

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
April 2017

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May 21-27: APAY Green Ambassadors Training, Chiangmai, Thailand

June 7-11: East Asia Gender Justice and Social Transformation Workshop, Hong Kong

South Asia Gender Justice and
Social Transformation

Gender. Sex. Justice. Transformation. Understanding of these key concepts and doing practical actions to achieve gender justice both on personal and organizational level are highlighted by the 14 staff and lay leader participants from Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka as their take away learning from the recently concluded APAY South Asia Gender Justice and Social Transformation Workshop held in New Delhi, India last April 29- May 3, 2017 with the National Council of YMCAs of India as the local host.

The three-day workshop that was inaugurated by APAY President Babu Markus Gomez, APAY Committee on Gender Equity Vice Chairperson Kumari Kuriaksoe, NCY India President Dr. Lebi Philip Mathews, NCY India NGS Ch. R.P. Manikumar, Keynote Speaker Dr. Jyotsna Chatterji along other guests emphasized the importance of working together, as a movement, towards developing communities in which no one particularly women and other sexual minorities are excluded, marginalized or discriminated against because of their gender. As part of a wider social movement working for social transformation, the regional movement has the responsibility to promote the protection of a person's rights.

The keynote speech of Dr. Jyotsna Chatterji, Founder & Secretary-Joint Women's Programme and the various workshop sessions and input presentations of other resource persons such as Aanchal Kapur and Anandana Kapur stressed that stereotype identities and roles played by women and men are mere social constructs. And that the gender relations that existed within the families, communities, churches, government, organizations and institutions undeniably perpetuate conformity to the norms imposed by patriarchal system.

Actual experience of women under such circumstances was witnessed by the participants during the exposure visits to the YMCA of New Delhi program on children, girls and women in the slum areas. The program includes day care centers for children whose mothers are working and livelihood trainings for girls and women in communities. With the knowledge and community exposure, the participants were challenged to transform their mindsets, values and practices that internalize the idea that women are inferior to men. More importantly, it was collectively expressed that YMCAs in their context still has a long way to go to achieve gender justice. Thus, the participants proposed the involvement of more men in education and capacity building in order to facilitate organizational and societal transformation.

↑ GJST delegates with the beneficiaries of New Delhi Community Development Program on women

↑ GJST participants engaging in dialogue with the resource person

~ Cristina Miranda-Lastima

4th GATN Managers Training Conducted in Matara

The National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka and the YMCA of Matara hosted the 4th GATN Managers Training held on 25-28 April 2017 in Matara, Sri Lanka. Ten (10) GATN Managers both from the sending and receiving YMCA joined the said activity to share experiences, learn new things and welcome new challenges that would further YMCA Alternative Tourism (AT).

The three-day training allowed the managers to share information and activities that reduce their carbon footprint. From this, the diversity of the projects for each alternative site can be noted which allows the YMCA to offer varying experiences. Similarly, the concept of water footprint was shared to the group as part of the goal of the GATN to be a sustainable and responsible tourism thereby challenging the YMCAs to also work towards the reduction of their water footprint.

Geared more towards improving and taking the quality of GATN to a higher level, topics such as community-based tourism, expectations of the sending YMCAs and, review and improvement of the GATN Code of Conduct were among the discussion. Mr. Na Hyo Woo from Good Travel also challenged the YMCA to go out of its box and ensure its quality so that it can match the ones already in the market. Moreover, he also encouraged the importance of collecting stories and telling the stories as part of the marketing for GATN. One of the highlights of the Managers Training was the discussion on GATN Certification which will help maintain the standards of the AT programs.

In the end, the training served as an avenue to share current programs and practices of the different YMCAs and it gave an opportunity to reflect and learn more about how the programs can be improved. The training also gave a wider perspective on why alternative tourism is significant because it is not merely about providing a different kind of tourism experience for the people but it is more about contributing to the community and the environment.

Finally, the warm welcome of the host YMCA was appreciated. They showcased their culture through the food served and the dance shown during the welcome program. Yet more than this, it is inspiring to see the efforts they are doing in the community. The short visit to the school and to the organic farm that provides food to the twenty-five (25) local families who manage it is an inspiration to improving and expanding the GATN programs.

Indeed, it was a learning experience to witness this training as it also paved the way to better understanding of the program, its significance and how it affects the community. Most of all, seeing the impact it leaves to people who have been part of the program, whether as a sending or a receiving YMCA, is a motivation to continue making change through the GATN.

↑Participants of the GATN Managers Training posed for a photo towards the end of the workshop held in Matara, Sri Lanka

↑The GATN Managers listening attentively during the workshop

~ Karren Joy Fetalvero

Annual General Meeting and National Assembly of the YMCA of Indonesia

To reinvigorate and give fresh life to the YMCA Indonesian movement and rekindle the passion, enthusiasm and zeal of its leaders and members, an annual General Assembly and Annual Meeting was held on April 7-9 at Wisma Samadi, Jakarta. This very important event was attended by leaders from the local YMCAs of Metro Jakarta, Salatiga, Malang, Makassar and Surabaya.

The program started with an inspiring reflection given by Rev. Martin. He emphasized the need for unity and transformation in Christ where there should be full and total commitment in every field of life. After the worship, the president, Dr. Kambodji presented the flow of the three-day schedule and discussed the need to amend the present By-Laws since as observed and noted, some of the articles are not synchronized and contradictory to the other provisions. It was suggested that a committee or team be organized who will work on studying the By-Laws and will make the necessary recommendation for amendments. Whatever amendments to be proposed by the committee will be presented in a special meeting for acceptance and adoption of the body, hopefully, to take effect in 2018.

During the sharing of the different programs and endeavors of the local YMCAs, it was observed that even in the absence of funds and paid staff, the local YMCAs were able to promote some empowering youth programs and address social issues such as HIV-AIDS. Mr. Nam Boo Won remarked that the strong volunteerism spirit of the leaders of Indonesia YMCA is truly commendable. On the other hand, he said that if there is no paid staff, the YMCA may be unstable and not sustainable in the long run. He encouraged them to develop strategies that will make the YMCA more stable as well as to look deeply into its financial situation to make the YMCA more effective and strengthened. President Kambodji admitted that they really need to do resource mobilization to make the YMCA more vigorous and sustainable.

On the second day session, after the morning worship led by Rev. Krise, YMCA Vice President, friends/partner organizations of the YMCA extended their warm greetings followed by the message of Nam Boo Won on the Assembly theme "Indonesian Christian Youth in times of turmoil". He challenged everyone to find new ways in revitalizing the Indonesian YMCA movement and see how APAY could support and assist in their efforts. Thereafter, Dr. Suwanto Adi, president of Salatiga YMCA discussed the topic "Religious Entrepreneurship" which means doing social transformation based on faith. Then, the YMCA foundation reported on the assets of the YMCA, some of which were sold and taken over by the families or relatives of the board and the difficulty they are facing yet, they continue to pursue on how it could be recovered

through legal action. Dr. Kambodji then rendered the president's report where he stated that despite the present condition of the YMCA, the National Board has done considerable effort in consolidating the organization, work on the assets/ property issues and continue to engage in meaningful undertakings together with other organization be it local, national or international level.

Matters taken up on the third day were the draft strategic plan and the election of officers. President Kambodji explained the draft strategic plan and discussed the role of the National Council as a coordinating body as well as the need to build up local YMCAs by collaborating with other organizations and churches. Nam Boo Won said that APAY will be ready to mobilize its partners again to support the strengthening of the National Council so that it could effectively serve well the local YMCAs. After the exchange of views , the election of the national board for 2017-2020 followed. Elected are the following: President - Dr. Alphinus Kambodji; First Vice President- Dr. Suwanto Adi; Second Vice President - Rev. Krise Gosal; Treasurer -Yudhi Satria Pulo; Member- Jenifer Astin Septiana; NGS- Retha Andoea.

↑Delegates to the Annual Meeting and General Assembly

↑The blessing of the newly elected National Board members and committee members

~ Thelma P. Juntereal, MS Coordinator

ICF Evaluation and Planning Workshop held in
YMCA of Singapore

With a view to evaluating ICF activities for the past thirteen years, reviewing the process of transformation of the youths as grassroots initiatives towards peace activism, as well as exploring the possibilities to expand and deepen the scope of the inter-faith peace education programs, an Interfaith-Cooperation Forum (ICF) Evaluation & Planning Workshops held on 19 – 22 April at the YMCA of Singapore. Four Resource Persons – Dr. Jung Ji-seok and Ms. Moon Ayoung from APAY, and Dr. Joseph A. Manickam and Mr. S. Lont Mun from Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) were invited to give fresh ideas and suggestions for the next phase of the project starting from January 2018. Dr. Mathews George, General Secretary, Dr. Reynaldo R. Ty, Executive Secretary from CCA and Mr. Nam Boo Won, General Secretary of APAY, were also present, together with Mr. Max Ediger, ICF Coordinator. Dr. George and Mr. Nam both facilitated the workshop.

Participants spent three days together to evaluate the achievement so far as well as discuss and reflect on the future direction and thrust of ICF. An overview of ICF up to date was presented by Nam, followed by discussions centered on the evaluation of the project from various perspectives. A self-evaluative reflection on School of Peace was presented by Max, ICF Coordinator, followed by questions and answers by the participants. Thereafter, further focused discussions took place to draw a strategic direction of the core components of the next phase of ICF with a view to reaching an originally set objective of “creating an inter-religious regional justpeace movement” in Asia. In this, diverse inputs and program suggestions were given from the resource persons. This led to a collective brainstorming for next phase program development taking into consideration the continuation of the current programs.

A new proposal, for the next three years, based on the outcome of the workshop, will be drafted by Mr. Duncan Chowdhury, Executive Secretary for Programs, APAY and circulated to

all the participants for their final inputs before finalization. At this juncture, we are particularly grateful to Mr. Max Ediger for his long and steadfast devotion to ICF work for the past 14 years. We hope and pray that ICF will continue to serve meaningfully and relevantly in building peace with justice in Asia, particularly in the communities where inter-religious tension and conflict arise. APAY is specially thankful to YMCA of Singapore for their generous offer of the hotel facilities and hosting a dinner for the participants.

~ Nam Boo Won

Grand Finale Ceremony of the 125th Anniversary of the Indian YMCA

The Grand Finale Ceremony of the 125th Anniversary of the National Council YMCAs of India was held on 26 April 2017 hosted by Calcutta YMCA, where the 1st historic YMCA in Asia had been established in 1857, and where APAY President Mr. Babu Markus Gomes and I were invited as chief and special guests, respectively. Prior to that, the National YMCA Executive Committee meeting was held and a Thanksgiving Service for the 125 years of service and witness of the Indian YMCA (1891-2016) was solemnly held at the St. Paul's Cathedral, Maidan Kolkata, under the theme "Building up people in the image and likeness of God". His Grace Rt. Rev. Ashoke Biswas, Bishop of the Calcutta Diocese, CNI gave a sermon, blessing the future of the India YMCA.

The Closing Ceremony of the Quasiquicentennial Celebrations took place at the parish hall of the St. Paul's Cathedral with more than 200 YMCA leaders and guests attending from all over India and abroad. Among them were Mr. Padma Shree Sourav Ganguly, President, Cricket Association of Bengal & Former Captain, Indian National Cricket Team; Justice Biswanath Somadder, Judge, Calcutta High Court; Mr. Babu Karkus Gomes, President, APAY; Most Rev. Thomas D'Souza, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Calcutta; Mr. Nirmal de Fonseka, President of National Council YMCAs of Sri Lanka; Mr. Nishimura Takao, Secretary General, Y's Men International; Dr. D.K. Manavalan, IAS (RETD.); Mr. Kasta Dip, Director, India Peace Center; Dr. Lebi Philip Mathew, President of the National Council of YMCAs of India; Mr. Ch. R.P. Manikumar, NGS of India YMCA; Mr. John A.K. Ghosh, President of Calcutta YMCA; Mr. Niladri Raha, General Secretary of Calcutta YMCA. Mr. Gomes, APAY President, delivered the keynote address, reminding the participants of the splendid history of Indian YMCA towards serving its people and communities for the past 125 years and expecting another century of devotion as faithful disciples of God. The ceremony was followed by cultural programs, fireworks and thanksgiving dinner.

The APAY wishes the Indian YMCA, under the joint leadership of Dr. Lebi Lebi Philip Mathew and Mr. R. P. Ch. Manikumar, President and NGS, respectively, will continue to serve its communities, particularly vulnerable sectors of its society – the poor, marginalized and voiceless – through its meaningful programs and relevant actions for justice and peace.

~ Nam Boo Won

The Alliance of University and College YMCA of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

The Alliance of University and College YMCAs affiliated to the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong successfully united over 100 students from 8 local higher education institutions in the “Less” Know More – Joint University Service and Workshop Day on 8 April 2017. In the morning, the participants attended a Human Library, where they had the chance to challenge their own stereotypes and prejudices through interactive dialogue with living books or guests from all walks of life including a cancer survivor, physically disabled athlete, treated addict, traditional craftsman, ex-mental health patient, refugee, South Asian immigrant and local farmer. After the Human Library, the participants joined a corresponding community service or workshop to further promote their understanding of the above marginalized groups.

Established since 2013, the Alliance of University & College YMCAs (the Alliance) consists of two representatives from the student executive committee of each University YMCA and College YMCA in Hong Kong. Through organizing a series of joint-university and college activities and mass programs, the Alliance has been dedicated to uniting youth leaders to make a positive impact on the local and global communities.

Rewarding from the Past, Devoting to the Future

Hello everyone, I'm Peter from Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to be the Chairperson of the YPLD Committee 2016-2019.

My Y story started with a decision when I was a freshman in the university to join the Uni-Y as a student executive committee member. As such I help in organising various types of activities for my university students, as well as serving the needy in society. I always believe that it is better if we can mobilize more people to care for our city and the world, so I appreciate the wide range of activities that Uni-Y engages in, from concerning the local social issues to leading others to understand issues of our global village. But after experiencing the Y for several years, I find that YMCA is much more than that.

First, YMCA is about bonding and is like a family that cuts across geographical boundaries. I remember that my first international YMCA experience was attending the APAY Regional Youth Conference, where I met lots of friends from different parts of Asia who all carried same aspirations – make the world a better place for all. We all cared about the society, and we all liked to share our own experiences! Whenever we danced, sang and discussed together, I felt close bonding and family connection! After that, I know that around the world there are always friends sharing same mission as I do, which gives me loads of support in my future work in the Y.

Second, YMCA is all for the youth. When I have become the Chairperson for YPLD, I discovered that all national movements and all leaders are caring for the youth. They all showed countless support to the youth work and gave precious opinions when we initiated new ideas during the annual Executive Committee Meeting. And when it was behind-the-scene, all of them are cheerful leaders, who were always willing to share and chit-chat with youngsters! Their willingness to give reflects their continuous backup on us, and echoes with the mission of ‘to serve, not to be served’! Therefore, they are all my role models that no matter what I will do in the future, I will keep the heart to serve and help the future leaders for the sake of our beloved society.

Looking forward to the future, from the perspective of my current position in the APAY, I would like to encourage more young people in this region to know more about what is happening in our world. Leaders cannot be nurtured in one day so we need to provide more platforms for

them to understand and grow in experience. I believe that YPLD can continue with its good work in initiating more region-wise trainings, which are absolutely beneficial to all.

When on one day, I step down from the YPLD Committee, I am still determined that I will continue to support youth work by encouraging youth to try out new things! From my point of view, youth empowerment is to give our youth more chances to take up responsibilities and make their dreams come true. Thus, allowing them to try is always the key to youth empowerment! With the collective efforts of all of us, I am sure that it will come true! Be stronger together!

~ Peter Chan

Newly Elected President of National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh

The 40th Annual General Meeting of the National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh was held on 28th April 2017, Friday at the Bangladesh YMCA Training Center, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

At the same day after the Annual General Meeting the election of National Executive Committee of NCY of Bangladesh had been held and Mr. Dilip Marandi NEC representative of Bogra YMCA has been elected as the new President of National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh.

Mr. Dilip Marandi is the founding member of Bogra YMCA established on March 31, 1979 and got the affiliation of National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh in 1985. Mr. Marandi served Bogra YMCA as President for the period of 2007 – 2014.

At National level Mr. Dilip Marandi served as Vice-President of the National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh for the period of 2000-2002, 2002-2006, 2007-2008 and 2012-2014.

Mr. Dilip Marandi has also served as founding President of Leo Club, a sister organization of Bogra Lion Club for the period of 1980 – 1983.

Under the dynamic leadership of Mr. Dilip Marandi the new Executive Committee of NCY of Bangladesh will govern for the period of 2016-2017.

APAY Publishes Book to Commemorate 500th Anniversary of Luther's Reformation

It has been 500 years since Martin Luther produced his Ninety-five Theses that sparked the Reformation in Germany in the 16th century. To commemorate this historical event, APAY launched the book *Revisiting the Reformation* at its executive committee meeting in March.

The book, which includes a foreword by the president of APAY, Babu Markus Gomes, and the general secretary of APAY, Nam Boo Won, is a collection of essays by theologians, church and ecumenical leaders, academics and others that share their reflections from a variety of perspectives—theology, gender, environmental protection, human rights, justice and peace, spirituality, economics, the culture of indigenous people, democratization, etc., with the book also noting the relationship between the Reformation and the YMCA movement. One of the book's strengths is the diversity of viewpoints of its 13 authors from Hong Kong, South Korea, Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Germany.

Copies of the book are available by contacting the APAY office.

~ Bruce Van Voorhis

Not interested any more?