



APAY eNEWS

Monthly e-Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

No. 02 ~ March 2008

Stay Connected – Share News and Information

The monthly newsletter 'Headlines' has been renamed **APAY eNEWS** to reflect the nature of the newsletter, an avenue for sharing that can serve as an inspiration and motivation for YMCAs in the region electronically.

National Movements are invited to share programme stories, news and information.
Please send us news and information by the 2nd week of every month.

1. HIGHLIGHTS ~ Successfully Concluded Executive Committee Meeting 2008

Eighty-eight representatives from our movements, and partners participated in the First Executive Committee and Related Committees' meetings successfully held on 27 to 29 March 2008 at the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong.

Dr. Park Jai Chang, President, in his Opening Address drew attention to a growing concern of the YMCA. He said:

There is a growing concern that the YMCA movements across the world in general and those of this region in particular are losing their vitality and identity in their respective daily endeavours. Responding to these fears and worries, there also is a growing consensus that we have to take some firm and relevant measure to turn this downward tendency upward and to revive heydays of this ecumenical movement in the past.

It is my understanding that such a crisis of our movement owes much to our reluctance in responding to this changing nature of our contemporary society. The working environment of our movement has been changed quite a lot ever since the movement was founded more than 160 years ago. The advent of the information society and subsequent globalisation of the world have brought a drastic change of social structure. Changing needs and demands of the society arising from such change, however, have seldom been reviewed deeply and we failed in identifying them in a more systemic manner. Naturally enough efforts have never been rendered in adjusting our working mechanism and developing new agendas meaningful and relevant to these changes."

Greetings were brought by Dr. Bart Shaha, Secretary General of the World Alliance; Ms. Boon Chin Tan, Sr. Associate Director, International Group, YMCA USA; and Ms. Necta Montes-Rocas, General Secretary, World Student Christian Federation Asia-Pacific.

The General Secretary's Annual Report recounted key events/work of the area and the national movements during the year – the 17th General Assembly, the pre-assembly Youth Caucus and the Gender Equity Forum; community building activities; peace-related youth programmes; responses to youth development and gender concerns; and other related QPP concerns. He called for a shift from 'the momentum of change' to greater 'inertia' to move our Quadrennial Thrusts forward.

The Annual Audited Statement of Accounts was also adopted, noting a net surplus of US\$25,790 bringing the accumulated surplus of the Quadrennium to a total of US\$132,446.

Dr. Bart Shaha, Secretary General of the World Alliance presented the World Alliance's Strategic Plan and the Resource Mobilisation Plan to support the Plan and Movement Strengthening thrusts, during a lively Dialogue Session.

Prof. Elmer Ferrer, University of Philippines who we commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the Quadrennial Programme Plan (QPP) 2004-2007, presented his final report to the meeting. The recommendations have been incorporated into the new QPP. The new QPP framework was presented, deliberated by the Standing Committees and adopted.

For the first time, the Youth Participation and Leadership Development, and Gender Equity Committees elected their own Chairs and Deputies from among themselves. The Youth PLD Committee unanimously elected Ms. Cristina Miranda as Chair with Dr. Pretesh Kiran as Deputy. Dr. Patcharawan Srisilapanan was elected Chair of the Gender Committee and Dr. Ann Thomas as Deputy.

The National General Secretaries met on 30 March. They decided that Mr. Kohei Yamada, NGS Japan, chair the NGSs Meeting for the year, with Mr. Bob Nicholson, NGS Australia the next, and Mr. Lee Hack Young, NGS Korea, the following year.

2. Focus on Youth Participation and Development

Regional Youth Roundtable Focuses on Globalisation and Its Impacts

This Regional Youth Roundtable focussing on *Globalisation and Global Citizenship and its Impacts on Youth in Society* will be held in Tozanso, Japan on 7 to 11 July. It is aimed at understanding the concepts of globalisation and their impacts; youth's social responsibilities as global citizens and action-responses. The participants will analyse and prioritise issues affecting them and develop a common framework for practical/relevant responses.

Further details of the programme will be sent to all National Movements soon.

1st Regional Forum for Strengthening Uni-Y Social Responsibility

The Chinese YMCA in Hong Kong is collaborating with the APAY to host a regional Uni-Y Gathering on 2-8 August 2008. One of the aims is to form a coalition to strengthen collaboration between Uni-Ys in the region. This programme envisions the development of more responsive and socially relevant leaders through study and reflection together on the issues that have been impacting them.

Singapore Y 'Youth For Causes' in UNICEF's Paper on Youth Entrepreneurship

The Citibank-YMCA Youth for Causes programme of Singapore YMCA was featured as a best practice in the UNICEF staff working paper titled, "*Adolescents and Civil Engagement: Social Entrepreneurship and Young People*". This learning series document is a summary

of the role of social entrepreneurship in the development of young people, communities and the achievement of MDGs. *Youth For Causes* aims to cultivate a culture of social responsibility and community leadership and as a catalyst in promoting responsible social entrepreneurship among youths in Singapore.

We congratulate the Singapore Y for their achievement and recognition ~ an honour to the YMCA, and for sharing the news. For more details please see (www.youthforcauses.com).

Indian YMCA Youth Action For Changing Communities

At the recently concluded National Youth Assembly of the YMCAs of India held at Jamshedpur, 114 participants deliberated on the theme “*Striving Together for Building Youth Towards Changing Communities*”. They discussed issues such as youth and present day Indian realities, Challenges of HIV/AIDS, youth as change agents. The Assembly also adopted a ten point mandate which included the need to rediscover the *thrust areas* of work of the Indian YMCA and the urgent implementation of the 1/3 representation for youths in the decision making bodies of the YMCAs at all levels of the Indian YMCA.

EASY Net ~ ASYG 2008 in Korea

The Asian Students and Youth Gathering will be on 25 to 31 August 2008 in Korea. The participants will learn, study and share together experiences and ideas on peace and peace-building in their own communities and countries. The theme will be “*Youth Across Boundaries Redefining the Culture of Peace*”

We encourage National Movements to send young people for this quadrennial ecumenical gathering.

3. MAProgramme ~ Partnership With NCY Korea-Kook Min Bank

Since 2004, the Mission in Action Programme (MAP) has strengthened multi-lateral partnerships among our YMCAs in the region. It has supported a variety of programmes focused on capacity and community building, movement strengthening, and issue-based programmes that bring transformation within the community. MAPs in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam will continue to be supported, and with new programmes in Sri Lanka.

For 2008/2009, *MAProgrammes*’ focus is on the thrusts for the Quadrennium, namely:

- Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility
- Peace and Security
- Sustainability for Life

An exciting new development is that the Korean YMCA will work through the MAP initiative to foster Global Citizenship for Sustainable Communities, in partnership with the Kook Min Bank (KB). The National Council of YMCAs of Korea will implement a Global Citizenship Project, “*YMCA-KB Friends of Asian Peace*”. In consultation with the APAY, 7 YMCA Programmes were identified in East Timor, Indonesia (Nias), Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. They are aimed at supporting work in sustainable community development and peace building. The project will engage Korean youth for learning experiences in a host programme country. They will work with youth and the community for integration and social transformation. The Programmes are in sustainable livelihood / community development, include poverty alleviation, public health, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, children and youth at risk, etc.

4. Tsunami Response Updates ~ India - Rebuilding Broken Communities

As part of the comprehensive Indian YMCA tsunami response, a long-term rehabilitation programme was the establishment of 14 community centres and community building activities. The Children in Crisis Programme is implemented at various locations in Madras, Madurai, Salem, South East Region, South West Region, Marthandam, Port Blair and Nagapattinam. Two Boys Homes have been set up, one at Marthandam and the other at Madras. They provide integrated care and support to 60 children-survivors, including livelihood training. Courses like tailoring and embroidery, bakery technology, banana fibre craft, bee keeping, computer training, etc. under the Vocational Training plan. In Health and Hygiene, regular medical camps, mother and child health, health/hygiene awareness programmes, distribution of free medicines, etc. are carried out. With the support of the YMCA USA, a drinking water purification plant has been installed in Sellur Village, Nagapattinam. Community building and Women empowerment are key focus areas of the rebuilding process. Partner YMCAs have also facilitated leadership, skill training and other empowerment activities to promote sustainable development in the respective communities. *(Source Report, Mr. John Varughese, Chief Coordinator)*

5. Congratulations ~ New YMCA Leadership in the Region

We express our warm congratulations to new National YMCA Presidents in the Area:

- Fiji YMCA Timochi Qionibavari from January 2008.
- Myanmar YMCA Dr. Tin Aung Swee from 9 March 2008.
- Taiwan YMCA Dr. Chen Ching-seng from 8 March 2008.

6. Myanmar YMCA Appoints Acting National General Secretary

Dr. Sonny Tha Nyan, Yangon YMCA General Secretary was appointed Acting Honorary National General Secretary for the next 6 months. A Search Committee has been formed to process the appointment of a new National General Secretary following the retirement of Richard Kaing as National General Secretary. We thank Richard for his services and congratulate Sonny on his appointment.

7. Philippine YMCA Holds Roundtable and Planning Workshop

On 30 January to 1 February 2008, the Philippine YMCA gathered its local/national leaders and volunteers at a roundtable and planning workshop. The roundtable was called to study together, plan and formulate a programme framework around its vision to be socially relevant, viable and sustainable YMCA. The APAY General Secretary shared the rich heritage of APAY, the contextual YMCA mission and the responses to it. The thrusts of the Quadrennial Programme Plan for 2008-2011 were also shared. Ms. Boon Chin Tan provided a backgrounder on Movement Strengthening.

8. University of Dili (UNDIL) Provides New YMCA Premises

The University in Dili, UNDIL, has generously agreed to allow the East Timor YMCA to use one of its buildings for the next 5 years for free. It will house the YMCA Office, an activity room and a computer room for students and youth. Being in the city centre, it is very accessible for youth in Dili to participate in YMCA activities.

9. Developing Peace-builders ~ Interfaith Cooperation Forum's 3rd School of Peace

School of Peace 2008

We have reached the midway point of this year's 3 month-School, the 3rd School of Peace. During the first two weeks we focused on learning to know each other and working as a community. Several sessions on gender were also held. Efforts have been made to include a gender perspective in all modules.

We looked at the "action/reflection" praxis that we use in sessions to make learning more action-oriented. To supplement this process several sessions on the 'theatre of the oppressed' were also given to help participants experience the use of body movement to explore conflicts and seek solutions.

Our first module focused on "Self, the Other and Community." We explored identity – how it is created, how it is used and how it influences our relationships with others, including gender and how our understanding of gender determines the roles we are expected to play in society.

In a week-long field trip into Dalit and Tribal communities, participants experienced how the system of caste has created terrible suffering for a large part of society. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their own communities where other serious forms of alienation and discrimination might be practiced so that they could be addressed in creative and effective ways.

Personal reflections by the participants indicated that they had experienced some very important personal transformation. This was especially evident in interfaith relations. The most effective process for learning about the faiths of others and then reflecting on one's own faith happened through the experience of living together. Informal dialogue, observing how others pray/worship, visiting places of importance to different religions, etc. was the most significant help in pushing participants to step out of their comfort zones and interact with the "other". Most participants shared in their reflections how much they had learned to respect those of other faiths, and how they had been challenged to look more critically at their own faith.

The second module on "Conflict, Violence and War" is almost completed. The emphasis in SOP is on conflict transformation and the processes for this are integrated into most of the discussions. Participants explored the meaning of conflict, violence and war and to look at examples from different countries for root causes of conflict in preparation for the final module on "Transformation". Three days were also spent looking at global economic issues and how globalisation has made it possible for some world powers to create so much conflict and suffering to others. They became more aware of the need for transformation of our societies.

The second field trip took one group to Goa to explore conflicts created by tourism, illegal mining, etc. Two other groups went to Gujarat to learn about the Hindu/Muslim conflict in 2002 that killed over 2,000 Muslims. Participants had opportunity to visit the areas of conflict and visit with the survivors. It was a powerful learning experience for everyone. It was not just an opportunity to hear about the violence, but also about how people are working to rebuild communities of trust. Some of the most powerful words of reconciliation came from those who lost family members in the violence. A 17-year old Muslim boy shared about the murder of his father by the mobs. We asked him what he now thought

about the Hindus who murdered his father. His answer was quick. *“It was not Hindus who killed my father. It was evil people. We must not say it was a Hindu or a Muslim that did violence. This is not a part of their faith. It is only evil people who do such things.”* This simple statement from a young boy left a deep impression on those of us who sat with him. If he can see the root of the conflict so clearly, then we too must learn from him.
(Notes prepared by Max Ediger, ICF Coordinator)

10. Weblinks – Stay Connected, Share and Learn Together

We have been trying to update our YMCA website and started with the list of address and contact persons of our YMCAs in the region. Several YMCAs have informed us of their latest e-mail addresses and websites. Kindly share with us any changes or new contact details of your YMCAs and we will make necessary changes.

11. Upcoming Events, April to July 2008

DATES	EVENTS	VENUE
JUNE 2-4	Global Staff Team Meeting on Resource Mobilisation	Geneva, Switzerland
JUNE 25-30	Regional Roundtable on YMCA as Global Citizens in Mission 21 st Century	Manila, Philippines
JUNE 29	Partnership in Mission: Triangular Deliberation of YMCA – YWCA – Y’s Men	Manila, Philippines
JULY 7-11	Regional Youth Roundtable ~ Globalisation and Global Citizenship: Impacts on Youth in Society	Tozanso, Japan
JULY 14-19	Partners’ Coordinating Group, Indonesia Tsunami Response Programme	Nias, Indonesia

12. Concluding Thoughts: Change, Momentum, Inertia

...from the General Secretary’s Annual Report, 2007

We recall the aftermath of the winds, the waves and waters of destruction; the quakes that shook the earth. The destruction and the debris, the rubble left behind after the floods, the cyclones, the typhoons, the mudslides, the landslides, that was the lot of so many parts of our region in the past few years. Our people, communities and YMCAs suffered. But, are recovering, rebuilding. Our spirituality and faith that God cares have strengthened us as we responded to the needs, the struggles of the people in the region.

We recount the past year’s experiences that have led to enhanced connectedness and unprecedented solidarity. They have been expressed in increased multilateral support and partnerships that have enriched individuals, communities and YMCAs. There is greater sharing of resources among the movements in our region, doing mission together, enriching the other and enriched ourselves. Networking, breaching divides, building relationships, harmonious engagements, towards a culture of peace. The engagement with grassroots concerns and communities in initiatives of rebuilding lives, livelihoods, and building peace has brought us to the ‘outside’ and helped us *make the ‘outside’, the ‘inside’ of our Mission.*

Emphasising youth and women participation and leadership, we believe we have integrated large numbers of our constituencies into the life of the movement. We have created the space and opportunities for their integration

We believe movements have become more responsive and recognised youth’s rightful place within the movement, providing support, giving opportunities for engagement. Youth, like a fresh breeze, with their freshness have shown us with enthusiastic action that justpeace is achievable through their deliberations and actions.

We believe too, that movements have become more responsive and recognised women's contributions to the growth of the YMCA movement and its *missional* thrusts. Women have strongly moved ahead in many of our movements in leadership.

Experiences across the region have shown that a sense of belonging and ownership of what the YMCA stands for can forge a convergence of minds and hearts as a region to bring the 'outside', 'inside', the transformed community of love, justice and peace, the reign of God. In reaching 'out' we achieve the transformation of self, our YMCAs, and our communities.

Our paradigm of partnership that reach, enrich and dignify lives have affirmed our commitment to the implementation of the imperatives of *Challenge 21* and the UN Millennium Development Goals, so similar to our own imperatives.

We cannot neglect to continue support to strengthen movements within our area, small or large, in Mission Clarity, Social Relevance and Institutional Viability. Resources are limited, its management and deployment need prudence, sound principles. And, there is evidence that this is happening. We cannot neglect the development of a leadership that not only is visionary and transformational, but also active, agile and inspirational.

Like a roller coaster, economies around the region and the world have rebounded, but were in 2007 going in for a downward spin. Our agility, adaptability and creativity in leadership will help us ride this downward wave till we hit the upward thrust again.

Inspiration for 'change we can believe in' and 'experience' we have to safeguard the nation's security and interests have been common themes of the current US Presidential Nomination Campaign. I believe the last year of the Quadrennium, has been an episode of inspiration for change, and inspired change in many of our movements. We have pushed to move from rhetoric and policy to practice, to engagement with God's Word, God's people, God's communities around the region. In solidarity, through partnerships, networks, and simple connections to each other, but, we are not there yet.....

Can we move from change to inertia.....with greater determination and commitment to create the *space* to encourage new paradigms. To be the *voice* for alternatives to situations of injustice and conditions that dehumanise peoples and communities, to restore dignity to all? To be the *vehicle* to engender new partnerships, actions to bring change and transform individuals, communities, and the YMCA?

The change-inertia move is there. The momentum and inertia are here..... to carry us forward towards the 'upward goal' of our calling to be the YMCA with a clear, socially relevant mission

May the Lord bless us and keep us, as we, strengthened by our spirituality, in commitment to the living faith, motivated by love, compelled by our compassion, driven by the momentum, the change-inertia, zero in as partners in sustaining life, our communities and our Earth.

Yip Kok Choong
General Secretary

Cristina Dalope **Jose Varghese**
Executive Secretaries for Programmes

7 April: World Health Day 2008: Protecting Health From Climate Change

World Health Day, on 7 April, marks the founding of the World Health Organization and is an opportunity to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health every year. In 2008, World Health Day focuses on the need to protect health from the adverse effects of climate change. The theme “protecting health from climate change” puts health at the centre of the global dialogue about climate change. WHO selected this theme in recognition of the *fact that climate change is posing ever-growing threats to global public health security*.

23 April: World Book and Copyright Day

23 April is a symbolic date for world literature as on this date Cervantes, Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega died. It is also the date of birth or death of other prominent authors such as Maurice Druon, K. Laxness, Vladimir Nabokov, Joseph Pla and Manuel Mejía Vallejo. It was a natural choice for UNESCO's General Conference to pay a world-wide tribute to books and authors on this date, encouraging everyone, and in particular young people, *to discover the pleasure of reading and gain a renewed respect for the irreplaceable contributions of those who have furthered the social and cultural progress of humanity*.

3 May: World Press Freedom Day

World Press Freedom Day proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1993, reminds us all – governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as civil society – of the crucial role a free press plays in strengthening democracies and fostering development around the world. It encourages transparency and good governance and it ensures that society enjoys the rule of true justice. *Freedom of the press is a bridge of understanding and knowledge. It is essential for the exchange of ideas between nations and cultures, which is a condition for true understanding and lasting cooperation*.

15 May: International Day of Families

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that 15 May of every year shall be observed as the International Day of Families. The theme for the International Day of Families in 2008 is **Fathers and Families: Responsibilities and Challenges**

21 May: World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

The Day provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to “live together” better. We need to promote greater *awareness of the crucial relationship between culture and development and the important role of information and communication technologies in this relationship*.

22 May: International Day for Biological Diversity

The International Day for Biological Diversity aims to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The celebration each year of the International Day for Biological Diversity is an occasion *to reflect on our responsibility to safeguard this precious heritage for future generations*. The theme for this year's observance will be **Biodiversity and Agriculture** and it seeks to highlight the importance of sustainable agriculture not only to preserve biodiversity, but also to ensure that we will be able to feed the world, maintain agricultural livelihoods, and enhance human well being into the 21st century and beyond.

29 May: International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

The UN General Assembly has designated 29 May as the annual observance of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The Day is intended *to pay tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations as well as to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace*. The date, 29 May, is significant to the United Nations. On this day in 1948, the first UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), began operations with a group of unarmed military observers in Palestine.

31 May: World No-Tobacco Day

Globally, most people start smoking before the age of 18, and almost a quarter of these individuals begin using tobacco before the age of 10. The younger children are when they first try smoking, the more likely they are to become regular tobacco users and the less likely they are to quit. It is clearly proven that exposure to direct and indirect pro-tobacco advertising, together with other marketing strategies used by the tobacco industry, leads to an increase in experimentation by young people and, in turn, to the very real risk of their becoming regular users of tobacco products. The tobacco industry spends tens of millions of dollars worldwide every year to effectively market its products in as many ways as possible. **Tobacco - free youth** is the theme for this year's campaign and its focus is *to ban all forms of direct and indirect tobacco advertising, including promotion of tobacco products and sponsorship, by the tobacco industry, of any events or activities*.