

Foreword

Once again, we are pleased to present the second quarterly program report of Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) from April - June 2007, to share with you where CCA is and its future programme directions. The report not only contains details of projects implemented but is accompanied by some reflections as well.

We will be glad to have your comments and suggestions on what strengths you think we need to develop in order to make CCA more visible in response to the new emerging contexts and realities of Asia.

The CCA team joins me sincerely to thank you for your concern, care and support in CCA's life and work. Your interest in the mission of CCA is a great source of strength and blessing for all the members of CCA and the ecumenical movement in Asia. We earnestly hope for a continued partnership in this developing mission.

Prawate Khid-arn
General Secretary

Ecumenism: Needs and challenges

During my visits to the churches in Asia I have had the privilege to meet with young people, women and men, both ordained and lay. In my conversations, I learnt that quite a number of them are disenchanted with the church, and the reason they give is that they see the sins of the world also within the church. It puzzles them and they often wonder how and why the church, which claims to be the body of Christ, indulge in such kind of immoral, unethical and corrupt practices. This is not merely a challenge to the institutionalized church but it also paves the way for most energetic and creative persons of integrity to leave the church in frustration and disappointment. The exodus of people of stature and character from the ecclesia is a spiritual drain which impoverishes the church and robs from it its divine character. When that happens the church loses its reason to be the church and also its moral power in an immoral world.

There was a time when people were drawn to the church because of the character, charisma and the stature of great women and men who held leadership positions in the church and the ecumenical movement. They were not politicians but spiritual giants. These persons emptied themselves to fill others rather than manipulate others and subvert the church and the ecumenical movement to grab power for themselves and abuse power for their personal advantage. Because of our silence when some were playing personal politics, the ecumenical movement as a whole became unattractive to quite a number of people in different parts of the world. According to some of the best, creative and imaginative persons the churches and the ecumenical movement are no longer attractive for them because of its spiritual bankruptcy and moral impoverishment. Whether we agree or not with their conclusions, we have to accept the fact that it is a severe judgment on the ecumenical movement and the church. Therefore those of us who are committed to the ecumenical movement and the church we have a God given mandate to redeem the church and the ecumenical movement by cleansing it from all forms of corruption and manipulation. It must be redeemed to become a movement in which God's spirit overpowers human spirit to become a movement which attracts people from all walks of life. Such a movement can become one of God's liberating instruments to transform the world and heal the wounds of people, communities and nations.

There is a Chinese proverb which says "It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness". Thus, my intention in writing this article is not to pass judgment on any person but to invite those who are committed to the mission of God's reign on earth to dedicate themselves to give the best and find the best within and among themselves to equip a new generation of leaders for God's mission on earth. This is a gigantic task but is surely a challenge we should struggle to overcome.

Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera
Associate General Secretary for Finance and Relationships

General Secretariat

Pastoral visit to Sri Lanka, April 17-20, 2007

The CCA general secretary, Dr Prawate Khid-arn and joint executive secretary for Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID) Tony Waworuntu had a visit to Sri Lanka from April 17-20, 2007. The objective was to express concern and extend support to the churches in Sri Lanka who are in the midst of escalating political conflict and possible “war” between the government troops and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). We also wanted to gather further information on the situation as how churches, religious communities and human rights-based organizations in Asia can play an active role to the process of restoring peace in the country.

During visit the CCA team met with various groups such as; National Peace Council in Sri Lanka (NPC), Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Civil Monitoring Committee (CMC), Senior Human Rights Advisor, UNDP, Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Non-Violent Peace Force (NPF) and NCCSL-Committee for Justice and Peace (CJP) in Colombo. The discussions were summed up in a meeting with the NCCSL general secretary Dr. Jayasiri Peiris and related staff.

Although the meetings were tightly scheduled there was a space for the reflections on current realities, every day happenings and personal experiences. Stories of people striving for peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka were shared.

It was observed that the general feeling among the people was a great concern over Sri Lanka entering another critical political situation as a nation. Majority of people expressed their apprehensions over the political crises which seem to be moving from “bad” to “worse”. Another feeling was that “go to war” is the prevailing popular notion in the country. Some people think that it was the only way to break the prevailing deadlock between the government and the LTTE at this stage and there is no other choice. It was discovered that more than 50% of the common people wanted to support the government to go ahead with a war in order to defeat the LTTE.

The people however, both Sinhalese and Tamils are living in fear. The bombings to defeat the LTTE have already displaced thousands of people in the Northeast. In this situation the abduction and disappearances are increasing every day and the resistant voices are being silenced with the use of force.

In this context NCCSL, churches and a number of NGOs both local and international in Sri Lanka are continuing with their campaigns to convince people that war is not the solution and a peaceful way to end the conflict is needed. However despite the ongoing campaigns, gaining mass support of the people is still needed in order to have a positive impact.

At the concluding meeting with the general secretary and the staff in charge, some urgent needs identified were:

- WCC and CCA need to plan an ecumenical pastoral team visit to Sri Lanka.
- CCA will urge UNHCR to send a visiting team to Sri Lanka.
- CCA will set up a website “Sri Lanka Update”.
- CCA and NCCSL will continue to explore possibilities of identifying donors to give humanitarian assistance to the political victims, refugees and internally displaced people.
- CCA-JID and NCCSL will identify sources to equip community leaders which would be a support in enhancing their capacity on issues of sustainable development and conflict transformation.

WCC-CCA liaison group meeting, June 6-7, 2007

The WCC-CCA Liaison Group met for the first time after its last meeting in 2004. Delegates from the WCC including Dr. Mathews George, Doug Chial, Rev. Dr Sint Kimhachandra and Anthony Row were joined by four delegates from CCA, Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, Rev. Dr Rienzie Perera, Manju Baroi and Rev. Jayasiri Peiris in the meeting.

The meeting is convened annually since 1996 to search ways for closer coordination and cooperation between these two ecumenical bodies.

During the meeting, updates on ongoing and forthcoming programs of WCC and CCA were shared. A number of common concerns such as Asian theologies and spiritualities, peace and conflict transformation (especially in context of a possible war in Sri Lanka), capacity building for church workers at all levels, interfaith relations, health and climate change issues etc were discussed.

It was agreed that the WCC-CCA liaison group will meet again next year in conjunction with the CCA’s General Committee meeting in September 2008. The NCC-general secretaries will be meeting before the two meetings.

Ecumenical Relations

April 3-4: The CCA general secretary Dr. Prawate Khid-arn attended the 125th Anniversary celebrations of Baptist Mission in Thailand held at Baw Kaew Village in Chiang Mai. About 7,000 people took part in the celebrations, majority of which were Karen tribal people.

April 10: Dr Khid-arn also lead bible study at the annual meeting of the Christian Coalition on AIDS in Thailand (CCAT) held on 9 – 10 April at Lanna Human Resources Development Centre in Chiang Mai.

The theme of the meeting was “Refresh me, Lord” taken from Psalms 51:10. Around 50 delegates representing various Christian organizations were present in the event to

analyze the HIV/AIDS ministries in churches. They discussed on how churches have taken up the mission to address issues related to HIV/AIDS. It was also endorsed that this is a time to strengthen networking among members and encourage CCAT to be more proactive in their mission in times ahead.

One of the important issues raised during the discussion was the withdrawal of new medicines by Abbot Laboratories in Thailand. This was a reaction to Thai government's urging pharmaceutical companies to lower drug prices in treating HIV and heart diseases. As an answer Abbott Laboratories, the maker of the HIV drug *Kaletra* took the radical step of withdrawing all of its new products from Thailand, depriving people from the access to new drugs for rheumatoid, arthritis, kidney disease, heart disease and high blood pressure.

NGOs have protested against this action and conducted campaigns to boycott products by Abbott Laboratories.

CCA received a message from Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) on 13th April where they shared information on their planning for a special worship encouraging churches to remember the suffering and struggle of the people living with HIV/AIDS in the midst of conflict between the pharmaceuticals and the governments.

The issue later on led to a discussion over US decision of putting Thailand on its "priority watch list" for intellectual property piracy.

In response, Mongkol Na Songkhla Minister of Public Health, Thailand decided to break patents on drugs to treat HIV and heart disease under the WTO provision. Dr. Mongkol Na Songkhla on his visit to USA met with many groups and organizations including the government, NGOs and business sector. The visit helped in providing the American communities a better understanding of Thailand's position on the issue of compulsory licensing.

CCA sent a letter of support to the Ministry of Health. The letter was circulated among churches and ecumenical organizations. CCA also received letters from CWS, ENI and CEN supporting Thailand on this matter.

April 23-25: The General Secretary attended the 12th Triennial General Assembly of the Council of Churches in Malaysia (CCM) on "United to build and to be a blessing" held at Pulai Resort in Johor Bharu, Malaysia. Greetings were extended and churches were called to be God's instrument for peace and reconciliation in midst of war and conflict ridden world.

In his message to the assembly CCA general secretary stated:

“The current global contexts of our times call for a paradigm shift in theological engagement. The role of the churches in Asia today is vital in addressing the critical areas of representative democracy; human rights; multidimensional security; the fight against corruption, protection of God’s creation, just trade and of course, social sustainability.”

Churches are called to stand up together as peacemakers for God’s mission in the world. The church as God’s instrument for peace has a special role to play to pursue human dignity, to protect the basic human rights, and to bring fullness of life to the people. ... CCM was created to make that God’s mission possible.”

The assembly was also a time to meet with CCA member churches, Anglican Church in Malaysia (Diocese of Sabah, Diocese of Kuching and Dioceses of West Malaysia), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore, and Methodist Church of Malaysia. At this time CCA was also introduced to other churches which are members of the CCM but are yet to become members with the CCA.

It was also a privilege to meet Bishop Lim K. Tham, the general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Singapore (NCCS) and the Bible Society of Singapore (BSS). CCA and churches in Singapore shared their experiences together and explored ways of working for God’s mission in the future.

May 23-24: The general secretary attended the preparatory meeting of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace (ACRP) held in Manila, Philippines. The ACRP members who were present at this meeting included ACRP governing board members, five religious leaders from Catholic Bishop’s Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), CCA, Taoist mission and representatives from the Muslim and Hindu faiths. Dr. Sunggoon Kim, General Secretary and ACRP gave a brief introduction to ACRP and brought issues for further discussion such as:

- Formation of the Asian Council for Religious Leaders (ACRL) in alliance with the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP).
- Proposal of “Centre of World Religions for Peace (CWRP)”.

Dr. Kim informed that the CWRP was initiated on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of KCRP (Korean Conference for Religion and Peace) and the 30th anniversary of ACRP. It is an interfaith body which is different in its character from other interreligious organizations. The major characteristics of CWRP include a permanent international interfaith body; headquartered in one place with two kinds of delegates- national chapters and religious communities. It should also incorporate cooperation between secular government and religious communities for common purpose; and should function in line with the UN resolution.

The participants realized that it is a great challenge for all religious communities to be united and pro-active to pursue peace and harmony in the world community. The fact was

emphasized that we live in one world, which is a home to different nations and religions. Regardless of nationality and religion, we all have common goals such as peace, justice and well being of humankind.

The religious leaders appreciated this initiative. Further discussions will finalize details on the representation of members and function etc in the next ACRP General Assembly which will be held in Manila.

May 24: On May 24 morning, the general secretary attended the theological writer's workshop on "Doing Theology from Disability Perspective". The workshop was jointly organized by ETE-CCA/WCC, EDAN and ATESEA from May 22-27, 2007 at Bay view Park Hotel in Manila.

Thirty participants including local theologians and persons with disabilities from Kenya, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Solomon Islands and Philippines took part in the workshop.

The organizers emphasized the challenge that "there can be no unity among the churches without acknowledging the gifts of persons with disability. The persons with disability are often discriminated and excluded from an active involvement in spiritual, social and community life of the church."

We are all differently-abled persons. Each one has weaknesses and strengths. Each part has to give and to take, like different parts in one body of the Christ. This is our Christian ethics and theological principle. Thus, to make long term impact in influencing the church in providing space for the expression of persons with disabilities in its spiritual, social and community life, it is necessary to focus on the training of the ministers (more detail presented under FMU).

May 29: The General Secretary was among the panelists in the meeting on "Compulsory Licensing" at Rattanakosin Hotel, Chiang Mai.

In relation with the decision of the Thai Government to break patents on drugs to treat HIV and heart disease, around 120 HIV/AIDS activists, social workers and international organizations participated in the workshop on "Is the Compulsory Licensing the Solution for Patient's Access to Treatment?" The event was jointly organized by eight organizations including CCA.

The speakers were Prof. John Ung-Pakorn, former senator Sunyalak, a law professor of Payap University and Anun, Upper Northern PWhA Network. Dr Prawate was invited to reflect on the topic from the ethical and religious perspective.

The General Secretary emphasized Christian ethics saying that "life is a gift by God and protecting life is a basic principle of every human being. To nurture and sustain life is the founding element of all religions and ethical organizations."

June 4-5: CCA in coordination with the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), YMCA and environmental-based NGOs organized a campaign and workshop titled “Stop global warming: our responsibilities”. The workshop was held on June 4-5, 2007 at YMCA Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Seventy activists, academic scholars and community leaders took part in the consultation, shared experiences, analyzed the critical causes for global warming and searched for practical strategies to promote environmentally friendly development. The organizers planned to submit the statement of commitment to the Governor of Chiang Mai.

Printed material based on the issue of global warming was distributed for public awareness and education. At the end of the workshop, the network “Global Warming Watch” was formed and CCA was requested to facilitate this new network.

June 11: The General Secretary, as a keynote speaker presented a paper on “Serving among the rural poor in Asia” to the ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization) Impact Asia Conference at the Empress Hotel, Chiang Mai. Over 150 participants from 15 countries attended the conference.

The General Secretary pointed out in his presentation that “poverty exists everywhere; it is unacceptable in a world so rich in resources and brilliant minds that poverty still plagues so many people. Countries have had to take a cutback in the areas of health, education and vital services for repayment of loans imposed by the international financial institutions over the last several decades.”

He also added that “there have been many efforts in the area of education, health, and income generation, but did it bring meaningful empowerment among the rural poor in Asia? The lives of the rural poor can only change when there is a vision of development which is more focused on human beings, their needs and their happiness. We need people centered development, a development that talks about freedom and empowerment of the poor in decision-making.”

ECHO is a church-based and non-profit organization located in U.S.A. for agricultural and rural community development by providing; education/training and problem solving networking.

June 12-14: The General Secretary was invited to attend the Asia-Pacific Forum (APF) Meeting held at the Anglican Church in Toronto, Canada.

The APF 2007 meeting was attended by 17 participants representing Presbyterian Church in USA (PCUSA), Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), UCC-Global Ministry, Church World Service (CWS), KAIROS, Anglican Church in Canada (ACC), United Church in Canada (UCC), United Methodist Church-General Board of Global Ministry (UMC-GBGM), UMC-GBCS, Baptist Church in the USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Reformed Church in America (RCA).

It was a regular meeting of churches and ecumenical partners in Canada and USA who were working in Asia and Pacific to discuss the socio-economic and political situations in the region, to share common concerns, and to follow up the decisions and programs that agreed upon from the previous APF meeting.

It was a privilege for CCA to be present in this year's meeting. The General Secretary highlighted CCA's vision, mission and goals for 2005-2010. The participants also extensively discussed how ecumenical movements in the North could be active partners in God's mission in Asia.

The General Secretary urged that APF should be more visible in regional ecumenical movement. The Forum, in response, affirmed the role of CCA. Cooperation and collaboration in the implementation was also explored.

June 15: The General Secretary, while he was in Toronto visited Rev. Dr. Karen Anne Hamilton, General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Canada (CCC) to discuss how the two ecumenical bodies can strengthen each other in the future. Information about WCC-REOs meeting scheduled in Chiang Mai in April 2008 was also shared.

June 22-26: CCA general secretary attended the 26th General Synod and the 50th Anniversary celebration of the United Church of Christ (UCC) with a theme "let it shine" held on 22 – 26 June, 2007 at Connecticut, Hartford. Over 8,000 voting delegates, visitors, observers and participants attended the event.

The meeting was originally planned to be held at the new Connecticut Convention Centre and the Marriot Hotel. However, because of a major labour dispute related to justice issues the venue was changed to the Civic Centre which is an in-door stadium. And this affirmed UCC's firm stance on a cause of justice for the powerless.

The presence of the CCA general secretary affirmed the relationship between CCA and the United Church of Christ (UCC). It was realized that both organizations have common ecumenical concerns which can be used to reveal the good news of Christ for peace and reconciliation.

The general secretary also visited various theological seminaries and colleges including Chicago Theological Seminary, Harvard Theological Seminary and Eden Theological Seminary. Some were interdenominational and other prioritized for UCC members. Bright possibilities now exist for future corporation and interaction between CCA and UCC in the field of theological education.

Relocation updates

March 7-8: The CCA General Committee met in Medan, Indonesia decided to carry on efforts in finding a smaller piece of land within the city limits of Chiang Mai.

March 21: Dr. Khid-arn conveyed the decision of CCA General Committee to the CCT-General Secretary.

March 28: CCA bought a piece of land (around 1 acre) in Chiang Mai. The procedures to hand over the land to CCA have been completed. The cost of the land (other fees included) is THB17.9 million (around US\$515,000).

April 20: Anuporn, the architect presented the first design of the new CCA Centre at CCA office.

May 8: The 2nd executive staff's meeting on new design of the CCA Centre was held at CCA Office.

June 4: Anuporn submitted the 2nd draft of the design.

June 29: The updated design of the centre was sent to the members of "Property Committee" for their consideration.

Personnel

Two Executive Secretaries completed their term of service: Rev. Josef P. Widyatmadja, Joint Executive Secretary for Faith, Mission and Unity-Urban Rural Mission, and Cora Tabing Reyes, Joint Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment completed their term of service with CCA. Both our colleagues left on June 2, 2007 with their families. We pray that God be with them.

Terms of two consultants extended:

Rev. Dr. Wati Longchar had his service term extended till 31 December 2007.

Shirley Susan, a consultant to UN/ESCAP, also had her term of service extended till March 31, 2009.

Communication consultant appointment: Naveen Qayyum from Pakistan is appointed as a communication consultant for a period of two year starting from June 1, 2007.

Faith, Mission and Unity (FMU)

Quarterly report for April-June 2007

CCA-FMU staff: Hope S. Antone and A Wati Longchar

Theological writers' workshop on "Doing Theology from Disability Perspective" (22-27 May 2007; Manila, Philippines)

Objective: To publish a theological resource book on "theology from the perspective of disability".

Rationale: Being aware that theology is constructed by able people for able people and realizing that churches will remain a disabled community without the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the ETE-CCA/WCC, EDAN and ATESEA jointly organized a workshop in Manila from 22-27 May, 2007 with a view to reconstruct a more inclusive church for persons with disabilities and publish a resource book on the "theology of disability" for theological students and church leaders from Asian perspective. This is a process which began in Limuru, Kenya (2004) and followed by similar events in Bangalore, India (2006) and Suva, Fiji (2006). There were thirty participants including two from Kenya, one from Tanzania, one from Jamaica and one from Solomon Islands. At the end of the consultation, the participants issued a declaration calling the attention of churches, ecumenical bodies and NGOs to work together more rigorously so that our common vision for establishing an inclusive, affirming and empowering global society may be realized.

Evaluation: Participants felt there were too many papers to grasp and the program schedule was too tight. The program could have been stretched to five days and presentations after dinner should be avoided in the future. However, the circulation of papers ahead of time was considered a good idea, focus was clear and the target was achieved. The materials were new and resourceful for future ministry. Both disabled, non-disabled were well represented; gender balance was also visible. The presence of ecumenical scholars from the other regions of the South was enriching and the worship was excellent.

Fourth seminar of "Asian Movement for Christian Unity" (11-14 June 2007; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Objectives:

- To actualize the covenant of the CCA and FABC to work together towards more visible unity;
- To include representatives from Evangelical and Pentecostal churches through the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA).

The fourth AMCU seminar brought together twenty four participants (12 from CCA, 10 from FABC and 2 from EFA) at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The theme of the seminar, “Our Common Witness in Contemporary Asia” echoes the theme of the Global Christian Forum in Asia, “Affirming our one saviour in common witness” while asserting the need for our faith as Christians to address Asian realities today. It was at the GCF in Asia on 21-23 September 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand. At this event the recommendation to open AMCU to EFA was made.

The participants from the three bodies shared their faith journeys (in the tradition of Pentecostal sharing of testimonies). A Bible study and worship was led daily by each of the three organizations. Contributions by representatives of each of these organizations were made on themes such as “Living our Faith in Asia’s Social Context” and “Common Witness in the Context of Religious Plurality in Asia”. From CCA side, Margaretha Hendriks-Ririmase of Indonesia gave the Bible study; Sherman Kuek of Malaysia gave the input on “Living our Faith in Asia’s Social Context”; and Rienzie Perera gave the input on “Common Witness in the Context of Religious Plurality in Asia.” Anthony Row served as moderator for CCA on the first day. The group came up with a statement on the last day of the meeting, which cites some challenges and possible steps to continue the journey of making visible our unity in Christ. This will be uploaded on the CCA website and will also be published in the September edition of the *CCA News*.

The Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU IV) is part of CCA’s relations with other Christian denominations and groups. Hence, it is a program lodged with the general secretariat. However, since FMU program area has to do with unity, the FMU staff was assigned to organize the fourth AMCU seminar with FABC counterparts.

Evaluation: EFA representatives thanked both CCA and FABC for opening the table to them and asked that such a practice be continued. Concerns were discussed about the lack of ecumenical formation at the local level for ordinary members on the pews, especially the young people. Some participants felt that two-days-and-a-half were very short for the seminar; that time should be stretched in order to know each other’s doctrines and traditions to facilitate better understanding of one another.

Planning meeting on ACTS III (13 June 2007; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

In line with our practice of maximizing time and resources, FMU staff and her FABC counterparts met on 13 June in Kuala Lumpur for the planning of the Third Asia Conference of Theology Students (ACTS III). Present were Hope Antone, Tom Michel, Clemens Mendonca and Archbishop Fernando Capalla. The group finalized the venue and dates for ACTS – MERGRANDE OCEAN RESORT, Talomo, Davao City, Philippines on 8-12 October 2007. In response to the request from EFA, ACTS will have five spaces for students from Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. In order to expose

theology students to interfaith ecumenism, the group also decided to invite five Muslim theology students from Marawi City in Mindanao. The group finalized the objectives of the conference, such as:

Objectives:

- To gather Christian theology students from church-related theological formation centres of CCA and FABC; also inviting some theology students from the EFA and Muslim theological schools in southern Philippines – for an experience of living and studying ecumenically together;
- To expose theology students to contextual and ecumenical theologizing and to issues faced by CCA, FABC and EFA in their life and work.

Theological networking

- **Working group meeting on “Revisiting Critical Asian Principle”** (April 29-May 2, 2007, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia)

The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) celebrates its 50th Anniversary in November this year and plans to adopt a new guideline for doing theology in Asia. The Critical Asian Principle (CAP) which was adopted thirty seven year ago is no longer relevant in the present context of Asia. This was the second and final working group meeting and Wati represented CCA and WCC. The Guideline has been finalized and will be adopted during the 50th celebrations for implementation.

- **Curriculum revision workshop of SEAGST and PTCA meeting** (29 June-1 July 2007; Seremban, Malaysia)

As part of the theological networking, Hope Antone attended the Curriculum Revision Workshop of the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST) on 29 June-1 July at the Seminari Theology Malaysia in Seremban, Malaysia. She is part of the group that has been invited to review, critique and revise the curriculum for M Theol and D Theol programs under the SEAGST of the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA). She also attended the committee meeting of the Programme for Theologies and Cultures in Asia (PTCA) which was held in the same venue.

Publications:

Our April edition of *CTC Bulletin* is the first of two series on the Fifth Congress of Asian Theologians held in August 2006. This first part contains the theme presentations, interfaith panel inputs and papers shared at the Women’s Forum in the Fifth Congress of Asian Theologians. A second part containing the papers presented at the discipline groups in the congress will be out in August.

A publication on the proceeding of the “Rerouting Mission and Ecumenism” consultations in Chennai, Jakarta, and Hong Kong is now ready for printing. This is the result of a study process initiated by FMU-URM. The title of the publication is, *They Left*

by Another Road: Rerouting Mission and Ecumenism in Asia. The book is edited by Wati Longchar, Josef Widyatmadja and M. P. Joseph.

Justice, International Affairs, Development & Service (JID) Quarterly report for April-June 2007

CCA – JID staff: Tony Waworuntu and Freddy De Alwis

Pastoral visit to Sri Lanka

CCA general secretary Dr. Prawate Khid-arn and JID joint executive secretary Tony Waworuntu made a visit to Sri Lanka from 17 – 20 April 2007. The purpose of the visit was to extend CCA's concern and spiritual support to churches in Sri Lanka in the midst of escalation of political conflict and possible "war" between the government troops and the LTTE. Secondly, to gather further information on the situation and to look at how churches, religious communities and human rights-based organizations in Asia can play an active role to the process of restoring peace in the country.

In Colombo, they met with various groups and organizations including the National Peace Council in Sri Lanka (NPC), Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Civil Monitoring Committee (CMC), Senior Human Rights Advisor, UNDP, Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Non-Violent Peace Force (NPF) and NCCSL-Committee for Justice and Peace (CJP). The discussions culminated in a summing up meeting with the NCCSL general secretary and related staff.

The Sri Lanka situation

The situation in Sri Lanka has become so desperate for local people that actions are urgently needed to resolve the conflict. Civilians need better protection against the increasing human right abuses committed against civilians by the Sri Lankan government, the Tamil Tigers, the Karuna faction and other armed groups. The lives of hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankans are getting severely affected.

The Sri Lankan government have failed in its responsibility to protect civilians; as there have been over 4,000 deaths since December 2005 while this government has been in power. The Tamil Tigers have killed hundreds of civilians in summary executions and indiscriminate bomb attacks. They are continuing to forcibly recruit child soldiers and have even prevented civilians from fleeing the fighting areas in the north and east.

The 2002 ceasefire had brought a measure of relief to Sri Lanka, beset for nearly a quarter-century by the rebels' bloody fight for an ethnic Tamil minority homeland. However in the last eighteen months, the ceasefire almost entirely unravelled as tit-for-tat attacks grew into an undeclared all-out war, with the Tigers employing tactics ranging from suicide bombing to an air raid.

Role of Churches, ecumenical organizations and NGOs

However, in this context, we observed that NCCSL, churches and a number of NGOs-both local and international in Sri Lanka are continuing campaigns to convince people that war is not a solution and they need to find peaceful ways to end the conflict.

Although there are ongoing campaigns, they have yet to gain mass support of the people in order to have an impact.

Steps to be taken

At the wrap-up meeting with the general secretary and the staff in charge, some urgent needs identified were:

- WCC and CCA send an ecumenical pastoral team visit to Sri Lanka at earliest, if possible before July 2007. The pastoral team should include leaders from Asian countries.
- UNHCR send a visiting team to Sri Lanka.
- CCA creates a website “Sri Lanka Update”.
- CCA and NCCSL continue to explore possibilities to identify donors for providing humanitarian assistance to the political victims, refugees and internally displaced communities.
- CCA-JID and NCCSL explore and identify sources to equip community leaders in capacity building on issues of sustainable development and conflict transformation.

Training in “School of Peace” by Interfaith Cooperation in Asia

From 20 – 24 April, 2007 Tony Waworuntu attended the School of Peace from the Interfaith Cooperation Forum in Asia in Visthar Centre, Bangalore, India.

This training has been organized for the second consecutive year where the curriculum of the SOP has focused on action/reflection rather than lengthy theoretical inputs. Case studies, films and field visits helped make the modules practical so participants can think more creatively about application to their local situations.

This year participants to SOP came from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia. Among the participants, there were six Christians, six Muslims, three Buddhists and one with no religion. All of the participants had experience of working and living in areas of conflict.

There were also three participants from SOP 2006 who worked as interns to assist the coordinator in managing all the activities. This provided them an opportunity to continue their learning and share their experience and skills with the new participants. It is hoped that their involvement will help form a bridge between all the participants of the two courses to expand and strengthen the regional interfaith justpeace movement.

The three and a half month course was held for the second year on the Visthar campus in Bangalore, India. Participants have been involved in an action/reflection process focusing learning on three themes: 1) Self and Society, 2) Culture, Religion and Spirituality and, 3) Transformation. The process ended in May by celebrating a ‘Festival of Justpeace’ together with marginalized communities from India.

Participants were expected to keep a daily account of their personal journey during these months together. They shared some of their journal entries with a mentor who was appointed to them. They also wrote reflective essays following each of the three modules to share what they are learning and how their perspectives on the issues might be changing. Through these methods they became more aware of their own transformation process.

To document all discussions and activities, two participants were selected each day to take detailed notes. These notes were typed out in the evening and kept in a file so participants can always review the learning of the past weeks.

Each module also included a one week field exposure to areas relevant to the issues being discussed. Usually these field trips have been done in smaller groups allowing for more intense immersion with local communities involved in struggles against injustice such as caste, tribal discrimination, gender inequality etc. Group reports on these field visits were prepared and shared with the larger group immediately upon return to the Visthar campus.

A daily schedule was set but had flexibility, allowing for changes to fit the needs of participants and resource persons. Generally, each day started with an interfaith reflection by one of the participants. Through this reflection, they shared what they feel their faith brings to the process for building justpeace. Following the reflection, the two participants responsible for recording the previous day's events read their report. Time was given for others to add or correct the report as well.

Then a time slot was given for participants to share any "hot news" from their country. This could include new outbreaks of conflict, natural disasters or positive changes in peaceful settlement of a conflict. This helped them know of what was happening in other countries and also to find ways to be supportive.

During the visit to the SOP, Tony shared the basic ideas; why we should have this "School of Peace" and how we can implement all the knowledge and skills after the training in our respective countries. At the end of the discussion participants came to the conclusion, "that building and promoting peace in this world isn't an easy task, but, it's not also only a dream".

EAA Consultation on Trade for People Campaign

Tony Waworuntu attended a three day consultation on Trade for People campaign organized by Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance on 2-5 June, 2007. This consultation was held at Gustav Stresemann Institute in Bonn, Germany and was attended by 30 participants from all over the world including Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, Latin America, and Central America.

The Consultation was based on two themes:

- trade and the right to food;

- the theology of trade justice

For everyone involved in the global trade campaign of the EAA, this was a chance to meet together face to face, share experiences and work on joint plans. It furthermore sought to broaden and deepen their joint work both in plans for action and in theological understanding.

As members in the EAA the participants were committed to work together to confront unjust structures, practices and attitudes and to offer alternative visions and strategies. The Trade for People Campaign of the EAA seeks a world where global trade systems give priority to people who live in poverty. A fundamental element of this campaign is to build a movement of people within the churches and church-related organizations to promote trade justice. This movement is growing, but still needs a lot of influence in several places. It was realized that to help the growth of this movement there is a need to develop links, share ideas and learn from experiences and this was one of the aims of the consultation.

The links between international trade and the right to food is the focus for the Trade for People Campaign in 2007. Food is one of the most fundamental necessities and a tangible daily part of life. The international trading system often seems remote and abstract. To explore how trade has an effect on the amount of food one has to eat can vividly raise awareness on the impact of trade on everyone's lives.

The EAA is working on a project to assess the impact of trade liberalization on the right to food of rice farming communities in Indonesia, Honduras and Ghana. Workshops had looked at how the outcomes of this research can be used and at how participants could adapt and use the methodology in other contexts.

Participants were invited to propose other workshops in this theme, and were encouraged particularly to put forward proposals that offer opportunity for shared future action.

As an alliance EAA is committed to reflecting theologically on its shared work. Positive work has been done beginning to look at the theology of trade justice, but there is much still needed to be explored.

This consultation had provided an opportunity to open a process of theological discussion on trade justice. Participants had the opportunity to tell their own stories of how faith influences their motivation to campaign for justice in trade. Assigned listeners sought to identify two or three emerging common issues. Follow up sessions had discussed those chosen issues more deeply in order to form a basis for future theological work.

A plan of action emphasized on the need to:

- Enhance mutual understanding of EAA participants' work together for trade justice and strengthened capacity for future cooperation
- Deepened understanding of theological basis for trade justice
- Individual participants' commitments to two or more actions undertaken jointly as part of the Trade for People campaign in 2007 and 2008

- A reference group to take forward ongoing theological reflection on trade justice.

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) - annual board meeting

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Life and Peace Institute, Tony attended the Annual Board Meeting of LPI from 11-15 June 2007 by All Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Meeting was focused mainly on the activities and programs of LPI where there was an evaluation of the last year (2006) programs activities and also the strategic plans for 2008 – 2010 of LPI.

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international and ecumenical centre for peace research and action. The international office of the Institute is based in Uppsala, Sweden. According to the statutes, the purpose of the Foundation is “*to conduct scientific research, on the questions of international conflict, and on the possibilities for collaboration among nations*”. The Foundation shall cooperate with international ecumenical bodies and churches and with other organizations, which are conducting peace research.

The Mission Statement of the Institute reads as following: *The mission of LPI is, through action and research, to enhance the capacity of the churches, ecumenical and faith-based bodies and other organizations, to actively work for justice, peace and reconciliation.*

Through research, education and training the Life & Peace Institute underlines the importance of non violent conflict transformation, a deeper understanding of the different causes to conflict, an inclusive community based approach in peace building, as well as development of conflict prevention measures.

An international board governs the Institute. It is appointed for a period of four years by the Christian Council of Sweden, which also elects the chairperson. The board is constituted to provide a balanced representation in relation to geographical origin, denominational membership and gender, as well as to provide expert knowledge within such disciplines as theology, peace and conflict studies, political science, and other relevant subjects.

The board meets at least once a year to draw up guidelines concerning the finance, structure, personnel, research and other activities of the Institute. The board also elects the vice-president, confirms the executive committee and appoints the executive director of the institute.

The Executive Committee – composed of board members from the Nordic countries – is responsible for preparing and executing the board’s decisions. It also accepts the annual budget, adopts the annual action plan, is responsible for the appointment of departmental heads and approves major new projects. The executive committee met six times during 2006.

The international office of the Institute is based in Uppsala, Sweden, and there are currently three offices for peace building programs in Africa: one in Nairobi, Kenya, for the implementation of the activities in the countries of the Horn of Africa, one in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo and one in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

The Institute reiterates the importance of a diverse staff in terms of cultural background and expertise.

The Institute's research activities are normally carried out through projects commissioned to individual researchers and collaborating partners around the world. The African peace building programs including action oriented research are carried out through three African offices. There are cooperative agreements with local and regional organizations in particular fields.

The overall responsibility for planning, coordination and administration rests with the executive director, who is supported in his work by the senior management team.

In connection to the meeting, there were some public activities in between the agenda of the business sessions. This included the visits to the All Africa Conference of Churches based in Nairobi where the venue of the meeting was taken place, and then to the Nairobi Peace Initiative Africa and the Federation of Church Councils in the North East Africa. There was also a seminar on Christian Muslim dynamics in Africa which was held on 13th June at the Desmond Tutu Ecumenical centre in Nairobi.

Then there was another seminar on the Human Rights to Peace – the Luarca Declaration. This declaration has been launched in order to better structure and give substance to peace matters from a human rights perspective. This seminar was held on 15th June and co-organized by Life and Peace Institute, World Council of Churches, All Africa Conference of Churches and the Spanish Society for the Advancement of the International Human Rights Law.

Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) meeting

The Global Ecumenical Network on Migration meeting was organized by the desk of Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation: Migration and Social Justice, World Council of Churches. CCA was invited by WCC and the AACC (All Africa Conference of Churches) to participate in this meeting which was held on 5 – 8 June, 2007. The event was attended by JID newly appointed joint executive secretary Freddy De Alwis.

There were 32 participants representing the All Africa Conference of Churches, Australian National Council of Churches, Caribbean Conference of Churches, Middle East Council of Churches, Pacific Conference of Churches, Canadian ecumenical justice initiative KAIROS and the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe. The Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) was unable to participate due to visa related constrains.

The main objective of the consultation was to understand “the impact of migration on the church in the ecclesial context”. The GEM network was formed by the WCC to engage and challenge churches in their work with migrants and more generally, to understand global migration in order to equip churches and their communities with the perspective necessary to resolve migrant issues. In the context of Africa and AACC this consultation had extensive impact. Both the organizations AACC and the WCC were able to meet the objectives with the diverse participation of Africa. The event was well organized, all the presentation and the inputs were excellent, panel and the group discussions were also very positive. The arranged field visits gave real understanding of the deploring situation of the refugees in Africa.

The event brought several facts related to migrant issues for reflection and discussions. As United Nation, International Migration 2006 reports that there are about 53 million migrant workers in Asia. Nearly 20 million African men and women are migrant workers. By 2015 one in ten Africans will live and work outside their country of origin if the situation prevails. And the current illegal migrant population is 9 – 11 million Africans. Along with these statistics the difference between migrant workers and illegal immigrants was also emphasized by the participants.

In context of the recent trends and challenges in the field of development it was realized that there is a need to redefine the concepts “right to life” and “development” in theological terms according to our own Asian realities in order to make more positive influence on the communities. Therefore these are the concerns and challenges that need to be taken in consideration for CCA –JID projects.

Concerns and challenges

- Continue supporting and strengthening the migrant action alert mechanism to expose blatant violations of migrants’ human rights (e.g. through the migrant forum in Asia).
- Encourage churches and the NCC’s to build linkages with the trade unions and labour movements in each country to develop a migrant workers agenda.

Ecumenical formation, Gender justice and Youth empowerment (EGY)

Quarterly report for April-June 2007

EGY staff: CHANG, Chung Chih and Moumita Biswas

Internships:

Background:

The CCA Youth Internship, based at the CCA centre, provides an opportunity of learning for young people where they experience and become part of the Asian ecumenical youth movement, theological reflections, leadership formation and diversity of faith and cultures while working with CCA. The CCA Youth Internship programme normally runs for a period of nine months.

Objectives:

- The internship aims to provide youth with an intensive learning experience of regional youth work in Asia
- To provide a training opportunity for ecumenical youth leadership development
- To help national ecumenical movements in developing youth as ecumenical leaders.
- Specifically, among other initiatives, the 2006 internship help and facilitate the participation of women and youth in celebration events of 50th anniversary of CCA

Outcomes:

- Since CCA started Youth Internship program, young people have been nurtured in the spirit of ecumenism and equipped in ecumenical leadership. It has been one of the most concrete programs on helping local youth to be introduced to Asia Ecumenical Movement, its vision and challenges.
- In October 2006, Abigail Peter, from Malaysia, and Douk Samnang, from Cambodia, joined Youth Internships program. Their internship program tenure was from 1 October – 31 June 2007. One of the major tasks was to help organize CCA 50th celebration events for youth.
- Due to the change in programme the CCA 50th Anniversary Youth Forum was decided to move to March 2007. Both Abigail and Douk were requested to re-plan their internship with the supervision of the youth secretary of CCA. Douk was assigned to help in organizing this Youth Forum, and Abigail was with the preparation meeting for Indigenous Women's Alternative Leadership for Transformation (IWALT).
- After the Youth Forum, interns were encouraged to focus on the issues that interest them. Abigail was given an opportunity to have exposure on "dowry" issue in

Bangalore, India and also research on the issues of feminism. Douk obtained a certificate in theological training from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong which is a joint programme with WCC. Apart from this, Douk was also participated in the North East Asia Peace Consultation, NEAPC 2007, one of the youth programs, for sharing on the peace related issues and learn about the demilitarization of North East Asia. Douk also assisted in a workshop on HIV/Aids organized by MEPP on his return to Cambodia.

- On 30 June 2007, Abigail and Douk officially completed their internship with CCA. Both of them expressed their gratitude to CCA and Douk shared in his final internship report where he stated “I will continue my involvement with ecumenical movement and help the young people in my country and among Asia for deeper understanding on ecumenism and working with different people from different context. And Abigail said; “my internship with the Christian Conference of Asia has truly been a wonderful experience for me. During the past nine months, being part of this ecumenical movement has taught me things I would have never expected to see in any other way.” They both also are given great appreciation on what they have contributed and shared in CCA. In the future, they will also help CCA in cooperation with their respective churches.

Ecumenical Asia Pacific Student and Youth Network, EASY Net:

Background:

EASY Net comprises of six regional organizations; World Student Christian Federation - Asia Pacific region, Christian Conference of Asia Youth Desk, International Movement of Catholic Students Asia-Pacific, International Young Christian Students Asia Secretariat, Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs and Young Women’s Christian Association.

Objectives:

EASY Net is a voluntary regional network of youth and students seeking to provide a common platform of action for youth and students of Asia Pacific and more importantly to promote ecumenical dialogue and cooperation at the grassroots levels. It aims to:

- Promote ecumenical dialogue and cooperation within EASY Net
- Share problems, perspectives, visions and hopes among Protestant and Catholic students and youth in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Enhance information sharing capacity between Protestant and Catholic students and youth groups in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Provide space and opportunity for Protestant and Catholic students and youth groups to experience inter-cultural and inter-religious solidarity.
- Extend the cooperation and collaboration of EASY Net to other youth and student groups and networks in this region as well as at the global level.

Outcomes:

- Since the representative of YWCA has shared her difficulty on joining EASY Net

with this position of a new moderator for 2007, team members have invited Bipul Alite Gonzales from IMCS to be the moderator.

- The other step for EASY Net this year is the transition of the coordinator. The last coordinator Glenda C. Rocas has finished her two terms with EASY Net officially on 30 June 2007. The team members of EASY Net met to interview new coordinator on February 9-10, 2007, in Quezon City, Philippines. The candidate Wataru Arizumi from Japan YMCA was short listed and the position was opened again for another one month. In March 2007 there was no more application for the position. Finally the team members decided to take Wataru Arizumi as the coordinator with a requirement of three months internship with Glenda and the team members who are based in Manila, Philippines. An evaluation will be held after Wataru's internship and a decision of his term with EASY Net will be made. Wataru finished his internship in Manila on 30 June 2007 and got appointed as new coordinator of the EASY Net.
- Due to the shortage of fund, this year the writing workshop for "Asia Pacific Students and Youth Week Celebration" is cancelled. Instead of having a workshop, EASY Net is inviting youth from all members to contribute their creative writing or painting on the theme of "**Youth mapping up their lives in the fast changing world**" The resource book will be published and will be sent to all the members for the celebration on Asia Pacific Students and Youth Week, held on the third week of October every year.
- The decision of preparation on Asia Student and Youth Gathering(ASYG) 2008 were made:
- The venue of ASYG 2008 will be finalized in July 2007, and a preparatory meeting with hosting country will be held in December 2007.
- The fundraising of ASYG 2008 will be done jointly by the team members.

CCA and WSCF AP Joint Program Committee, CWP:

Background and objectives:

The Joint Program traces its roots from early 60's, when the representatives of then EACC (East Asia Council of Churches) and WSCF met in Hong Kong to identify their common vision for ecumenical student ministry in the region. The goals of CWP are:

- To encourage dialogue between NCCs and SCMs especially in countries where relations are weak
- To continue mutually enhancing partnership in programs between WSCF-AP and CCA
- To form a joint committee mandated by the decision-making bodies of both organizations to ensure the implementation and monitoring of suggested action plans of this Consultation
- to bridge the difference in the understanding of the ecumenical movement and its varied expressions in the constituencies of each organization
- to provide opportunity and space to link the constituencies of each organization
- to recommend joint activities and plans to each organization

- to plan and ensure the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the joint activities; to evaluate the role and performance of the committee

Outcomes:

- An original plan of “Joint CCA and WSCF Youth Secretaries and Coordinators Meeting”, which will be focusing on interfaith dialogue, was postponed to early 2008 due to the change of CCA 50th anniversary celebrations.
- The School for Ecumenical Leadership Formation (SELF) 2007 will once again be a joint undertaking between the two organizations after five years of separation. The SELF 2007 will be held on September 2-22 2007, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Anglican youth will be helping in cooperating with SCM Sri Lanka for hosting SELF. The theme of SELF 2007 is “Young People Working towards Wider Ecumenism in a Pluralistic Society”. And youth leaders from both CCA and WSCF AP aged between 22 – 32 with at least one-year involvement in ecumenical movement; with commitment to serve the youth and student movements after the SELF Program are invited to join. This program will be held under the supervision of the joint executive secretary during the transition of youth secretary of CCA.

CCA 50th Anniversary Celebration Youth Forum:

“Be humble, be gentle in love and be united for peace”

Youth has been instrumental in the ecumenical movement since its beginning. While reading the history of ecumenical movement, we can see the youth from WSCF, YMCA, YWCA and other Christian organizations, were involved in giving birth to ecumenical movement. The first World conference of Christian Youth, in 1939 brought a growing conviction of essential togetherness of all Christians. Hence, the second World Conference of Christian Youth, Oslo, July 1947 was a post-war ecumenical gathering, which gathered hundred and twenty-nine Asians. After this, Asian youth was seen playing a vital role in the ecumenical movement and its development.

Youth Desk is one of the earliest desks formed in EACC, which had been bringing in the energy, creative ideas, critical thinking and passion to Asia ecumenical movement. From the participation of youth in ecumenical movement to the call of responding the responsibility of being young Christian, CCA Youth have been leading a direction for young people. This year is the 50th anniversary of CCA, after half century’s hard working, it was time for us to reflect and witness what we have done and gained in this movement. And at the same time it was an occasion for young people to bring out our concerns and issues for the next 50 years of Asian ecumenical movement. Therefore, in conjunction with the CCA 50th anniversary celebrations on March 3-7 2007 in Parapat, Indonesia, we organize the Youth Forum with the theme “ Be humble, be gentle in love, be united for peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

Objectives:

The CCA 50th Anniversary Celebration Youth Forum aimed to bring a carefully selected number of young people and provided a platform for around 35 youth leaders from across Asia to share the concerns and issues which influence the life and ministry re-affirming the importance of youth participation in CCA's life in the past, present and future.

The objectives of the **CCA 50th Anniversary Celebration Youth Forum** were:

- To share the youth's concerns and witness in CCA 50th celebration event
- To provide a common platform for youth leaders across Asia to discern and response to the issues concerning them
- Attempt to make CCA more focused on youth leadership development and empowerment within the churches in Asia.
- To develop the future leadership of the ecumenical movement and the churches in Asia.

Outcomes:

- In the CCA 50th Anniversary Celebration Youth Forum, we had 34 young people from nine countries in Asia. The international participants were the youth leaders in their respective countries. Our local youth and host were also from the local youth movement.

Program content

- The first input of Youth Forum was on the Biblical Reflections with the theme "be humble, be gentle in love, and be united for peace" by Peggy Adeline Mekel, a young woman from HKPP church Indonesia. She led participants in reflecting on the role of youth in Asian ecumenical movement. She also emphasized as how the future of youth should be the responsibility of all Christians in Asia and not only youth themselves.
- In order to have more ideas from young people, the plenary session was set up for more mutual communication and learning process. The speakers shared on the challenges and its impact on young people. Necta Montes, the regional secretary of WSCF AP presented on the subject from a regional point of view and Lesley Capus the youth coordinator of National Council of Churches of Philippines shared on the challenges of ecumenical work on the national level. Binsar Pakpahan, from Indonesia shared about the concerns and challenges of the Indonesian youth.
- The second plenary was focused on the important experience of CCA Youth in the past. Dr. Soritua A.E. Nababan, the first youth secretary of EACC and CHAN, Beng Seng, the formal youth secretary of CCA were invited to share their experience in their time. Both of them shared on the challenges and role of youth in their time and encouraged young people to be the leaders of today and tomorrow.

- The last plenary “mission is possible” was on how young people struggle to work for ecumenical movement in their contexts. Ma La Wun Shwe Wut Ye, a member of general committee of youth from Myanmar Council of Churches presented a play based on the stories and struggles of youth in Myanmar. Yun, Jae Hyang from South Korea, member of general committee of CCA, shared how the Korean youth got together to work for the social issues and the ecumenical movement. Rev. Raj Bharath Patta, youth secretary of National Council of Churches of India, shared updates on the programs that NCCI is doing for empowering and equipping young people.
- All participants were encouraged to be involved in the main event of CCA 50th anniversary in order to voice the needs and concerns of the youth. At the same time, young people also gathered for reflecting and discussing the role of youth in the future of ecumenical movement.
- A Jubilee Proclamation was made by all participants to re-affirming that ecumenism for youth means friendship, mutual understanding, striving for unity affirming diversity, and building community of communities transcending all the barriers in the creation. They also emphasized how ecumenism is about life and living the life in its fullness, and means to be in solidarity with the least, the lost, and the last in the society. They expressed how they believe that focus for ecumenical movement is the local church and local ecumenism is the priority in seeking the unity of the body of Christ and this is what we are called to do in our action as today’s leader.
- In addition, the participants also shared that it is high time for CCA to take up the cause of young people and work for the empowerment and bring the awareness to become better responsible citizens of their countries. The participants urged churches and their leaders to start implementing ecumenism in local congregations. They were hopeful that the church leadership will take youth issues very seriously and try to promote many young leaders for the church and society.

Evaluation

- The Youth Forum was given a positive feedback in the evaluation forms. However, since this forum was held in conjunction with the main celebration event of CCA 50th anniversary, due to time limitations and venue it did not meet the expectation of some participants. The other feedback was the number of youth participants in the main event of CCA 50th anniversary as they were only one-tenth of the entire participants. This brought concerns that in the important time of CCA as a regional ecumenical organization, youth’s presence is not highly considered. Apart from these, participants felt that it was a good chance to meet each other for solidarity, relationship and friendship for the youth movement in Asia.

North East Asia Peace Consultation, NEAPC 2007

Background and objectives:

CCA organized “North East Asia Peace Consultation, NEAPC” on 16 – 27 May, 2007 after almost ten years. It is a program which that brings youth leaders from Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan together; to discuss the role the young Christians and churches **can play towards addressing the effects of militarization. Hence, NEAPC aims to facilitate sharing and exploration on issues of conflict transformation and peace initiatives in the context of North East Asia promoting peace movement and to keep working as a network of peace among the youth in North East Asia.**

The objectives of NEAPC 2007 were:

- **To bring youth from the NEA countries for deliberation and exploration of peace and conflict issues, especially on “de-militarization” and its related issues based on theological reflections.**
- **To provide a platform for a youth network on peace issues in NEA.**
- **To provide an opportunity for inter-linking with other sub regions in Asia.**

Outcomes:

Participants

- Together with the resource persons and local host committee staff, NEAPC 2007 had total number of 33 participants. The gender balance was given high consideration with the number of 16 women and 17 men. The participants were below 35 years of age and actively working with their respective organizations.

Program content

- The inputs of program were focus on the theme “theological reflections and bible studies on peace building - initiating and building a peace movement in North East Asia and realities of North East Asia with a focus on militarization”. And the topics to be explored for resource persons were; militarization in North East Asia, patriotism and people’s security (including human rights violations), theological perspectives on peace building and related contemporary issues, economic dominance and globalization and peace movement in North East Asia.
- Other than the main inputs from resource persons, an exposure to the “front-line” of Taiwan, Kinmen Islands, was also included. In this exposure, young people were able to learn about the historical and political issues between Taiwan and China as well as the life of people in Kinmen during the war time.
- Since main purposes of having NEAPC regularly is to promote the concrete action in cooperation among young people in North East Asia, a workshop on peace building was held. Participants were given time to analyze the issues of their respective countries and also think about the concrete action plan for overcoming the challenges.
- Participants also spent time in finalizing a statement on the issue of

“Demilitarization in North East Asia” together. The basic idea was taken from Ephesians 4:3; "To keep the unity through the bond of peace". Participants shared that this passage shows that peace will come true if we have a peaceful solidarity instead of being ignorant, therefore the situation of militarization must be changed by positive action. We believe it is God's will. In this, we saw the biblical imperative to act for peace. In this statement, participants also share all the concerns from their respective countries and North East Asia region. The statement ends with the conclusion that war brings people suffering and sadness. Yet we can replace war with peace. Let us try to understand each other in the international cooperation and strive for justice together.

Evaluation

- A general evaluation with positive feedback was shown among participants in the end of NEAPC 2007. However, some difficulties identified were in the area of arrangements, organizing the event, preparatory tasks and the tight schedule. The main problem for communication was the language. As we know that most of Northeast countries are not that familiar with English, it sometimes made the process of preparation or communication difficult. The issue of demilitarization was a crucial subject to bring to the young people and due to less preparation they sometimes even got lost in discussions. The tight schedule this time was due to the exposure trip to another island of Taiwan. These are the elements that can be considered for next NEAPC preparations.

(WEAVE) East Timor

Women’s Ecumenical Accompaniment for Vision and Empowerment (WEAVE) is a project assisting CCA member churches and councils in their capacity building work for women in ecumenical leadership and organizational development through full time ecumenical accompanier facilitated and supported by CCA.

Objectives:

- This project aims to develop support mechanism for ecumenical women’s movement within the structure of the receiving organization.
- To develop better connections among women’s leadership development with organizational and program management capacity building.
- To strengthen the partnership of member churches in responding to the challenges faced by women in ecumenical movement.

WEAVE in East Timor

In the context of violent history of East Timor and it was realized that the situation had a deep impact on the women who are struggling for their rights amidst the conflict. Immediately after East Timor gained independence Cora Tabing Reyes had a meeting with women representing different churches on from 21 – 22 July, 2002. She also

revisited the country in April for a follow up meeting with Shu Wen Chiang, executive secretary of Asian Church Women Conference (ACWC). They visited local churches and NGO's and met with the leaders of Igreja Protestante Iha Timor Loro Sae (IPTL).

Dominica. L. Faurillo, a church worker of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, agreed to serve as a volunteer of CCA to the IPTL while based in Delhi. She was active with the NCCP and was the ecumenical accompanier in Cambodia from 2003- 2006. She will be responsible for the following tasks:

- To develop collective support mechanism for ecumenical women's movement in the country
- To accompany the women in their ecumenical leadership development, organizational and program management capacity building.
- To support church women in their movement for building communities of peace.

It was also agreed that the IPTL will provide CCA with an annual evaluation report on work progress. Dominica will primarily be accountable to the Moderator of IPTL along with EGY- joint executive secretary- women's concern. It was also agreed that quarterly reports will be sent annually.

WEAVE- East Timor planned to begin its work from July 2007. However due to the transition of work responsibilities to EGY joint executive secretaries it was delayed. In this context to continue developing the functioning of WEAVE in its capacity building work Dominica will be meeting the executive staff in Chiang Mai on 24 July 2007. She will also be attending a workshop on "Programs and Funding Request 2008" to be held on 24-25 July 2007 at Crystal Spring Guest House, Chiang Mai. She will share with the CCA team, her tentative action plan, methodology and theological reflections about implementation of WEAVE along with EGY joint executive secretary.

Indigenous Women's Alternative Leadership Training Project (IWALT)

Objectives

- To assess and analyze the outcomes of sub regional trainings based on participants' follow up activities.
- To develop better understanding of feminist theology
- To evaluate the applicability of alternatives such as feminist leadership, in their own respective contexts
- To build platform for action, solidarity and cooperation among indigenous/Dalit women in peace building.

A follow-up to the preparatory meeting was organized by the IWALT Team on 1-3 March 2007. Apart from this meeting IWALT regional gathering will also take place on 15-22 November, 2007 in Myanmar. A letter was sent to all the participants of the sub-regional trainings held in 2005 and 2006, informing them about the event along with the guidelines for the required report on their implemented action plans. Reports were due by June 30 and list of recommended participants by the end of August. The hosting of the

Myanmar Council of Churches was confirmed during the CCA office visit of Rev. Mar Gay Gui in April.

IWALT Follow up Thai Participants:

The follow up meeting of IWALT with the Thai participants was organized by CCT Women's concerns at Mc Gilvary School, College of Divinity on 19 July, 2007. Ten participants attended the meeting while EGY joint executive secretary Moumita Biswas represented CCA.

The objective of the meeting was to monitor and hear stories of Thai indigenous women participants of IWALT. And also to see what learnings they have extracted from the training sessions to be implemented in their own contexts. The main areas of discussion were:

- Challenges faced by Thai participants in implementing the learnings of the training in their own communities.
- The contributions to be made in the final gathering of IWALT in November 2007.
- How to widen IWALT beyond merely a training program and making it a lifestyle and implementing it in daily lives to build sustainable communities of justpeace.

In the mean time other follow up reports were also sent by many participants.

CCA – UNESCAP Project
Strengthening of Life Skills for Positive Youth Health Behaviour

Quarterly report for April-June 2007

Shirley Susan
CCA UNESCAP Consultant

Introduction

The present four-year project (2005 – 2008) on life skills for disadvantaged youth aims to empower them with essential life skills so that they are better able to protect themselves from the threat of HIV/AIDS and drugs.

The project is implemented in four countries: Cambodia, China (Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous region), Philippines and Sri Lanka. It focuses on developing community-based life skills training networks to reach young people and foster their positive health behaviour.

Project objective:

The overall project objective is to empower young people with essential life skills so that they are capable of protecting themselves from the threat of HIV/AIDS and drugs.

Outcomes:

- Disadvantaged youth participating in the project adopt positive health behaviour and healthy lifestyles.
- Disadvantaged youth is getting equipped with life skills to make informed and responsible choices about their health, particularly on HIV/AIDS and substance use.
- A more supportive environment is created in order to facilitate positive behaviour development among disadvantaged youth.
- Evidence on effective community-based life skills interventions is available as a reference source for policy and programme improvement.

Updates on work progress during January - March 2007

- Training of Trainers Program in Colombo, Sri Lanka and Kampot Province, Cambodia was conducted to build a team of community based trainers.

- Discussions were initiated with National Counterpart Organizations (NCOs) in Sri Lanka, Xinjiang (Uyghur Autonomous Region, China), Cambodia and the Philippines to initiate community based life skill training networks.
- Discussions on developing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials for disadvantaged youth.

Project activities during April - June 2007

- Preparation of Letter of Agreement (LoA) between UNESCAP and Pasay City Government, Manila, Philippines.
- Training of Trainers in Pasay City, Philippines to build a team of community based trainers and initiate community based life skills training networks.
- Consultations with national counterpart organizations in the Philippines to initiate community based life skills training networks.
 1. Discussions on exploring options for initiating livelihood skills development programmes in the community.
 2. Discussions on mobilizing community through innovative community based recreational activities such as sports, music, dance competitions, creative arts etc.

Training of Trainers (ToT) in Pasay City, Philippines

Mission to Pasay City, Manila, Philippines (29 May – 01 June 2007): Consultant Shirley Susan coordinated the TOT program together with the National Counterpart Organisation (NCO) – Pasay City Government, Pasay City, Philippines.

Aims

- To conduct ToT in Manila to build a team of community based trainers on life skills for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and substance use.
- To undertake stakeholder consultations on technical implementation modalities.

Key activities

- Conducted the ToT workshop on strengthening life skills for positive youth health behaviour in Manila (57 participants);
- Met with the Mayor of Pasay City, Planning and Development Coordinator, City Planning & Development Office, Programme Coordinator, Pasay City Child Welfare Council and Mayor, City of Munoz.
- Met with representatives from UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN-Habitat.
- Met with NGOs such as Foundation for Adolescent Development, Inc. and Sigmahanon Foundation for Culture and the Arts, Inc.
- Discussed the design for training of life skills based trainers and to build community based life skills training networks with Local Government Unit of Pasay City. Discussed with the partners on ESCAP's health programme focus, which is the strengthening of health systems in the region. Therefore the need for all technical

cooperation projects to reflect and ensure a balance between normative, analytical and operational aspects were identified and discussed.

Training of Trainers in Pasay City, Manila

- There were 57 participants (Male – 25 and Female – 32) who participated in the Training of Trainers Programme.
- The four-day ToT programme brought participants from the Social Welfare and Development Office, Health Office, Pag-asa Youth Association – Special Drug Education Centre Programme, Department of Education, Bridge of Pasay Dwellers Foundation and faith based organizations such as the National Christian Council of the Philippines (NCCP), Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), Intercissors for the Philippines (IFP) and young women and men in the ages between 15 – 24 from Pasay City.
- The training included presentations, group activities, discussions, role-play, games and exercises based on the ESCAP Life Skills Training Kit on “HIV Prevention among Young People”.
- The participants were open-minded, energetic and creative. They actively involved themselves in the discussions, practical sessions on peer education, identified specific activities and drew out a strategy plan to mobilize out-of-school youth and other stakeholders in the community.
- Around twelve churches and faith-based organizations participated in the programme and committed themselves to provide their infrastructure and services in mobilizing out-of-school youth and organizing peer education activities within their own communities.

Recommendations:

The Recommendations by the participants to train life skills based trainers and build community based life skills training networks were the following:

- Develop appropriate Information, Education and Communication (IEC materials) relevant to Philippines context.
- Explore options for initiating livelihood skill development programmes in the community. As of now the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) of Philippines has committed to provide scholarship to 500 out-of-school youth in Pasay City.
- Revive youth bodies in the community such as Sangguniang Kabataan.
- Build life skills through community-based social artistry, musical performance and other sports activities such as aerobics, *taekwondo* etc.
- Mobilise faith-based organizations and religious leaders in the community and engage them to speak openly and organize programmes on issues concerning substance use and HIV/AIDS to reduce fear, stigma and discrimination in order to promote healthy behaviour.

- Consider the possibility of establishing a “Teen Health Centre” which will include education, counselling, medical and referral services to attend to the needs of youth in Pasay City.
- To link all activities to improve Philippines’ performance in meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets.

HIV/AIDS - Role of the Church

Stigma and discrimination are one of the major concerns in addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS in the Philippines context. The Roman Catholic Church plays a significant role in influencing attitudes and behaviour of the society. After a series of discussions and deepening relations with the church, UNAIDS was successful in having the “*Training Manual on HIV and AIDS for Catholic Church Pastoral Workers*” endorsed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

Community based life skills training activities – updates

1. Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China

During March 2007, Centre of HIV/STI prevention and control of Xinjiang CDC organized training workshops with the objective of building capacity amongst youth who are regarded as key opinion leaders so that they are able to provide peer based support to their community.

Life skills training workshops were conducted in Yining and Kashgar. Key people selected to participate in the community were aged between 15-25 years. They were relatively less mobile, had certain education level and were influential among other local young people. Participants included 115 people from Yining city, Yingyer and Bayindai township (60 males and 55 females) and 120 people from Kashgar (72 males and 48 females).

Trainings

The workshops were organized based on a modular approach. The first module was life skills and the second was drugs and HIV. In each two training workshops (total 28 workshops were held).

- The first training session included developing of life skills; ten key life skills; necessary life skills for health promotion; how to be a peer educator and how to do peer education.
- The second training session included reason and impact of using drugs; certain drugs which young people often used; drug dependence - how to abstain from drug use and withdrawal symptom arising out of stopping the use of drugs; how to prevent or reduce drug abuse by using relative life skills and so on.

Training model

- 15 participants in each class were trained to be key staff for peer education. Trainers were two workers from local Youth League who had participated in ToT.

- 1-2 staff persons from city CDC were responsible for monitoring the training and providing necessary technical support.
- The training was held in residents' home or activity centre of villagers' committee.
- Training methodologies such as brainstorming and games were adopted in the training.
- Since most of the participants were from Uyghur, the training was provided in Uyghur. Many local examples were cited to strengthen participants' understanding of the concepts discussed.

Results of the training

According to verbal feedback from participants, training methods were considered interesting and were extensively accepted by them. Discussions continued among participants even after the training. Participants also gave feedback on what they thought were important areas for further skills development. They wanted to learn more on the following areas:

- basic life skills
- interpersonal communication skills
- HIV/STI knowledge
- harmful effect of drugs and awareness on self-protection.

Reasons for successful implementation of the training are:

- Involvement of trainers from the community facilitated in easy communication with participants.
- The training was provided in Uyghur and local examples were adopted to clarify some knowledge points, so the participants are able to gain knowledge in a direct perceived way.
- Staff from city CDC provided adequate technical support.
- The training was conducted in local settings familiar to the participants. The participants were home to the environment and therefore were more comfortable and receptive to the learning.

2. Mattakuliya Communities, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Training of Trainers was conducted from 28 January – 3 February 2007 together with the National Counterpart Organization (NCO) – Sarvodaya (Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya), Sri Lanka.

Post Training of Trainers activities

On completion of the Training of Trainers the participants got involved in the training of their own district level health volunteer leaders as well as the ten women's safe houses leaders (managers).

Sets of modules / copy of the relevant modules were provided to the following government organizations:

- Health Education Bureau
- Family Health Bureau
- National STD/AIDS Campaign
- Health Ministries of nine provinces
- NGOs involved in HIV AIDS prevention activities;
- Sri Lanka Family Planning Association
- ADIC (Alcohol and Drugs Information Centre)

Building a team of community based trainers in life skills:

Orientation programs

The orientation programs for local government officials, community leaders, religious leaders and other stake holders intends to inform on the health risks that youth face and the need for life skills training.

As the target group was very diverse and distributed along a large geographic area, it was decided to have a series of orientation programs for different groups of people at different sites and times.

Four very successful and one fairly successful orientation programs were held with the attendance of:

- Religious leaders from the locality (chief priest from the local temple, church leaders and a Hindu priest)
- Representatives from the law enforcing organisation (Police)
- Local health authorities, Chief Medical Officer, Colombo Municipality and staff, Medical officer in charge of City Dispensary, Public health inspectors, and the health educators from the CMC
- Government development officials, Samurdi officer of the area
- Representatives from other local NGOs, Lions club
- Senior and respected Citizens from the area including local politicians
- Elders and parents of the youth in the area.

After having the first meeting in the city's Sarvodaya office which is about eight kilometres away from the project site, the need was expressed to have them conducted in the project area itself so that its easier for people from the area to attend the event.

As there were about 12 communities in the project area with different culture, languages, behaviours and attitudes from one another, the requests came from each of them to have orientation, consultative and planning meetings separately.

Usually the trainers who were trained together with the local community took the initiative to organize such meetings. And Sarvodaya only had to discuss our objectives with them and plan the programs to suit their conditions with their help.

Outcome

Religious leaders pledge support

The religious leaders of the area played a major role in setting values and trying to bring about positive changes. They were enthusiastic about their involvement in the project activities as they themselves were trying to struggle with the issue of substance use which they identified it as one of the root cause of the problems. They welcomed the activities directed at prevention of HIV / AIDS, and STIs, a subject which was new to them though they were well aware of the increase in numbers of youths getting involved in commercial sex and promiscuous behaviour. While pledging their support for the activities they willingly offered their property to be used for project activities free of charge.

Youth asking for recreational facilities

At these meetings it was revealed that one of the key reasons for youth risk behaviour was the fact that youth had no recreational facilities to be engaged during their free time. The small play grounds and places used as libraries available in the past (provided by the local government) were now occupied by temporary shelters for people displaced by Tsunami. There were no plans currently to relocate these displaced people to permanent residences else where. Therefore the chances of the youth to have an area to regain their play grounds and libraries were remote.

The youth of the area wanted body building equipment (weight lifting) to build their physique which the elders thought was a good idea since it would lead to building of their character as well.

Sarvodaya felt that this was a good idea as it would help to keep the youth away from getting involved in substance use. It was observed that most drug addicts were people with no involvement in sports or other healthy activities.

The mothers were of the opinion that the young girls will benefit by learning to sew and cook which will keep them occupied during their free time and help them in a small way to earn some money. This they felt will keep them away from getting involved in various negative activities in order to earn money.

A request for musical instruments for girls (Melodicas) was also made by the parents and young girls, so that they will be able to play in the school band. As it was agreed by both parents and youth that this will lead to building of self confidence and personality.

Request was made by the police officers for a Training of Trainers program for a group of youth leaders who can mobilize the community with the police in order to reduce alcohol, substance abuse, crime, road safety and corruption.

The school teachers of the area wanted seminars, workshops and other activities to be held for school children if possible.

Involvement of youth in developing materials on HIV /AIDS

Sarvodaya conducted a secondary literature survey of booklets already published by others NGOs on substance use, alcohol and protection against child abuse. The information will be reviewed and reprinted after obtaining copy right permission from the relevant organisations.

Involving the youth of the Mattakuliya area in producing material on prevention of substance use and HIV / AIDS is also been tried out. Already young children of the area are encouraged to produce material in relation to the subject. Some of them have made posters on the drawing materials provided to them by the project funds. The others will be organizing a song and drama competition on the effect of alcohol at various levels i.e. self, home community etc. to be performed in a social evening, to which their parents will be invited. It is expected that children getting involved in such activities will help reflect on the issue and come up with solutions. It was felt that the being part of such programmes will not only have an impact on their life but on the lives of those who will be exposed to them. This will also build their self confidence.

Outcomes of above mentioned programs

- Youth of the area have shown more interest in finding out how and why things happen around them and started to feel that they are capable of bringing a change in their communities.
- They have started trying their hand at addressing issues their community is faced with. This community was comparatively better in non usage of addictive substances including alcohol, but the number of cigarette smokers was high.

E.g.: The youth themselves got together and organized actions against boutiques that sell cigarettes. They have managed to stop selling cigarettes in five boutiques in the area, by explaining to the shop owners (who are their relatives) on the unhealthy impact cigarettes are having on the community.

Though they were indifferent towards the plight of two youth who are known to be drug addicts in the community in the beginning, they started looking for help (institutional or professional) to rehabilitate them.

- Having the feeling that they could do more for their community they have now decided to revive the long given up “Maranadara Society” (Mutual Help Society for expenses at funerals).
- They are now planning to improve the main drain which is running across their houses and is a reason for many health problems of the community by performing Shramadana (donation of Labour).
- Some of the youth who attended the seminars said that this was the first time they were given a chance to get involved in matters that were so closely related to their lives. They expressed their desire to share what they learnt with their friends at work places.

- a) They planned to organise similar workshops for their wives and parents.
- b) One participant who was involved in a hand embroidery course elsewhere volunteered to train others who were interested. Around fifteen young girls now attend weekly classes which are held at the Sri Wickramasinharamaya (Temple). Sarvodaya helped in the initial process by providing materials like sewing frames, cloths and threads but now they look after their requirements by themselves.

Kampot Province, Cambodia

Monitoring Mission to Cambodia (6 – 11 May 2007): Michael Chai, Social Affairs Officer, UNESCAP undertook a monitoring mission to Phnom Penh and Kampot Province. The National Counterpart Organisation (NCO) in Cambodia is Youth Department, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS).

Aims

- To monitor implementation of project activities in Kampot Province.
- To undertake stakeholder consultations on technical implementation modalities.

Key activities

- Visited project sites in Kampot, Kampong Bay and Dang Tong to observe youth training and outreach activities being carried out by NCO.
- Met with local community leaders from the three districts of Kampot province (Kampot, Kampong Bay and Dang Tong) as well as the community-based trainers involved in the youth training activities.
- Discussed and planned project activities and strategies for 2007, with community-based training team.
- Met with officials from the Youth Department, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) in Phnom Penh, and provincial counterparts in Kampot province.
- Met with UNAIDS Country team country team coordinator in Cambodia.

Work progress

To date, 18 such peer education activities have been carried out in the three districts of Kampot by local community-based trainers. Several IEC pamphlets, posters and booklets have been produced and distributed, and three orientation activities were organised for local government officials, community leaders, religious leaders, and other stakeholders, on health risks that youth face and the need for life skills training.

Peer-to-peer youth training activities, Dang Tong, 7-8 May 2007

- The two-day peer-to-peer youth training series of activities was attended by some 50 out-of-school youth from nearby villages, almost all of them working on family-run farms.
- The training included presentations, group activities - group discussions, role-play, games and exercises based on the ESCAP Life Skills Training Kit on “HIV Prevention among Young People”.

- The youth peer educators were all local persons, who had participated in the ToT held in January 2007, in Kampot.
- The participants were open-minded, energetic and actively involved themselves in the training.
- Evaluations carried among participants at the end of the activities suggested that the participants found the exercises useful and informative and many pledged to share their new-found knowledge with friends and family.

Following the training activities, the community-based peer educators and selected participants met for a few hours to brainstorm on specific strategies to continue youth outreach activities in their villages. Recommendations by the group are as follows:

- Develop more IEC materials which are relevant to the village contexts.
- Encourage more young people's involvement in future peer-to-peer education activities.
- Organise other community activities such as sports, music, and games, during which to conduct peer-to-peer education.
- Organise financial assistance for some poor youth and their families in the community.

Outcome of consultations with the Youth Department, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), Phnom Penh

The MoEYS is in the process of formulating a National Cambodian Youth Policy. In this regard, the Director of the Youth Department has requested for ESCAP's advisory services in order to complete the final draft of the policy document. Phan Sokim, Director of the Youth department, has proposed for a meeting with the Secretary of State of MoEYS, Cambodia, to discuss the matter.

Outcome of consultations with UNAIDS Country Coordinator, Cambodia

Consultations were held with Jane Batte, Social Mobilization and Partnerships Advisor and Acting Country Coordinator, Chek Lim, Deputy Director of the department of Youth, MoEYS, Cambodia and Pen Kosal Deputy Director, Department of Early Childhood Education. The purpose of the consultation was to brief the UN country team on ESCAP's "life skills" project in Cambodia. UNAIDS Cambodia expressed interest in ESCAP's project and extended its support to the NCO in implementing the project activities. Batte hoped that ESCAP will share its HIV-related work in Cambodia with other members of the UN Country Team, especially UNFPA, UNESCO and UNICEF.

MEPP: Quarterly Report

(April –June 2007)

MEPP coordinator: Janejinda Pawadee

Rev. Huh Chun - jung

A. Mission to Lao

MEPP coordinator visited Lao Evangelical Church (LEC) from 10 – 12 April, 2007 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The purpose of the visit was to meet and build relationships with LEC leaders and learn about their programs. Another objective was to help them develop a proposal on development projects to be submitted to funding agencies. Rev. Khamdeng Kounthapanya, CCA General Committee and MEPP contact, Rev. Saykham Singitthiphon, vice chairman of Vientiane Capital Evangelical Church and Chantala, secretary for International Relation participated in the process.

Currently LEC is developing churches through leadership trainings provided to both pastors and lay leadership. It has a staff of around forty people working in twelve different departments. Most of the work is done from evangelical perspective. They incorporate social development programs in their tasks such as mobile clinic in rural area. The country is opening up to a wider outreach mission however still have some limitations.

MEPP is playing a role to liaison and help LEC to communicate with Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT). PCT is also supporting LEC ministry on water projects in rural churches and communities. Rev. Huh spent time with LEC to visit churches and primary schools in four villages and learnt more about their situation and the needs of the community.

Rev. Huh also organized a meeting for Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK), National Mission Ministry's executive secretary Rev. Chin Bang Ju and four delegates from Puchun Presbytery to meet and discuss with LEC leaders. They discussed issues of sustainable development, capacity building and theological education. Discussions are on over the possibility of PCK continuing support to LEC ministry through MEPP next year.

B. Meetings and workshops

Puchun Presbytery Annual General Assembly in Korea

Rev. Huh attended Puchun Presbytery Annual General Assembly held from April 14-26, 2007 in Souel, Korea. During the Assembly, he shared about CCA programs and MEPP work especially on human rights and HIV/AIDS issues in different countries. He also invited them to undertake a trip to Mekong region through MEPP cooperation.

Meeting with Vietnamese students

MEPP staff had a chance to meet with a group of nine Vietnamese students on April 29, 2007. These students have recently graduated from Mc Gilvary College of Divinity, Payap University. The meeting gave an opportunity to get to know each other and build relationships for future cooperation in Vietnam. These students have spent three years studying at Mc Gilvary College of Divinity, PYU together with other students from Cambodia, Burma and Thailand.

All of Vietnamese students (4 women and 5 men) came from different parts of Vietnam and different backgrounds. They shared their experiences and learnings from studying and living in Chiang Mai. They also shared that to study at Mc Gilvary, their perspectives and horizons have been widened. Most of them were going back to serve their churches in their hometowns in different part of Vietnam.

MEPP is looking forward to work with churches in Vietnam through these graduated students. All of them will return to Chiang Mai again on November 2007 for their convocation at Payap University. We hope that they will have more stories to share since when they return. According to general secretary of Evangelical Church of Vietnam (ECV) Rev. Dr. Le Van Thein, situation in Vietnam is getting better as 80% of churches in the highland are re-opened. ECV is trying to negotiate with their government to give back buildings of 265 churches to them. Rev. Dr. Le Van Thien is also starting a new project. He is setting up a Graduate School of Theology in North Vietnam. This institution will welcome qualified faculty preferably with ecumenical background. There is a hope that we hear more positive stories from Vietnam churches in the future.

YMCA workshop (May 28-31, 2007)

MEPP was invited to attend a four days workshop on Mekong issues at YMCA. The YMCA for Northern Development Foundation (YNDF) organized a regional workshop at the International Hotel YMCA Chiang Mai. The theme of the workshop was to strengthen Mekong community for promoting sustainable human development, protecting environment, and securing peace.

The workshop brought together 25 participants, drawn from academics, researchers, governmental and non governmental organizations, representing five countries of the Mekong Region: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand. Participants represented different segments of civil society and engaged in discussions on current efforts of civil society in the Mekong region. They also identified priority areas for future cooperation and actions towards sustainable development and peace.

The workshop aimed to reinforce understanding of the values and concepts of sustainable development, human security and peace as they relate to the Mekong region. The workshop also promoted management of resources through adoption of community management approaches and initiatives. The participants also identified positive community practices regarding the different Mekong resources.

During the workshop, participants had a chance to exchange experiences from their own contexts. An exposure trip was also arranged to educate participants on sustainable development issues.

Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) meeting in Nairobi, Kenya

World Council of Churches (WCC) organized the Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) meeting was held from June 5-8, 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was organized by the desk on Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation: Migration and Social Justice of WCC.

There were 32 participants representing All Africa Conference of Churches, the Australian National Council of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the Canadian ecumenical justice initiative KAIROS, and the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (addressing refugee issues on behalf of the Conference of European Churches).

During our meeting we learnt that many of the 200 million migrants around the globe are confronted with enormous difficulties: being exploited, confronted with xenophobia and often forced to migrate under precarious conditions. Our hosts in Africa shared their sorrow on how large parts of the youth of Africa are leaving the continent, often to die in the seas of the Mediterranean and Atlantic for a supposedly better life in Europe.

Christians from the Middle East shared their concerns over the most dramatic refugee crisis of our times in the war-and conflict torn region, which is further accelerating the departure of Christians from the region which is the cradle of Christianity. They recalled the plight of migrant workers coming into the Middle East, who remain in isolation and precarious conditions. The churches are therefore called to witness in an environment which often has little space for church.

Asian participants reported on the situation of Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) and three major categories on IDP's such as armed conflict related displacement, state sponsored displacements and disasters such as floods and tsunami.

Colleagues from the Pacific shared their experiences on the emerging migration challenge due to climate change, while the churches' working in the Caribbean also shared similar concern over the challenge of dealing with migrant issues.

Churches from Europe, Australia and North America reported on their efforts to raise awareness among churches to open wholeheartedly to new migrants and provide them with assistance as required.

Churches across the globe are active in:

- assisting refugees, displaced persons and other groups of uprooted people and advocating for their rights
- welcoming migrants into their midst as expression of the global fellowship of the church.
- upholding the rights of migrants and refugees against exploitation, discrimination, racism and prejudice based on the conviction that all human beings are created in the image of God.

An exposure visit was arranged for participants to meet with a group of women refugees from Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) currently is working to support these women on sewing project to help them generate their income. As refugees, they are not allowed to work outside the camp. Sewing products is one way to help women earn money to support their families. In this situation, women play a major role in uplifting of their community with the support of AACC. They also get to receive basic support from the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugee (UNHCR) as people of concern (POC).

Diakonia Partner's meeting

Diakonia organised its partner's meeting at Amari Hotel in Chiang Mai from June 11-13, 2007. There were 37 participants from 11 organizations who attended the meeting.

Diakonia is a Swedish ecumenical development organization working together with local partners for a sustainable change for the most vulnerable people of the world. Diakonia has partners from almost all religious beliefs. In Thailand, there are about 15 partner organizations including MEPP supported by Diakonia.

During the meeting each partner had a chance to share about their work and experience in different areas. During a three - day meeting, Diakonia spent most of the time reviewing Diakonia's mission and made a presentation on Diakonia policy and strategy plan for 2007-2008. Project proposal and reporting guidelines were also explained to participants for better understanding.

PCK Indo-China Missionary Annual Meeting

Around 70 Korean missionaries working with PCK from Cambodia, Lao, Burma and Thailand attended a meeting held on June 18-22 in Phuket, Thailand. The theme of the meeting was about the cooperation work in Mekong the sub-region. Rev. Huh made a presentation about ecumenical cooperation and introduced CCA programs and MEPP during the meeting. He also suggested how to cooperate with CCA member churches in each country.

HIV/AIDS workshop

MEPP planned to organise a workshop on HIV/AIDS from July 10-12, 2007 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The purpose of the workshop was to update and analyze the HIV and AIDS situation in terms of trends, causes, results and problems. The workshop aimed to emphasize on the needs to build awareness and capacity of communities and churches on the issue of HIV and AIDS.

C. Organizing / Networking

Global warming meeting

CCA together with Socio Development Service Unit (SDSU) and Christ Church in Thailand (CCT), Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and other local NGOs working on environment issues organized a two - day workshop on Global Warming from June 4-5, 2007 at the International Hotel, Chiang Mai.

During April to June, MEPP had a chance to coordinate with NGOs, governmental organisations and civil society groups to prepare for the workshop. Resource persons and participants were also contacted and updated on the programme.

There were 67 participants representing 27 organizations who discussed the issues that cause global warming. Academics from Chiang Mai and Maejo universities were helping participants to understand more about the situation and causes of global warming. Participants also discussed strategies to help reduce the dangers causing global warming. The workshop ended with participant recommendations to reduce global warming at different levels including individual, family, community and policy making.

MEPP staff meeting with WCC Programme Executive for Asia

MEPP staff met with Dr. Mathews George, programme executive for Asia of World Council of Churches. He is an active leader who also worked for Indo-China Program of CCA previously. MEPP was encouraged to follow up with many leaders within Indo-China countries and continue supporting them. Issues on leadership development, social development, migration and HIV/AIDS were also discussed with him. His valuable recommendations in consideration of MEPP work in future included:

- Interfaith cooperation: MEPP should bring Buddhist monks from Cambodia, Vietnam and Lao PDR to meet in Thailand. In those countries, Buddhism is the main religion and there are some tensions between Christians and Muslims in some countries e.g. Cambodia.
- MEPP should focus more on capacity building in areas such as leadership development, social development, HIV/AIDS and migration. However it was suggested not to expand areas as MEPP has only one fulltime staff.

- Capacity building should always be held in Chiang Mai with the support of MEPP and CCA resources. In Chiang Mai, CCA executive staff can meet and speak in sessions and can highlight the work of CCA and MEPP.

Concerns and challenges:

- MEPP had a chance to meet and learn from others through meetings and workshops. The challenge to work in collaboration with churches, NGOs and Civil society in Mekong region to enhance capacity of grass root people was significant.
- MEPP need to help churches in Mekong countries to initiate concrete work on HIV/AIDS issues. The challenge is to help churches in some country to start their Aids Ministry based in their own contexts. Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are the countries on priority for HIV/AIDS initiative.
- Another challenge is to work in collaboration with Vietnam churches and leaders in future.
- MEPP has attempted to help Korean missionaries and churches understand the situation in Mekong countries where capacity building is needed.

HIV/Aids Programme Desk

Quarterly report for April-June 2007

HIV/Aids concerns consultant: Fr. Philip Kuruvilla

Background of the second quarter

CCA's AIDS Programme office is working to finalize the schedule for the planned projects. For the national HIV/Aids programme in Bangladesh the dates are confirmed for September, 2007. The delay in the process was due to the political turmoil and uncertain situation in Nepal. For this reason holding a program in 2007 was initially refused. However now it is agreed to plan a program and the search for a suitable date and time is on. A response is still awaited from Myanmar on our request for a joint program. The annual AIDS Workshop this year will be held in Malaysia, in conjunction with the Malaysian Council of Churches. The scheduled dates for this event are in November. Work for the preparations for the AIDS day is also on its way and liturgy is due to be released by December, 2007.

April activities

The HIV /Aids policy development for churches in Asia is part of 207 – 2008 program plans. India and Indonesia are the two countries selected for 2007. Rev. **Gomar Gultom** from Indonesia had two preliminary meetings and will have a series of discussions towards framing a national policy.

In Kolkata, India, CCA joined with Christian Agencies to Combat Substance Abuse Network (CMAI's CACSAN) to have a three - day workshop on "Helping churches develop policies on HIV/AIDS" from 26-28 April, 2007. The results were encouraging. Ms. Sagarika Chetty contributed her fresh perspectives and analysis on NCC India's HIV Program. Around thirty participants from various churches and Christian organizations took part in the program. Dr. Vijay Aruldas and Ms. Karuna Roy worked towards the achievement of the objectives of the workshop. They prepared a broad frame work on which the policies of Indian churches can be structured. More meetings are required to complete the process.

May and June activities

In December 2006 delegates from World Council of Churches (WCC), CCA, AINA (Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS) and UNICEF (ROSA, Kathmandu) met in Colombo to plan an "Interfaith Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS" before ICAAP-8, from 17-19 August 2007. The project document was brought out by AINA's International Steering Committee, supported by CCA and WCC, and was distributed to the partners and donors. The CCA HIV/Aids consultant was asked to be the convener of the IIPC (International Interfaith Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS) and he visited Colombo for the preparatory meetings. A local host committee was formed and met once a month since January, 2007 with the local coordinator Ms. Gayathri Gajamange. In the entire process Rev. Jayasiri Pieris general secretary NCC-SC and his team played a pivotal role. There was slight set back in the plans due to intense security concerns in Sri Lanka, however by 1 June a

crucial meeting was held in Chiang Mai. CCA and NCC – SL general secretaries agreed to go ahead with IIPC as scheduled. Soon after, the HIV/Aids desk arranged another meeting of the local host committee in Colombo where the associate general secretary of CCA, Rev. Dr. Rienzie Periera guided the participants on how to support the IIPC. Preparations and logistics were discussed with NCC-SL.

Concerns

One of the areas that required intense negotiation and public relations was getting funds for this program. Many international organizations were concerned about an interfaith approach to AIDS, and were supportive towards CCA's inclusive approach on the issue. UNAIDS, ICCO, Kirk-en-Actie, United Church of Canada are some of the donors who got involved in the process. The efforts of CCA to combat HIV/Aids threats with an ecumenical perspective were appreciated and acknowledged.

Annexure:

**DECLARATION
of the
International Consultation
on
“Doing Theology from Disability Perspective”**

We, the participants in the International Consultation on “Doing Theology from Disability Perspective”—comprising of women and men, clergy and laity, persons with disabilities and people with no apparent disability, family members, as well as representatives of ETE-CCA/WCC, EDAN-WCC, AFUB, and ATESEA¹—have gathered in Manila, Philippines, on May 22-27, 2007, to heed the call of God to greater participation of persons with disabilities in the life of God’s community, to continue our celebration of our diversity as God’s creation in which every human person is created in the image of God, to share our experiences as God’s workers in our respective contexts, and to offer our reflections on how to make our world more consistent the way God has always intended it to be—a place that teems with justice, grace and love.

We thank ETE-CCA/WCC, EDAN and ATESEA for their common commitment to make a long-term impact on the life of church and society, as well as their continuing sponsorship of a series of consultations on Doing Theology from Disability Perspective, which began in Limuru, Kenya (2004) and followed by similar events in Bangalore, India (2006) and Suva, Fiji (2006). We join in solidarity with ETE-CCA/WCC, EDAN and ATESEA in their common quest to develop a resource book on the theology of disability for theology students and church leaders worldwide, more specifically from Asian perspective.

We affirm our common identity as children of God. We find fulfilment in our continued connection with our Creator and to everyone in this creation. We celebrate the many gifts with which God has endowed us and confess that we have not always used those gifts to nurture each other, build communities, restore shattered relationships, and heal hurting lives.

We celebrate the many concrete measures taken by the international community, certain governments, the church, non-governmental organizations, theological institutions, communities, and individuals in Asia to promote the dignity and rights of people with disabilities. We affirm the United Nations’ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006.

¹ To see what the acronyms stand for please consult the last section following this document. .

We loudly lament the failure of the church to provide meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities in its various manifestations. We strongly deplore the marked indifference with which certain governments, community, and church groups continue to respond to the plight of PWDs.

We recognize that our work as persons with disabilities, counsellors, educators, community animators, church workers and ministers, theologians, advocates, and concerned citizens is not finished; on the contrary, it should intensify towards the establishment of an inclusive, affirming, and empowering global society. Toward this end, we call upon:

1. Churches

- to use the WCC's interim theological statement, "A Church of All and For All" for discussion, education, and reflection;
- to carry out a program of pastoral care and counseling that helps those who seek care to address the systems that disempowered and victimizes.
- to proactively involve PWDs in all aspects of church life.

2. Ecumenical Coalitions (WCC, EDAN, CCA, AENPWD, National Councils of Churches and ATESEA, and other theological networks).

- to continue facilitating the holding of local, regional, and international dialogues, conferences, and consultations that address the many issues affecting PWDs.

3. ATESEA and Theological Institutions

- to adopt and implement policies towards full accessibility of their learning environments;
- to enhance opportunities for participatory learning;
- to ensure the acquisition of practical ministerial skills for all and their students;
- to sharpen the mission focus of theological education from disability perspective; and
- to revise employment policies and practices for faculty and staff as well as admission policies and practices for students to ensure that no one is discriminated on the basis of disability.

4. PWDs and their organizations

- to intensify their initiatives in the development of high-quality resources for self learning, self motivation and public education;
- to continue developing networks and partnerships that will strengthen their advocacy agenda; and
- to continue chronicling their positive experiences and best practice models.

5. Governments

to sign and ratify the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as promulgate local legislation and policies to implement the provisions of the Convention.

- to include in the basic curricula of their educational institutions at least a module on the positive image of PWDs as well as the challenges of empowering PWDs. We further enjoin government, business and industry to intensify efforts to provide meaningful employment for persons with disabilities; and

It is our unequivocal position that in all our plans and actions, PWDs should play a critical leadership role.

In all, and through all, these endeavours, may God be praised and lifted up!

ACRONYMS

AFUB	African Union of the Blind
ATESEA	Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia
EDAN	Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network
ETE	Ecumenical Theological Education
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
WCC	World Council of Churches

**Fourth seminar of the Asian Movement for Christian Unity
(AMCU IV)
11 - 14 June 2007
Kuala Lumpur**

Joint Statement

The Fourth seminar of the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU IV) was held on 11- 14 June 2007 at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. 24 participants, representing the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), and the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA), took part. Earlier AMCU seminars (Hong Kong, 1995; Bali, 1997; Chiang Mai, 2001) were jointly sponsored and organized by CCA and FABC. The participation by representatives of EFA in AMCU IV was the result of discussions carried out at the Asian chapter of the Global Christian Forum in Bangkok on 21-23 September 2006.

The theme of AMCU IV was "Our Common Witness in Contemporary Asia" and focused on the importance of Christians of all Churches and Christian communities to be united in responding to the social, political, and religious realities of Asia today. The participants shared their personal faith journeys and examined the possibilities of joint Christian witness of faith in the context of the social challenges of injustice and discrimination and in the milieu of Asia's religious and cultural plurality.

The participants agreed that Christian commitment must lead the Christian churches in Asia to take a prophetic stand against any form of discrimination, such as that of caste, class, race, and gender, as being incompatible with the teaching of the Gospel. God's message to humankind, as enunciated by the prophets and expressed in God's word in Jesus Christ, affirms the equal human dignity of all people and condemns as sinful those human attitudes and deeds that oppress and discriminate among persons.

The common witness that Christians are called to make against patterns of oppression includes self-examination and self-criticism to become more aware of the ways in which sinful structures have also become engrained in the life of Christian communities in Asia. To be credible, Christians must oppose injustice and exploitation, not only when the victims are themselves Christian, but also in instances where those who suffer discrimination are the followers of other religions or of no religion, and in cases where the perpetrators of injustice are fellow Christians. Christian witness, based on the Gospel imperatives of loving service to others, must focus on the needs of the most vulnerable such as victims of natural calamities, oppressive regimes, and all forms of degradation of human life and should confront problems like global warming and other environmental concerns.

Faced with the multiplicity of religions in contemporary Asia, the participants of AMCU IV sought to define some elements of common Christian witness. Faith in Jesus Christ must be proclaimed in full respect for the beliefs and practices of others. Witness to Christian faith should never be carried out by putting down or denigrating the faith of

others. Genuine Christian witness understands faith in Christ to be liberation from patterns of human sinfulness and which arises from a free and joyful response to God's grace.

In the light of the various challenges faced by the churches, the participants call upon the component bodies (CCA, FABC, and EFA) to address together the following concerns. One challenge is that of forming Christian youth in a commitment to build Christian unity. A second challenge is that of making our parish communities and pastors to be focal points for deeper involvement in the search for full visible Christian unity.

The three bodies can concretely promote Christian unity by getting to know one another better through mutual discussions and invitations to assemblies and plenary sessions, by engaging in joint projects such as the Asia Conference of Theological Students (ACTS) and the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), and by undertaking joint actions such as summer camps for Christian unity for young people. Mutual cooperation and activities at national and local levels are also to be strongly encouraged.

The participants expect to hold the next seminar for the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU V) in the year 2009.

Christian Conference of Asia
Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences
Evangelical Fellowship of Asia

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
14 June 2007