contact [lakshan@asiapacificymca.org](mailto:lakshan@asiapacificymca.org) or [cristina@asiapacificymca.org](mailto:cristina@asiapacificymca.org) to register with the APAY YouthNet on which the Forum will take place.

### 5. Young People Promoting Peace in Conflict, Rebuilding Lives Post-Tsunami

#### Youth Fostering Peace Amidst Conflict

National Movements are invited to send youth members to the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Timor Leste Youth Peace Camp (ITLYPC) scheduled on 31 July – August 8, 2007 in Dili, Timor Leste (East Timor). The ITLYPC is organised as part of our efforts for peace and reconciliation. In solidarity with the people of Timor Leste, the camp will engage in

learning and doing peace through work activities. “*Popoki*”, Japan YMCA’s own “peace-cat” will thrill the “Peace School for Children”. They will learn of “A Cup of Peace” the Korean YMCA’s alternative Trade for Peace. The participants together with local youth will carry out improvement works at the Terra Santa Youth and Community Training Center that symbolizes a belonging to the community. There will also be cultural exchanges and festivities and Ecumenical Worship.

This is a multi-lateral partnership programme of the YMCAs of Japan and Korea, and the Asia and Pacific Alliance. We thank the National Council of YMCAs of Japan for planning and coordinating the 2<sup>nd</sup> ITLYPC.

**Deadline of registration of international participants is extended to 20 July 2007. Registration fee for Board and Lodging in Dili is US\$280. Other travel related expenses in Denpasar, Bali + Return Airfare to Dili, East Timor + Visa Fees approx. US\$380. [Announcement/Details sent to National YMCAs on 31 May 2007.]**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Nias YMCA Love and Affection Youth Camp in Indonesia**

As we continue our efforts in rebuilding lives of tsunami-affected communities, the YMCAs of Japan and Medan will hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nias YMCA Love and Affection Youth Camp in Simeasi, Nias, Indonesia on August 13-20, 2007.

The camp will focus on activities to create a friendly and harmonious environment for the Niasan children to “grow” out of the effects of the 2004-Tsunami and 2005-Earthquake. This will be done through cultural activities, exposures, reflections and sharing of experiences. Together with the Medan YMCA youth volunteers and the YMCA Tsunami Response Programme Field organisers, the participants will facilitate the planned activities. Participants will develop a strong sense of responsibility and their potential leadership in building healthy and sustainable communities in their own countries.

National YMCAs are requested to submit their participants’ forms to the Coordinator of the Camp, the National Council of YMCAs of Japan. Registration and Participation fees of US\$430 will cover roundtrip airfare to Nias, board and lodging in Nias and Medan. Registration deadline is 20 July 2007. [Announcement/Details sent to National YMCAs on 31 May 2007.]

## **6. YTRP Progresses in Nias Island, North Sumatra, Indonesia**

A highlight of the Indonesian Tsunami PCG Meeting was a site visit to 7 villages (of 14) in West Nias. After a day of reviewing the YMCA Tsunami Response Programme (YTRP) implemented by the Medan YMCA and local leaders/volunteers in South and West Nias, the team comprising Emile Stricker (World Alliance/representing HorYzon), Kaori Fujiwara (Kumamoto/NCY Japan), Cristina Dalope (APAY Related Executive), Yip Kok Choong (APAY GS/Chairperson) and the whole YTRP Team of 18 went on a “grassroots” visit to 6 villages that lasted from 7.30am to 1.00am! (*It was unfortunate that Chris Roles,*

*Y CARE Executive Director could not join us because of last minute unforeseen circumstances that had kept him in London.)*

Plans for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the implementation of the YTRP were reviewed and clarified, including discussions of “what next, after the YTRP”? The YTRP Team will develop further plans for the transformative work started through the YTRP.

## **7. YMCAs at 100, 125 and 150....this year**

In February, we had congratulated and thanked God for the Calcutta YMCA, the first YMCA in Asia, as it launched its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

This month we congratulate the Colombo YMCA, Sri Lanka as it celebrates its 125 years history of service in the Nation’s capital. On 5-6 July, the Manila YMCA turns 100! Congratulations to them as they celebrate their life of commitment to the people and the Nation. We thank God for the work of these YMCAs, their volunteer and professional leaders and members.

### **URGENT: Philippines Typhoon Utor Shelter Rehabilitation Programme in Albay**

We are still seeking further support of US\$10,000 for the Philippine YMCA’s programme support to rebuild another 45 homes destroyed by Typhoon Utor. The plan was to support up to 100 families at approx. US\$25,000 in 3 *barangays* (villages). US\$15,000 received so far has been remitted for the emergency response carried out, and the shelter rehabilitation programme.

## **8. From the CCA ..... Eviction of Tamil Citizens from Colombo**

The National Christian Council in Sri Lanka released a statement with an update on the new dynamics in the country, especially the eviction of Tamil citizens from the Capital, Colombo on June 7, 2007.

“This inhuman act sent shock waves amongst many civil minded people. This caused panic, outrage, despair and anger. It is a serious violation of people’s fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution,” the statement said.

The statement also said “the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka expresses our sympathy to those who had to undergo such harassment. We condemn all these acts and appeal to all leaders; political, religious and civil to take all steps to stop such brutal acts of physical and mental violence and ensure that all people live in harmony based on justice and human dignity. We also call upon all peace loving citizens to use religious teachings

and engage in dialogue as we have appealed over the last twenty-five years. This cannot be postponed any further.” *[Further details are available at the CCA website.]*

*We remember the YMCAs in Sri Lanka and the people and communities they work with, especially those in the northern and the eastern provinces, at this difficult time. We urge you to pray for God’s protection and Guidance, and strength for them, their volunteer and professional leaders and members.*

**9. Upcoming Events, July – September 2007**

DATE	PROGRAMME	VENUE
<b>JUNE 28-30</b>	Meeting of Mongolian YMCA Partners’ Support Group	Taipei, Taiwan
<b>JULY /AUGUST</b>	Review/Evaluation of QPP 2004-2007	Area-wide
<b>4 September</b>	APAY Nominations Committee Meeting	Chiang Mai (Empress Hotel)
<b>4-5 September</b>	APAY Youth Caucus	Chiang Mai (YMCA)
<b>5 September</b>	APAY Gender Equity Forum	Chiang Mai (Empress Hotel)
<b>5-10 September</b>	APAY 17 <sup>th</sup> General Assembly	Chiang Mai (Empress Hotel)

**10. Concluding Remarks ~ Rebuilding Lives for the Present, Fulfilling Hopes for the Future**

The month of June, like any other month this year, has been a month with insufficient days and hours in view of the preparations for the General Assembly, the programmatic and other regular work, and “surprises” along the way! But, we are doing our best to cope.... We had the Partners’ Coordinating Group meeting in Indonesia recently. The PCGs of Sri Lanka and India had met in January and March, respectively.

The tsunami response programmes that have been initiated in these countries and followed through with our international partners have helped to fulfil peoples’ hopes as the programmes have helped to rebuild lives and communities.

At the Indonesian PCG Meeting, we saw the results of the work that had been undertaken, though not without its share of challenges. Nias Island and its population had been much neglected by the authorities even before the tsunami of December 2004, and the earthquake of March 2005. Education, health care, economic activities/development/employment are poor compared to other main islands of Indonesia. Transportation and communication have been neglected. Many villages could only be reached after hours of trekking on foot. Outside of Gunung Sitoli, the regency capital, telecommunication is bad. The influx of INGOs and instant planting of local NGOs to support their projects when they withdrew from Nias has created huge gaps in salaries among field workers. “Poaching” of “trained” workers is common. We can understand why there was so much of “leap-frogging” from one NGO to another. For the volunteers and community organisers from Medan (Sumatra) and Nias, these were real challenges as they engaged with the communities with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (even within Nias Island, especially between the West and the South). To wish someone “good morning, afternoon or evening” the common

Indonesian greeting would be “*Selamat pagi, siang or sore*” respectively, but in Niasan dialect, there is only one greeting for any time of the day “*You-hu-boo*”; “*Terima kasih*” (thank you) is “*Saur-gela*”. The YMCA Tsunami Response Programme (YTRP) Team had to undergo their own “socialisation” process over the past two years as they organised community groups, capacity building for community leaders, youth and women, and community rebuilding and social activities around their current economic activities, mainly agriculture (rubber and cocoa), fishing and pig-farming.

It was an enriching visit to 6 such village communities in the West. We saw and heard about the processes that had been initiated. We heard the youth, women and adult groups tell us about the changes that had taken place in their lives and village communities since the YMCA/YTRP engaged them in a social transformative process, rebuilding hope for the future and life for the present.

We saw model farms, demonstration plots of herbal plants for medication, simple yet successful group cooperative trading stores selling rice, daily essentials, medication for pigs – for rebuilding economic life in the Community Rebuilding Component. We met and heard confident youth share about their cooperative efforts in trading and farming, and their ability to do these on their own and often with their own resources before further seed grants/loans were given to help them expand their activities. Women spoke of changes, of better understanding of health and nutrition, of responsibility in the process of change with a sense of pride. We saw playrooms and playgrounds where in the previous visit there were none. There must have been a 100 children packed into a small playroom (house) at one village where 280 children benefit from this new addition to their community, as Selvi a Field Organiser and a village volunteer led them in a rousing sing-a-long. At the base of all these were weekly or monthly Bible Study sessions to strengthen the community spiritually, and to see their transformation in context of the teachings of the Gospels and the Church. There is strong involvement of the village heads, the religious leaders and cultural (customs) leaders, a “revival” of the Niasan spirit of “*banua*” (*community spirit of oneness, cooperation for the good of the community*)

All these we observed and learnt through our interaction with the grassroots, the key actors in the YTRP journey, accompanying the Niasan people towards a “New Nias”. These were lessons for us in social transformation and commitment – the result of a small team of dedicated and committed local Nias youth and youth/young adults from Medan.....living in difficult conditions – without water, electricity supply, and travelling long distances rain or shine.....

*May the Lord bless and keep us all as we journey together in Mission with the Nias YTRP Team to rebuild hope, lives and communities and their “banua” spirit.....*

**Yip Kok Choong**  
*General Secretary*

**Cristina A. Dalope & Lakshan Dias**  
*Executive Secretaries*

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