

↑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 2014

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Nov 2-29: 32nd Advanced Studies Programme, Wu Kwai Sha, Hong Kong

APAY Youth Conference 2014

The APAY Youth Conference is an annual program of the Youth Participation and Leadership Development Committee of APAY. This is a platform where young people together share their own YMCA youth empowerment activities and learn new experiences from other national movement youth empowerment actions. This year theme of the youth conference was “Youth Engagement for Sustainable Development”. At the conference the participants dwelt on YMCA volunteerism and build new generation of leaders for sustainability of the YMCA and community. Global Citizenship Education was one of the priority areas for training of the young people and developed as a unique platform to prepare the youth to become effective leaders and change-makers in their respective communities. This one of the tools to help equip the youth for progressive leadership development, making them committed youth leaders and ready to actively participate and take greater responsibilities in promoting common consciousness and understand about global realities.

The APAY Youth Conference was held 25-30 August 2014 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Sixty Two youths from various countries of our region, like Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Cambodia took part in the Regional Youth Conference 2014, this was hosted by the Cambodia YMCA.

The Deputy General Director of ministry of education, youth and sports of Cambodia, Mr. Chek Lim, was the guest of honor and talked about current youth development of Cambodia. Cambodia Government mainly focuses youth education and development providing more facilities to schools and universities for higher education. He hoped that the YMCA Regional Youth Conference shall integrate the Cambodian youths to build good relations with other youths of our region.

Mr. Max Ediger, was the key resource person. He presentation was about hope and change, though sharing his years of experience and all the lessons he has learned in life. He then

enumerated the lessons we could learn from the face, on the topics of sustainable development, transformation, volunteering, struggle, focus, vision, patience, comfort-zone and courage.

After his sharing, the delegates were divided into groups and shared with each other the issues and struggles their respective countries are currently facing.

Youth Development officer APAY, Mr. Roger Peiris shared APAY youth empowerment program which are leading by Youth participation and leadership development committee. Participants shared their national and local youth empowerment presentations.

Dr. Sok Toch rector of Khemarak University addressed about Cambodian Independence, Democracy, Conflict with Cambodian and Vietnam Community, Cultural evaluation, Conflict with China and Russia, and the difficulties and the development of Cambodia.

The Exposure visited the Toul Sleng Museum, which was known as S-21 and Killing Fields during the 1975-1979. The Cambodian YMCA staff, together with the local participants, explained to the history of Khmer Rouge. They elaborated how the intellectuals and wealthy people were tortured and killed during that time, while touring everyone around the same buildings where the gruesome acts were conducted. It was apparent in the air that the participants were overwhelmed by the unbelievable atrocities that happened during the Khmer Rouge reign.

The participants visited the slums Bor Brok community in Phnom Penh, Cambodia YMCA project area where participants witnessed the plight of the poor people in Cambodia. Participants divided 10 different groups; each group interviewed many families, Elderly people, children living in the neighborhood and got to know them. Cambodia YMCA youth volunteers explained Cambodia YMCA service projects and how they engagement with Bor Brok community. The participant met families who are beneficiaries of Cambodia YMCA's home stay program. The young people got to know a lot about the living conditions of Phnom Penh residents and also about Cambodia YMCA's projects and activities, while getting a look around the area.

The participants shared thoughts and feelings about the exposure trip. They showed different ways Dramas, Live show, News , Presentation etc.

Mr. Bunthok Deth, General Secretary of Cambodia YMCA gave a speech highlighting the youth volunteers' roles and responsibilities regarding local and national issues. He stressed the importance of being persistent and determined. The youth should be prepared to become the strongest foundation of a country. An analogy of this is that youth are similar to the foundation of a house, and a house represents a country. There needs to be a good foundation in order to build a strong house with a good quality. This applies to the relationship between the youth and a country.

Mr. Max Ediger shared about systematic analysis and lateral thinking, which are helpful strategies in life. He conducted puzzles and games to waken the minds of the participants and encourage them to think differently and more progressively.

He gave every group a big piece of white paper and asked them to make a drawing showing one issue that they saw in the poor community and the ways of solving it. The participants unleashed their creativity in order to share with each other their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

Open flow discussion asked inquiry what is your respond through YMCA those issues? Young people willing to help YMCA though community work. They are committed to give their

volunteer support. They requested YMCA make plan more integrate young people for community empowerment work.

Every national movement shared their national action plans related youth empowerment. Bangladesh: Promoting camping, Philippines: Promoting Human resources through local events, Cambodia: National youth gathering ,Thailand: One night camp (invite beneficiaries to attend), Sri Lanka: Re activate Youth Club , Hong Kong: No internet facilities in Restaurant (build human relationship), Myanmar: Workshop promote volunteerism, Vietnam: Education for youth, Japan: Study tour/ educate why Japan people needs to be happy.

~ Roger Peiris, Youth Programme Officer, APAY

YMCA One Million Voices

Five national trainings on One Million Voices were held in Singapore, India, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong during the months of August and September. The National Coordinators and supporting staff had participated in these trainings. Jose Varghese, Executive Secretary of Leadership Development of the World Alliance of YMCAs conducted the sessions. OMV is a comprehensive research project about young people ages 15-24. Over 65 countries are participating to reveal how young people view their lives, their world and their needs around 3 key areas of Employment, Health and Civic Engagement.

Interviews are very important tool being used to conduct the OMV project. Jose Varghese produced short guide for participants on good practice. It was a good experience for all those who took part as interviewees and interviewers.

The methodology was very important area where the participants have to integrate data collection, self-completion, and interview- administered questionnaire. A video explained the over view, technical aspects, interview procedure and provides some helpful advice. The video also contained an interview role play and feedback.

~Roger Peiris, Youth Programme Officer, APAY

19th General Assembly of APAY

The second meeting of the Planning Committee for the 19th General Assembly was held in Daejeon, South Korea on the 13th and 14th September 2014. It is our pleasure to announce that the 19th General Assembly of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs will be held during 7th to 11th September 2015 in Daejeon, South Korea. Peter Malone, Vice President of APAY and Alvin Kan, Chairperson of the YPLD have been nominated as the Co-Chairpersons for the General Assembly Planning Committee. Here are some highlights of the ensuing General Assembly.

The theme of the Assembly has been determined “Anchored on our Rock, Building a Sustainable Future”.

We reached an agreement after a long discussion on purposes and direction of our movement. The followings were the main points of discussions;

* The results of our recently conducted survey of how people see our future priorities, all categories of respondents of the survey, the lay leaders, the GSs/NGSs, staff and the youth leaders chose the youth leadership development as the highest priority for YMCAs in the next

coming five years.

* The main concern for lay leaders and GS/NGS was sustainable YMCA operation and management, including leadership development, governance, strategic plan, and resource mobilization. On the other hand, young people see the importance of dealing with current issues in our society such as environment, child protection, advocacy, and Global Citizenship Education.

* Spiritual Development was chosen by senior lay leaders as the second important point, although young people placed it as #16. We identified that the Christian Emphasis and Youth Development was the core mission of the YMCA throughout the history and these two points will have to be reinforced in future in our movements. In that sense, YMCA would like to be a House for God for young people who would serve the world.

* One of the main questions discussed on how we make a balanced selection of life in seeking more wealth, comfort and so called success in our lives. We need to see the needs for development, but at the same time we need to understand that we need to control our endless desire for better lives with wealth and comfort that have caused severe competitions among us that have brought big gaps in our society and caused serious issues against the sustainable ecology. We need to learn to seek the balanced and alternative ways of living in a sustainable way. This Assembly may need to focus on this point.

* From all the discussion of above, we reached to an agreement as “How and where do we find our spiritual basis, and how we can find the future living style?” This point was expressed as our theme of the General Assembly, “Anchored on our Rock, Building a Sustainable Future”.

Youth Participation

Youths are the key stakeholders in building sustainable YMCA movements. Their initiatives and leadership should be developed as well as used in the present and future YMCA operations. How we would realize this goal will be the key point of success in the General Assembly. Presently, APAY has 40 Youth Representatives (Reps). In early 2015, we will select 40 new Youth Reps and 60 new Change Agents. The total of 140 plus 40 local Korean youths will be invited to the General Assembly. Realistically, among all of those young people we expect 70-80% of them, about 140 will be attending.

Most of the young people shall be the first time attendants to the General Assembly and it would be necessary to encourage their full participation in the decision making process during the General Assembly as well as becoming leaders of their own national and local associations after the General Assembly. Therefore, we need to conduct;

* Youth Orientation session one day prior to the General Assembly. They will meet from the afternoon of September 6th and to the General Assembly of September 7th .

* The home-stay program will be conducted from the day of field trip, Sept. 9th to the next morning.

Other points of discussion

* The early bird Registration will start from January till the end of March, 2015. The overall registration should be closed in the end of July 2015.

* The first information should be given to all movements by December 15.

* The Worship team will be formed with three Korean (including one youth) and three from other sub-regions (including two young people). They will meet in November for three days.

* Youths will be required to participate in the whole process fully and therefore we need to orient and train them separately once we identify the new Change Agents and Youth Reps.

~ Kohei Yamada, General Secretary, APAY

School of Peace (SOP) Alumni in the Philippines support the Bangsamoro Peace Process

Alumni of the School of Peace (SOP) in the Philippines held their annual national forum meeting from Sept. 13 to 15 in Cagayan de Oro in northern Mindanao to discuss activities that they will organize during the upcoming year to promote interfaith justpeace. At the conclusion of the meeting, the SOP alumni, most of whom are Muslims from Mindanao, issued a statement to express their support for the peace process between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), including their endorsement for enactment of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) that was submitted to Congress on Sept. 11.

Among the activities that the group plans for the next 12 months is a Festival of Justpeace during the Mindanao Week of Peace in November as well as a series of fun runs and forums to educate people about a variety of issues. The fun runs and forums will be held to coincide with the observance of some of the annual international days designated by the United Nations, such as International Women's Day on March 8 and the International Day of Peace on Sept. 21.

With most of the members of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) network now from Mindanao, an important thrust of the SOP alumni's collaboration in the next year is to expand the network to other parts of the country, such as the island of Luzon and the Visayas region, and to people of other faiths working on different issues.

Participants at the ICF national forum meeting in the Philippines discuss plans for interfaith justpeace activities they will organize in the country in the upcoming year.

~ Bruce Van Voorhis, Intefaith Cooperation Forum (ICF)

Interfaith Cooperation Forum:
Philippines National Forum

Interfaith Movement for Justpeace
Calls for Enactment of Bangsamoro Basic Law

The Philippines National Forum of Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), an Asia-based movement committed to justpeace, non-violence and interfaith dialogue, strongly supports the submission of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) to the Philippine Congress on September 11, 2014.

The ICF-Philippines National Forum is guardedly optimistic that the Philippine Congress will swiftly deliberate and enact the bill into law. We are very hopeful that the BBL will facilitate the transformation of violence into justpeace in the southern Philippines. For too long, the people of the southern Philippines have suffered from decades of fighting that have taken the lives of many family members, injured countless others and have destroyed people's property and livelihoods. We thus pray that there will be no obstacles to a lasting peace rooted in justice this time, such as any unsubstantiated allegations that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has established a foothold in the southern Philippines that would offer an excuse for the BBL to be withdrawn from deliberation by Congress or defeated.

It is in this spirit that the ICF-Philippines National Forum challenges the Philippine government, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and other stakeholders to remain faithful and committed to the common and long-aspired vision for the southern Philippines: an end to violent conflict and tension in this part of the country so that people of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds can live together in peace.

It is this vision of lasting justpeace in the southern Philippines that guides the determination of the ICF-Philippines National Forum to work for the BBL to be enacted.

TIRMIZY E. ABDULLAH, national coordinator, ICF-Philippines National Forum,

ANSARY A. DIAMAODEN, Member ICF –School of Peace 2007

NORODIN A. SAMAD, Member ICF-School of Peace 2006

MOHALIDEN SUGA, Member ICF-School of Peace 2012

KATHLEEN CECILLE MARTIN, ICF-School of Peace 2010

NORAISA SABAN, ICF-School of Peace 2012

~ Bruce Van Voorhis, Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF)

The first visit to Pyongyang, North Korea

My visit to Pyongyang this time was an invaluable opportunity, which came like a 'thief' in the Bible. In fact, I was doubtful about the visit considering the strained relationship between the South and the North Korean governments. The 18 delegates were consisted of General Secretary of NCC-K, representatives of different denominations, ecumenical organizations such as YMCA and YWCA, KSCF, etc. During the 4 days of stay from 13 August through 16 August, we visited many places such as Okryu Children's Hospital, Pyongyang Maternity Hospital Breast Cancer Institute, Neungla Dolphin Show Museum, and Munsoo Water-side Excursion Center. The itinerary seemed to carry the intention of the 'Alliance' to demonstrate to us the remarkable development achievements of North Korea after Kim Jungeun's succession.

The most impressive moment during my visit was the joint worship with the church members in commemoration of the National Independence Day (August 15) for reconciliation, solidarity and reunification between South and North Korea. The communion was the culmination of the worship, where many participants cried silently. While I was walking along the Botong river every morning and whenever I met people at our different visiting sites, I could feel a kind of "weariness stemming from a tiresome life in the very rigid system." The weariness might be different from the ones felt by us, South Koreans, having lived tiresomely in a neo-liberal capitalistic society where severe competition and winners-take-all rule.

Although it was a brief trip, it caused me to return with three questions in mind: First is the question on the political power. I was disturbed by the thought of how both of the divided systems in the Korean Peninsula were making use of the 'divided state' and their 'counterpart' in

order to justify and solidify their political power. I wondered whether the peoples in-between the conflicting two systems were passively pervaded with the ideologies of hatred and hostility manipulated by the ruling systems. Secondly, I was challenged by the awakening that my thoughts on the nation had long been biased towards South Korea. I realized the need to widen the scope of my thinking on the Korean Peninsula in an integral perspective. Thirdly, I learned that the best, irreversible, and only way towards national reconciliation and peaceful reunification was through the people's self-awakening and spontaneous efforts.

My visit this time was a time of new reflection and awakening not only because I could observe and feel the life of people in North Korea albeit superficially, but also because I could visit both Chilgol Church and Bongsoo Church where we participated in a worship and communion together with the church members. I returned home with a resolution that no matter how far away and rough the road to reunification may be, I must continue the journey steadily as if one was laying one brick on another. I firmly believe that it will be the awakened Christians who open up their hearts towards their other forgotten halves and wage various activities for peaceful reunification. It is also the significant task of YMCAs of the APAY, not to mention Korea YMCA, to work for peace-building in our region as peaceful reunification is closely inter-linked to sustained peace in the region.

~ Mr. Nam Boo Won, GS, National Council of YMCAs of Korea

Digital YMCA Space: Like APAY Facebook!

The YMCA has a history of community-building for the last 170 years. What if YMCA can create additional space beyond geographical boundaries? Making good use of internet social media, we are able to inform more people about YMCA.

Asia Pacific YMCA is already on Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube. With these tools, we hope to engage more communities in world and regional campaigns, not just for young people, but also for everyone.

Like Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

Like APAY Youth committee (YPLD) and Change Agents

Like YMCA!

~ Alvin Kan, Chairperson, APAY Youth Committee (YPLD)

Not interested any more?