

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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

1. Green Ambassadors Training (Virtual)
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3. Travel the YMCA Way
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5. ICF holds Virtual Seminar-Workshop on the Intersection of Religion, Gender and Human Rights
6. APAY Gender Equity Committee Meeting held via Zoom - Dr. Meerha Han elected as Chair
7. ICF Welcomes Annika Denkmann to the APAY-ICF Family

Nov 8-22: YMCA Secretaries Basic Training Course

Nov 19 & 26: ICF Workshop on Intersection of Religion, Gender and Human Rights

Green Ambassadors Training (Virtual),  
6-12 October 2020; 3:00-6:00 pm HKT

One of the intervention programs of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs in its continued efforts to combat climate change is its annual conduct of the Green Ambassadors Training. Due however to the current COVID19 situation, the training was held virtually last 6-12 October 2020 at 3-6pm (HKT). Around 70 young staff and volunteers from the YMCA movements in China, Hong Kong, India, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand participated the said training that was aimed to educate YMCA staff, leaders, volunteers, youth and communities to bring about behavioral changes in order to reduce carbon footprints and to advocate for eco-justice.

The training that was moderated by the APAY Green Team included the following areas of learning as part of the continued commitment to strengthen Green Movement towards a carbon neutral YMCA by 2030:

\* Climate Crisis, Policy and Advocacy on Climate Justice: A keynote presentation by Sze Pang Cheung, Executive Director, Greenpeace East Asia

\* Carbon Emission and Carbon Footprint Calculation and YMCA towards becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030: an input presentation and workshop by Colin Lambie, APAY Green team Member and YMI Green Team

\* Sustainable Development Goals on Climate Change: an input presentation by Lee Man Key, APAY Green Team Member and Coordinating Secretary (Kowloon District 1), Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

\* Action Planning led by Narupacha Muang-in, APAY Green Team Member and Head of Climate Change Education Program at Sao Hin YMCA

The training also included case studies related to YMCA good practices on climate change action. Three YMCAs presented their case studies and the impact it created to their communities. The following case studies were presented:

\* Green YMCA and Green Community: YMCA of Makati, YMCA Philippines; Presented by Magda Gana, Program Secretary, YMCA of Makati, Green Ambassador Batch 2018

\* Sao Hin YMCA Educational Center; Presented by Narupacha Muang-in, Head of Climate Change Education Program at Sao Hin YMCA

\* Environmental Conservation; Presented by Saw Tun Lu, Manager, Sustainable Livelihood and Community Development Project, Myanmar YMCA

Equally important session included the participants sharing of their national environment and climate change situation; and the current actions done in their respective countries and/or YMCAs. The participants also presented their action plan/project that is intended to be directly implemented in their respective YMCAs or communities.

↑ Green Ambassadors Training 2020 Participants with their commitment to take action on Climate Change

Through the designed learning sessions, APAY is confident that the participants, referred to as Green Ambassadors, will continue the work in encouraging their respective YMCAs and communities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions; forming and/or strengthening Green Team in local YMCAs levels; increasing its engagement in environmentally friendly practices in local YMCAs and communities by integrating environmental issues into YMCA programs; creating more Green YMCAs and Green Communities; expanding Green YMCA and Green Organization Network; conducting carbon audit; and developing green action plan towards becoming a carbon neutral YMCA by 2030.

~ Maria Cristina Miranda, Executive Secretary for Programs

### Youth-Led Solutions Initiative on Climate Change

One hundred twenty-five young people represented the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs to the recently concluded Youth-Led Solution Initiative (YLSI) on Climate Change organized by World YMCA, in collaboration with YMCA of USA and the YMCA of San Francisco. The YMCA also partnered with the United Nations to celebrate the signing of the UN Charter. The virtual events took place from 12-23 October 2020 with two live events that featured key leaders from the YMCAs, UN and various individuals and organizations working to address climate change.

The youth representing APAY comprises of 13 local and national 'Solutions Teams' from 10 national movements namely, Australia, Cambodia, India, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. Each team has been engaged with series of discussion on issues related to climate crisis and exploration of youth-led solutions. The regional office

facilitated series of online discussions and learnings over a couple of months to prepare our youth group to the launching of YLSI. To culminate the learning experience, APAY organized a virtual regional dialogue that included a keynote presentation on climate crisis and green new deal by Sze Pang Cheung, Executive Director, Greenpeace East Asia; and the sharing of concept papers on climate change solutions plan. Each solutions team developed the project proposals for submission to the global planning team of YLSI for possible seed fund grant.

#### ↑ APAY YLS Team at the regional conversation

The APAY also facilitated online workshops on subject matters taught during APAY Green Ambassadors Training and GATN Manager's Training. These workshops included input on Carbon Footprint Calculation by APAY Green Team Member Colin Lambie and Global Alternative Tourism by Taichung YMCA and GATN APAY. APAY was also represented by Hemant Yauthai, a Green Ambassador Alumni and a young volunteer at Sao Hin YMCA, Chiangmai during the youth dialogue session. APAY also took part in the YLSI program plan and design through its youth representatives to the YLSI Global Planning Committee namely Magda Gana, YMCA of Makati, Philippines and Jeannie Chen, YMCA Taichung, Taiwan.

The two-week virtual gathering that was joined by around 600 young people from around the globe included online workshops, roundtables, keynote, interactive virtual engagement and solutions showcase. The event was designed with the vision to amplify youth solutions that positively impact local and global sustainability, the development of just and equitable communities, and the well-being of the people.

~ Maria Cristina Miranda, Executive Secretary for Programs

#### Travel the YMCA Way - GATN campaign at the YLSS

The Youth-Led Solution Summit is an initiative of the World YMCA, in collaboration with YMCA of the USA and the YMCA of San Francisco, the United Nations, academia and external partners to empower young people and drive social innovation to advance the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The vision of the Summits is to amplify youth solutions that positively impact local and global sustainability, the development of just and equitable communities, and the well-being of all people.

The first in the series of Summits, held virtually from 12-23 October 2020, focused on Climate Action. More than 700 young leaders between the ages of 15-35 from over 30 countries in six continents joined this event via online workshops, keynotes, interactive virtual engagement and solutions showcase event throughout the two weeks, and commitment to advance the environmental action to reduce climate change. Young people from APAY provided two workshops in YLSS, one is Carbon Footprint Calculation, and the other one is GATN (Global Alternative Tourism Network).

A lot of the YMCA youth empowerment programs involve travel, e.g. workshops, youth exchange, conferences, workcamps, etc. However, traveling by air has very high carbon footprint, making up 70% of the total carbon footprint of each trip. We need to mitigate for our carbon footprint, through our behavior and activities that we engage in at the destination. The YLSS workshop was a good opportunity for us to promote the mission of GATN to teach our young people to travel responsibly and sustainably. "Traveling the YMCA way"... that should be our new travel lifestyle, even into our daily life.

In GATN workshop, Taichung YMCA showcased how their young people traveled responsibly and sustainably. Traveling Taichung YMCA's way is through the International Service Trips and over 800 young people from Taiwan join this program every year. It's a life changing experience for these young people and they will remember it for the rest of their lives. They will be traveling responsibly and sustainably for the rest of their lives, including their consumption habits, their respect and actions to protect the environment.

The proposal from the Taichung Solutions team to combat climate change is to change the whole paradigm of travel and tourism. Traveling the YMCA way is to live a responsible and sustainable lifestyle.

Each year about 10,000 to 20,000 from the global YMCA are traveling related to YMCA programs and meetings, nationally, regionally and internationally. That's why we'd like to raise the awareness to the global community, if we need to travel, then let us travel the YMCA way, responsibly and sustainably. Here are some of the conclusions from the solution team:

1. We should redefine travel and tourism.

GATN, is a new way for us to re-think travel and tourism. Travel should not be just pleasure and consumption. It should promote resource sharing, support and empower the local communities. It should be friendly to the environment, respectful to culture and nature.

2. YMCA can be the leader of this new tourism trend.

YMCA has the 2 strength that no other organization can match, the biggest global network and closest relationship with local community. We can use our strength to design and promote a travel lifestyle that is responsible and sustainable... "Traveling the YMCA way". We should use YMCA's global network to make an impact.

3. Our intended impact:

- \* popularize responsible tourism mindset
- \* assisting global-partnership in YMCA network
- \* assisting local & communities' development
- \* empowerment of youth
- \* education for people to take climate action

If you consider yourself a responsible and sustainable traveler, join us, Traveling the YMCA way and living a more responsible and sustainable life.

↑ Solution Team members of Responsible Tourism. (Taiwan)

(Watch the workshop on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/yGrhO7LVSwQ> ;  
<https://youtu.be/wEulTf9GfQk>)

~ Jeannie Chen, Program Director of Taichung YMCA and  
Member of YLSS Global Planning Committee

ICF's book "Seek Peace and Pursue It: Daring to Take Small Steps" has arrived

The hard copy version of the book *Seek Peace and Pursue It: Daring to Take Small Steps* just arrived from the printing shop. The book has three parts:

Part I – *Seeking Peace* has four essays from a Buddhist layperson, and from the APAY-ICF staff.

Part II – *Stories of Pursuing Peace* is composed of stories from the experiences of twenty-five ICF alumni. Of the 25 entries, two are from Bangladesh, one from India, one from Cambodia, three from Indonesia, one from Laos, 3 from Myanmar, two from Nepal, nine from the Philippines, one from Thailand, and two from Timor Leste.

Part III is a section on poetry that includes seven poems also from ICF alumni. An alumna from Nepal translated two poems that her SoP batch mate wrote from Nepalese into English.

The book will not be possible without the contributions of the alumni and the efforts of the production team. An ICF thematic workshop alumna, Teodora Dotusme from the Philippines, designed the book cover. The ICF program officer, Baidido Saganding collected the essays from the ICF alumni and Annika Denkmann, the seconded personnel from Bread for the world did the layout while she was working from home in Germany. Sunita Suna, one of the Executive Secretary for Programs, joined Annika Denkmann and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro in proofreading the materials. Irene Chan and Fion Fung helped in the acquisition of ISBNs, contacting the printing shop and logistic arrangements, respectively.

Nam Boo Won, General Secretary of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCA wrote the Foreword. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro did the editing of the materials and coordinating the production of the book.

The book has a digital version that is available at the ICF's website, [interfaithforum.org](http://interfaithforum.org).

~ Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, ICF Coordinator

ICF holds Virtual Seminar-Workshop on the Intersection of Religion, Gender and Human Rights

ICF will hold a series of sessions that comprise the virtual seminar-workshop on The Intersection of Religion, Gender and Human Rights on November 19 and 26, and December 3 and 10, 2020. All the session proper will cover two hours, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., except for the session on November 26, 2020 that will take place from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Admission into the rooms will begin at 30 minutes before the session starts.

The sessions are open to public but interested person must register at ICF's website, [interfaithforum.org](http://interfaithforum.org).

The activity is ICF's way of aligning with UN's "16-Days of Activism against gender-based violence that starts on November 25 and ends on December 10, 2020. The sessions will be on Thursdays to weave into the UN's call and the World Council of Churches campaign #ThursdaysinBlack in "resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence, and to show respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence."

While ICF conceived this program within the framework of a thematic workshop for the young people, this program is open to anyone who is interested to join. Please visit ICF's website, [interfaithforum.org](http://interfaithforum.org) to register and signify the topics of your interest.

Each session carries one objective as outlined below, so that whatever religious tradition the participants come from, they should be able to -

\* identify the interconnection of religious views on gender and women's sexuality with various forms of sexual abuse;

\* formulate one's personal answer to the question: "Is God's love exclusive for the straight people?"

\* explain why health is a human right and a peace issue, and connect this especially with the struggles of Persons with Disability and of those afflicted with HIV and AIDS; and

\* analyze the situation of women in different sectors and explain how people and their respective government systems either uphold or violate women's rights.

Dates and Time

Topics

Resource Persons

November 19 – Thursday

4:00 – 6:00 HKT

Religion, Femicide, and Various Forms of Sexual Abuse

Dr. Liza Lamis – Executive Secretary, International Fellowship of the Least Coin

Ms. Mercy Kappen – Executive Director, Vishtar, Bangalore, India

November 26 – Thursday

5:00 – 7:00 HK time

Religion and LGBT Communities: "Is God's Love Exclusive for the Straight People?"

Dr. Sharon Bong – Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Monash University Malaysia;

Dr. Al Fuytes – Associate Professor, George Mason University, Virginia specializing in psycho-social trauma healing as an important component of conflict transformation

December 3 - Thursday

4:00 – 6:00 HK time

Health as Human Rights and Peace Issue (incorporating the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Persons with Disabilities and those afflicted with HIV/AIDS)

Dr. Erlinda Senturias – physician, former WCC and CCA consultant on the church's role in Addressing HIV/AIDS, now based in the Philippines

Dr. Tabita Kartika Christiani – Associate Professor, Duta Wacana Faculty of Theology, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

December 10 – Thursday

4:00 – 6:00 HK time

Women's Rights are Human Rights

Hon. Samira Gutoc – lawmaker, journalist, Human Rights champion  
Dr. Sonia George – General Secretary, Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)  
Union in Kerala, a feminist activist

Atty. Anjana Ramanathan – young lawyer, recipient of Support Staff Silver Medal in Human Rights from Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University

↑ Dr. Liza Lamis  
↑ Ms. Mercy Kappen  
↑ Dr. Sharon Bong  
↑ Dr. Al Fuertes

For those who are interested to join as Regular Participants

Those who wish to participate as regular participants of this virtual Seminar-Workshop must be present in all four (4) sessions and carry out some requirements such as reflection papers, and do some readings on the topics during each week. Those who complete the sessions will receive a reimbursement of their internet connection expenses at the end of the four meetings. They could also prepare a proposal on a doable project that in relation to any of the four themes. The participant-proponent will then implement these projects in their communities at least two weeks after the 4th session.

~ Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, ICF Coordinator

APAY Gender Equity Committee (GEC) Meeting held via Zoom  
- Dr. Meerha Hahn elected as Chair –

The GE Committee meeting was held virtually on November 4, at 3 PM HKT. The members, including invitees and APAY staff, attended the meeting.

The main agenda of the meeting was to elect the new Chairperson for the GEC, for the current quadrennium (2020-2023), and discuss the upcoming gender justice programs and activities.

The election of the Chair was postponed due to the COVID19 pandemic and the possibility of a face to face meeting is grim in the present situation, that led us to organize this virtual meeting. We are happy to inform that the members elected Dr Meerha Hahn as the new chairperson of the GEC for the next quadrennium to lead the GEC and advance the work of the gender justice programs in the Asia and Pacific region through the APAY.

The members are thankful to Ms Nagako Okado, the former Chairperson, for her excellent work with passion and commitment towards gender justice for the past four years. The members appreciated Ms Cristina Miranda, who was the staff in charge of the gender justice program for her hard works to implement all the proposed programs and recommendations of the GEC in the Asia and Pacific region.

The members also discussed the immediate upcoming gender justice programs and planned to meet again to develop the gender justice program strategy for the next quadrennium.

The GEC is formed to work mainly on the followings:

\* Advancing the APAY Gender policy guidelines and strategies for gender sensitivity and gender-responsive programs at all levels within the region.

- \* Increasing leadership skills and capacity development for women empowerment and gender equality through sub-regional leadership formation/training.
- \* Cultivating the culture/sense of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls at all levels through the creation of platforms of learning, reflection and exchanges of experiences
- \* Enhancing advocacy capacities of various constituents that promote policy and programming reforms for equal opportunities for all gender at all levels
- \* Encouraging constitutional change at local and national levels to facilitate women membership and leadership in Local and National Boards.
- \* Organizing and mobilization of national/local movements to engage in community-based gender justice and women empowerment projects
- \* Networking with the World Alliance and other NGOs for the development of gender justice programs.
- \* Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of gender justice strategies annually and post quadrennial period.

Dr Meerha Hahn, the New Chairperson of the Gender Equity Committee (GEC)- APAY  
We are happy to announce that the Gender Equity Committee virtually met on November 4 and elected Dr Meerha Hahn as the Chairperson to lead the GEC for the current quadrennium (2020-2023). Dr Hahn hails from South Korea, an ordained minister at the Korea Association of Non-denominational Seminaries at Christian Universities (KANSCU). She also is the Emeritus Professor of Applied Theology at the Hoseo University, Graduate School of Theology. She served as a Professor, Dean, Senior Chaplain, Chairperson, and the Director of Centre for International Education for 25 years (1994-2019). Dr Hahn is the recipient of the Presidential Order of the Republic of Korea in 2019.

Dr Hahn has served at the Korea Society of Christian Education & Information Technology in different capacities and has contributed her leadership for the D.Min Program at Drew & Luther Rice University in the USA. She has also contributed to developing curriculum for Bible studies for youth and women. Dr Hahn has authored nine books, autobio essay, and dozens of academic articles. Some of her writings are based on feminist theology, theological education in Asian contexts; women in the digital era, among others.

Dr Hahn brings a wealth of experience as an academician and feminist theologian to lead the GEC to contribute to the ongoing work of gender justice in the AP region through the APAY. She envisions a better world for women, men and young people, to experience life in all its fullness. She is committed to addressing the issues of discrimination based on gender and sex, and gender-based violence through the gender justice program of the APAY and very much looking forward to working together with the members of the GEC.

While we welcome the new chairperson of GEC Dr Hahn, we acknowledge and extend our heartfelt thanks to Ms Nagako Okado, the outgoing chairperson for her excellent leadership in leading the GEC with passion and commitment for gender justice for the past four years and ten months.



~ Sunita Suna, Executive Secretary for Programs

### ICF Welcomes Annika Denkmann to the APAY-ICF Family

Annika Denkmann finished her 14-day quarantine on October 21, 2020, and is now reporting to the ICF-APAY office in Hong Kong. She joined ICF on July 21, 2020, as seconded personnel from Bread for the World. She was “working from home” in Germany until she could travel to Hong Kong.

Annika holds a Bachelor’s degree in Intercultural Communication and Modern Languages and a masters’ degree in International Politics with a focus on globalization, poverty, and development. She also holds certificates for Peace and Conflict Work from the Academy for Conflict Transformation in Königswinter, and International Project Management with the Association for Sustainable Development in Witzenhausen, Germany.

Her exposure to the Asian context was during her four-month internship with Cambodia Defenders Project, focusing on the campaign against Gender-Based Violence in Cambodia. Annika has worked as Programme Coordinator for the Engagement Global-Service for Development Initiatives in Bonn. She was also the volunteer coordinator for the Evangelical-Lutheran Mission in Lower Saxony, Hermannsburg. She also spent a nine-month internship in Eirene, an International Christian Service for Peace in Neuwied where she assists the tasks in the volunteer department.

Aside from German, her mother tongue, Annika also speaks excellent English and has a basic knowledge of French and Spanish. With her rich experience, she will surely boost the work of ICF in empowering young people around Asia.

~ Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, ICF Coordinator

Not interested any more?