

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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March 2016

1. Interfaith Cooperation Forum Plans Programs for 2016
2. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
3. New President of Bangkok YMCA
4. Rachan Mannekarn joins as New General Secretary of Chiangmai YMCA
5. New General Secretary for Mongolia YMCA

Interfaith Cooperation Forum Plans Programs for 2016

The Annual Program Committee Meeting of Interfaith Cooperation Forum took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during 25 & 26 February 2016. This was held at Kuala Lumpur YMCA. Mr. Max Ediger, Mr. Bruce Van Voorhis, Mr. Hem Sopharak "Small", Coordinators of ICF, Mr. Bibek Shahi and Ebenezer Dharshan, SOP Alumni Members, Mr. Nam Boo Won, General Secretary and Mr. Duncan Chowdhury, Executive Secretary for Programs from Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, Dr. Rev. Pradit Takerngrangsarit, President of CCA Trust in Thailand and Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary of Christian Conference of Asia, participated at the meeting. Ms. Rachel Bergen an ICF Intern from Canada also participated at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate ICF activities of the past year and also plan the programs for the year 2016.

The Meeting of the Joint Working Group, the governing body of ICF also took on 25 February. One of the key issues dealt at the meeting was how the APAY and CCA and their constituent member organization in the Asia Pacific, could be integrated throughout the program activities of ICF. In this respect, it was decided to engage focal points from APAY and CCA in 8 countries, where APAY and CCA have member organizations and were willing to work together along with ICF National Forums. The National Forums do undertake various peace building activities at national level initiated by the SOP Alumni members of those countries. At the meeting the Working Committee of ICF was renamed as ICF Program Committee.

Interfaith Cooperation Forum is a joint program of Christian Conference of Asia and Asia & Pacific Alliance of YMCAs undertaking the peace building programs, involving youths from various religious, ethnic backgrounds, especially in the conflict zones and communal tensions. This program was initiated in the year 2003. School of Peace, (SOP) a three month training course for peace building activities is the flagship program of ICF, which is held usually on bi-annual basis. Till date a total of 115 youths have successfully participated in 7 such courses and now involved in peace building activities in their own countries, some of the SOP Alumni Members are from the YMCA.

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A Challenge for YMCA

Recently the Millennium Development Goals for 2016 – 2030 has been declared by the UN, which include 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Many of these goals may have been unmet in the earlier MDG of 2001 – 2015.

In January, I had the opportunity to represent APAY at the Asia Development Alliance's Annual Consultation 2016 in Bangkok along with 70 other people representing 16 countries. We discussed and shared ideas on SDGs, the roles of national and regional organizations and the future engagement of strategies on all levels. During many of the discussions, I thought about APAY and how we could involve our member national movements in achieving the SDGs. The 17 SDGs will challenge the YMCA to plan how they can join in transforming our world by implementing activities within our social context and the overall YMCA mission.

SDGs are geared around the following five topics:

People

We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet

We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity

We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

Peace

We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Partnership

We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

As we place an emphasis on environmental education, we were pleased to see that the SDGs included education, water management, sustainable and modern energy, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, ocean conservation, ecosystem protection and restoration and global peace promotion.

As the YMCA, we should craft a guideline around their agenda to direct our strategic planning and action plan in accordance with our mission.

At the Chiang Mai YMCA in Thailand, we pay special attention on environmental policy and being a Green Organization. Since the environment affects the life and wellbeing of the people, our activities aim to give them clean air to breathe, clean water to drink and safe food to consume. We want our lives to be in balance with our beautiful natural surroundings.

However, too often, people over consume natural resources which causes global warming, climate changes and natural disasters. This year, we're preparing for a drought which is predicted to be the worst in 20 years that will directly affect our global food security.

Think Globally, Act Locally

It's a necessity to know and understand what is happening in the world and then look for things we can do in our own communities. What is our role as YMCAs? We're one of the biggest non-governmental organizations with a long history. Our network spans across the globe with a massive membership. We realize that the youth are valuable leaders in our society and are able to bring change to our world now and in the future.

Climate change is a global issue that affects all of us. Greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide levels in our atmosphere continue to rise and heat up our planet. If the global temperature increases just two degrees Celsius, we will face disasters around the world.

Even though organizations like the United Nations have made environmental policies and agreements, their success depends on the people bringing it to practical action. Everyone must act.

Let's act as a YMCA family and do what we can to help save the world. All of our YMCA programs can promote more climate change education and we can encourage our staff and members to live an eco-friendly lifestyle.

With our commitment as YMCAs and our cooperation with governments and NGOs, we will be a strong network in Asia and the Pacific to move towards the SDGs. Together, we can transform the world to be a better place where we can live together in harmony with nature.

Patcharin Aviphan

Chiangmai YMCA , Thailand

New President of Bangkok YMCA

Mr. Danuch Yontararak has been appointed to be the President of the Bangkok YMCA with effect from January 2016. He joined the Bangkok YMCA as a Board Member in 2010. His work experiences are from many organizations such as Siam Commercial Bank, PCL as a Vice President and Managing Director for Financial and Business Development for Christian & Nielsen (Thai) PCL. At present he is the Deputy Managing Director of A.S. Association Engineering (1964) Co. Ltd. Besides these he serves the church in Bangkok and is on the board member of many other organizations as well. He is currently serving as National President of the Thai Alliance of YMCAs.

Rachan Maneekarn joins as New General Secretary of Chiangmai YMCA

Mr. Rachan Maneekarn has been appointed to be the General Secretary of the YMCA of Chiangmai with effect from February 1, 2016. Mr. Rachan obtained his Master Degree in Business Administration and has had working experiences as a Bank Manager of Bangkok Bank, Cluster Manager and Chairman of the Activity's Board and Business Plan. Besides these he also serves as a Chairman of the Advisory of the Chiangmai Banker's Club and serves the local church in Chiangmai and other foundations as well. He has been serving as the National General Secretary of the Thai Alliance of YMCAs for many years.

New General Secretary for Mongolia YMCA

We are pleased to announce that the Board of Mongolia YMCA have appointed Mr. Munkhtsog Davaadorj as the new General Secretary of Mongolia YMCA, who has joined the office from 1st March 2016.

Mr. Davaadorj had done his BA and MS from the Khuree University specializing in Information Technology. He is a committed Christian and currently serves as an elder of the Presbyterian Church, True Love, in Ulaanbaatar. He is actively involved as a volunteer in the youth activities of the church and have gained much experience in youth programs. Before joining the YMCA he served several governmental and non-governmental bodies in the field of IT.

He is married with a daughter. We welcome him to the YMCA family.