

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
August 2015

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Sept 7-11: 19th General Assembly & 3rd Youth Assembly

4th Bulletin: 19th General Assembly and 3rd Youth Assembly

It is an exciting experience for us here in Hong Kong while we prepare for the 19th General Assembly and 3rd Youth Assembly of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs scheduled to be held during 7 – 11 September 2015.

We are grateful for the overwhelming number of registrations we have received from national movements during this registration period. We understand that the MERS situation in Korea had led some of the countries to be indecisive on this issue, the graduation improvement of the MERS situation have now paved the way for more registrations for the General Assembly. In order to accommodate such registrations, the APAY have now decided to extend the deadline of registration until 14 August 2015. Participants intending to register themselves for the General Assembly can do it now until 14 August 2015. However this extension of date will only be applicable for those intending participants who do not require any notarized visa invitation letter from the host country. We would also like to mention that the rooms at the ICC hotel are have been fully booked by this time. Rooms available at Lotte Hotel only.

Pre Conference

Those of you who have opted to participate at the Peace Conference scheduled to be held from 4-6 September 2015 at the DMZ, we request you to arrive at Incheon Airport on Friday, 4 September, preferably before noon. The host committee shall then make arrangements for your travel to the conference venue from Incheon Airport.

Executive Committee Meeting

The APAY Executive Committee Meeting shall be held prior to the General Assembly on Monday 7 September 2015 at 11.30 hours to 14.00 hours, The Executive Committee Members (Presidents of National Movements) and NGSs are requested to arrive in the early morning of 7 September 2015 or evening of 6 September for better flight connections, in that case inform us earlier for hotel booking for 6 Sept. night accommodation.

Regular Participants

All regular participants are requested to book their flights arriving Incheon Airport before noon of Monday 7 September 2015 and departing in the evening Friday 11 September 2015. The General Assembly concludes in Daejeon at noon time. It takes about 3 hours to reach Incheon

Airport.

Flight Schedule

We request all registered participants to send us their flight schedule as soon as possible. The host committee representatives shall meet you at Incheon (Seoul) Airport and arrange your transportation to Daejeon. It takes about two and half hours travel from Incheon Airport to Daejeon.

The venue Daejeon Convention Center, situated at 107, Exop-ro, Yuseong-go, Daejeon, Korea. Tel. +82 42 869 5400

Registration

The registration process of all the participants shall start at Daejeon Convention Center before noon of Monday 7 September, 2015. All participants are requested to register first-before, they shall be provided with Assembly kit bag and an Assembly tag. This tag will be used for the identification of all the participants. If your registration or participation fees are not yet settled please pay your fees at the registration booth. Please remember, such payments must be paid in cash US\$ only. For Korean participants they can pay in Korean Wons. After the registrations the participants shall be directed to their respective hotels. Participants shall be required to pay their hotel dues in cash or via credits cards at the hotel counters.

Exposures

The participants shall be visiting exposure sites on Wednesday 9 September 2015. There will be around eight exposure sites or more. Each of the GA participants shall be able to choose one site for their exposure, this has to be done during the time of the registration. The description of the exposure sites shall be available in the Assembly Workbook and also in the website of APAY.

T-Shirt Exhibition

We request all the national movements to bring at least 4/5 T-Shirts or more, which they have produced with YMCA logo or slogan at their respective YMCAs. Please bring them with you when you come to Daejeon for the Assembly. We plan to exhibit hundreds of these T-Shirts at the Conference Venue as an illustration of the multi-facet programs the YMCAs are involved with.

APAY Member YMCA Exhibition

Each member YMCA of APAY (24 national movements) shall have a space in the Assembly for about one meter (square) for exposition of their key programs (with at least 3 / 4 pictures) and about 10 - 12 lines to narrate these programs. Each of these pictures should not be less than 1 MB in size, preferably in jpg format. These pictures along with the text should be sent directly to the National Council of Korea latest by 15 August 2015 to Ms. Meejung Lee, email id: ymcakorea2013@gmail.com and a copy to APAY at office@asiapacificymca.org

Information for Youth Participants

Arrival & Departures

All youth members participating at the Youth Sessions need to arrive Incheon at Airport before noon of Sunday 6 September 2015 and depart on Friday 11 September 2015.

Flight Details

Send your flight information to us as soon as you booked your flights. Volunteers from the host YMCAs shall receive you at Incheon (Seoul) Airport. It takes about two (2) hours to travel from Incheon Airport to Daejeon Youth Hostel. Shuttle buses shall leave at regular intervals from Incheon Airport on 6 September.

Youth Assembly Registration

Registration Team members will meet you at the Youth Hostel. Your registration name tag and room number will be provided to you upon your arrival at Youth Hostel. Registration will continue in the afternoon for those who will come late.

Participant's General Introduction

We request each youth participant to send us their recent picture (jpg format) mentioning the name and country as file name. This will be used to introduce all participants at the Inaugural Session of the Youth Session. Please send us the picture by email latest by 15 August 2015 to Roger Peiris, email : roger@asiapacificymca.org

Cultural Night

Cultural night will be held on 6 September at 20:45 pm at the Youth Hostel. Every national movement shall have the opportunity to perform one musical item. Please bring your own countries' pop music, song (CD/USB).

Home stay

Each youth participant shall join a local host family on 7 September at 17:30 pm to stay over one night with them. Please bring personal sanitation things that you will need.

Youth Exposures

Exposure visit has been arranged on Monday, 7 September at four (4) venues. Participants are expected to indicate their preferences on exposure visit sites. Each youth participant shall be requested to fill in the form that APAY will send..

General Assembly Registration

On Tuesday, 8 September youth participants shall arrive from home stay to the General Assembly venue at the Daejeon Convention Center before 9:00 am. Youth participant shall register to the General Assembly once they arrived at the venue. All participants shall be provided with the General Assembly kit bag and guest house/hotel information. All youth participants are expected to join the Opening Session of the General Assembly in time.

Strategic Dialogue (SD)05. Workshop on Youth Empowerment

This Strategic Dialogue parallel session shall start at 8 September 14:30 hours All youth participants are expected to attend the Youth Empowerment session at 14:30 – 16:30 hours.

Strategic Dialogue (SD) 10 Workshop on Global Citizenship

This Strategic Dialogue parallel session will start on 8 September at 16:30 – 18:00 hours. This session is open to all participants. However, we expect the youth to lead in the attendance. The new Youth Representatives who did not attend Global Citizenship training in Philippines during May 2015 are requested to attend this workshop.

Dialogue with the General Secretary, World Alliance of YMCAs

Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltik, General Secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs will meet you on 10 September at 14:30 – 16:30 hours to share about World Alliance of YMCAs' "Youth empowerment and sustainable future". He will be share about WAY Change Module, New Way, Our Way strategy, youth empowerment strategies and actions; youth expectation and how these strategies relate to transform youth in the YMCA. After the presentation, there will be time for open dialogue with him.

Preparing Recommendations

On the 10th September during Session 8 at 16:30 hours shall be the time for all the youth participants to work together on the recommendations on youth empowerment actions for APAY to address in the next quadrennial. This is one of the 5 workshops where we shall be Shaping our Future Strategies.

T -Shirts Exchange

We request each youth participant to bring YMCA T-shirt to exchange with another youth friend. This will be held during lunch time of 10 September 2015 at the main venue.

APAY Youth committee invites every youth participants to participate in the “YMCA T-shirt exchange”. The purpose is twofold—“YMCA T-shirt” as an appreciation of our diverse activities in Asia and Pacific area; and “exchange” as a ‘symbol’ of our fellowship at the Assemblies and is a great time to meet friends and swap “souvenirs”.

You may bring along any kind of YMCA T-shirts from work camps, service projects and other activities (no matter old or new, but in good quality).

These are the updates we wished to share with you all at this point of our preparations for the General Assembly. However, if you have any queries and or need any clarifications please feel free to communicate with us.

Meet you in Daejeon.

~Kohei Yamada

Potential YMCA in Laos, Luang Prabang City

There is no YMCA in Laos, the only country in Mae Kong Delta Area that does not have a YMCA movement. One American who worked in Luang Prabang (LP) for three years during 2010-13 as a teacher in private school and liked the people and the culture there, realized that young people do not have recreational activities and therefore they have nothing to do but going to bars to drink. He was then thinking of opening a social and recreational place in Luang Prabang, the second city in Laos with the population of a half million. The city is well known as it is one of the World Historical Heritage by UNESCO. He contacted the YMCA in Asia/Pacific. In July, APAY went there with him to see the possibility of opening a YMCA there. The Chiangmai YMCA of Thailand is closest YMCA to Luang Prabang and they were interested in forming a new YMCA in Laos. So they also came to Luang Prabang for a few days.

During our stay in Laos, we visited various places and met many people; There are totally 5,000 students in their university in Luang Prabang with 6 departments, Education, Tourism, Agriculture (800), Literature, Engineering, and Architecture. 25% of the students receive scholarships and 75% students pay own tuition. We met a business man who runs a school for the English classes and 260 students exist at this point. We also met four young ladies who are all in 20's and speak English very fluently. They are all Christian but some of them have not mentioned to their families about their religion. They said the young people in Laos need something to do. Sports, music, volunteer, etc instead of going to bars all the time. We met four pastors from three churches. There are 7,800 Christians in the Luang Prabang Province. There are 49 tribes and some particular tribes are more Christians then the other tribes. There is a district in their area where over 3,000 Christians exist. In Luang Prabang Province nearly 2% is Christian. They recommended that YMCA should stress its work of education and social welfare rather than any Christian teaching.

We also visit Vientiane, the capital city of Laos. We met people there and they advised me that the specific purposes of the YMCA should be clearly defined and these are necessary and good for the Lao people, they would approve but if the purpose is such as political or religious ones, the government would be very careful.

The strategies for formation of the YMCA in Laos

Task Team: We selected 3 local people and 3 international people for the next 6 months (Aug

2015 to February 2016). The team meets once a month by SKYPE. The conclusion could be shared in March at the time of ECM 2016.

Programs in preparation:

- * visiting the Chiang Mai YMCA to see the activities of a YMCA
- * conducting a few projects based on the needs of the community in LP,
- * conducting a need assessment research in the community and identifying the program
- * recruiting the members who agree to starting the YMCA in LP. The goal could be 50.
- * identify the staff and potential board members.

~ Kohei Yamada

China YMCA Youth Participate in SOP for First Time

Two youth from the YMCA movement in China will take part for the first time in the School of Peace (SOP) conducted by Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF). Their participation is the result of relationships established when youth from the YMCA in China joined the round-trip voyage of the Peace Boat from Japan to Okinawa to Taiwan in March 2015.

This SOP, which will be held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, will be the seventh that ICF has conducted since the program's inception in 2006. In addition to China, the 15 SOP participants will come from five Southeast Asian countries—Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. The faith backgrounds of the eight men and seven women who will attend SOP are Buddhism, Christianity, indigenous spirituality and Islam.

Beginning on Aug. 1, the first two SOP modules will be held in August and September. The participants will return to Siem Reap in January 2016 for the last module after they have had three months to put into practice in their own organization what they have learned in the first two modules.

During the first module, the participants will focus on identity and conflict with the second module devoted to poverty, development and people's rights. In the third module next year, the emphasis will be on transformation, first of oneself and then of one's community.

Upon the completion of SOP early next year, a total of 113 youth in 17 countries will have taken part in this joint program of APAY and CCA.

~ Bruce van Voorhis

ICF National Forum in Indonesia holds Annual Meeting

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) national forum in Indonesia, comprising its School of Peace (SOP) alumni in the country, met for their annual meeting from July 22 to 24 in Cilacap in Central Java. At this meeting, the group shared the issues from their part of the country in Aceh, Papua and the islands of Java and Sulawesi as well as their work for the past year and made plans for activities that the national forum will organize in the next year. In addition to the seven SOP alumni who attended, six Indonesian youth who will join SOP 2015 beginning on Aug. 1

also took this opportunity to meet the other national forum members and to learn more about ICF and SOP.

At their annual meeting last year, the national forum decided to formally register themselves as Indonesia School of Peace, or Sekolar Dawai Indonesia (SEKODI), in order to build relationships with other partners in the country and to be able to acquire more financial support. This process took a step forward at this year's national forum meeting as the group selected their officers for SEKODI and decided to have their association notarized to formally establish it.

As for activities, SEKODI wants to make an annual two-week mini-SOP as their core program with the first mini-SOP being held next year in Bandung in West Java. They will use the ICF ideology of non-violent approaches to religious tensions as their core ideology in order to build a stronger interfaith movement of activists for justpeace in Indonesia. They also would like to expand their network into such areas as Bali, the Maluku islands and the provinces of West and East Nusa Tenggara.

Another project that was discussed was the publication of a book containing the stories of human rights victims and their families in Papua. The author and photographer would be two SOP alumni in Papua with these skills.

As part of their field visits to learn more about the issues in Cilacap, the group visited a local interfaith forum with Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu members. They shared about their work together and the challenges they are now facing, such as increasing numbers of radical Islamic fundamentalists, some of whom are from outside the community. It is believed, they said, that these people who have a very different understanding of Islam receive weapons from Malaysia and funding from the Middle East.

Among the issues facing other people in Indonesia, the participants from Papua, where most of the population is Christian, shared that a mosque had recently been burned down—a new phenomenon there. Another issue in Papua, they said, is the presence of the Freeport-McMoRan gold and copper mine that removes Papua's natural resources without providing many benefits to the people and also occupies land that local people cannot use. Land disputes are also a concern in Central Sulawesi, said the participants from this island, as the Astra Co. of Japan has bought land there for a palm oil plantation. Rural people, they explained, have sold their land but don't realize that the compensation they received is so little. As for Java, the prevalence of religious intolerance is reflected in the burning of churches and mosques of the Ahmadiyyah community, and indigenous people must practice their spirituality privately because it is not officially recognized by the government.

~ Bruce van Voorhis

As part of the annual ICF National Forum meeting in Indonesia, the participants took a field visit to a historic Dutch fort in Cilacap.

Not interested any more?