

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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August 2017

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October 15-20: Regional Conference on Climate Change

One Global Community

↑ Global Citizenship Institute 2017 participants visit University of the Philippines Diliman in Quezon City, Philippines

It is all about one global community. It is all about interconnectedness. This is how the participants of the Global Citizenship Institute 2017 make sense of their roles as socially responsible global citizens. The nine (9) delegates comprising of young staff, young lay leaders and university YMCA members from the National Movements of Cambodia, Korea, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand and the YMCA Laos Committee came from various educational backgrounds such as environmental science, computer science and engineering, geography, agriculture, finance and management, economics and political science. All share however a common interest and commitment to engage in youth and community development programs in their respective YMCAs.

The gathering that was warmly hosted by the YMCA of Manila, Philippines, utilized devotions, session facilitation, community building activities, lecture presentations, group work sessions, dialogue, case study, reporting, community immersion and home stay, project proposal writing and presentations and cultural fellowship as both tools and methodology to build on the potentials and skills of youth to think critically, speak clearly, write comprehensively and practice learned skills.

Community and Family Home Stay

CAMP Asia Inc. is a non-profit, non-stock NGO that facilitates Community Development and Social Enterprise through creation of sustainable communities for Relocation Sites was the partner NGO during the community immersion and home stay. Likewise, Igting members (Ignite), a people's organization in the sewing center and is a social enterprise that provides quality apparel products and custom sewing service such as uniforms, men and women's apparel, bags and pouches accommodated the participants in their homes.

↑ GCI participants dialogue with CAMP ASIA Staff and IGTING Member at the sewing center

The distinct contribution and strength of GCI to youth and community development was the opportunity to live with the people in some of the most vulnerable communities through home stay. This year's community immersion was held in a resettlement area for informal settlers who used to live within the metropolitan city of Manila. The families hosted the participants for three (3) days and two (2) nights. This opportunity was geared to gain understanding of the life and struggles of informal settlers who were relocated in a place with limited and at times no available source of livelihood and no access to various social services such as school and hospitals. The experience gave the participants a chance to analyze the social condition of the people and reflect on the realities of their own communities. This process provided both cognitive and psycho-motor learning opportunities that were used to plan and write community-based action plans.

↑ Global Citizens from Cambodia, Phally (left) and Vichhai, promotes sustainable use of water and youth participation in communities

The individual journey of each participant finds its connection to the collective stories of youth's struggles and plight to claim their lost rights. The knowledge, values and skills learned during the institute equipped the participants to go back to their local YMCAs with concrete community-based and community development action plans that needed support and mentorship from the movement. These plans speak of their commitment to do their duties as socially responsible citizens and to contribute their potentials to the promotion of human rights and upliftment of human dignity.

~ Maria Cristina L. Miranda

#### Laos YMCA Team Exposure Visitation to Chiangmai YMCA

To intensify and deepen further the YMCA spirit of volunteerism and service of the newly organized YMCA team in Laos, 5 ( five ) of its members had a one- week exposure visitation to Chiangmai YMCA last August 4-10 headed by their leader, Ms. Phetsamone Manola. This initiative was generously supported by the YMCA of Hongkong , one of the PSGs assisting the growth and development of Laos Y through its General Secretary, Mr. Peter Ho with the strong cooperation as well of the YMCA of Chiangmai. The visit happened at the same time with the first " Boundless- Empowering the Aspiring -Service Trip Program" of the YMCA of Hongkong in Chiangmai where a group of young people from Hongkong participated and get involved. The exposure trip which was proposed during the initial PSG meeting held in Laos last March was deemed very important in equipping the team more understanding and appreciation of the YMCA as a movement , its vision , mission and ideals. Moreover, it aims to provide them personal experiences and broader ideas on how programs are being carried out and done at the YMCA and enable them to observe how YMCA volunteers and members contribute their efforts in pursuing and realizing the mission of the YMCA. Further, it hopes to encourage and inspire them to acquire considerable perspectives on how the YMCA could be fully established and developed in Laos.

In this exposure, the participating Laos team leaders visited YMCA branches in Lumphoun and SanPaTong . They spent two days visiting, observing and witnessing the different programs and activities and other endeavors these YMCAs are engaged in as a response to the needs of the community and the people they are serving. They were so pleased to see the work they are

undertaking. On the third day, they stayed in the YMCA in Sao hin and joined with the YMCA of Hongkong program participants in their cultural exposure by experiencing rural life and getting to know some local families and understanding their everyday life . While there are great similarities in their cultures and traditions, still, they were so glad to meet new families and acquaintances. They also took part in their community service activities. Another day was spent by some members of the team in Chiangrai YMCA visiting and seeing some of their programs and activities too before finally heading home.

↑ The Laos team with Mr. Peter Ho, Genera Secretary, YMCA of Hong Kong and Ms. Chularat Phongtudsirikul, Associate General Secretary, YMCA of Chiangmai

↑ Visiting YMCA and meeting staff and volunteers

The team was truly grateful for this very productive and meaningful exposure. The opportunity of visiting strong YMCAs like Chiangmai and took part in youth-led activities like that of Hongkong YMCA was significant and very much worthy to them. As a new team striving to fully understand the YMCA movement , the said exposure tremendously gave them much encouragement, inspiration and motivation. It helped them gain added ideas on how they would constantly build and develop the YMCA in Laos . The various programs and activities they observed offered them some thoughts on how they could likewise engage in similar efforts to make the YMCA a channel of empowering the community and its people.

The Laos team is extending its profound thanks to the Partner Support Groups (PSG) ( YMCAs of Hongkong, NCY of India, YMCA of Yangsan , Korea, YMCA of Chiangmai) for continuously assisting and supporting them. Hopefully, their small initiatives and actions at present will fully pave the way in the strong development of the YMCA in Laos.

~ Thelma P. Juntereal

GATN Featured Site -  
YMCA Pangasinan: Driving Change with GATN

↑ The Multi-purpose hall jointly built by YMCA of Pangasinan and YMCA of Singapore through a GATN Program

Creating change in a society is not an overnight work; instead, it takes commitment and consistency to continue because you believe in the mission.

YMCA of Pangasinan has proven this with the constant effort they put in the different Alternative Tourism programs that they have. Just recently, the turnover of a multi-purpose hall which was a product of the International Service Program between the students from the YMCA of Singapore, and the local community and volunteers from YMCA of Pangasinan is a concrete evidence of this.

The project was created by four teams of volunteers from Nanyang Technological University and several local volunteers and staff. It doesn't only aim to create a building; instead, it wishes to build the dreams of the village housewives and young people by using it as a space for technical vocational training and livelihood programs. This is only one of the several community projects the YMCA of Pangasinan has implemented through their GATN programs.

Located in the northern part of the Philippines, Pangasinan is a four-hour drive from Manila City

and known as the “Milkfish Capital of the Philippines”. It is also in this place that people will find pristine waters and hundred islands. But more than all these, YMCA of Pangasinan is more known for the good relationship and friendship that it can offer.

Pangasinan has been hosting several sending YMCAs such as Taichung YMCA, YMCA of Singapore and Saitama YMCA. The programs that they create are tailor-made to the capacity of the volunteers and to the needs of the community. With the diverse community that it supports, there are several different opportunities to volunteer in.

One of the most staple parts of the program is the construction work where participants stretch their muscles and do labor works for different projects such as a pathway in muddy rice paddies, walls for classrooms, flooring for schools, or in the story mentioned above- a multi purpose hall for the village. The participants experience to carry blocks, sift sand, and polish the cement as it is all part of the process. Regardless of the heat of the sun or the drench from the rain, what is always noticeable is the smile of the people who not only create a building but build a friendship in the process.

↑ Young People working hard to accomplish the community project in one of the Alternative Tourism programs.

In one of the activities, YMCA of Pangasinan brings the participants to a dump site to make them realize the importance of preserving nature and caring for the environment. Several issues in the community spawn from this experience but what is highlighted always is the empathy of the young people and an awakening for them to take actions on various issues even in their local communities. Values formation is also one of the key aspects of an alternative tourism program. The goal of these programs is to expose the participants out of their comfort zones and to make them realize the issues faced in a particular community. Through this, the participants not only visit places but they learn deeper about these communities and build a stronger connection to the place and to the people of that community.

Indeed, GATN strives to find harmony in benefitting both the host community and the participants. This is one of the principles to which the GATN started and continue to stand for. Seeing that mass tourism, in hindsight, actually creates harm in the communities; GATN endeavors to make tourism beneficial for the community by channeling these opportunities into doors for development. In YMCA of Pangasinan, GATN does not only build infrastructures, instead, it continues to build dreams by providing a scholarship to young people in the community- a proof of strong commitment to education and sustainable activities that provide sustainable benefit to the community.

↑ One of the activities in a GATN program of YMCA of Pangasinan is a visit to the dumpsite.

Similarly, GATN aspires to develop a responsible and sustainable attitude towards tourism. Through the interaction and realizations the participants gained from this experience, GATN attempts to cultivate people who have a deeper sense of global citizenship and advocates for a more meaningful, more responsible and more sustainable form of travel.

Promoting sustainable and responsible travel and providing mutual benefits between the host and the participants are among the key principles of GATN. And true enough, with commitment and consistency in these principles, the aspiration to make change through tourism; and to make Alternative Tourism not just a program but an advocacy and a way of life are within reach.

~ Karren Joy Fetalvero

### Regional Conference on Climate Change

The Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs will be conducting its 2nd Regional Conference on Climate Change in Daegu, Korea on October 15-20, 2017. This will be participated by youth who have finished the E-learning on Climate Change and submitted an action plan.

The conference will serve as the culmination of the four month E-learning program that allowed the participants to learn more about issues on climate change. Also, the participants will be asked to report on an environmental program or activity that they proposed or they have implemented after the e-learning as it will form part of the assessment of their comprehension.

It is expected that the conference will be filled with discussions on topics that were not covered in the E-learning and that the participants will have an exposure in a community to give them a practical application of the things they learned. At the end of the conference, the APAY hopes that the participants will be strong in advocating for Climate Change issues and other environmental concerns.

Application for the conference is until September 15, 2017 while official announcement of the participants will be released shortly after.

This program will be hosted by Daegu YMCA.

~ Karren Joy Fetalvero

### Bali field trip a highlight of SOP's second module

The eighth School of Peace (SOP) conducted by Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) began on July 15 near Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with 16 participants from 10 Asian countries. The first module of the three-month program focused on people's multiple identities, including gender, sexual orientation and faith. Other important topics of the first module involved sessions on structural analysis to better understand sources of power within society and community organizing to learn how grassroots people can utilize their own power for social and economic change.

The emphasis of the second module of SOP that began in mid-August is on conflict, violence and war. The participants discussed definitions of conflict, examined the causes of conflict and considered a number of approaches to potentially resolve conflicts non-violently. In addition, the participants learned how to use photography and drama as tools for transformation that can be effective ways to educate communities about their issues and to motivate them to take action.

↑ The SOP participants create their own masks as part of the session on identity

A highlight of the second module was a four-day field trip to the island of Bali—a predominantly Hindu area of the country. During this field trip, the participants visited organizations providing women with alternative health care and legal aid for women and children. They also met survivors of the mass killings in Indonesia of alleged communists that began in 1965 and that took the lives of between 500,000 and three million people within a one-year period. They met as well victims of so-called development—members of fishing communities along the coast that are being displaced for land reclamation. Lastly, during a session discussing transitional justice, they learned about the stolen children of Timor-Leste who were forcibly taken by Indonesian

soldiers back to Indonesia during the violent conflict between 1975 and 1999 in Timor-Leste.  
~ Bruce Van Voorhis

Not interested any more?