

Program Report

January - March 2007



Christian Conference of Asia
Chiang Mai, Thailand

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From the General Secretary's desk

The year 2007 began on an optimistic and challenging note as CCA continues to implement its mandate of “building communities of peace for all”. In the present Asian contexts of global conflict and terror, religious fundamentalism, the massive degradation of the environment, increasing HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, the greed and consumerism pushed by large corporations etc, the theme challenges us to open our eyes and ears and think creatively and evolve effective responses to the needs of our member churches, councils and society as a whole.

We are pleased to share the quarterly (January – March 2007) program activities of CCA. One of the main highlights is the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of CCA in Parapat and Medan in March. The celebrations brought together Asian Christian leaders from all walks of life to make an assessment of the ecumenical movement in Asia. It was truly a time of giving thanks to God for the life and work of CCA over the past five decades. One of the highlights of the anniversary was the inauguration of the CCA Endowment Fund to reach the goal of USD 5 million. It was well received and several pledged to support the work of CCA so that in years to come, we will reach the point of self-reliance.

The other programs include the final consultation of the study process on “Rerouting mission and ecumenism in Asia”, Teachers and Pastors’ Training in Cambodia, Training of Trainers (School) for Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in North East Asia, Indigenous Women’s Alternative Leadership for Transformation (IWALT) preparatory meeting, NEA Core Team Annual meeting and Preparatory meeting for North East Asia Peace Consultation (NEAPC 2007), CCA-UNESCAP Training of Trainers Program and others

We welcome your comments and suggestions as we continue our journey together with you. The CCA team joins me in sincerely thanking you for your concern, care and support of 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 ecumenical movements in Asia.

We look forward to a continued partnership with you.

With all good wishes and sincere regards,

Dr.Prawate Khid-arn
General Secretary

Finance and Relationships in the context of Ecumenism

In my capacity as the newly appointed Associate General Secretary for Finance and Relationships of the CCA, I have had the opportunity to visit a few Churches and National Councils in few countries during the month of March 2007. During my visits I was able to meet the leadership of constituent Churches and Councils and even associate with second and third layers of leadership. In addition to meeting with the leadership of the partner Churches and Councils I also had the opportunity to meet with some of the leaders of the Roman Catholic and non-traditional churches in Bangladesh.

When I was appointed as the Associate General Secretary for Finance, I was also assigned with the responsibility for relationships. I had to struggle for sometime with these two responsibilities (finance and relationships) in order to understand what these two areas had in common. Now, I have begun to realize the close connection between ecumenism and economics!

It has been said that the “ecumenical movement is a movement among friends ...” at least at its initial stage. There is a lot to think about in this saying and when ecumenism gets grounded on the basis of friendship we discover friends opening themselves to engage in deep conversation on matters concerning the relevance and the significance of ecumenism for our times. When a discussion on ecumenism reaches to that level, then it is not being perceived by the outsider that the ecumenical movement is an exclusive club of a few powerful and influential persons trying to manipulate it for their own advantage. It is unfortunate that the ecumenical movement, rightly or wrongly, is being accused by people within and outside churches as a movement of a “special club of people”. When we go around and meet with leaders of the churches we hear this criticism from some of them. I have used my “ecumenical relationship portfolio” to dialogue with them and to make them understand that their perception of the ecumenical movement is incorrect. Furthermore, I also invite them to get involved in the ecumenical movement represented through the CCA and make their observations and critical comments. When the negative image of the ecumenical movement gets erased from the minds of those who have had a wrong understanding of it, then they are willing to be in solidarity with the work CCA carries out on behalf of the ecumenical movement. In fact they are even willing to share both human and financial resources to enhance the work of CCA. As I mentioned earlier, it is in this context of relationship I see the deep connection between ecumenism, relationship and finance. This is what I experienced during my visit to a few churches in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. I intend to devote more time for this work and improve the relationship between Churches and national councils and the CCA.

All of us who are related to the life and movement of the CCA in one way or another are also called to become Ecumenical Ambassadors to further the cause of ecumenism and to renew the spirit of ecumenism in all those who are associated with the work of ecumenism. We are also called and challenged to win new converts to bring in fresh thinking, vision and life to the ecumenical movement in Asia. We must see the work of ecumenism from this perspective and make a renewed commitment to advocate the cause for ecumenism. Unless we take this challenge seriously and engage in this task before long ecumenism will fade away from the agendas of the churches and denominationalism will begin to triumph. Therefore, we have a gigantic task ahead of us and with God being our helper everything is possible.

Rev.Dr.Rienzie Perera

Associate General Secretary for Finance and Relationships

This is CCA

Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is a regional ecumenical organization. Some 55 million Christians, who belong to nearly 100 churches and 16 national councils of churches and national Christian councils in 19 countries, are part of CCA. The 20 countries are: Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong SAR China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Timor Leste.

Churches joining CCA must be churches that confess Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to Holy Scriptures, and, therefore seek to fulfill their common calling to the one God-- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. National councils or similar bodies joining CCA must accept this basis.

Purpose

Believing that the purpose of God for the church in Asia is life together in a common obedience of witness to the mission of God in the world, the CCA exists as an organ and a forum of continuing cooperation among the churches and national Christian bodies in Asia within the framework of a wider ecumenical movement. The CCA is committed to the equal participation of women, men youth, clergy and laity in church and society.

Vision

Our vision for the next five (5) years is that the Church in Asia participating in God's mission through "building communities of peace for all" based on justice, healing and reconciliation, harmony, equality and unity.

Mission

The Christian Conference of Asia is a regional body committed to serve God through the ecumenical movement, and seeks to build communities of peace for all through Christian unity, service and witness. We do this by utilizing Asian theologies and spiritualities, renewing mission thinking and practice, enhancing human resources and capacity building, and promoting human dignity, care for the whole creation, and intrafaith and interfaith cooperation. We do these with other churches, other faiths, and peoples' movements, with equal participation of women and men, youth, clergy and laity in church and society.

Goals

Goal 1: To strengthen Christian faith and spiritualities and promote Asian Christian theologies *to build communities of peace for all.*

Goal 2: To develop human resources for social development and sustainability of life *to build communities of peace for all.*

Goal 3: To enhance ecumenical networking and the relationship and cooperation within the Christian communities and with other faith *to build communities of peace.*

Goal 4: To strengthen CCA's organizational capacity and enhance the sense of ownership by its constituents of its vision, mission and goals (COP).

General Secretariat

50th Anniversary Celebration

The Christian Conference of Asia celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on 3-7 March 2007. The celebration was jointly hosted by churches in North Sumatra especially the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), the government of North Sumatra and the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) in three places- Parapat, Pematang Siantar and Medan.

Parapat (March 3 - 6)

Returning to the site of the original meeting which conceived the idea of a regional ecumenical organization in 1957, 120 overseas and 100 local participants gathered in Parapat on the shores of beautiful Lake Toba in North Sumatra, Indonesia. They took part in worship services, panel discussions, story telling sessions and even tree planting.

The celebrations began with *worship* in over fifty churches in Parapat and Samosir Island symbolizing that CCA is rooted in the local church. Many of the participants preached and all enjoyed the music, fellowship and food shared by the local congregations. There were also many Bible studies and opportunity for worship during the celebrations.

The celebrations brought together Asian Christian leaders from all walks of life to make an assessment of the ecumenical movement in Asia (*International symposium*). They gained a greater understanding of the vision and spiritual depths of the pioneers of the movement who ventured into an unknown future to form the East Asia Christian Conference in 1957 (later renamed the Christian Conference of Asia).

To achieve this, the participants listened to four in-depth panel discussions on CCA's fifty-year journey: Revisiting the Past, Strengthening Leadership, Present and Future, and Missiological and Ecumenical Challenges.

A highlight of the celebration was the story telling session led by Ron O' Grady, who introduced previous leaders and friends who reminisced about their time and involvement with CCA over the last half century. Interestingly two people who were at the original meeting in Parapat in 1957 were present in 2007. Dr. Kyaw Than, a former General Secretary, and Rev. Dr. Soritua A. E. Nababan, now a President of the World Council of Churches.

The speakers at the sessions were

Bible Study on "Jubilee": Dr. Anna May Chain

Bible Study on "Mission and Witness": Rev. Dr. Chelliah Lawrence

Revisiting the Past: Rev. Dr Soritua A.E. Nababan, Dr Kyaw Than, Ms Chitra Fernando
Strengthening Partnership: Most Rev. Roger Herft, Mr. Ad Mook, Rev. Dr Henrietta Hutabarat

Missiological and Ecumenical Challenges: Dr Preman Niles, Rev. Dr Hermen Shastri, Ms Carmencita Karagdag

Present and Future: Dr Matthews George Chunakara, Mr. Lesley Capus, Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae

The local government designated 10 acres of land near Parapat for sustainable ecological and environmental development. On March 6, the participants were raised from their beds before dawn to plant trees on this piece of land. This act symbolized CCA's concern for the degradation and depletion of scarce natural resources around the world. The government of North Sumatra has decided that from henceforth this hill will be called "Lake Toba Asian Mission Hill". A worship service and other awareness raising programs will be held at this site on the occasion of the World Environment Day every year.

Pematang Siantar (March 6th afternoon)

An overwhelming feature of the celebrations was the involvement of the churches of North Sumatra. The local organizing committee raised a significant amount of money to make these celebrations something that no one will ever forget. Wherever the participants went in North Sumatra, colorful banners over streets and on churches proclaimed the jubilee. A spiritual revival service was held in Pematang Siantar where a large gathering took place in 1957 in the presence of President Sukarno. Before this revival service, the participants were transported in style in 350 becaks (small rickshaw-like vehicles based on old motorcycles).

Medan (March 7th)

The celebrations culminated in a huge worship in the stadium in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra.

The celebrations were not just about the past, they were also a time to look to the future and identify new opportunities and challenges to equip the churches to venture in to mission and models for ministries unique and decisive to the Asian context. The General Secretary of CCA, Dr.Prawate Khid-arn says, "The need of the hour is to pool all our resources together in order to transform this continent and the world to become humane, just and compassionate".

Reflection

The fact that all the churches in Indonesia (including CCA member churches as well as those that are not) had come together to host the activities from 4 to 7 March is a concrete sign of unity that is already there in Christ Jesus, our common Saviour. The kind support of state officials, including the presence of Muslim brothers and sisters who

presented their greetings during the events, was also a concrete sign of the wider unity that we are all called to live out as we get engaged in “building communities of peace for all”, the theme of the CCA in the years 2006-2010.

However, the General Committee members expressed sympathy for the loved ones of the victims of the two calamities that took place (an earthquake and a plane crash) during the time of the anniversary celebration. These sad incidents in the life of Indonesian people heightened the concern for environmental sustainability in Asia, a visible sign of commitment being made not only through discussions at the international symposium and speeches during the other events, but most especially in the tree planting activity at the government-given land in Parapat, which is now the “Lake Toba Asian Mission Hill”.

In a speech to a crowd of around 150,000 people gathered at the Teladan Stadium in Medan on 7 March, Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, General Secretary of CCA, described the 50th anniversary as not merely a time to celebrate, but also to “thank God for accompanying us right through the past 50 years. We have also come to seek God’s forgiveness for our lack of courage to witness and to take a stand for justice and peace amidst the challenging realities and to renew commitment to become ambassadors of Jesus Christ to transform the principalities and powers of this world which kill the innocent, deny food, shelter, education, and security, to the majority of our people and abuse God’s creation.”

Speeches of the early ecumenical pioneers who conceived the Christian Conference of Asia (then the East Asia Christian Conference) in Parapat in 1957 recalled the challenges that went with the movement for genuine independence from colonization and imperialism among the countries in Asia. The ecumenical movement was born as a concrete sign of the Asian people’s determination to uphold their freedom and dignity and to live out their being a witnessing community, called to witness to the reconciling power of Christ.

What will happen next? What will be the direction of the CCA in the coming years?

Having heard the stories, paper presentations, scripture studies, and dialogues and conversations, the following were offered as recommendations summarized by a listening team at the international symposium and which were heard by the General Committee at its meeting on 8 March in Medan:

1. CCA needs to strengthen links with member churches and councils.

- Ecumenical movement must be rooted in the local congregations.
- There must be improved information sharing (to build trust, friendship and ownership) through better communication methods, translations of publications, etc.
- There must be visits to churches and councils.
- For CCA activities to have an impact on the lives of people – resulting in trust building, friendship and ownership – there must be needs analysis for programs.
- Opportunities to host/own CCA programs will result from the trust and friendship that are built.

- There must be sustained leadership development in member churches and councils.
- 2. CCA needs to explore relationships beyond the member churches and councils. The plurality in Asia calls for a wider ecumenism, i.e. for unlimited relationships.**
- This means expanding or reviving the geographical membership (e.g. churches in China and Singapore could be brought or welcomed back to the CCA).
 - This means fostering intra-faith dialogue with Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches.
 - This also means promoting interfaith dialogue among the different peoples of faiths in Asia.
- 3. CCA must explore the emerging missiological/theological issues of the present time.**
- This includes listening to the CCA story from the perspective of the underside/marginalized (not only the winner's side).
 - This includes identifying present empires (e.g. colonialism and neocolonialism) that usurp the freedom and dignity of the peoples in Asia.
 - This includes clarifying relationships between mission, evangelism and witness and CCA's missiological role.
 - This includes affirming CCA role in intervention and advocacy especially in challenging difficulties of calamities, injustice and oppression.
 - This also includes promoting environmental sustainability.

Terima kasih to all our sisters, brothers and friends in Indonesia!

General Committee Meeting (March 8-9, 2007)

The CCA General Committee Meeting was held right after the 50th anniversary celebration from March 8-9, 2007 at Hotel Nauta Toba International in Medan. The Committee evaluated the celebration and discussed how CCA becomes God's instrument to promote peace and unity in the new and challenging Asian contexts.

On 9 March 2007, the last day of the two-day General Committee meeting of the Christian Conference of Asia held at Medan, Indonesia, members were united in expressing gratefulness to the Indonesian churches for their generous hospitality and their very able and systematic organizing and hosting of the 50th anniversary events in Parapat, in Pematang Siantar, and in Medan.

Other businesses included reporting of program activities and action plan, personnel, finance and budget 2007-2008, the relocation update and the preparation for the General Assembly in 2010.

Regarding the relocation matter, the General Committee approved to change the location of CCA from the proposed CCT's land (five acres) which is about 17 kilometers from the city to a smaller and manageable size (one acre) in down town Chiang Mai. The General Committee expressed its heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Church of Christ in Thailand for their warm hospitality, cooperation and support.

Regarding the preparation of the 13th General Assembly in 2010, the general committee appointed members of the Preparatory Committee which include Dr. Henriette T. Hutabarat Lebang (Indonesia), Mr. Anthony Row (Malaysia), Rev. Prof. James Haire (Australia), Mr. Shahzad Khuram (Pakistan) and Dr. Prawate Khid-arn (General Secretary).

Ecumenical Relations

January 14: Dr. John Zachariah (ACISCA President), Dr. Wolfgang Lenze (Oikonet) and Mr. Surakit Kamolrat (Treasurer, ACISCA) discussed its annual leadership training to be held in Chiang Mai in 2008.

January 18: Rev. Jorge Domingues of the GBGM discussed CCA-GBGM relationship and cooperation.

January 22-23: WCC-REO Annual General Secretaries Meeting was held at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva to strengthen relationship, mutual understanding and closer cooperation between the WCC and the REOs.

Dr. Kobia stressed on the role of the REOs and the NCCs (National Councils of Churches) in strengthening the ecumenical movement in the 21st century.

At the end of the meeting, the REOs general secretaries affirmed the following:

- The value of the annual meeting of REO general secretaries as a forum for sharing and mutual support and cooperation.
- The value of networking between REOs on particular issues.
- The particular value of consultation between the WCC and REOs prior to finalizing program plan and taking action.
- The particular value in coordinating a common presence in major meetings, i.e. ecumenical assemblies, regional gathering with NCCs or sub-regional fellowship, and related initiatives involving specialized ministries.
- The particular need to maintain a 'win-win' outcome while continuing to reflect for better future of ecumenical movement.

The REO's members include All Africa Council of Churches (AACC), Caribbean Council of Churches (CCC), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), Council of Churches in Latin America (CLAI), Pacific Council of Churches (PCC), Council of European Churches (CEC), the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCC-USA) and Council of Churches in Canada (CCC).

It was agreed that next REO General Secretaries meeting (possibly March 2008) will be jointly hosted by Christian Conference of Asia in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

February 6: The General Secretary was invited to extend greetings to thirty participants from 15 countries in Asia and the Middle East attending the School of Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation (February 5-26, 2007) at the Crystal Spring House, Chiang Mai, Thailand. It was jointly organized by Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN), Asian Resource Foundation (ARF) and Institute for the Study of Religion and Culture, Payap University.

February 7-8: The General Secretary, as the Chair of Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) presided over the special ECOT Meeting at the Crystal Spring House in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

February 19: The General Secretary and Dr. Rienzie Perera, AGS for Finance and Relations and Dr. Hope Antone had a meeting with Rev. Bill Yoder, Dean of the Mc Gilvary Faculty of Theology (MFT) and Dr. Salvador Martinez (Budy), Dean of International Theological Education Program of Payap University (PYU) in Chiang Mai. The discussion identified possible areas of cooperation between CCA and MFT/PYU.

February 22: Mr. Isao Nozaki, Director of Asian Rural Institute (ARI), Japan and Mr. Shigeo Asia, a Japanese missionary working at the McKean Rehabilitation Institute visited CCA. Mr. Nokazi was on his mission to visit ARI's graduates in Thailand and Sri Lanka. During our conversation, we shared and discussed how CCA and ARI could become close partners for capacity building for community development and sustainability. We, in principle, agreed to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for CCA to regularly recruit some trainees to be trained at ARI each year.

February 24: Mr. Shin'Ichi Noguchi, Executive Director of Niwano Peace Foundation (NPF), Japan, visited CCA to strengthen relationship and closer cooperation. The discussions were very fruitful. The NIWANO Peace Foundation agreed to jointly host the forthcoming "Asian Inter-religious Leader's Conference: Being Peace Makers in Asia Today" which will be held from 12-16 November, 2007 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Personnel and Staff

January 26-27: The Personnel Committee met in Bangkok. It recommended the Executive Committee to appoint new executive staff for Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID) and Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment (EGY) - Women's Concern. The General Committee which met on March 8-9, 2007 approved the appointments. The two executive staff are

1. Rev. Freddy de Alwis (Sri Lanka) for Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID)
2. Mrs. Moumita Biswas (India) for EGY-Women's Concern

It was also the first time that CCA introduced the six-month “probation” period in an appointment of the executive staff.

Faith, Mission and Unity (FMU)

Rerouting Ecumenism in Asia

Prior to the CCA 50th anniversary celebration in Parapat, Indonesia, the final consultation of the study process on “Rerouting mission and ecumenism in Asia” was held on 1-2 March 2007 at Sibolangit, North Sumatra, Indonesia.

To commemorate the Jubilee celebration of CCA and to give a new perspective on mission and ecumenical practice at this moment in history when Asia is bleeding and life – both human and nature – under constant threat by global market and the Empire, the FMU-URM brought together 22 church leaders, URM grass-root level workers, and theological educators. The purpose of consultation was to complement the occasion of the Jubilee celebration of CCA with its reflections on the context of the Jubilee from the perspective of people, more importantly people in struggle and pain. This was the culmination of the fifteen-month long sub-regional study process among peoples in South, South-East, and North-East Asia on rerouting mission and ecumenism.

Unlike the three previous study processes, there were not many presentations during the consultation. There were three bible reflections led by Rev. Mindawati Peranginangin (1Corinthians 1: 26-31), Tso Man King (2 Kings 5), and Rev. Josef Widyamadja (Mark 6: 30-44). Wati Longchar gave the summary of the theological reflection on rerouting mission of study process. Rienzie Perera spoke on the partnership, resources sharing and future of ecumenical movement. Lesley Capus spoke on ecumenism from youth perspective, and Evangeline Rajkumar spoke from women perspective. M.P Joseph drew attention to Rerouting Mission and Ecumenism in the Context of Empire.

At the end of the consultation, the participants issued the Jubilee Declaration on Rerouting Mission and Ecumenism in Asia (The Declaration is attached herewith). The Jubilee Declaration calls CCA to the following actions:

- To set up an independent and autonomous “study commission”, with partners in Latin America and Africa, on the impact of the changing empire-centric geopolitical scenario. Such a commission could also help in discovering forgotten and alternate histories and stories of people.
- To discover the heritage of dialogue and common praxis between peoples of religious and other traditions, affirming the integrity of creation, to unearth the potential of the spirit of conviviality issuing forth in the invitation to celebrate the feast of life as the culture and ethos of Asian Ecumenism.

- To address theological education and ministerial formation with a view to forming persons who will nurture communities of faith who will in turn immerse them in the process of communities transforming themselves in relation to each other and to all of creation.
- To initiate a consultative process on “people’s resource in Asia” which will on the one hand help rediscover the immense potential available among peoples, communities and local institutions and on the other reduce dependence on resources that are not sensitive to Asian realities and priorities.
- To invest on developing leadership through conscious recognition and involvement of the potential available with students, youth and women movements within and outside the ecumenical fraternity ensuring relevant and youthful leadership.
- To renew the commitment to produce literature – books and manuals that will articulate faith responses in the context of organising communities and keeping them relevant and updated.
- To affirm people’s movement both within and beyond the ecumenical family, and to stand in solidarity with all such initiatives that are similar to that which the Church professes in building communities of peace for all.
- To help the churches, ecumenical bodies and people’s movement to reflect critically on the upcoming centenary of the International Mission Conference (2010) and in so doing find new direction for ecumenical mission engagement in Asia. CCA is urged to facilitate a Mission Conference in Asia in the context of Re-routing Mission and Ecumenism in Asia.

Teachers and Pastors’ Training in Cambodia

The second batch of 30 participants of the Teachers and Pastors’ Training program in Cambodia was held on 19-24 March in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The first batch of 30 had their turn in November 2006. CCA-FMU hopes to train sixty (60) ecumenical enablers in Cambodia on Asian contextual theologies by exposing them to new ways of reading the Bible, preaching and worship, and to issues of economic injustice, globalization, environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS, multi-religious and gender inequalities. Teachers were: Dr. Gaikwad Roger, Director of Theological Education by Extension of the Senate of Serampore College; Dr. Donald Messer, Director of Church and Global AIDS; Dr. Hope S. Antone; and Dr. Wati Longchar.

One participant said, “We were never taught to read the bible this way. Now I understand what it means by reading the Bible in the context of contemporary realities. I feel very inadequate to preach having listened to our teachers. I realize that I need more formal training.” Another said, “This kind of training program should be organized in the provinces. All pastors should have a chance to attend such a training program. We see hope for Cambodia if we preach from the Bible in the way our teachers taught us.” A participant whose family has been affected by HIV/AIDS suggested that “a separate training program needs to be organized on ‘Reading the Bible in the Context of HIV/AIDS’ to help pastors understand the virus and minister to them. Pastors have a crucial role to play in the community and we thank the teachers for helping us to

understand how to create a healthy community. We have become more sensitive. But we need more worship materials.” A woman participant expressed the need for a separate training program on reading the Bible from women’s perspective. She said, “This will help both men and women to understand the various forms of cultural discrimination and change their attitude towards women and thereby become agents of transformation.” All the participants expressed their full satisfaction of the relevance of the themes dealt with during the training, and they are hopeful that the inputs they received during the training will surely enhance their leadership ability, especially in the preaching ministry.

During the evaluation the participants suggested the followings:

- a) Contextual reading of the Bible, feminist theology, HIV/AIDS and inter-religious issues should be continued. Focus should be given on reading the Bible relating to those issues.
- b) The next training program can include issues like church administration, resource mobilization, finance management, effective leadership and worship planning, peace and reconciliation, practical evangelism and community building.
- c) Evening hours (after dinner) should be set aside to practice preaching relating to contemporary problems and challenges. The participants may be informed ahead of time to come prepared. After preaching, evaluation may be done for improvement.

Ecumenical Lecture Series

The CCA-PST (Pag-asa School of Theology) Ecumenical Lecture Series was launched on 22 March 2007 at Brokenshire College in Madapo Hills, Davao City, Philippines. Their chosen theme, “Empowering Women Leadership in the Household of God,” links with the UCCP General Assembly theme, “Living in the Household of God” and addresses issues of women and gender inequality which they felt had not been addressed in their conference.

Ecumenical speakers/lecturers were Liza Lamis, a Baptist who is the women’s desk coordinator of NCCP and who gave an input and conducted a workshop on “empowering the church for gender justice”; Phebe Crismo, a deaconess of the United Methodist Church who gave an input and conducted workshop on “issues and challenges of ministering with children and youth”; and Hope S. Antone who launched the Ecumenical Lecture Series with the President of Brokenshire College, Rev. Leopoldo Naive, and gave an input on their chosen theme and led one morning devotion.

The reception of the ecumenical lectures series was good. It is hoped that in the next Ecumenical Lecture Series, the circle can widen to include church workers not only from the UCCP Southern Mindanao District Conference but also from the other churches. The Ecumenical Lecture Series is a good chance for CCA to be seen and felt at the local level – while promoting ecumenical issues, concerns and challenges that theological institutions would not push for unless required by their existing curriculum offerings. While CCA-FMU takes care of the travel of the lecturers, the activity also encourages ownership by the institutions. Hence, it is not seen as a dole-out but as a partnership.

PST is one of the younger theological formation centers of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, which services the UCCP member churches in Southern Mindanao.

Networking

Meetings of AWRC and a visit to Bintulu

As part of the theological networking in Asia, Hope Antone attended the series of meetings of the Asian Women's Resource Center for Culture and Theology on Jan. 29-Feb. 4 – including the Editorial Advisory Committee of *In God's Image*, the Planning Team on Asian Feminist Theology Modules, and the Coordinating Team Members of AWRC. Hope encouraged AWRC to widen its circle by linking with theological education associations and in order to promote Asian feminist theologizing more systematically in the seminaries. After this, she joined Cora Tabing-Reyes in visiting an IWALT participant in Bintulu – which was a good opportunity to experience and share with the long house communities of Sarawak.

Senate of Serampore Board and Senate Meeting

Doing ecumenically is networking and doing together. Go on trying, and go on doing. Two is better than one and together we do better and bigger. ETE continues to walk with our partners and share our gifts in their struggle for building communities of love, peace and justice. To strengthen ecumenical relations, ETE was invited to be part of the Board and Senate meetings of the Board of Theological Education of Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) from 7-10 February 2007 in Shillong where Wati Longchar also led the Bible study. Wati spoke on the sharing of resources based on the theme “Twelve basketful of left over bread and fish” from Mark 6: 30-44.

CISRS Golden Jubilee in Bangalore

During the 50th Jubilee celebration of the Christian Institute for Study on Religion and Society (CISRS) from 12-16 Feb, Wati Longchar presented a paper on “Contextual Theology in Today's Changing Context” and led Bible study in the opening worship of Jubilee celebration.

Visits with UCCP and NCCP General Secretaries and Some Feminist Theologians

During the trip to the Philippines for the Ecumenical Lecture Series, Hope S. Antone was able to make courtesy visits on 26 – 27 March with the General Secretaries of the UCCP and NCCP, respectively. It was a good opportunity to hear from NCCP General Secretary Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes of her visit, together with the ecumenical delegation, to Canada and USA to create awareness regarding the extrajudicial killings that are going on in the Philippines. This will be reported in the March issue of *CCA News*.

Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service (JID)

Training of Trainers (School) for Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in North East Asia (January 23-February 1, 2007)

Asian countries are experiencing an ongoing internal and across border blood shed conflict. The churches have been called to be 'ambassadors of Christ' for building communities of peace.

In coordination with the North East Committee, CCA held a Peace Building and Conflict Transformation program in Northeast Asia School. It was held from January 26-31, 2007 at Tainan Theological College and Seminary (TTCS) in Taiwan. The program was jointly hosted by the Formosa Christianity and Culture Research Centre (FCCRC), Chang Jung Christian University and Tainan Theological College in Taiwan. Seventeen (17) participants and three (3) resource persons from Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan took part in the program to share concerns and experience on conflict transformation and peace building.

Objectives

- To strengthen national solidarity in order to help churches develop a better working relationship with the state and other religious communities
- To enhance the capacity of the church's workers to deal with peace building and conflict transformation
- Identify participants' current views
- Help participants to recognize and clarify their current ideas and behaviours, and assess their usefulness in resolving conflicts in their lives
- Help participants construct their own understanding

Participants' evaluation and reflection:

When we talk about peace-building, *Mediation* is one of the main tasks which a peace-builder should achieve in the process of conflict solution. It is also a process of *Negotiation* which a peace-builder works as a rescuer. Mediation is based on one's empathy toward both parties, and his/her attitude always concerns about Appropriate Assertiveness.

It is very important for a peace-builder to empower both sides with *Willingness* to resolve the conflict, so he/she always should be aware of responsive with *Creative Response*.

And also, he/she should tell them about the importance of the process of *Managing Emotion*.

In order to work as a peace-builder in the midst of complicated conflicts, *Co-operative Power* is the role which he/she should play. His/her deep knowledge, skill, and understanding about Mapping the conflict and Designing Options are required.

On the whole the training was considered important for church's workers dealing with peace and conflict issues. Therefore it was felt that the training of this nature should be continued at all levels within our churches.

North- East Asia Working Group on Peace and People's Security

Tony Waworuntu attended the meeting of North-East Asia Working Group on Peace and People's Security, in Hong Kong from 2-3 February, 2007. There were 12 participants from Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan and Korea.

This meeting, hosted by the HKCC at Tao Fung Shan Christian Center, opened at 14.00 on 2nd February with worship, during which Dr. Huang Po Ho shared his reflection on Matthew 8:23-27. Rev. Ralph Lee then delivered a welcome speech on behalf of the HKCC, and Mr. Tony Waworuntu introduced the participants. It was agreed that at each Working Group meeting, additional people may be invited as invitees in order to provide wider church representation.

Tony Waworuntu reported that there were 17 participants: 6 from Korea, 8 from Taiwan, 2 from Japan, and 1 from Hong Kong. He shared that the evaluation by the participants was quite positive. It was suggested that this program should be continued every year. The members unanimously agreed that the second 'School for Peace' should be held Jan 23 – Feb 1, 2008 in Taiwan.

It was suggested that the training module be circulated to the Working Group members at least two months before the actual program. It was also proposed that three of the 2007 course participants be invited to the 2008 training course as assistant facilitators: from Japan, Mr. Azusa Mikami; from Korea, Mr. Jang Hyung-Chull; from Taiwan, Ms. Shen Ger. Working Group members asked the CCA and FCCRC to issue a certificate of participation in the Training course (School for Peace) to all participants.

The working group also had also agreed on several activities such as:

- Gathering of young pastors and seminarians
- Women's gathering
- Regional Children's Peace Conference
- Publication and web-site
- Ecumenical Conference on Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution

Rev. Toshi Yamamoto was unanimously elected as moderator for the period 2007-2008 until the next Working Group meeting. The next meeting will be held on February 17-20, 2008 at the CCA center in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice, and Youth Empowerment (EGY)

Networking with the Asian Women's Resource Center for Theology and Culture (AWRC), Coordinating Team Meeting (AWRC CTM), 30 January – 4 February, 2007 at Maranatha, Janda Baik, Malaysia

Introduction

- The AWRC is a regional organization which aims to form an international community of Asian women engaged in theology and ministry, and to encourage them to articulate Asian women's contextual theology. It has a Coordinating Team (CT) which is the policy-making body of the organization, and is responsible for coordinating, oversight of the affairs of the organization, planning, and appointing any necessary committees. The history of AWRC is linked with CCA and since it's founding the representative of CCA Women's Concerns Desk is co-opted as voting member of the CT.
- AWRC publishes *In God's Image* (IGI) as Asian women's theological journal.
- CCA EGY maintains this link Aside from the benefits of having a network of feminist theologians for speakers or bible study leaders and a partner in publishing results of joint projects/consultations like that of Overcoming Violence Against Women, CCA receives free copy of quarterly issue of IGI and books published from time to time.

Highlights of the meeting

The AWRC CTM was attended by: Dr. Chung Sook Ja, Dr. Anna May Say Pa, Dr. Hisako Kinukawa, Dr. Ann Patricia Wansbrough, Rev. Malini Devananda, Ms. Doreen Teo, Ms. Anna Marsiana, Ms. Jessica Richard, Ms. Cora Tabing-Reyes, Dr. Hope Antone, Ms. Yong Ting Jin (coordinator).

This year is 25th anniversary of IGI and 20th year of AWRC. Aside from approving the planned themes for the forthcoming years, the CT approved to have a special issue of IGI. The AWRC CT is to embark in mapping the development of feminist theologies in Asia as reflected in the IGI and have a critical assessment looking at the past 25 years.

The AWRC will continue its other projects:

- Young Women Doing Theology workshop: Young Women Doing Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation in Asia on the theme, Life Stories in the Tension between Power and Empowerment.
- Publication of the book based on the joint study workshop of "Women's Herstory" (overview of history from the Asian feminist perspective) and young women doing theology.

Indigenous Women's Alternative Leadership for Transformation (IWALT)

Follow-up at Bintulu, Sarawak, Malaysia, 4-7 February, 2007

Introduction

Rev. Enjut Salang, the host, participated at the IWALT Philippines training. Her action plan was a follow-up event in early February 2007 with the Iban women of Sarikei in which Hope and I were invited to be with her. But this plan was aborted because she was transferred to Bintulu district in January 2007. Because of the limited time and the adjustment period, Enjut did not plan a workshop. Instead she planned a time for us to be with 2 longhouses—Matthew longhouse at Sarau and Sait Longhouse to share about CCA-- and also spent time with her and her Iban local church.

Activities included exposure to the town of Bintulu and visits to Matthew longhouse (a longhouse is named after the headman/woman) and Sait longhouse. We had sharing with our host family, with the women preparing for the wedding of a daughter, observation of the activities along the river, meal with the host family. We had worship services in the longhouses and were able to share about CCA.

Reflections

Enjut remembered her first ecumenical encounter participating in hosting CCA exposure to Iban communities sometime in the 70's which had impact on her direction of life and commitment to ecumenical ministry. Exposure and community integration is a viable way of educating both the host and the exposees in terms of context, struggles of people in Asia, people's aspirations and how we can be in solidarity with one another in Asia—in prayer and actions.

- The Iban longhouse community provides a model of communal living, hospitality and cooperation. But it is under attack. Globalization is changing not only the house material from wood to concrete or having the facilities of light, water, etc. Globalization is also changing family values from simple living to that of consumerism. Shorter longhouse is taking place as nuclear family is becoming an option. There are inroads to violence into their lifestyle and concerns, lose of traditional wisdom, of land and natural resources. The river where the people bathe also serves the way to ferry logs from the forest to the lumber company. A youth said, "The problem of our youth is that many are "enjoying too much"—referring to gambling and drinking, losing sense of responsibility for the next generation. They are very much affected by the violence in mass media and internet.
- Enjut has resolved to do her best; she provides a model of an alternative leader. From one member, he said "I like Padri Enjut. This is the first time we have a female padri and she is kind. Enjut needs the IWALT network as much as the IWALT network needs her insights.

IWALT Core Team Preparatory Meeting, February 28-March 3, 2003, Medan

1. The meeting was participated in by Dr. Anna May Chain, Dr. Hnuni Zauva, Dr. Limatula Longkumer, Dr. Hope Antone, Ms. Awala Ao, Ms. Moumita Biswas, Ms. Maureen Loste, Ms. Kaythi Min (General committee member), Ms. Abigail Peter (CCA intern) and Ms. Corazon Tabing-Reyes
2. The 2-day meeting was fruitful in terms of attaining its objectives of a) sharing and assessing, even in a cursory way, the multiplying effect which took place after the sub regional trainings in India, Chiang Mai and Philippines. b) preparing the working paper for the **IWALT Regional Gathering to take place on 15-22 November, 2007 at Yangon, Myanmar.**
3. The working papers prepared were :
 - a. Sharing and Reflection on IWALT Multiplying Effect Back in Communities
 - b. IWALT Regional Gathering Background paper: some initial thoughts
 - c. IWALT Regional Gathering Goals, Objectives and Components
 - d. Regional Gathering Tasking for Core Team
 - e. Tentative Schedule
 - f. Guidelines for Participants Report

NEA Core Team Annual meeting and Preparatory meeting for North East Asia Peace Consultation (NEAPC 2007) (January 28-31, 2007, Taipei, Taiwan)

The meeting was organized to visualize cooperation of young people to promote peace building in North East Asia. The specific objectives of the meeting include:

- Sharing from NCCs on challenges, main focus, program plans in 2007
- Reviewing on North East Asia Peace Consultation 1997 to 2003
- Preparation for NEAPC 2007
- Preparation for NEA Core Team program 2008

Rev. KHO, Sing-Doh, the associate general secretary of PCT, welcomed the members from North East countries. He reminded them on the importance of peace issues. He said, for Christians, peace is not a part of mission, but the center of mission.

Reviewing on CCA Youth North East Asia Peace Consultations, NEAPC from 1997

Rev. Kitani gave participants a brief overview on the initiation of the NEAPC.

NEAPC was initiated in 1997. While many issues were discussed, the peace issue was brought out as the main concern. Besides the issue on peace, there were other issues which include human rights and other concerns. For instance, Okinawa was isolated in Japan, and Korean in Japan faced the problem of their identity and nationality. The sovereignty of Taiwan, the unity or diversity in North and South Korea, the security and

economy consideration after Hong Kong return to China were brought out through NEAPC in 1997.

In 2002 as a result of the event 9/11 in US, issues concerning security became main concern for whole the world. The 2nd NEAPC was held in 2003. The topic was “**to be a peace-maker**”. Although the members at this meeting discussed strategies, the action was not put into practice.

This background gave participants some concepts to know how to process the NEA co-team meeting this time. And it also helped participants to get a whole picture of NEAPC.

Sharing from NCCs

The main focus for NCCJ Youth this year is to **re-build up relationship among different denominations** and also with Catholic Church. Therefore, NCCJ Youth will arrange a meeting between Protestant and Catholic youth groups for mutual-understanding. In addition, to work with Japan EASY Net will also help in bringing in Catholic youth. The main event of NCCJ in 2007 is the Youth Convention which will be held this summer.

In 2006, HKCC initiated a training program for youth leaders on the concerns of **social responsibilities of youth**. In March, all participants from the training will start to practice their action plans. In 2007, HKCC has a new joint program with HK SCM to bring theological student from seminaries to work with HKCC. This will be an opportunity to expose those students to ecumenical movement.

The concern of “**identity of youth**” is still the main focus for PCT Youth this year. Hence, PCT Youth will have “I Love Taiwan Mission” which is a program for introducing Taiwan to our partner churches and friends in ecumenical movement. In this mission project, young people will be assisted to help local churches’ summer mission programs and PCT Youth will help them in the process of orientation and debriefing. PCT Youth has extended their warm invitation to all friends in ecumenical movement.

In 2002-2006, the main focus of EYCK was Peace and Life. In order to reach out to local youth, EYCK has started a study group and also has a regular gathering on envisioning youth movement together with other youth leaders. In these gatherings, the main issues discussed are: **US military Base in South Korea, Free Trade Agreement and the South Korea President election**. EYCK is planning to re-structure itself for the sake of getting much closer to the present youth life.

Preparation for Peace consultation 2007

The NEA Core Team had decided to have North East Asia Peace Consultation, NEAPC 2007 on 16-22, May, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan. After reviewing on the concept paper which finalized in last meeting in Tokyo, Core Team members discussed on the theme, resource persons and exposure program. The theme of this NEAPC is “**To Keep the Unity through the Bond of Peace**” (*Eph 4:3*). We are all a part of the family of God but separated by the desires, greed, and temptation from evils and so on. Hence, we feel so insecure that try to build up defense. Nowadays, those self-defenses in each country of North East Asia have become threaten to other countries. In order to bring the awareness

of youth on the issue of Peace in North East Asia, this NEAPC will again put Unity and Peace as our main concerns on the theme.

For the sake of mutual-understanding among participants, the resource persons of NEAPC 2007 will be invited from each country of North East Asia. It will also be a chance for participants to learn from different situations of North East Asian countries. The other strategy for young people is to learn the issue of Peace from hosting country to expose them to the real situation. Therefore, an exposure program will be arranged by the help of PCT Youth. For more understanding on the issue of Taiwan straits, a trip to the frontline of Taiwan, Kingmen Islands will be arranged.

Discussion on NEA Core Team 2007 programs

According to the Tokyo meeting 2006, the moderator of NEA Core Team in 2007 will be from NCCJ. Therefore, CCA Youth has passed on the role of moderator of NEA Core Team over to Rev. Hidefumi Kitani, the youth secretary of NCCJ. In the discussion, Core Team members agreed to organize exposure programs in conjunction with NEAPC 2007. As for the National Peace Campaign, every country will organize it and practice it locally.

The fund raising strategy of NEA Core Team has been raised again. Core Team members agree to raise funds together and also look for more local resources. And the other strategy is to put this join program into every member's program schedule so that NEA Core Team will get the support from their mother organizations too.

Strengths/success/weakness:

The specific concern on demilitarization inspires youth leaders to look at the issue from the wider context of North East Asia. Hence, NEAPC provides a space for deeper understanding among youth groups in North East Asia. It also helps young people to learn and share the issue of peace together. This NEAPC will be the first program of CCA Youth NEA Core Team. By carrying out NEAPC together, NEA Core Team will also have a chance to exam this new mechanism of network. NEA Core Team member have agreed to evaluate the networking after this NEAPC so that the necessary adjustment and re-arrangement of this network will be done.

Raising financial support is the main concern of the Core Team members. In order to make this network work smoothly, CCA Youth will help as the main resource and continue to encourage the Core Team members to raise local support. For example, NEAPC 2007 program costs will be jointly covered by CCA Youth and PCT Youth.

Ecumenical Asia and Pacific Student and Youth Network (EASY Net) (February 9-10, 2007, Quezon City, Philippines)

Discussion on Asia Pacific Students and Youth Week Celebration

In the discussion on the theme of Asia Pacific Students and Youth Week 2007, CT members felt that the identity of Christian Youth has been a question which impacts their daily life. Hence, the theme and concept will revolve on YOUTH issues. The APSYW will raise the question of "Where are we", amidst the myriad of situation, conflicts, confusion and oppressions that the youth are in. Moreover, it will highlight the role of

youth in social transformation. The capacity of the youth would be to rise above their situation and lay its prophetic voice in the fast changing world.

The following themes were suggested:

1. Youth in the Changing World
2. Youth Mapping Up their Lives in the Changing world
3. Talitha cum “Rise up my Child”

Asia Pacific Students and Youth Week Creative Writing Workshop, APSYW

This year, there will be no Creative Writing Workshop due to funding difficulties. Therefore, national ecumenical teams will be encouraged to hold their own creative writing workshop. The creative resources done in national workshops will be collated by the Coordinator which will form part of this year’s resource book. The countries will be highly encouraged to hold creative writing workshops are Pakistan, Thailand and Japan. And at the same time, the stronger NET’s such as EASY Net in Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will be asked to contribute on resource book.

ASYG 2008 Preparation

The suggestions from NC training were taken into consideration. EASY Net will ask the India team to come up with Expected Budgetary expenses for ASYG 2008, and share with CT. The other possibility place is Taiwan where even though the local network is not strong so far but Chung Chih will be happy to discuss with the member of EASY Net in Taiwan and lead the hosting team in Taiwan. Therefore, The Venue of the ASYG 2008 will be finalized on July, 2007 and the Preparatory Meeting with the Hosting country will be held by December 2007.

Special Program

CCA-UN/ESCAP Joint Program

The project on Strengthening Life Skills for Positive Youth Health Behaviour being implemented in four countries (Xinjiang, Uygur Autonomous Region, China), Sri Lanka, Philippines and Cambodia is in its second phase of implementation. The first phase involved initiating discussions and field visits with related government departments and identifying suitable research institutions for the conduct of baseline surveys and undertaking baseline surveys in all four countries. The second phase involves the following activities

1. To develop training modules and conduct Training of Trainers (TOT) to build a team of community-based trainers on life skills.
2. Adapt and translate existing UNESCAP life skills training materials for project site use in local languages and develop illustrated reading materials for disadvantaged youth.
3. Undertake orientation programs for local government officials, community leaders, religious leaders, and other stakeholders, on health risks that youth face and the need for life skills training.
4. Conduct training for youth leaders to improve their capability in communication, advocacy and resource mobilization.
5. Initiate activities to foster collaboration among youth groups, community leaders, local government agencies, civil society groups and health service providers.
6. Develop and strengthen local life skills training networks.

Shirley Susan, CCA-UNESCAP Consultant and Michael Chai, Social Affairs Officer, UNESCAP will coordinate and monitor activities in the implementing countries.

Training of Trainers in the implementing countries

The key outcome of the training of trainers (TOT) is “Increased national capacity to build enabling institutions and to formulate and implement measures for improving health, in line with the Millennium Development Goals.”

Colombo, Sri Lanka (January 28-February 3, 2007)

Objective

- To conduct Training of Trainers (TOT) in Colombo.
- To undertake stakeholder consultations on technical implementation modalities.

Training of Trainers in Colombo

- There were 37 participants (Male – 22 and Female – 15) who participated in the Training of Trainers Program.

- The four-day training of trainers program brought participants from the Ministry of Health, Colombo Municipal Council, Family Planning Association, National Christian Council in Sri Lanka, The Methodist Church, NGOs such as Sarvodaya and young women and men in the ages between 15 – 24 from the Matakuliya under-served communities, Colombo.
- 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 participants were open-minded, energetic and actively involved themselves in the discussions and identified specific activities to mobilize vulnerable youth and other stake holders in the community.

The Recommendations by the participants to train life skills based trainers and build community based life skills training networks are as follows:

- Develop appropriate Information, Education and Communication (IEC materials) which are relevant to Colombo contexts.
- Explore options for initiating livelihood skill development programs in the community.
- Revive youth bodies in the community such as youth corps, youth councils and children guild etc.
- Raise awareness by screening videos, documentary films through mobile theatres.
- Identify opinion leaders in the community and engage them to speak openly on issues concerning substance use and HIV/AIDS to reduce stigma and discrimination and promote healthy behaviour.
- Establish a counseling centre with a full-time trained counselor to attend to the needs of youth in the Matakuliya areas.
- Mobilize community through innovative community based recreational activities such as sports, music, dance competitions etc.
- Invite ex-drug users/PLWHA’s to share their experiences through their testimonies.
- Meeting with Director General, Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training
- Out-of-school at the project site - Matakuliya under served settlements are unable to pursue vocational training programs initiated by the government due to lack of financial support.
- During the meeting, it was proposed that the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training would initiate skill development trainings for out-of-school within the Matakuliya communities.
- The duration of each technical course is two months. A stipend of Sri Lankan Rupees One Thousand Five Hundred would be given to each youth participant every month during the training period. On completion of training, each participant would receive a certificate recognized by the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training.
- The vocational training program is expected to begin during Mid-March 2007.

Kampot Province, Cambodia ((January 28-February 3, 2007)

Objective

- To conduct Training of Trainers (TOT) in Kampot Province, Cambodia.
- To undertake stakeholder consultations on technical implementation modalities.

Training of Trainers in Kampot province, Cambodia

- There were 35 participants in all who participated in the ToT (13 females); participants included officers from the provincial Department of Youth and Sports, teachers from formal and informal schools, NGO staff and youth leaders.
- 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 trainers were all local persons, who conducted the ToT in Khmer and with much success.
- The participants were open-minded, energetic and actively involved themselves in the discussions and identified specific activities to mobilize vulnerable youth and other stake holders in the community.

Following the ToT, the trainers and selected participants met for half a day to brainstorm on specific strategies to implement all the project’s 2007 activities. Recommendations by the team are as follows:

- Develop appropriate IEC materials which are relevant to Kampot contexts.
- Encourage young people’s involvement in youth focused cultural activities.
- Encourage and facilitate small group trainings/meetings at the residences of the community members and the community learning centers.
- Identify and invite local/youth leaders - to speak openly on issues concerning substance use and HIV/AIDS to reduce stigma and discrimination and promote healthy behaviour.
- Mobilize community through innovative community activities such as sports, art workshops, music, dance competitions etc.
- Establish help line to attend to the needs of vulnerable youth in the community.
- Organize campaigns and invite prominent personalities to deliver key prevention messages on substance use and HIV/AIDS in the community.

The task force also discussed ways to influence relevant enabling policy at the Central Government level. Currently, the MoEYS is in the process of formulating a national youth policy.

MEPP (Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program)

The year 2007 is a transition period for MEPP. Ms Janejinda Pawadee, new Program Coordinator has replaced Mr. Songkiat Tungyen in January 2007. Ms Janejinda has been studying all MEPP documents and materials to gain more knowledge on the history and current focus of the program. She spent time to write out the MEPP proposal which has been submitted to DIAKONIA with help of Rev. Michael David Fucella, MEPP fraternal worker.

During the last three months, MEPP has corresponded with various funding agencies through emails. Rev. Huh Chun Jung, a fraternal worker has also approached some churches and shared with them on the needs of the program. The funding agencies and churches approached by MEPP are:

- DIAKONIA
- World Council of Church (WCC)
- Church World Service (CWS)
- Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT)
- Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)
- National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA-CWS)

MEPP - Staff meeting

MEPP held one meeting on February 20, 2007 to review MEPP implementation and budget for 2007. The meeting composed of Program Coordinator, two fraternal workers, former Program Coordinator and CCA General Secretary. The meeting helped the Program Coordinator and two fraternal workers to understand their role and commitment. The strengths and weaknesses of the churches in the Mekong Sub-region were discussed. Dr. Prawate emphasized that MEPP must be proactive and work in collaboration with CCA and other organizations in each country within Mekong Sub-region. Former Program Coordinator also shared his experiences and perspective on how to work with each country and churches in this region.

Lay Mobilization Trainings:

During this quarter, MEPP and Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) organized two trainings. This is part of the five trainings planned for the year 2007. The training programs will focus on lay leadership training for KCC member churches. The churches in Svay Rieng Province were chosen as the pilot group for all five trainings because the churches in this province are currently experiencing unprecedented growth in the number of believers being added to their fellowships. Consequently there is a need for more

leaders for the small groups that are springing up in villages throughout the province.

The first two three-day trainings were organized in Cambodia on January 29-31 and March 26-28, 2007. Each time there were about 35 participants who attended the training and there were only 3 women participants who attended each training. Maintaining gender balance at meetings is a concern as Cambodian churches are still male dominated. Literacy is one of the main problems among others which women are facing.

CCA 50th Anniversary in Parapat and General Committee Meeting in Medan, Indonesia

MEPP staff had the opportunity to participate and celebrate in the 50th anniversary celebrations of CCA in Parapat, Indonesia from March 3-6, 2007. They were also observers at the General Committee meeting in Medan, Indonesia on March 8-9, 2007.

Reflections

- Church leaders in the Mekong Sub-region need to be strengthened.
- MEPP has to work actively to approach churches in GMS especially Cambodia and Laos to help them on capacity building.
- MEPP has to follow up closely with funding agencies to get support and to help MEPP implement its activities as scheduled.
- Language continues to be a setback which slows down the process of networking