

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
May 2016

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May 11-14: GATN Mentors Meeting, Yangon, Myanmar

June 3-8: Task Force on Disaster Response & Management, Manila, Philippines

June 20-24: Regional Conference on Climate Change, Chiangmai, Thailand

July 12-16: APAY NGS Conference, Yangon, Myanmar

In response to people's sufferings caused by natural disasters
- A Call for a Worldwide Simultaneous Actions

In recent times, we are witnessing more frequent natural disasters occurring not only in our region but also worldwide – earthquakes in Japan and Ecuador, floods in Uruguay, a huge forest fires in Canada, to name a few. Are these alarming signs of our times? Apart from this fundamental question, the huge sufferings of the many people affected by the disasters are always facing us – challenging us with the question “what are you – as common humanity – willing to do to share their sufferings?”

Last Friday, APAY received a letter from Japan YMCA calling for a Worldwide Simultaneous Actions for Collecting Donations for Kumamoto YMCA whose main building had been severely damaged by the earthquake. I quote partly from the letter:

“We sincerely appreciate encouraging prayers, messages, and contributions from Asia and all around the world for Kumamoto Earthquake which occurred on April 14th and 16th. Kumamoto YMCA, though itself is hit by the quake, now makes every effort to help people in the affected areas in collaboration with many other local YMCAs in Japan, by sending staffs, experts and youth volunteers, by supporting the prolonged evacuees’ lives, by opening the facilities of YMCA Center for free, and by opening the YMCA volunteer center utilizing its campground.”

Looking at other countries, Asia and other parts of the world have suffered from massive disasters caused by earthquakes and the climate change. For instance, over the last year, a large bushfire in Australia, Nepal Earthquake, Myanmar Flood, and Ecuador Earthquake took a heavy toll of lives, and there are still many people, especially those who are in vulnerable positions, facing great difficulty.

Though YMCAs in Japan are not specialized disaster emergency rescue organizations, we recognize that YMCAs’ immediate rescue and reconstruction supports itself encourage people

in disaster affected communities. We acknowledge such reconstruction supports for the affected people, increasingly become the important mission of YMCAs.

Therefore, YMCAs in Japan call for a worldwide simultaneous action for collecting donations (on streets) on May 14th and 15th, in order to show our/our supports for YMCAs in Asia and in the world which work for people, especially for children and youth, in the disaster affected areas. In Japan, the donation campaign will be held on one month after Kumamoto Earthquake, which will carry out the messages and wishes of “We will never forget Kumamoto Earthquake.” and “Let us expand our solidarity support networks for people who are affected by other disasters in Asia and the world.”

We may wish to set up a YMCA foundation for disaster relief and for education for disaster prevention in the future, but for now, we do hope that we can cooperate and coordinate an action to support disaster affected areas of region or a country near from each YMCA.

* Date: May 14th (Sat) -15th (Sun), 2016

* Action: Calls for a Worldwide Simultaneous Action for Collecting Donations (Campaign for both domestic and foreign purposes)

* Usage: Support YMCA Activities for children in disaster affected areas

* Note: Huge impact is expected if we could act worldwide with the same message as the YMCA World Challenge succeeded by youth, with youth.”

All the national movements may not be able to organize the called action within the limited time. However, I would like to earnestly suggest that all the movements try our best to find creative but practical ways to participate, within the spirit of solidarity, in concrete actions in support of Japan YMCA’s earthquake relief efforts. I think it is time for all of us to witness towards the world that we are truly one in our mission. Let us all pray together that God will bond us together in our joys and sorrows, delightedness and sufferings. May God also guide us with wisdom and courage as we put our solidarity into concrete actions of sharing.

- by Nam Boo Won, General Secretary

NCY Malaysia 2nd Training of Youth Trainers:
A Call to Empowerment and Shepherding

↑ Participants to the 2nd NCY Malaysia Training of Youth Trainers, Gurun, Kedah, Malaysia, April 29-May 2, 2016

Thirty-four participants comprising of key lay leaders and youth from local YMCAs of Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Penang, Sibu, Kedah and Johor gathered together at the National Council of YMCAs of Malaysia’s 2nd Training of Youth Trainers held on 29 April - 2 May 2016 at Gurun, Kedah, Malaysia under the theme, ‘Empower Voices of Youth, Shepherd Leaders of Change’. The participants learned good practices, diversity of activities and challenges that each YMCA faced in the efforts of fulfilling the YMCA mission. They also reflected on the importance of

investing in youth as an opportunity for the movement to grow and continue as agents of transformation. The group committed to take a shared responsibility and strengthened support to move forward the following recommendations on youth empowerment under what they called the 5 EPs action points:

- * Empower People- To build capacity of youth and to organize Uni-Y, Youth Clubs and Youth Committee
- * Elevate Programs- To develop various youth programs that focus on value formation
- * Establish Place -To create meaningful youth spaces for utilization on youth activities
- * Engage Partnership -To engage in partnership among YMCAs at all levels, Churches, NGOs and various communities
- * Enhance Publicity- To enhance visibility of YMCAs through various forms of new media

As expressed by Mr. Michael Cheong, Working Committee Chair and YPLD Member from YMCA of Penang, “We, the youth in the YMCA, dream of a Y as a space for young people to express, be guided and mentored, to learn and grow and to take responsibility as a global citizen. Moreover, we dream of a Y that is relevant in our community, one that stands against social and environmental injustices. Most importantly, we dream of a Y that empowers the youth and the weak for community’s benefit through the Y’s safe learning ground. Indeed, the 2nd TOYT served as a platform to look into their strength and draw a common youth agenda.
– by Maria Cristina Miranda-Lastima, Executive Secretary for Programs

Global Citizenship Forum on Peace Boat

↑YMCA participants offering a prayer for peace at the

Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park

Global Citizenship Forum

In partnership with Peace Boat, the World Alliance of YMCAs organized together with the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, Japan YMCA, Korea YMCA and Y’s Men Asia Area the Global Citizenship Forum during the Peace Boat Spring Short Voyage from 31 March to 8 April 2016. Eleven participants from YMCAs of China, India, Japan, Kenya, and Sri Lanka joined the said forum and other Peace Boat on-board programs. The participants included four (4) young people and seven (7) senior YMCA members. Together with 700 Japanese Peace Boat participants, the YMCA participants sailed and visited Sasebo, Jeju Island and Hiroshima.

Peace Boat

As its name conveys, Peace Boat is a ship creating spaces jointly with the people of the world. Peace Boat is an NGO in Japan that organizes regional and global voyages in the process of building an international civil society network. The voyages are organized to create neutral spaces beyond borders, bringing people of different nationality, religion, and ethnicity together to discuss, understand and jointly take action on issues of peace, human rights and sustainable

development. The space connects, creates and nurtures a global civil society.

Program Highlights

The Global Citizenship Forum included input presentation on Global Citizenship for a Peaceful World, Human Rights and sharing about WAY and APAY program thrusts. The forum also had opportunities of sharing of personal experiences, discussion, and field study tour. Within the Peace Boat Program, the YMCA delegates joined the following sessions:

- * Historical Context of Conflicts and Peace (talk by A-bomb survivor KOTANI)
- * Japanese Cultural exchange / experience (traditional clothes, games, tea ceremony, etc.)
- * Joint session with “Peace Boat Global University” participants (youth peace boat participants)
- * Joining the Global Day of Action on Military Spending with Local Media Coverage
- * Final presentation / report by YMCA participants to the Peace Boat Participants

Reflection:

Deepening our engagements in peace building platforms such as dialogue, forum, and study tour are relevant to our mission of building a human community of justice with love, peace and reconciliation. The many places and peoples within our region speak about the ‘real’ pain and suffering brought about by conflicts. These stories need to be passed on to the younger generation with the end goal of learning not to repeat the evils of violence; rather nurture the values of love, respect and justice. Let our movement increase its voice and action for a humane and peaceful world.

↑ YMCA participants join Global Day of Action on Military Spending with local media coverage

- by Maria Cristina Miranda-Lastima, Executive Secretary for Programs

Bangladesh YMCAs Elects A New President

Mr. Samarendra Ritchil has been elected as the new President of the National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh at its 39th Annual General Meeting held on 15th April 2016 in Dhaka.

Mr. Samarendra Ritchil represents Edilpur YMCA and is also the founding member of that YMCA established in 1991. He served as Honorary General Secretary during the initial period for a few years until a General Secretary was appointed for Edilpur YMCA. Mr. Ritchil is a Professor of Susong Durgapur Mohila (Girls) Degree College of Netrokona District, in Bangladesh.

Earlier Mr. Samarendra Ritchil served as the Vice-President of the NCY Bangladesh for several terms and also served as Acting National General Secretary of the NCY Bangladesh for the period of April to August, 2012. He has also been actively associated with Garo Baptist Convention, a federation of 300 local churches of the Garo Christian Community in Bangladesh and served as its President for the years 1996, 2008, 2011-2012 and 2013-2014.

We take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ritchil and we firmly believe that the Bangladesh YMCA shall stride further towards fulfilling the mission of the YMCA under his dynamic

leadership.

Not interested any more?