

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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June 2016

1. Sri Lanka YMCA's Emergency Relief for Flood Victims
2. GATN Task Force and Mentors Meeting
3. Asia and Pacific University YMCA Regional Conference 2016
4. Learn from the World to Build My Homeland
5. National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka holds 51st Annual General Meeting

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

July 19-25: Asia and Pacific University Regional Conference, Hong Kong

Sri Lanka YMCA's Emergency Relief for Flood Victims

On 15 May, Sri Lanka was hit by torrential rains due to the tropical storm Roanu, which caused widespread flooding and landslides, destroying homes and submerging entire villages. About 237,240 people have been displaced from their homes and have been moved to 376 'safe locations', including camps as well as schools, temples, community centers, with host families or in other temporary accommodation. The majority of these displaced people are in Colombo and Gampaha districts in the south-west of the country where floodwaters still remain high.

The National Council of the YMCAs of Sri Lanka has sent relief items to the victims with the financial support of International YMCA Fraternity. The NCY Sri Lanka encouraged the local YMCAs to be engaged in meeting the needs of the victims as early as possible. The National Council Staff visited the most affected areas, like Widyawardana Vidyalaya, Kolonnawa and distributed water bottles, dry food packs, medicines and sanitary items for 100 families.

The Colombo Divisional Secretary of the Government has informed that 15,000 students have lost their school stationery. The National Council of YMCAs in Sri Lanka with the understanding of the need of the parents took up the task of helping the students. So now it has been decided to select around 1,500 students to provide the essential stationeries such as note books, school bags, pens, pencils, drink bottles that the children could start moving towards school. Parents too are worried much about the education of their children.

GATN Task Force and Mentors Meeting

The newly formed Task Force of the Global Alternative Tourism Network (GATN) had their first meeting for this quadrennial in Yangon from 14-18 May 2016. The meeting brought together members of the GATN Task Force to review our programme, explore and strategise how best to develop this programme further in the coming years. GATN Task Force members for this

quadrennial include: Dr. PARK Jai Chang [CHAIR] (Korea), Steve CHIU (Taiwan), Andrew LEO (Singapore), Chularat PHONGTUDSIRIKUL (Thailand), Pablito TABUCOL, (Philippines), Bunthok DETH (Cambodia), John P. FERNANDEZ (India), Eve NAN (Myanmar) and Lu Van LOC (Vietnam). APAY staffs responsible for the GATN programme are NAM Boo Won, Duncan CHOWDHURY and CHAN Beng Seng.

Mr. Tha Sein, President of the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar, welcomed participants to the meeting and expressed gratefulness to host the APAY meeting in Yangon. Mr. Tha Sein also invited the GATN Task Force members for dinner followed by a visit to the famous Shwedagon Pagoda. In his greetings and welcome to the participants, Mr. Maung Maung Win, National General Secretary of Myanmar YMCA, informed that several YMCAs in Myanmar have also been working hard to develop alternative tourism sites and hoped that everyone would have a good meeting.

In giving the orientation Mr. Nam Boo Won expressed his hopes and expectations that the alternative and sustainable tourism programme will contribute to leadership formation and development of global citizenship of young people in the Asia Pacific region.

Dr. Park, Chair of the GATN Task Force began the meeting with a keynote input on Current Trends in Alternative Tourism and Challenges for the GATN, providing his insights and proposing the directions for GATN. NA Hyo Woo, who was appointed as Advisor to the GATN programme, shared his experiences in developing his own Good/Fair Travel Company and his marketing strategies.

The members of the GATN Task Force reviewed and evaluated the work of GATN in the last 3 years. Discussions were based on the evaluations done for the General Assembly and the staff evaluation done for Bread for the World. The Task Force also enriched the discussions on alternative tourism with their own experiences and expertise. Some shared with the group case studies of their experiences in developing and managing an alternative tourism sites. Another group shared case studies of their experiences in sending groups of young people for study tours and service learning programmes. From the sharing of these case studies we derived much input for further improvement of the programme.

In order to further promote and develop GATN, the Task Force recommended that more training workshops should be conducted for both receiving and sending YMCAs. The Task Force also reviewed the proposed components of the next phase of the GATN project. Some of the major components of the project include:

\* Skills development for local YMCAs and Program Managers.

The main objectives are to enhance their skills and improve the standards and quality of alternative and sustainable tourism based on the CHANGE principles.

\* Advocacy and lobbying on Tourism and Climate Change.

The main objectives are for Young people to learn about climate change, responsible travel and participate in activities that have low carbon footprint activities, and contribute to society through community service projects. GATN will also network with other NGOs and participate in regional and international meetings to advocate and lobby for tourism and climate change related issues.

\* Site assessment, Networking and Marketing.

The main objectives are to improve alternative and sustainable tourism sites through

programme planning, mentoring, site inspections and evaluations. A self-assessment checklist will also be developed as training as well as evaluation tool.

↑ Visiting GATN Site in Yangon - Andrew's Home for Children

~ Chan Beng Seng, APAY Coordinator for GATN

APAY Asia and Pacific University YMCA  
(APUY) Regional Conference 2016

Theme: Peace and Justice Towards Sustainable Society

We invite all National Movements to participate in the upcoming APAY Asia and Pacific University YMCA (APUY) Regional Conference on 19-25 July 2016 in Hong Kong. The first APUY was organized in 2008 to provide a platform for student YMCA members to share, reflect, learn and exchange ideas, wisdom, creativity and enthusiasm on issues affecting them that leads to sustainable society. Following the success of previous APUY Regional Conferences in Hong Kong (2008), Singapore (2009) and the Philippines (2010), the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong is proud to host the APUY this year.

It is noted that YOUTH EMPOWERMENT has been one of the main foci of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY) to create opportunities for youth participation and leadership development that leads to active contribution in sustainable community development. By achieving that, the YMCAs in the region have worked in partnership with various educational institutions in different countries, commonly known as Uni-Y, College Y, Student Y, Campus Y and/or Hi-Y. These groups of YMCA youth constituents have been significant in the development of youth-led and youth-initiated programmes, which are contributory to strengthening the social relevance of the movement.

The theme for this year is 'Peace and Justice towards Sustainable Society'. We believe that despite the claims of social and economic development in many countries in the region, significant numbers of youth are still confronted to live in fragile and conflict-affected communities. Today, these societal problems faced by youth call for various social and educational institutions to work together to empower youth to shoulder the responsibility to build a harmonious and sustainable society and to impart values that promote peace, justice and love. Let us come together in nurturing youth as agents of peace. – Maria Cristina L. Miranda, Executive Secretary for Programs.

For more information please visit our website at [www.asiapacificymca.org](http://www.asiapacificymca.org)

~ Maria Cristina Miranda-Lastima, Executive Secretary for Programs

Learn from the World to Build My Homeland

A SOP Alumnus from Indonesia Selected for U.S. Fellowship Program

Gunawan attended the School of Peace (SOP) conducted by Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) in 2010 in Bangalore, India. Since returning to Poso in the Indonesian province of Central Sulawesi, his work has centered on empowering women and children. Recently, he was selected to take part in a fellowship program in the United States.

Being a member of the Indonesian delegation of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) professional fellowship program is one of my major accomplishments this year. The

five-week internship program from May to June 2016 is organized by the U.S. State Dept. and American Councils for International Education. This opportunity is good for me to get more experience and then working for my community through my organization, Sikola Mombine (Women's School), in my home country of Indonesia.

America stimulates my curiosity to learn from their best practices about developing informal education programs. I am fortunate to get a placement working with the Cara Program in Chicago, which prepares and inspires motivated individuals to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty, transform people's lives, strengthen the community and forge paths to success.

Even though the issues in Chicago are very different from my own community of Poso, there are similar basic focal points, such as providing education and economic development. Consequently, my greatest expectation here is to learn about building a sustainable curriculum process, strategies for sustaining organizations and integrating informal education and economic empowerment programs. These areas are strongly connected with my responsibilities as program director of the Women's School.

Most of my work with the Cara Program is working with the curriculum staff, professional development staff and gaining experience with the students in their class activities. The most significant observations are that this program not only helps people get a job but it also builds a community in order to provide people with a bridge so that they are involved together to motivate and encourage others and build solidarity as one community.

Another thing that sparks my curiosity here is intrafaith, allowing me to learn more about my own faith of Islam. I have come to understand that Muslims in America have equal opportunities for access in the community's social life, such as worship, work and education. The mosque is not only a place for worship but is also an Islamic learning center, a place to build interaction among Muslims and a center for social service to the surrounding community. I have been impressed, for it is the opposite from my expectations about the life of Muslims in America before I came here.

Many young people from many countries come to learn in the United States and then don't return to their home country because they want to earn money here. They are not wrong. For me, however, I must learn more and then come back to do more for my society in Poso. This mission is the greatest responsibility that I have: learn from the world to build my homeland.

↑ Gunawan, an Indonesian School of Peace (SOP) alumnus living, working and learning in the United States for several months

National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka holds  
51st Annual General Meeting

The 51st Annual General Meeting of the National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka was held at Jaffna YMCA on 28th May 2016. Mr. Nirmal De Fonseka from Galle YMCA has been elected as President of the National Council, while Rev. Srilal Karunaratna and Mr. Ratnasabapathy Vinoth were elected Vice Presidents and Mr. Spencer Leon as Treasurer for the tenure 2016/17.

Mr. Nirmal de Fonseka is of 51 years of age, started his YMCA career as a YMCA Youth volunteer in 1982 and gave leadership to many of the YMCA programmes – especially as a member of the Galle YMCA. In addition to his lay leadership to the Galle YMCA as its President for many years and he also served as the Vice President of NCY Sri Lanka for a couple of terms. By profession he holds the position of Chief Human Resources Manager of the Sri Lanka

Port Authority.

The APAY congratulates Mr. Fonseka for being elected as the President of the NCY Sri Lanka and do hope and pray that the Sri Lanka YMCA shall be able to leap forward in fulfilling its mission under the leadership of Mr. Fonseka.

Not interested any more?