

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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

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July 12-17: Change Agents Regional Training, Tozanso, Japan

East Asia Gender Justice and
Social Transformation Workshop

The three-day East Asia Gender Justice and Social Transformation Workshop was participated by twelve staff and lay leaders both young and senior members of YMCAs of Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau, Taiwan and Australia. The group that met on June 7-11, 2017 at Salisbury YMCA in Hong Kong strongly believes that the YMCAs in the region are not “gender blind”. However, the level of awareness and actions engaged in by the various movements in relation to advancing the rights of women and other sexual minorities need to keep moving forward. Thus, the concluding call for action is to continuously and consciously educate, organize and mobilize local and national movements to work together towards developing communities through their programs in which no one particularly women and other sexual minorities are excluded, marginalized or discriminated against because of their gender.

The workshop that was inaugurated by APAY General Secretary Mr. Nam Boo Won, APAY Executive Secretary Mr. Duncan Chowdhury, APAY Committee on Gender Equity Chair Ms. Okado Nagako, Hong Kong YMCA General Secretary, Mr. Peter Ho, Hong Kong YMCA Cheung Sha Wan Center Manager Mr. Eric Au Yeung, Hong Kong YMCA Director of Finance & Administration Ms. Corinia Chan. The Keynote Speaker Dr. Christina Wong Wai-Yin along with other guests began emphasizing that as faith-based movement, we profess inclusivity in our work as God excludes no one.

A strong connection was formed among the participants who have shared life story facilitated by Law Lapman of Hong Kong YMCA that reflected roles and responsibilities expected and reinforced by the various social institutions. The sharing served a springboard to better understand the concepts of sex, gender, gender roles and relations that influence one's views of gender justice and social transformation. The learning process was enriched by input presentations on globalization, patriarchy and socio-cultural practices and gender studies from

Dr. Hope Antone, Program Officer, United Board of Christian Higher Education in Asia and Dr. Cho Man Kit, Joseph, Lecturer at Gender Studies Program, Chinese University of Hong Kong, respectively.

The exposure visit to Hong Kong YMCA Cheng Sha Wan Center which is working with ethnic minority women gave opportunities for participants to listen to testimonies on women's struggle for acceptance and independence. Moreover, the organizational intervention showcased a good practice of working with the people. This process was complemented by a case study on Korea YMCA Aha Sexuality Education & Counseling Center for Youth by Ms. Lee Myung Hwa, Executive Secretary of Korea YMCA, in charge of the Center.

~ Cristina Maria Miranda

Global Citizenship Institute 2017- "Youth as Global Citizens: Partners in Community Development"

Following the mandate of Challenge 21, we must envision a strong ecumenical youth movement that actively engages youth on responsible leadership and transformational actions in community. APAY believes that this can be achieved by creating opportunities for youth participation and leadership development that leads to active contribution in sustainable community development. As part of a wider social movement working for social transformation, we have the responsibility to empower the youth to live life to her/his fullest potential and maximize her/his full participation in the life of society.

Thus, Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs calls for National Movements to support young people in participating to the Global Citizenship Institute 2017 to be held at YMCA of Manila, Philippines on 15-28 August 2017. This platform is designed to engage young people in appreciating their identity yet respecting cultural differences; deepening understanding and critical thinking on social realities/issues both on a local and regional perspective; strengthening values of compassion among the marginalized sectors; and mobilizing youth to act towards creating a society liberated from injustices.

The challenge is not only how well the participants are informed of the current social injustices. But more importantly on how as global citizens they would act as change agents through conducting community-based programs that are geared towards achieving sustainable community development.

The GCI experience includes interactive input presentations, case studies, community and home stay exposure, dialogue with local people and youth, reflections, project planning skills workshop, cultural exchanges and creative presentations.

For more information pertaining participation, you can send email at miranda@asiapacificymca.org or visit www.asiapacificymca.org for detailed program information.

~ Cristina Maria Miranda

A joint meeting of National Presidents with
APAY board members

Following a collective decision made at the Presidents' meeting in Hong Kong during the last

Executive Committee Meeting, a joint meeting of National Presidents with APAY board members was held on 10th June 2017 at the conference room of APAY, 6th floor, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong. Thirteen Presidents of National/Territorial Councils of YMCAs were present including APAY board members. The meeting was chaired by APAY President Babu Markus Gomes, partially by Romeo Calubaquib, Vice President.

The purpose of the meeting was to encourage high quality candidates to be nominated by the national movements for the election of the officers & executive committee members of the World Alliance which will take place during the World Council Meeting in Chiang Mai on July 2018. Also, it aims to coordinate with the candidates at a regional level, based on voluntary consensus among the national movements, so that unnecessary overlaps and competitions could be avoided. Thus, possibly maximizing the representation coming from our region at the World Alliance governance body. The meeting went well and smoothly with active participation of the participants in a transparent and informative manner. In the meeting, the current situation of the Sri Lankan floods and the YMCA's emergency response were also shared by Nirmal Fonseka, President of the NCY-Sri Lanka.

The meeting was followed by the 10th APAY board meeting where reports on the programs conducted from March to May were made; a financial report (1 January ~ 30 April 2017) was also shared by Ronald Yam, APAY Treasurer; and forthcoming program plans including Change Agents Regional Training, ICF School of Peace and Global Citizenship Institute were reported by Nam Boo Won, General Secretary.

APAY is deeply thankful to both Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and YMCA of Hong Kong for warmly hosting the dinners for the national YMCA presidents and APAY board members present. The meeting was appreciated much by all the participants as a demonstration of unity among national movements in the APAY.

~ Nam Boo Won

Visit to YMCA of Vietnam

The YMCA of Vietnam has been promoting meaningful programs and doing great service to the youth and community since it was re-established 17 years ago. Many YMCA partners from overseas, believing in its inspiring endeavors such as the sewing class, workcamp, vocational training, pre-school program, program for the disabled and other undertakings had given their steadfast support to help the leadership carry on with their efforts and make them grow as a movement. Along the way however, they encountered some challenges and internal conflicts that somehow caused division between the board and the staff. Late last year, financial difficulties eventually hampered their operation and program implementation. Seeing no immediate relief and solution to the situation and with Mr. Luu Van Loc, the General Secretary, getting sickly due to so much stress, it forced them to close the vocational center, the disabled club program as well as to stop implementing the other programs that they used to promote. The Board also decided to move to a smaller office and temporarily closed the main YMCA office.

The problematic situation reached the APAY through a report by a concerned YMCA partner, and it lost no time to know and to understand the situation. MS coordinator Thelma Juntereal was initially sent to Vietnam last April to meet with some Vietnam YMCA leaders and staff. After the visit and the report by Thelma, APAY felt the urgent need to intervene positively in the case.

A task force composed of APAY staff and YMCA partners of Vietnam YMCA represented by Jeff Watkins from Houston YMCA, Andrew Leo from YMCA of Singapore, Boon Chin Tan of Y-USA and Kazuki Yamane of NCY Japan, was created to help address the issue. A visit to Vietnam from June 27-30 was made by the group. However, Boon Chin and Kazuki were not able to join due to their prior engagement. Two whole day meetings were done by the task force, firstly with the YMCA Board and secondly, with the former General Secretary, Mr. Luu Van Loc and his wife, and with the other former YMCA employees. This was done to fully understand the story of both sides and how to possibly come up with a positive and good compromise agreement between the Board and the staff. In these meetings, it was found out that the situation is indeed very complicated. The Board appointed its concurrent vice president, Rev. Buu as the new General Secretary in place of Mr. Luu Van Loc. They have to address the issue of compensation of Mr. Loc and that of the other employees which they find difficult having no available funds at the moment. The transfer of the two other YMCA properties which are under the name of Mr. Loc is also a concern which they need to negotiate with him as well. The bank loan negotiated during the time of Mr. Loc to help sustain YMCA operation needs to be paid. In the same manner, Mr. Loc felt pressured from the former employees regarding their demand for the compensation. Having no close relation and losing their trust with the Board, they are looking up to Mr. Loc as the person who could respond to their concern being the General Secretary that had worked closely with them.

The task force discussed the matters with Rev. Buu, the new General Secretary and conveyed to him the position of the former employees, the concerns of Mr. Loc and how could these be possibly resolved in a mutually trustworthy way. Rev. Buu made several recommendations to respond to the concern but he has to take these matters first with the Board. Whatever decision they will make, Rev. Buu said that he will willingly inform the APAY in the near future. Hopefully, the board and the staff will be open to making a positive compromise that will be beneficial to both parties and that YMCA will again move forward and be strengthened anew to contribute in youth empowerment as well as in its service to its community.

↑ The APAY task force meeting with the Vietnam YMCA Board Members

↑ Meeting with Mr. Luu Van Loc and his wife by the Task Force

- Thelma P. Juntereal

YMCA Secretaries Basic Training

The YMCA Secretaries Basic training will be held on 1 – 30 September, 2017 at the YMCA of Manila, 350 AJ Villegas St., Ermita, Manila, Philippines. APAY is jointly organizing this month-long YMCA Secretaries Basic Training Course along with the YMCA of Philippines.

Initiated for the first time, this is a basic training program for professional secretaries of the YMCAs, focusing especially on the YMCAs of South East Asia. We encourage the national movements of this sub-region to nominate suitable YMCA professionals for the program.

Subsidies are available only for deserving candidates for air travel and participation fee.

Applications with required documents should reach APAY on or before 30 July 2017 and successful candidates shall be notified soon after.

For detailed information of this training program and registration form, please contact Mr. Duncan Chowdhury, our Executive Secretary for Programs at duncan@asiapacificymca.org

~ Duncan Chowhdury

The 35th APAY Advanced Studies Program

The 35th Advanced Studies Program of APAY will be held during 3 – 28 November 2017 at the YMCA Youth Village, Wu Kwai Sha, Ma On Shan, New Territories, Hong Kong.

Initiated in the year 1982, this training is held each year, as an advanced training program for the senior professional secretaries of the YMCAs of our region. The candidates should be a university graduate and have at least 3 years work experience in the YMCA's core administration, at policy making level.

The main objectives of this month-long training is to enhance YMCA professional secretaries' ability to critically analyze ongoing social processes, based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and develop the YMCA professionals who are mission-responsive, socially relevant and effective institutional leaders.

We urge the YMCA national movements of our region to nominate suitable YMCA professionals for the program. Detailed information and registration form of this course has already been dispatched to the national movements.

Limited amount of subsidies are available only for deserving candidates for air travel and participation fee. The registration fee and the green fee are mandatory for all participants. Subsidy requests should be sent along with the applications forms.

Applications with required documents should reach APAY on or before 31 July 2017 and successful candidates shall be notified on or before 15 August 2017 by APAY.

If you have any queries or need any clarifications please feel free to contact Mr. Duncan Chowdhury, our Executive Secretary for Programs at duncan@asiapacificymca.org for this purpose.

~ Duncan Chowhdury

Call for Climate Change E-Learners

The APAY E-learning on Climate Change is on its second year and is open for those who wish to learn more about issues on Climate Change. The nine-module curriculum aims to provide a multi-dimensional understanding about the matter where topics such as basic information of greenhouse gasses, impact on different nations, Climate Justice and Sustainable Tourism among others are covered.

The e-learning is a self-paced method of learning wherein a specific target date is given to complete the modules. The different modules have several units that contain reading materials, videos and other images that will aid in this virtual education. The e-learners also have an option whether to do self-learning or to be guided by mentors who would help facilitate their study.

As Climate Change becomes one of the most pressing issues in today's time and continues to provide threat to future generations, it is important that actions be taken to address it. Through this E-learning, APAY aims to empower youth who are environmentally responsible and work towards curbing the effects of Climate Change.

Aside from understanding the causes and impact of Climate Change in a global and national scale, the e-learning also has modules dedicated in providing lessons on various actions that can be taken such as lobbying for the environment, carbon footprint counting, eco-fair

procurement and advocating for sustainable tourism. The aim is that after acquiring enough understanding on the issue, the e-learners would have to develop a feasible plan that can be implemented in their local YMCAs and in the community.

During the first implementation year of the E-learning, there were twenty-two (22) youth who completed the course and also showcased their action plans during the Climate Change Conference held in Chiang Mai, Thailand. For this year, participants of the Change Agents program and the Green Ambassadors are among the second batch of E-learners.

It is highly encouraged that national and local YMCAs invite their youth and their staff to enroll in the course to learn more about this important issue and to aid them in developing programs for the environment in their local YMCAs and in the community. For those who have questions or are interested to enroll, you may send an e-mail to karrenf@asiapacificymca.org.

~ Karren Joy Fetalvero

Executive Committee Meeting and Related Meetings 2018

This is to give you an early notice on the dates of the APAY Executive Committee Meeting (ECM) next March for your scheduling in advance. The venue will be in Hong Kong as usual. The dates of the ECM 2018 is: 14th March (Wednesday) - 18th March (Sunday)

* Arrival: 14th March 2018

* Departure: 18th Afternoon or Morning of 19th March

Related documents will be circulated to the National Movements around October 2017 and will be available in our website www.asiapacificymca.org

Not interested any more?