

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
March 2020

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2. ICF Alumni organize activities supported by ICF's small grants
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The ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic and YMCA Response

- APAY NGSs met by Zoom with Carlos Sanvee, SG of World Alliance and Emergency Plans to be developed –

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the YMCAs in Asia and Pacific region,

We wish to send warm greetings to you from APAY, Hong Kong amid the ongoing, if not aggravating, covid-19 pandemic in our region, as well as the whole world. I am writing to share with you some of the developments in APAY and World YMCA in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Among others, there was a NGSs Meeting by Zoom on 26th March co-convened by Carlos Sanvee, Secretary General of the World Alliance and Nam Boo Won, GS of APAY. Thirteen NGSs were present in the video conference with APAY staff and some of the national YMCAs' staff, with apologies from two NGSs. It was a good opportunity to not only share the covid-19 pandemic situation and its impacts on the YMCAs in each and every country represented but also seek together ways and means for mutual support to help overcome the pandemic. (If you want to receive the full notes of the NGSs meeting, kindly write to Ms. Irene Chan at office@asiapacificymca.org).

↑ APAY NGSs sharing the covid-19 situation in their countries at a Zoom meeting

Now, with a view to following up of the suggestions made at the NGSs meeting, I would like to propose the following:

First, let us have time for "Praying Together" from the place where you are, on the evening of next Thursday, 9th April - one day before Good Friday, the suggested time is, from 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm. As you would agree with me, we are called to pray, among others, for:

* The safety of the frontline medical workers, so that they could continue to work for the patients without burnout or being infected.

* Those victims and their families of the covid-19 pandemic

* Those poor and vulnerable sectors of our society who had been most hit by the impacts of the

pandemic, economically and otherwise

* Those who have been and are devoted to producing the products of people's basic needs such as rice and other basic foods, PPEs for covid-19, and the like.

* Governments and political leaders who are called and urged to collaborate each other in a well-coordinated manner to help overcome this human-made crisis, beyond "my country-first" attitude.

* Lastly but not the least, the YMCAs which are suffering for their sustainability, if not survival, due to the negative impacts of the pandemic.

Secondly, as strongly suggested in the NGSs meeting, we will organize a regular ZOOM meeting among the NGSs to share, learn from each other, and seek to help overcome the huge effects of the pandemic by creating "collective intelligence" among them. In addition, we will create an SNS group of APAY NGSs to enable speedy and timely communication among them, particularly with regard to collectively coping with the Covid-19 pandemic situation in our region.

In the meantime, the Global Staff Team (GST) comprised of Area Secretaries headed by Carlos Sanvee, continued to meet by online to explore a possible global action in response to the covid-19 pandemic, including supporting fragile national movements hard hit by the pandemic. A kind of "YMCA Solidarity Fund" is being explored and, once approved by the WAY governance, the fund will help to relieve at least partially the financial burdens of those fragile/struggling YMCAs in our region as well. In addition, on-line virtual conferences, webinars and other events will be provided by APAY as well as World Alliance with a view to strengthening the capacity of YMCAs in Resilience & Recovery in the time of the pandemic. We will announce them and invite all of you to these on-line spaces as soon as the plan is finalized.

A very encouraging news is that, amid many challenges and difficulties faced, several national/local YMCAs in our region have already went out to the streets and villages to render emergency humanitarian services to the most affected people. As you can see in the photos below, the YMCAs are providing masks and other Personal Protection Equipment (PPE); basic foods such as rice to the poorest people; awareness building on the Covid-19 prevention methods; and even producing masks at the YMCA for distribution to communities. We have collected this information from the Facebook.

↑ YMCA of Albay, Inc., Philippines have distributed more than 80 face shields to different hospitals, since its launch in March 25, 2020.

↑ YMCA Alwaye Project of India has been distributing 150 food packets everyday through the police department to the needy people during Lockdown.

↑ Batticaloa YMCA of Sri Lanka have provided Disposable Personal protective equipment(PPE) 355 sets, Surgical masks 5,000 pieces and Clean hand gloves 5,000 pieces to medical professionals of the city

↑ In Bangladesh, Birisiri YMCA's youth volunteers participated in spraying disinfectants throughout the neighborhood to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

↑ In Bangladesh, Dinajpur YMCA took a program to distribute food to the poor people of the community

↑ Jaffna YMCA of Sri Lanka distributed provisions to the families of daily wage earners

↑ Youth member of Kaligram YMCA in Bangladesh distributing facemasks, soaps and leaflets on information to prevent coronavirus to the village people.

↑ YMCA Ranchi distributed food grains in different adopted slum centers of YMCA

Finally, we wish all of you to stay safe and healthy amid the continuing pandemic. May God allow us His courage and wisdom to overcome the challenges/difficulties faced by us and our YMCAs now and in the days to come.

With best wishes,

Prof. Chen Chin-Seng

Nam Boo Won

President

General Secretary

ICF Alumni organize activities supported by ICF's small grants

ICF alumni organize and conduct activities for local peace education, advocacy and networking for implementation in the month of March 2020, with ICF's Small Grant support. Among them were alumni in Timor Leste, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Marawi, Philippines. Timor Leste, led by Leo Gamboa Marçal and Luis Garcia, alumni of School of Peace, both SoP 2019 alumni, and assisted by Magdalena "Nona" Pinto, SoP 2018, implemented the activity with the theme "Human Rights and Conflict Transformation" on March 5-8, 2020 in Samaun Ismaik, Dare, Dili. Nepal, on its part, with the leadership of Kaushila Sunuwar, SoP 2019 and Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman, SoP 2017, held their activity around the theme "Peace Education and Conflict Transformation" on March 11-13, 2020 in Nepalgunj, Province 5.

Marawi and Sri Lanka, however, were not able to implement their programs on the "Mindanao Youth Peace Formation" set on March 21-23, and "Peacebuilding and Nonviolent Communication" set on March 12-13, 2020 respectively. The prohibition for public gathering due to the onslaught of the coronavirus named COVID-19 caught up with them. The recipients will implement the programs as soon as the pandemic is over.

The workshop in Timor Leste had youth participants: thirteen females and six males. Among them were three Baha'is and one Muslim. One must understand that Timor Leste's population is predominantly Christian, specifically, Roman Catholic. Timor Leste YMCA's general secretary, Antonio da Silva provided the orientation on the history of YMCA and the work of ICF.

A SoP 2018 alumna, Magdalena Pinto facilitated the topic of 'Understanding the definition of Conflicts.' She said she feels very happy to share her experience because many young people lack knowledge and capacity.

↑Kaushila (extreme right) and Mohammad (extreme left)
with the leaders of different religions in Nepalgunj
↑ Nepalgunj Participants presented their conflict analysis
through a conflict Tree

In Nepal, 20 core participants - Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Sikhs - joined the activities that went for three days. The first-day session focused on understanding Peace, Conflict, conflict transformation and the role of media to build peace. Kaushila Sunuwar led the workshop on Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis, while Mohammad Rahaman facilitated the session on Conflict Transformation. A guest facilitated the topic on the Role of the Media. The second day was set aside for an Interreligious Dialogue with Religious Leaders on Peace and Reconciliation. Aside from the core participants, more than 30 people from the community – young and old – joined the activity. Different religious leaders give their understanding of peace from their religion's perspective and engaged in dialog with the audience. On the third day, the core participants went for a community visit and field exposure in Narainapur village. It is a village that had been, in the last four years, disturbed by Hindu-Muslim conflict, although the roots are traced back to political reasons and misinformation. Appreciating the activity, the religious leaders recommended that similar activity be also done in schools and communities. The activity in Nepal was covered by the local media.

Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) seeks to provide a small grant preferably for programs such as “peace campaigns or interfaith communal harmony in . . . local contexts” and those “that will focus on peace advocacy, peace education, training of teachers in schools, etc.” The follow-up actions on SoPs and other ICF-initiated activities are expected to be carried out by the ICF activities. ICF encourages the alumni to take the initiatives to make follow up activities for the ICF Alumni and their local setting for the local youth. ICF provides small grants to support these initiatives.

There are two programs that ICF supports: Alumni Follow-Up Program Support and Local Peace Education and Advocacy Grant. The first is given to ICF alumni to organize activities for ICF alumni. The aim should be to gather the graduates of ICF programs to enhance the knowledge and skills gained during ICF activities, and to strengthen their national forums. The second program is given to ICF alumni who seek to “address [on] peace and reconciliation concerns and issues emerging at the local or national contexts.” In this vein, they hold local peace education or advocacy programs for the youth in a local community or on the national level. This will also encourage the local youth to make efforts to become peacebuilders in their local contexts.

↑ Group Photo at Timor Leste
↑ Small group discussion at Timor Leste National Forum

The proposals from the ICF alumni for Alumni Follow-Up activity and for Local Peace Education and Advocacy that needs revision such as those of the Philippines and Myanmar implementation in April 2020 are put on hold until the COVID 19 pandemic will be over.
~Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, ICF Coordinator

New President of the YMCA of Taiwan

Dr. Dennis Ching-Yang Lee has been elected as the President of the YMCA of Taiwan from March 21, 2020.

He is a dentist and has been in medical services for many years. He is now the head of Lee Dental Clinic. He has long been concerned about social development and devoted himself to social services, and has actively participated in the Tainan YMCA. Currently, he is the President of the Tainan YMCA.

Not only that, he also works in church and Christian organizations. He is the Elder of the Great Light Presbyterian Church, and the Board Member of the Gideons International of the ROC.

Tsutomu Taguchi - New NGS of NCY Japan

Mr. Tsutomu Taguchi has been appointed as the new National General Secretary of NCY Japan, effective from 1 April 2020. He has been working for the YMCA since 1979. He worked the Yokohama YMCA diligently for 40 years, and served as General Secretary from 2008 to 2019. He has been active in the field of early childhood education, youth empowerment, support for the challenged children, elderly support, international cooperation and exchange. Through the community activities of Yokohama YMCA, he had been engaged in community development and support for the voluntary and social activities. He has also been an important leader of the national YMCA, serving as YMCA National Board Member since 2010.

APAY takes this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Taguchi for his appointment as the NGS and also express our deepest gratitude to Mr. Seiichi Kanzaki, the present NGS for his dedicated work as NGS and support to APAY for the past three years. He will return to his hometown Kyoto in April after his long service of 40 years as a YMCA staff and excited to start a new retired life.

↑ Bible Handover Ceremony

Not interested any more?