

Foreword

Once again, we are pleased to present you the third quarterly program report of Christian Conference of Asia from July – September, 2007. This is to share with you where CCA is and what directions it is moving ahead. The report not only highlights program implemented, but contains some reflections as well.

We will be pleased to receive your feedback and comments on how we can build our strengths and be more visible in response to the new emerging contexts and realities in Asia.

On behalf of CCA team I sincerely thank you all for your concern, care and support for 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 development mission.

Prawate Khid-arn
General Secretary

Dear friends and colleagues

Asian ecumenical movement manifests itself in CCA, which is placed within a unique context. The context of Asian continent with its diversity, complexity, challenges, opportunities and crisis is a significant one. God has placed us in this context to be God's ambassadors, as well as to be a community of people who stand together to make a difference, and risk to swim against the dominant cultures of violence. Therefore we are called to wrestle with the *text* (Bible) and the *context* (as placed by God) in order to *discern* the presence of God. Those of us who are responsible for programs within the ecumenical movement in CCA, having discerned the presence of God and are called by God to put our experiences into the framework of programs. This should be done in such a way that the ones who participate experience the power and the presence of God and follow the programs with a commitment to make a difference to the world. Therefore, those who are chosen by the ecumenical movement and entrusted with a responsibility to prepare and conduct programs, seminars and workshops must be women and men of quality, prayer, discipline, commitment and courage. They must be embodiments of spirituality and God fearing people, as our calling is to be "...servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Corinthians 4:1)

Therefore, it is important that CCA undertakes this responsibility with utmost care and equip people to become God's co-workers to address challenges faced by them. This should be seen as part of their faith formation and Christian discipleship. This also poses a challenge to the staff of CCA to be fully equipped to meet that need. Given that, what CCA staff needs to keep in mind is not the number of workshops or seminars they hold in countries, but the quality of those programs and their relevance. To improve the quality of programs there needs to be thorough preparation, reading and dialogue with others in order to learn new insights and incorporate them wherever possible. We must always remember that the conference, workshop, seminar space is sacred and it should not be profaned by entering that space unprepared.

The constituent member churches and national councils also have a responsibility in this regard. They too must be disciplined to send appropriate participants to programs conducted by CCA. In addition, churches and national councils who send participants must have a creative and constructive plan of action to make use of those trained when they return to their home churches. Sometimes I feel that CCA, constituent member churches and national councils need to take their responsibilities more seriously. Otherwise the efforts could end up in a waste of time, resources and opportunities. And the ones responsible for the waste can be accused of being irresponsible stewards.

The quarterly reports are sent to churches, national councils and ecumenical partners in order to share information with them and receive their constructive comments to improve the quality of programs. Another purpose is to make use of the people trained by CCA programs to improve the quality of programs conducted by churches and national councils at local level. It is part of the process to equip churches and enhance the capacity of local churches. We also hope that ecumenical partners too will read our reports and

engage with us in critical dialogue, not merely to critique us and to see how the funds have been spent, but also to learn from our experiences and find mutual ways to support each other. This is the kind of partnership that is required for the ecumenical movement to grow and become vibrant and relevant for our times. Hence, these quarterly reports are sent to you with the aim that you will find time to study and reflect on programs enclosed in them and provide new insights to improve the quality of programs. In this way we can become partners or co-owners of CCA programs and break the culture of 'us' and 'them' and work towards creating an ecumenical culture of true partnership and solidarity.

It is in that spirit we send you this and other CCA related documents. It is one of the ways to communicate and be accountable to each other. It is because of these reasons that we put these documents together and hope that our efforts will contribute to the re-awakening of the ecumenical movement in Asia. As this is a movement, which has given life, hope, purpose, meaning and freedom to countless people, both within and outside Asia as well as Christian circles. It is a fact that CCA is one of the branches of the wider ecumenical movement located in Asia and has been playing a creative and prophetic role in breaking all kind of barriers and moving into uncharted territories to encounter the God of surprises! Let us be faithful to that God through our programs and commitments.

With peace and blessings,
Rienzie Perera
Associate General Secretary for Finances and Relationships

General Secretariat¹

Strategic Program Planning Workshop

To envision and plan programs and activities for 2008 and beyond, CCA- executive secretaries, consultants and interns met together at the Crystal Spring House for a two-day workshop from 24-25 July, 2007 in Chiang Mai. The administrative support staff was also invited to develop better understanding of the programs and activities of CCA and its constituencies.

After the opening prayer, workshop followed the agenda as given below:

- A. Introduction to CCA: An overview of CCA- its history, vision, mission and goals
- a presentation was made by the general secretary Dr Prawate Khid-arn.
- B. Self-evaluation: Presentations were made by executive secretaries and consultants of each program area on strengths and weaknesses of their programs implemented during the first half of 2007.
- C. Program plan 2008 and beyond (Programs and Funding Request 2008).

Ecumenical Relations

August 14-19: The general secretary Dr Prawate Khid-arn attended the following meetings in Colombo, Sri Lanka

- CCA HIV/AIDS Strategic Task Force Meeting (14-15 August)
- EAA Asia Regional Meeting (16 August)
- International Interfaith Pre-Conference on HIV/AIDS (17-19 August)
- 8th International Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP VIII)

September 3: Rev. Dr Makoto Hara along with six theology students and five faculty members from Theological College of Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan visited CCA.

September 5-10: The general secretary and executive secretaries participated in the 17th General Assembly of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs held at Empress Hotel in Chiang Mai. Around 370 delegates including representatives of World Alliance of YMCAs, officials, national representatives, ecumenical partners and senior friends participated in the event.

CCA general secretary and staff members were invited to lead discussions and workshops.

- 'Poverty, Development and Sustainability' by Dr Prawate Khid-arn

¹ Reference: Program Report/2007/April-June.doc

- ‘Responding to Gender Concerns and Gender Sensitivity in Partnership’ by Dr Hope Antone
- ‘Youth Trends, Challenges as Opportunities in a Globalised Changing World’ by Ms Shirley Susan
- ‘Diversities and Inclusiveness’ by Rev. Dr Rienzie Perera
- ‘Global Citizenship – Responsibility and Participation in YMCA Mission in Community’ by Chan Beng Seng

September 10-15: The general secretary attended the 92nd Annual Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) in Korea. It has been a tradition of PCK and PROK to hold their general assemblies simultaneously for more than ninety years at the same time, however with different venues.

The PCK General Assembly was held at Sang Dang Church in Cheong-Ju, with a theme ‘Churches, Create to its Fullest—Embrace the Next Generation’. More than 1,500 delegates attended the assembly.

The PROK General Assembly took place in the province of Kyoung-Ju, with a theme ‘Jesus Christ – Sustainer of Life and Creation’. Around 800 delegates attended the assembly.

Promote Asian theological studies:

While in Korea, the general secretary met with the heads of churches and theological institutions to promote Asian theological studies. Through PCK Mission Department applications were made open for Doctoral theological studies at the United Graduate School of Theology, Yonsei University (UGST-YU) for academic year 2008. In the process, five applicants were decided to be accepted in the course with full scholarship and related benefits. Interested students recommended by CCA and its member churches including China were made eligible to apply. Deadline for the submission of application was set to be in November 2007.

CCA is also having further discussions with other universities and seminaries in Korea for more levels of theological studies and signing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The negotiations are underway with the Presbyterian Theological Seminary (PTC) and Hanil University, Korea.

The general secretary met with Rev. Kwan Oh-Sung, general secretary of NCKK during his visit. Along with sharing on common concerns and discussions it was agreed that it is high time to reflect on church’s mission work in Asia. The issue was raised in relation to the recent incident of Korean kidnappings in Afghanistan. Given to the debate on the paradigms of mission and churches, CCA and NCKK agreed to organise a consultation on this issue in 2008. This event will critically reflect on the subject along with creating better understanding of churches and their work regarding to mission ideology.

September 19: Mr. Oneua, the finance manager of Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) office in Vientiane, Laos visited CCA for discussion on financial matters.

Preparations for the 13th General Assembly

- July 9-10 Members of the Preparatory Committee of the 13th General Assembly, Dr Prawate Khid-arn, Rev. Prof James Haire, Mr. Anthony Row and Dr Rienzie Perera visited Taipei to discuss the possibility of holding CCA 13th General Assembly in 2010 in Taiwan. The discussions were held at the PCT Office. Churches in Taiwan showed enthusiasm to jointly host the assembly. If the proposition works out, it will be the first time that CCA will hold its assembly in Taiwan, and the second time in North East Asian Region. Report will be presented to the CCA Executive Committee meeting in November 2007 for further decisions.
- August 1-3 Members of the Preparatory Committee of the 13th General Assembly- Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, Rev. Prof James Haire, Mr. Anthony Row, Mr. Shahzad Khurram and Dr. Rienzie Perera met heads of member churches in India and National Council of Churches India (NCCI) to discuss the possibility for holding CCA 13th General Assembly in India in 2010. The meeting was held at the CSI Centre in Chennai. Report will be presented to the CCA Executive Committee meeting in November 2007 for further decision.

Relocation Updates

August 28 The CCA Property Committee and the CCA Foundation Board met on 28 August to discuss the construction plan for the new CCA Centre in Chiang Mai. The architect Mr. Anuporn Intraphan presented the new design and plan for the CCA Centre. It was agreed that the tendering process will commence through CCA Foundation, with tenders to be opened at the CCA Executive Committee meeting in Chiang Mai from 26-30 November, 2007.

September 18 The CCA Foundation Board met at the CCA Office:

- approved the new revised design which will be sent to the CCA Property Committee
- the time frame was set up as following:

September 24, 2007	Approval of the design
November 7, 2007	Working drawing
November 12, 2007	Bidding package
November 14, 2007	Bidding package distribution
November 16, 2007	Site inspection
November 23, 2007	Submission of bidding
November 27, 2007	Opening of bidding

Personnel Matters

- Ms. Chang Chung Chih, Joint Executive Secretary for EGY-Youth completed her assignment with CCA. Chung Chih and her husband Erdian Sembiring left for

Taiwan on September 5. While settling as a new family, both planned for further studies. Erdian will be taking up a master's course in religious studies at Tainan Theological College and Seminary while Chung Chih is considering further studies in social work.

- Naveen Qayyum from Pakistan joined CCA as the communication consultant for a period of two years. She started working in Chiang Mai office from June 15, 2007.
- Two interns Mr. Samnang Douk from Cambodia and Ms Abigail Peter from Malaysia completed their internship tenure and returned to their home countries. Both interns took back their ecumenical learning from CCA to their churches. They will be continuing with their studies.
- The Personnel Committee met in Bangkok from 12-13 July, 2007 to interview a candidate for the post of Joint Secretary for FMU-Theological Concern, and recommended Rev. Dr Park Sung-Kook to be appointed.

Faith, Mission and Unity (FMU)

Quarterly Report for July-September 2007

CCA-FMU staff: Hope S. Antone

1. Networking: ATESEA Accreditation Visits and Accreditation Commission

Meeting (8-16 July, Philippines)

Part of the network of CCA-FMU staff is the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA). Both A Wati Longchar and Hope S. Antone of the FMU team participated as accreditation team members from ATESEA to member seminaries and Bible schools in the Philippines and those applying for membership with ATESEA. The purpose of the visits on 8-14 July was to assess the status of the church-related theological institutions in accordance with the criteria of ATESEA member schools. The visits were a good opportunity to meet up with faculty, staff and students, and sometimes with the Board of Trustees of the church-owned seminaries. The exchange and dialogue were good avenues to explain the thrust of ecumenical theological education and to promote Asian theologising, including Asian feminist theologising. Following the visits, all teams met with the Accreditation Commission on 14-16 July to report on the visits, recommend accreditation to those that meet the criteria, and to suggest ways of improving the curriculum and other offerings of the seminaries.

2. CATS VI Continuation Committee Meeting (16-19 July, Iloilo City, Philippines)

Taking advantage of the presence of several members of the Sixth Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS VI) Continuation Committee in the ATESEA accreditation visits and commission meeting, the planning meeting of CATS VI was held on 16-19 July in Iloilo City, Philippines. The purpose of the meeting for the Continuation Committee members was to make an ocular visit to the venue, Central Philippine University (CPU), decide the theme and dates of the congress, and plan for the congress following a review of the fifth congress held in 2006. Although the committee decided to hold the congress on 16–20 January, 2009 discussion is now going on to reconsider the dates in view of the plenary assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) which is also set around this time. The Continuation Committee feels that the congress should not clash with such a major event of FABC lest it will adversely affect their participation and presence in the congress. The theme of the 6th congress, "Doing Mission from the Underside: A Challenge to the Understanding of Mission Since 1910", reflects the intention to critique present-day mission thinking and practices in the light of the Asian realities.

3. Ecumenical Lecture Series at CPU (19 July, Iloilo City, Philippines)

Taking advantage of the presence of several Asian theologians on the campus of Central Philippine University for the planning of the Sixth Congress of Asian Theologians, the Ecumenical Lecture Series was planned to enable three theologians to engage with the students and faculty of CPU and other theological institutions in the area. Dr Anna May Chain, Dr A Wati Longchar, and Sr. Dr Clemens Mendonca from the CATS Continuation Committee stayed for an additional day to give the lectures and participate in conversations. Topics were on biblical hermeneutics, tribal theology, and theologising from the perspective of women and the poor. The Ecumenical Lecture Series is an

opportunity for CCA to be engaged with the local seminaries, providing ecumenical lectures and Asian theologising, and for the seminaries to own the program by providing hospitality to the lecturers. This was the first time CCA held the ecumenical lecture series at CPU, a university related to the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, which is a member of the CCA.

4. Theological Consultation on Transforming Theology and Life Giving Civilisation, (12-18 August, Changseong, Korea)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Council for World Mission (CWM) jointly organised a theological consultation on Transforming Theology and Life Giving Civilisation at the Hanmaum community in Changseong, Korea on 12-18 August. Hope S. Antone was invited to attend the consultation, along with several theologians from Africa and Asia, and a few from the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe and America. The consultation looked at the philosophy and practices of Ubuntu and Sangsaeng – African and Asian words that describe community life and convivial living in the two regions. Unfortunately, such life giving civilisations are being eroded by globalisation and its accompanying values of materialism and individualism. Participants were challenged to look into their own respective regions, countries, cultures and tradition to lift up life giving civilisations that can help to transform theologies to be more life-affirming in the age of so much life-denying realities. (A detailed report is available in *CCA News*, September issue)

5. Consultation on Ecumenism in India Today: A Search for a Relevant Ecclesiology and Interface Dialogue between Churches and Theological Institutions (6-9 August, Jorhat, Northeast India)

As a continuing study process of the Senate of Serampore, a consultation was organised by Senate of Serampore College on “Ecumenism in India Today: A Search for a Relevant Ecclesiology and Interface Dialogue between Churches and Theological Institutions” and Study Centre at Eastern Theological College, Jorhat on 6-9 August, 2007. This brought twenty six theology teachers and church leaders to address the issue of strengthening partnership between the churches and seminaries in training future leaders. The consultation evaluated the ecumenical content in teaching materials and made relevant recommendations to the Senate for implementation. ETE has been involved in this study process. A Wati Longchar participated in the process.

6. Consultation on Violence against Women and Disabled Persons (28 August-3 September, Solomon Islands)

The Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) planned and implemented a consultation in Solomon Islands for the churches and theological schools in the Pacific on “Violence against Women and Disabled Persons”. A group of fifty-one participants attended the consultation. The project is an ongoing study process which began in 2004. This is the fifth consultation on “Disability Discourse in Theological Institutions.” More specifically this consultation dealt with the issue of the interconnection between women and disability. A curriculum will be developed for the colleges in the Pacific.

7. Women to Women Theological Educators' Team visit to China (2-12 September, China)

The Ecumenical Theological Education coordinated the women's theological educators' team visit to China. A team of eleven women visited six cities for mutual learning, sharing and exchange of ideas. The team visited eight theological colleges and many churches.

8. Consultation-Workshop on "Empowering the Church for Multicultural Ministry and Solidarity" (16-20 September Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

CCA-FMU organised a consultation-workshop on "Empowering the Church for Multicultural Ministry and Solidarity" in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 16-20 September. Although Asia is a very multicultural region, the Asian churches do not affirm the need and are not really equipped to do multicultural ministry and solidarity. Valuable inputs were given by Hermen Shastri (general secretary of the Council of Churches of Malaysia), Yong Ting Jin (coordinator of the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology), Philip Thomas (Cor Episcopa of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Malaysia), I W J Broery Hendriks of the Protestant Church in the Moluccas, and Tabita Kartika Christiani of the Gereja Kristen Indonesia. Exposure to two organisations – Sisters in Islam and A Call to Serve (ACTS) provided a unique learning and dialogue on what serving across ethnic and religious backgrounds can mean in Malaysia which is a plural country. Truthful to being a consultation and a workshop at the same time, the methodology used was a lot of interaction, discussion in small groups, sharing of stories and experiences, and action planning. (A detailed report will be included in the December issue of *CCA News*).

9. Publications:

- The August edition of *CTC Bulletin* features the second of a two-part series on the proceedings of the Fifth Congress of Asian Theologians.
- Two books have been released by the Ecumenical Theological Education: (a) *Persons with Disabilities in Society – Problems and Challenges* and (b) *Broken God Amidst Broken People: Doing Theology from Disability Perspective*.

Justice, International Affair and Development and Service

Quarterly Report for July-September 2007

CCA-JID staff: Tony Waworuntu and Freddy De Alwis

1. Training of Trainers (School) for Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in South Asia (10 – 17 September, 2007 YMCA Centre, Katunayake, Sri Lanka)

Background

In context of the growing conflicts in Asia and the need for peace building ‘Training of Trainers - School for Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in South Asia’ was organised from 10 – 17 September, 2007 in Katunayake, Sri Lanka. Given to the fact that political conflicts in countries like Sri Lanka, Philippines, Pakistan and Indonesia are costing many lives, the challenge to transform the conflicts into peaceful and tolerant situations is becoming demanding for the churches.

Since CCA is intensively involved in promoting the ‘Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV)’ in Asia, it was considered important to analyse the conflict management in the light of regional realities. In this context, CCA developed this program, in which fourteen participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the training, including four resource persons from Sri Lanka, Japan and CCA.

Objectives

- Equipping participants to help churches develop better working relationships with the state and other religious communities.
- Capacity building of participants to deal with the challenges faced in religiously plural situations.
- To equip participants with strengths to address conflicts and work for peace building in their communities.
- Identify participants’ abilities and help them use their strengths to transform conflicts effectively.
- Help participants build their own understandings of conflict situations and peace building.
- To use the existing frame of reference of the participants for conflict transformation and enhance it by discussing their views and making links to the material presented.

Program thematic contents

The program thematic content included; win-win approach in conflicts, creative response in transformation, empathy, appropriate assertiveness, cooperative power, managing the conflict, willingness to resolve the conflicts, mapping the conflict, designing options, negotiation, mediations and broadening perspectives.

Complimentary subjects included following themes:

- Understanding conflicts from socio-political perspectives
- The root causes of conflicts

- Theological understanding and reflections on peace building and conflict transformation.

The process/methodology of training

The methodology of the training included active engagement of the participant in the process. This included a lot of questioning, encouragement of debates and discussions in the given timeframe. The responses from the participants were consciously treated as concrete contribution to the group's understanding. The fact that personal anecdotes and sharing of experiences illustrate a point was given a significant place in the entire process of the training. The learning mechanisms were kept brief and relevant for the group's purpose. With the same provisions participants were encouraged to personalise the materials with their own stories. Current conflicts experienced by participants were taken as the key points for further dialogue and discussion. The engagement of participants moving between mental concepts and actual behaviours was the significant part of the discussions and learning. Language was given an immense importance in the process of the training, considering that only clarity would contribute to the intricate vocabulary used for conflict transformation process. Special attention was drawn to distinctions, or confusion and distortion occurring often in the peace building strategies.

Participants' evaluation and reflections

Participants shared that they found training interesting and helped them a great deal to equip themselves with skills and knowledge needed to deal with conflict situations. They expected that after this training they will work to maintain and develop their skills and knowledge, so that they may have initiatives and quick response to conflict situations in their communities.

It was also realised by the participants that in order to work as a peace-builder in the midst of complicated conflicts, Co-operative Power is the role which needs to be played. The required deep knowledge, skills, and understanding about the conflicts and transformation were exposed and discussed well during the training. It was also recommended to CCA to continue such trainings at all levels for the churches in future.

General observations:

Strengths:

1. Well organised; good training facilities, accommodation and food
2. Influential and inspiring resource persons.
3. Systemic approach towards learning.
4. Diverse and creative worships during the training.
5. Positive communications and relationships during the training.

Weakness:

1. Insufficient time to get into in depth study of the materials.
2. Few numbers of participants particularly from Pakistan.

Recommendations for follow up:

- CCA should continue such trainings in future
- National councils and local churches should utilise their own resources to conduct such training in their own countries;

2. International Consultation on “The Role of the Church for Peace and Unification in Korean Peninsula”

The “100th Anniversary Conference of Korean Great Revival 2007”

Venue: Hotel Grand Hilton Seoul, Korea (9 – 11 August 2007)

Background

On the anniversary celebrations of the Great Revival Korean movement, originated in Pyongyang in 1907, this international consultation was held on 'The Role of Church for Peace and Unification on the Korean Peninsula' in Seoul, Korea from 9-11 August, 2007. The event was organised by Peace and Unification Committee of the 100th Anniversary Conference of Great Korean Revival. National Councils of Churches in Korea (NCCK) and Christian Councils of Korea (CCK) participated in the consultation along with others international delegates. Around three hundred participants, representing churches and ecumenical organisations from Korea, Asia and the world took part in worships and bible studies. The participants attended the lectures and took part in discussions on the role of churches in bringing peace and unification to the Korean peninsula.

Consultation context

The conference was organised in the context of the Great Revival movement which has a significant place in the history of Korea. It played a pivotal role in spreading Christianity throughout the Korean peninsula. It was the revival movement, which took place a hundred years ago and laid the foundation of Christian faith in Korea.

It was twenty years ago when the churches of Korea took a bold step by issuing a 'Declaration of the Churches in Korea on National Reunification and Peace' in February 1988. In Declaration the Korean Churches committed themselves with a calling to labour as apostles of peace. The concept was based on Colossians 3:15. The declaration also stated that, "God has commanded the Korean Churches to take up the mission of overcoming today's harsh realities of people divided into north and south in confrontation. And we are thus obligated to work for the realisation of unification and peace." This commitment was grounded in the theology of Matthew 5:23-24. The landmark declaration raised one of the most significant issues of unification movement of churches, which remains relevant even today.

Therefore there is a need to share the pain of national divisions to achieve unification. Churches' reform movement for peace, extensive educational efforts and continuation of solidarity movement originated by the declaration are the efforts we have to continue. Indeed, Christianity is naturally related to the unification movement which holds the basic belief of peace. Bringing the values of reconciliation between two Koreas through religious movement is in line with the pursuit for unification to bridge the divides of confrontation and hostility. Therefore, what Korean churches need today is not just religious exchanges but more extensive commitment for peace and reconciliation.

Recommendations:

To the governments of North and South Korea and other concerned governments, with regard to the second Korean Summit participants made following recommendations:

- This Summit should lead to the establishment of peace on the Korean peninsula by fulfilling their pledge to make the Korean region nuclear

weapon free, and subsequently to sign a Peace Treaty to replace the existing Armistice.

- The Summit should aim to open the way for North and South Korea to develop their economics in a balanced manner through the establishment of a comprehensive economic development plan for the Korean peninsula.
- This Summit should contribute to the invigorating and widening of exchanges at all levels – political, military, social, cultural, and religious – and through these exchanges contribution towards reconciliation and peace can be made.
- This Summit should develop harmonious co-existence through increased commitment to humanitarian support, such as the provision of foodstuffs and the reunion of separated families.
- The government officials of North and South Korea should make use of the historic opportunity that this Summit presents, to realise specific and concrete steps towards unification.

Participants urged the Korean churches:

- To unite on the stance of unification in the Korean peninsula based on the Biblical vision of ‘Shalom’.
- To lift up the theological underpinnings of peace and unification to the extent that Christians may see that the movement as part of their mission, and to broaden perceptions of what it means to be a church in situations of division and brokenness, as a reconciling and healing community.
- To deepen and strengthen the relationships among all Christians regardless of denominational differences, all groups of people regardless of gender or age, with a view to collectively work for peace and unification.
- To continue in their positive contributions to the alleviation of suffering, especially for the vulnerable people of North Korea and continue their aid efforts.
- To join people of other faiths and civil society groups in the common cause of peace and unification.

To the churches in the world, participants urged that:

- They lift up the churches and the people of Korea in prayer.
- They recognise that peace and unification in the Korean peninsula is a regional issue with global implications.
- The churches of the nations participating in the Six Party Talks (North and South Korea, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia) welcome the initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to facilitate a parallel meeting of the churches. At the same time, we request and encourage the WCC to promote the cooperation and contribution of the wider worldwide Christian communities, e.g. the Consortium for Social Development in North Korea, Christian Conference of Asia, and NCKC.
- They engage their governments and communities in advocating peace and unification in the Korean peninsula by strengthening networks of solidarity and peace education.

3. Interfaith Pre – ICAAP Conference on “Response of Faith Communities to HIV and AIDS” (17 – 19 August 2007, Continental Hotel Colombo Sri Lanka)

This Conference brought together more than two hundreds delegates, belonging to different walks of life and faiths, ideologies, from all over Asia. The participants with diverse cultural, religious, social and linguistic backgrounds participated in the event. These participants represented the local and international NGOs and organisations working with People Living With HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). People from PLWHA also took part in the conference.

The observations and comments from the participants were both positive and negative. The content of the conference was considered to be effective and relevant and inputs and discussions were engaging. However the composition of the participants required more balance in terms of religion and country. It was also felt that the logistics and planning of the conference could have been improved. The NCCSL, international coordinating committee, local coordinating working committee needed to coordinate more in terms of logistics.

Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment (EGY)

Quarterly Report for July-September 2007

CCA-EGY staff: Moumita Biswas

1. Indigenous Women's Alternative Leadership Training program (IWALT) Preparatory Meeting for Regional Follow up Workshop (5-9 August 2007, Yangon, Myanmar)

IWALT in Asia is a three year project of CCA in partnership with WCC and Sister's Network. The three sub-regional IWALT programs were organised in India, Philippines and Thailand between 2005- 2006. The preparatory meeting for the final event of the project – The 'Regional Follow up Workshop' was held in Myanmar. It was organised for sub regional participants of the previous IWALT program. The final follow up workshop was initially planned to be held on 26 – 31 March, 2007 in Chiang Mai. However due to CCA jubilee celebrations, changes were made in the dates of planned activities. It was decided in the IWALT Core Committee meeting held in Medan, Indonesia (28 February – 3 March) that the Regional Follow-up Workshop will be held in Yangon, Myanmar. The preparatory meeting for Regional IWALT Follow up Training was thus organised by CCA- EGY in collaboration with Myanmar Council of Churches in Yangon from 5 -9 August 2007.

Objectives

- Networking and dialogue with local host committee and Myanmar church leaders for ecumenical solidarity
- Arrangement for IWALT regional follow-up workshop in November.
- Monitoring the follow up activities of Myanmar participants from previous IWALT Sub Regional Gathering.
- Assessment of the dynamics of indigenous women's ecumenical movement in Myanmar and enhancing the role of EGY-CCA as a facilitating body.

IWALT Activities:

Preparatory Meetings

Series of preparatory meetings with the host committee comprising of Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) staff, executive committee members, Student Christian Movement (SCM) general secretary, indigenous women and ecumenical/ church leaders of Myanmar were held.

Monitoring the follow up activities by IWALT sub regional participants in Myanmar:

Monitoring of the follow up activities from the sub regional IWALT participants from Myanmar was conducted. One participant organised 'Karen Women's Leadership Training Program' from 9 -11 October 2006 as a follow up activity. Forty-three women from Karen Baptist Church and Church of Christ in Thailand attended the program. Another participant reported her follow up activity which she organised despite several practical challenges at the local level. She shared the dynamics of IWALT and how it can

be promoted in the grassroots communities with the 948 women gathered in Karen Baptist convention from 4- 8 October 2006.

Networking with Indigenous Women's Group: The visit to Yangon for IWALT preparatory meeting also provided an opportunity for interaction and meeting with a group of theologically trained women from different indigenous backgrounds in Myanmar. These women were mainly faculty and students of Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) and belonged to Kachi, Kayah, Karen, Lahu, Shan, Wa, Chin, Kachin and Mon tribes. They shared about the challenges that indigenous women are facing in Myanmar and their strategies and efforts to build communities of peace.

2. Women's Ecumenical Accompaniment for Vision and Empowerment (WEAVE) – East Timor

WEAVE is a project assisting CCA member churches and councils in capacity building of women in ecumenical leadership and organisational development. It is done through full time ecumenical accompanier facilitated and supported by CCA in partnership with sending and receiving member council or churches.

The context of this program is the violent conflict history of East Timor. These conflicts in the country put negative impacts on women who are the worst victims of violence. However they are struggling for their dignity and rights. Given the important role needed to be played by churches and CCA in the current situation as a facilitating agent of transformation, WEAVE has laid out the following objectives:

- To accompany church women in East Timor and help them with ecumenical leadership development, capacity enhancement, organisational and program management skill building.
- To facilitate building up a collective support mechanism for ecumenical women's movement in East Timor, such as:

(a) Organisational networking to support women in conflict situations.

(b) Encouraging member churches to support new churches for the common cause.

It was decided that Ms Dominica L. Faurillo a church worker from United Church of Christ and NCCP in the Philippines will volunteer with CCA to the Igreja Protestante Iha Timor Loro Sae (IPTL) as the ecumenical accompanier based in Dili. It was also agreed that the IPTL will provide CCA with an annual evaluation of WEAVE project in East Timor and also on Dominica's work progress. Dominica will be primarily accountable to the moderator of IPTL and joint executive secretary- women's concern. Quarterly reports will be sent every year by Dominica to Joint Executive Secretary of EGY- women's concern for processing and monitoring of the activities. The WEAVE East Timor started from 15 September 2007. Dominica will be responsible for implementation of the following activities for women's capacity enhancement in East Timor.

Activities for September – December 2007.

- Bible study groups will be formed to unite and empower church women in East Timor in order to reflect biblical and theological perspectives
- Facilitate and conduct workshops for capacity enhancement of women.

- Baseline survey will be conducted on the challenges women are facing in East Timor, different forms of violence and women's efforts for healing and reconciliation.
- Documentation of geopolitical trends, case studies, unheard stories of struggles, challenges and strategies of women to build communities of peace.

3. School for Ecumenical Leadership Formation (SELF)

(2- 22 September 2007, Colombo, Sri Lanka)

SELF is a biannual leadership development project and an endeavor for ecumenical formation of young people to strengthen ecumenical youth movement in Asia. SELF is jointly organised and developed by CCA and World Student Christian federation – Asia Pacific (WSCF-AP) region since 2001. The first SELF was organised in Thailand in 2001, the second in 2003 and the third was in Bangalore, India in 2005. Though SELF was initially a joint program of CCA and WSCF-AP, however not all schools were jointly organised. Due to the need to strengthen the relationship between CCA-EGY – (youth concerns) and WSCF-AP for youth capacity enhancement in Asia, SELF- 2007 was jointly organised in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 2 - 22 September 2007.

Objectives:

- Ecumenical leadership formation of youth and strengthening ecumenical movement in Asia and Asia Pacific region.
- Promoting active participation of youth in decision making process of church and society.
- Facilitating youth articulations from biblical and theological perspectives on geopolitical issues such as globalisation, militarisation, war on terror, religious fundamentalism, justice, peace, ecology, feminism and human rights etc.
- Tracing the history of ecumenical movement at national, regional and global levels and addressing challenges and issues of today.
- Searching alternative approach to communicate and advocate ecumenical witness among students and youth in lives of the people.

The theme of the SELF 2007 is 'Young People Working towards Wider Ecumenism in Pluralistic Society'. Thirty participants from Asia and Asia Pacific attended the school. The uniqueness of this school was the methodology of forum style which provided scope for men and women participation, where the youth could take part in deliberations and decision making. SELF 2007 made an attempt to bridge the gap between older generation of ecumenical and church leaders and the younger generation by providing scope for dialogue and deliberations. Another uniqueness of SELF was that it made an effort to integrate participants from other faith communities to enhance the dynamics of youth ecumenical movement in Asia. The four days exposure program also provided the participants with opportunity to learn about the challenges, witness and dialogue with:

- Refugees and displaced people in North and East province of Sri Lanka
- Tsunami victims and visiting rehabilitation and trauma counselling centres
- People working in tea plantation and witnessing challenges and exploitation faced by them.

Both CCA-EGY and WSCF- AP aims to bring out a publication featuring SELF-2007 outcomes. It will reflect youth theology, just peace spirituality and sharing of the documented by the participants.

CCA-UNESCAP Project

Strengthening of Life Skills for Positive Youth Health Behaviour

Quarterly Report for July-September 2007

CCA-UNESCAP staff: Shirley Susan

Updates on work progress during July - September 2007

- Completion of preparation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials for disadvantaged youth.
- Monitoring mission to Xinjiang (Uyghur Autonomous Region, China and Sri Lanka) was intended to study the progress of community based life-skills training interventions undertaken by the national counterpart organisations (NCOs).
- Discussions and planning for Mid-term Review Meeting.
- Publishing of bi-monthly e-newsletter "Youth for Health" (August issue)
- Initiation of the preparation of the booklet on positive youth health behaviour.

Monitoring Mission to Xinjiang (Uyghur Autonomous Region, China)

(24 - 29 August 2007)

Michael Chai, Social Affairs Officer, UNESCAP undertook a monitoring mission to Urumqi, Kashgar and Yining, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China.

Objectives

- To monitor implementation of project activities in Urumqi, Kashgar and Yining.
- To undertake stakeholder consultations on technical implementation modalities.

Key activities

- Visited project sites in Kashgar and Yining
- Met with representatives of local government including Village chiefs, Party officials, the Bureau of health and youth leaders/trainers
- Met with representative from Xinjiang HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Project (XJHAPAC), a five year joint partnership program between Government of China and Australia
- Visited the needle exchange centre in Yining
- Discussed technical implementation modalities on community-based life skills training networks with the responsible staff from the Centre for STI/AIDS Prevention and Control of Xinjiang (CDC). Discussed with the partners on various operational aspects of the projects, progress in meeting targets as well as the Mid-term Review of the project scheduled for 5 – 6 November 2007 in Bangkok.

Progress in implementing the Letter of Agreement

A Letter of Agreement (LoA) had been signed with the Centre for STI/AIDS Prevention and Control of Xinjiang (CDC) in October 2005. The completion date for Phase I of the project was 31 August 2006. Subsequently, a second LoA was signed with the Centre, in December 2006, for Phase II of the project. The main outputs specified by the Second LoA were:

- 1) training of life skills based trainers in Kashgar and Yining

- 2) developing of IEC materials in Uygur and Mandarin for disadvantaged youth on strengthening life skills for positive youth health behaviour and
- 3) life skills trainings network and outreach to 5000 – 6000 youth, by the end of Phase II of the project. Project outputs as per the LoA are ongoing.

Following the Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshop in September 2006, Phase II of the project was initiated with monthly life skills training activities in various locations in Kashgar and Yining. The ESCAP life skills training materials were adapted into the local context, including its translation into Uyghur and Mandarin. This mission observed a number of youth leaders who had participated in the ToT workshop playing an active role in outreach peer-to-peer education programs at the village/community level. Other relevant Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on prevention on substance use and HIV/AIDS were also regularly developed and disseminated.

The project partners are also engaged in ongoing discussions with local government officials, community leaders, including Muslim religious leaders, and other stakeholders on health risks that youth face. The partner organisation has carried out ongoing activities to mobilise communities to foster collaboration among the youth, community leaders, local government agencies and health service providers in developing community based life skills training networks. Specific life skills and issues which affect men and women differently were also taken into consideration in the activities. Other ongoing interventions include:

- Muslim religious leaders – Imams – speaking openly on issues concerning substance use and HIV/AIDS to reduce stigma and discrimination and promote healthy behaviour.
- Innovative community activities such as sports, art workshops, music, dance competitions etc.
- Community centers made accessible to youth.
- Ex-drug users engaged as out-reach volunteers.

Monitoring Mission to Colombo, Sri Lanka

(10 – 15 September 2007)

Shirley Susan, Consultant, CCA-UNESCAP undertook a monitoring mission to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Objectives:

- To monitor implementation of project activities in Mattakuliya under-served settlements in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- To undertake stakeholder consultations on technical implementation modalities.
- Met with the Chairman, Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka and Director (Health Education and Publicity), Health Education Bureau, Ministry of Health, Colombo;
- Met with Chief Medical Officer, Colombo Municipal Council, Colombo;
- Met with the representatives from the Ministry of Health and non-governmental organisations such as Mel Madura, The Sumithrayo Drug Demand Reduction Programme, Colombo;
- Met with Rev. Dharma Kusala, Buddhist Monk, Mattakuliya;

- Met with Rev. Jayasiri Peiris, National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCS)
- Visited project sites in Mattakuliya under-served settlements in Colombo;
- Visited the vocational training centre established by the Foundation for Co-existence in Mattakuliya;
- Review of the project scheduled for 5 - 6 November 2007 in Bangkok.
- ESCAP's health programme focus, which is the strengthening of health systems in the region, was emphasised in all the discussions.

Key activities

Progress in implementing the Letter of Agreement (LoA) in Sri Lanka:

A Letter of Agreement was signed with The Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya (Sarvodaya) in January 2007. The main outputs specified in the LoA were:

1. Conduct of training of trainers in life skills-based training for youth at community level;
2. Developing IEC materials (picture books/manuals/posters) on prevention of substance use and HIV/AIDS in Sinhalese;
3. Initiation of life skills training network and outreach to 5500 – 6500 youth.

The conduct of training of trainers in life skills-based training for youth and developing IEC materials is complete. The monthly training activities have been initiated in Mattakuliya under served settlements. Project outputs as per the LoA are ongoing.

The project partners are involved in ongoing discussions with local government officials, religious leaders (Buddhist and Christian), NGOs, parents, youth and other stakeholders on health risks that youth face.

Observations in the under served settlements- Mattakuliya, Colombo:

- The subculture of social norms in Mattakuliya is very distinct and has a strong influence on the behaviour and habits of youth.
- There is no recreational space, library or community centre to mobilise or organise activities for youth. Community centers which were earlier available are now being used for rehabilitation of tsunami victims.
- As there are no youth clubs or youth councils, a 'Fitness Club' has been initiated to mobilise and engage youth. Apart from fitness related activities, the youth discuss issues related to smoking, drug use and alcohol. The youth who are members of this club are reaching out to other youth on a one-to-one basis. Peer education is informal.
- There has been an increase in the awareness level on the negative impacts of smoking, alcohol and drug use.
- Discussions with youth revealed that the mode of transmission and HIV prevention knowledge has increased. Specific attention has been given to addressing stigma and discrimination in relation to HIV/AIDS.
- Dissemination of IEC materials has helped in increasing life skills in relation to self-protection. One young woman voiced her complaint to the community leader that she was being harassed by a relative of hers. She specifically mentioned that she gained confidence to voice her complaint after reading the IEC materials.

Response from parents, religious leaders, government officials and other stakeholders in the community to current project interventions:

- Parental support is extremely crucial in mobilising and organising activities for youth. Sarvodaya in collaboration with the Health Education Bureau and NGOs have initiated dialogue with parents. Parents have extended support.
- Some of the parents of youth who are engaged in youth activities mentioned that youth are no longer found loitering in the community. Youth have become more united and organised among themselves.
- Religious leaders (Buddhist and Christian) have supported the project interventions by offering their premises during weekdays for sewing classes for young women and other peer education activities.

Meeting with the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCS):

During the field visits, it was observed that there were many churches in the Mattakuliya under-served settlements. The Rev. Nadira Fernando, Methodist Church in Mattakuliya has provided assistance in offering the church premises for the programs organised by the NCO, Sarvodaya.

Shirley Susan and Anjali (Team leader of the project, Sarvodaya) met with Rev. Dr Jayasiri Peiris and his team and discussed about the possibility of involving the other churches in the project interventions in Mattakuliya. Dr Peiris has expressed his willingness to provide the addresses of the various churches in the Mattakuliya area. The various churches will be contacted by Sarvodaya.

Challenges on building community- based life skills training network:

- Mattakuliya under-served settlements are not organised by the Colombo Municipal Council. Therefore building rapport and mobilising various stakeholders in the community for activities is a major challenge. Enormous amounts of time and energy have gone into mobilising four out of the twelve communities in Mattakuliya.
- Waste disposal, sanitary and other basic facilities are poor. Awareness on cleanliness, health and hygiene requires attention.
- There is a stigma attached to youth and children from Mattakuliya. They are discriminated against and looked down on by teachers at school and the general population in Colombo. Programs which address change in behaviour and attitude both in Mattakuliya and the city of Colombo are necessary.
- Access to community centres, library facilities, play grounds, counselling facilities or public health centres is an urgent need.

Recommendations for follow-up:

- Lobby for a recreational space/community resource centre for youth activities and continue with action oriented programs for the energetic youth in the community.
- Youth friendly services including counselling facilities require attention.
- Initiation of career guidance and vocational training programs with support from the Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training.

- Initiation of Community Development Councils (CDCs) by the Colombo Municipal Council. The CDCs will assist in organising the community and community mobilisation.
 - Organise regular meetings with the various stakeholders (various government departments, religious leaders – Buddhist, Christian and Muslim, teachers, health workers, NGOs).
 - Initiation of discussion with the Ministry of Health and NGOs to measure life skills and identify indicators for behaviour change among youth.
- Focus on over all well-being of the community. Foster collaboration among stakeholders and strengthen the community to deal with the determinant factors.

Progress in Cambodia and the Philippines

The Philippines

Information, Education and Communication materials:

The following printed materials have been produced to aid trainers in the conduct of the Life Skills Training. The materials will be used by Peer Educators in reaching out to a minimum of three other OSYs.

1. A 40 page manual covering 8 introductory lessons to aid Life Skills Trainers in conducting the one-day Peer Educators Training, have been revised to ensure transferability of the lessons:
 - Adolescence
 - Understanding Sex, Sexuality, and Gender
 - Sexually Transmitted Infections
 - HIV/AIDS
 - Substance Use (Drugs and Alcohol)
 - Life Skills
2. An 8 page colored *Tagalog/English* pamphlet that highlights the topics related to Adolescence and Sexual Maturation; HIV/AIDS; and Substance use.
3. A set of laminated 8” by 11” pictures of STI’s and its symptoms; Kinds of drugs and its ill effects on pregnancies and children; HIV/AIDS visual aids. All of these are made available to every Faith Base Organisation (FBO) Senior Life Skill Trainers in soft copies as well.
4. The Disaster Intercession materials (one-pager)

Life skills based Training:

The first batch of 14 Peer Education Trainings were initiated in coordination with the Pasay City Social Welfare and Development Office (PCSWDO), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Pasay City Cooperative Development Office (PCDO), Barangay units, and the FBOs.

The following steps of activities guided the project team:

Identification of OSYs

The lists of OSYs were provided by Pasay’s Community Based Monitoring System baseline data and the PCSWDO. The FBO LS Trainers realised that it was necessary for them to invite and get the commitment of the OSYs prior to the date of training and not

just rely on the PCSWDO nor the barangay officials to get ensure the participation of the OSYs.

Pre-PET Preparation Activities

Twelve (12) sets of forms were designed to guide and monitor all the details of the community based Life skills training or PET. The Life Skills Trainers were required to submit one week in advance duly filled up 4 sets of Pre PET forms (out of the 12 forms) and other necessary paper works to satisfy the bureaucratic procedures of the LGU in order to avail of the financial training support.

Actual PET Activity

The Peer Education Training is conducted by a team of 3 to 4 trainers. Each FBO develops its own set of trainers.

Post- PET Activities

The Life Skills Trainer fills up 8 sets of Post PET forms for evaluation and monitoring purposes. Also, a follow-up program is designed by each FBO to establish both short-term and long-term relationships with the OSY believing that life skills cannot be immediately strengthened through a one-day training program.

HOPES Program

One of the major observations and findings during the first few trainings is that, Filipino OSYs need an integrated program to strengthen their abilities or life skills to say NO to all kinds of risky behaviors. They responded more easily and with enthusiasm to offers and prospects for livelihood skills training and employment or job placements. Thus, 5 solid programs were deemed necessary to give the OSYS a better chance to have strengthened life skills.

Under the banner of the **MEET@Youth**, *Mitigating the Effects of External Threats Among the Youth of Pasay*, the **HOPES** program have been drawn:

1. **H** HIV-AIDS Prevention through Life skills Training
 - LST strengthens the youth's ability to say NO to a risky lifestyle
 - OSYs to have a vision in life and have options to a new beginning of life transformation
 - Encourage the youth to be involved in an association (youth org, church, bayanihan centers) for moral support and accountability
 - OSYs to become Peer Educators who will influence others towards a positive youth health behavior.
2. **O** Outsourcing and Harnessing Livelihood Skills
3. **P** Placement of Jobs
4. **E** Education through Alternative Learning Systems
5. **S** Sports, Arts, and Culture Development

Cambodia

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has implemented several training and outreach activities at the community level in the Kampot province. Participation of out-of-school youth was found to be encouraging.

The Kampot Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sports is the primary implementing body. Good cooperation with the local authorities such as district governors, commune development councils, and village chiefs has helped in encouraging youth in the community to participate in the trainings as well as dissemination of the IEC materials.

The people in the village are happy with the training programmes. They especially enjoy playing games with the facilitators and peer educators in the village.

Bi-monthly Newsletter – Youth for Health

The *Youth for Health* is a **bi-monthly e Newsletter** intended to share and inform on the on going work being undertaken by our National Counterpart Organisations (NCO) in Xinjiang (Uygur Autonomous Region) China, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Kampot Province, Cambodia and Pasay City, Philippines.

It is intended that the sharing and reflection will help build effective strategies to promote positive health behaviour for out-of-school and disadvantaged youth in the participating countries.

The first issue of the e Newsletter was launched in August 2007.

Booklet on Positive Youth Health Behaviour

The findings of the baseline survey and the various missions undertaken over the last two years will be compiled in the form of a booklet. The discussions and outcome of the Mid-term Review meeting will be included in the booklet. The document will be completed by end of November 2007.

Mid-term Review Meeting

The Mid-term Review Meeting has been scheduled for 5 -6 November 2007 in Bangkok.

The two-fold purpose of the Mid-term Review is:

- 1) To review the outcome of the current interventions in the above-mentioned project (2005 – 2007) and share information with other country teams as well as project partners; and
- 2) To discuss plans of activities for the forthcoming Phase IV (2008) of the project.

The participants to the Mid-term Review include Nationals Counterpart Organisations (NCOs), UN agencies, EED, CCA and UNESCAP.

Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program (MEPP)

Quarterly Report for July-September 2007

CCA-MEPP staff: Janejinda Pawadee

Program Activities

1. HIV/AIDS Workshop, Cambodia

(July 10-12).

The MEPP HIV/AIDS workshop held in Cambodia gathered twelve participants from Vietnam, Lao PDR and Cambodia. Four resource persons and facilitators from Thailand and Cambodia were invited to lead the discussion and exposure visits. The workshop began with theological reflections on HIV/AIDS by Rev. Sanan Wutti. His reflections set the background to the discussions and made a positive contribution to the sharing process as he has a wide experience of working with Christ Church of Thailand's Aids Ministry (CAM). MEPP coordinator Janejinda Pawadee shared the reflections and experiences on the 'Situation of HIV-AIDS in the Mekong Sub Region'. Her discourse included the information based on UNAIDS relevant documents and provisions. She made the presentation about the possible ways needed by the churches in Mekong countries to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic and finding solutions for their communities. She also shared the WCC documents and strategies formulated to help churches deal with the HIV/AIDS issues.

The participants got engaged in positive dialogue and sharing on the issue discussed. This included a significant contribution from one of the Muslim resource people Ms Sros Tor from Cambodia who shared her experiences of working in her community on the HIV/AIDS issues and awareness raising. During the workshop participants also got a chance to visit three community and church based organisations working on HIV/AIDS and related issues. The participants met with a group of People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). The exposure trips were a new experience for most of the participants. According to them this added more to their conviction as how it is so urgent for the churches to address the HIV/AIDS issue and how they can be more involved in awareness raising. The participants also expressed during the workshop how important this issue is in the context of Mekong countries especially in Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam as access to AIDS medicine is still limited for people in these three countries. The participants from Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) expressed their wish to establish AIDS ministry to educate and serve people in their community.

2. The 3rd Lay Mobilisation Training in Cambodia

(28-30 August, 2007)

MEPP along with Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) jointly organised the 3rd Lay Mobilisation Training in Cambodia held from 28-30 August, 2007. The theme of the training was 'Church History and Church Administration'. The training was held in Phom Thmei Church, Chrey Thom Commune and Romeas Haek District of Svay Rieng Province. Around thirty-three lay-leaders and pastors from the first two modules attended this training. Rev. Mike Fucella (MEPP fraternal worker) was the facilitator in the discussions. The training was the third event in the series of five held over the period of one year. The series was part of the leadership training project for the KCC member

churches. The churches from Svay Rieng Province were chosen as the key participant in the program as their congregational fellowship is increasing and they were more interested to address the community issues. Another context was the need of training for the small groups in villages in the province working for community development in their region.

According to the participant's feedback the training was helpful for the group of churches in Svay Rieng Province in order to recall their history and use it for the future. It was also realised by the participants that the need to work on the history of Christianity in Cambodia is immense in present contexts. It was expressed generally that training held in the local situations of the participants proved both beneficial in terms of fellowship, comfortable environment and reduction in the cost of the seminar.

3. MEPP 'Training for Awareness Raising on Human Rights and Migration' in Myanmar

Karen Baptist Convention (KBC) and Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) conducted 'Training for Awareness Raising on Human Rights and Migration' in different parts of Myanmar.

- At Yangon from 3-7 July, 2007.
- At Pathein from 6-9 August, 2007.
- At Taunggoo from 27-30 August, 2007.
- At Hpa-an on 18-21 September, 2007

Purpose of the trainings was to provide information about migration and human rights to the leaders and representatives of local churches and communities of KBC and Internally Displaced Person (IDP) areas. And to analyse information and causes related to human rights and migration issues.

The trainings brought together around thirty participants. Participants shared and exchange their church experience on the issues of human rights and migration. Most of the participants got involved in positive and engaging discussions and expressed their interest in the training content.

Visits

1. Follow up MEPP program in Burma (August 6-8)

MEPP Coordinator visited Burma to follow up MEPP program with Karen Baptist Convention (KBC) and Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC). She had discussions with various church leaders and organisations in Yangon from MCC, KBC, Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCA (AAY) and APAY.

Observations from the visit:

- MCC staff was very committed to their work and their tasks impacted positively in the grass root communities. Their work in the field of social development, HIV/AIDS, Indigenous women, student and youth was highly positive

- KBC was very actively involved with social justice issues in their communities.
- Ecumenical Network in Burma continues to grow despite of the difficult socio-economic and political situation. Their work was carried on both with intra-faith and interfaith approach.
- Despite all the constructive efforts most of the people in Burma are still living in fear especially the ones in the countryside.

Visit to CCT church with Thai-Burma border

(21-23 September, 2007)

MEPP coordinator visited the 16th District church of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) as an advisor of CCT Tribal Human Right Committee. The 16th District church is located with the Thai-Burma border at Kanchanaburi Province. The objective of the visit was to encourage church leaders to get involved with human rights issues and continue working for their citizenship status.

The personal legal status of these communities is a significant issue in that area. As churches and communities along the Thai-Burma border mostly hold difference kind of ID document and therefore are unable to have the equal citizenship status like others. The church lacks the personal resources to deal with these human rights issues. Therefore it was realised that they require more capacity building and awareness in order to fight for their right of equal personal legal status.

Another purpose of the visit was to encourage the churches and communities to work in collaboration with government officers. The 16th District church committees appreciated the visit and expressed that they would like to continue their work on personal legal status and would like to have trainings for capacity building in this regard.

Series of meetings/conferences in Colombo, Sri Lanka

CCA Working Group meeting on HIV/AIDS (13-14 August)

MEPP coordinator attended CCA strategy/policy meeting on HIV/AIDS as an observer. Ten participants of the working group discussed CCA strategies on HIV/AIDS work and policies for future during the two days meeting. CCA had a positive exchange of views and strategies with WCC in regard to dealing with the HIV/AIDS issue. WCC shared on the policies and programs implemented by the churches in dealing with the issue. In the end CCA came out with a draft strategy and policy on HIV/AIDS and assigned some working group members to finalise the documents for CCA to use in the future.

Asian regional meeting of EAA (August 16)

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) organised a one day meeting for Christian participants from all over Asia. The participants were the ones involved with the HIV/AIDS work from 1989 to 2006. EAA gave opportunity to participants to share and exchange their experience from working on HIV/AIDS and related issues. EAA also introduced its campaign 'Trade for People' to educate participants about the linkages between HIV/AIDS and socio-economic issues. The session 'Keeping the Promise' highlighted the role of civil society including Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) in holding government and other stake holders accountable for the promises they have made.

International Interfaith Pre-ICAAP Conference on HIV and AIDS

(17-19 August)

The theme of the conference was ‘Response of Faith Communities to HIV and AIDS: Have We Kept the Promise?’ The three days conference brought more than 250 faith leaders, community representatives and workers to share and learn from each other.

During the conference one session was dedicated to hear voices from People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). The reflections showed how they are involved in fighting the stigma attached with HIV infected people. One person shared his experience saying, “I can live with AIDS but I can’t live with discrimination!” It shows how stigma and discrimination are a big challenge for the religious communities in order to change their attitude towards PLWHA. All participants mutually agreed that they have a significant role to fight against stigma and discrimination towards PLWHA.

International Conference on HIV/AIDS in Asia and Pacific (ICAAP –VIII) (August 19-23)

MEPP coordinator Janejinda attended ICAAP forums and workshops to hear the stories and difficulties faced by PLWHA and learn about the organisations in Asia / Pacific working for HIV/AIDS issues.

The sessions in the conference discussed discriminatory and unjust laws in Asian countries regarding to the HIV/AIDS infected people. The views were exchanged in regard to the countries like Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong and the Philippines who have supportive AIDS concerning laws. However most of the other countries on Asia contain discriminatory laws against homosexuals, men having sex with men (MSM) sex workers and Injection Drug Users (IDUs).

HIV/AIDS Program

Quarterly Report for July-September 2007

CCA-HIV/AIDS Program staff: Fr Philip Kuruvilla

1. CCA Workshop, Chiang Mai: 24-25 July

The workshop for CCA staff was held in Chiang Mai from 24-25 July. The staff was encouraged to go beyond the traditional training and conference methods in order to bring out more positive results. Through this meeting the staff was able to appreciate each other's activities and learn from one another. The workshop gave an opportunity for discussions on better ways of engagement with the councils and churches. The decision to bring AIDS Program under CCA-JID was made and recommended that the consultant should attend the executive committee meetings to bring positive impact on the cohesiveness and team spirit within the HIV/AIDS program.

Preparatory meetings for 'International Interfaith Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS (IIPC)': 23-23 July

1) Meetings with Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA) members, Chiang Mai and Bangkok:

As a member of the Steering Committee of AINA representing CCA and being the Convener of IIPC, this visit to Thailand gave the program consultant opportunity to participate in AINA International Steering Committee Meeting in Chiang Mai, and the AINA Scholarship Committee Meeting in Bangkok. Both meetings were essential in planning and finalising preparations for IIPC. The headquarter of AMAN (Asian Muslim Action Network) – an interfaith partner of CCA was also visited in Bangkok.

2) Meeting with UNAIDS in Bangkok

The consultant met with Ms. Sally Smith who is Geneva based Partnerships Advisor for UNAIDS. The role of CCA as a faith based organisation in the region battling against HIV and AIDS was discussed with Ms Smith. She confirmed UNAIDS support for the CCA – HIV/AIDS program and also agreed to attend the IIPC. Further ways for the two organizations to work together against HIV/AIDS were discussed.

3) Run up to IIPC, Sri Lanka:

In Sri Lanka the program consultant had meetings with David Bridger, Country Coordinator of UNAIDS, as well as members of Lanka Plus (Positive Network of Sri Lanka). The last Local Host Committee Meeting was also held before IIPC. The meeting with senior authorities of the **International Congress on HIV and AIDS in Asia and the Pacific** (ICAAP-8) was held to ensure the reading of IIPC Joint Interfaith Statement emanated at the Inaugural Session by AINA chairperson. The proposal was accepted.

These meetings played a significant role in organizing IIPC, and in bringing together diverse organizations and various stakeholders into one collaborative and cohesive event. They also helped to expand CCA networking connections and project CCA as an active coordinator of Asian interfaith response to AIDS.

International Interfaith Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS (IIPC): 17-19 August

For the first time in the history of HIV/AIDS response, a three-day interfaith meeting was attended by over 230 delegates, drawn from the major faiths of Asia. CCA along with the Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA) and the WCC conduct the International Interfaith Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS (IIPC) in Colombo from 17 -19 August.

Objectives of IIPC:

- To raise the awareness among faith based leaders on the impact of HIV/AIDS for well being of communities and congregations, and to formulate suitable responses from within their scriptures and traditions.
- To work together as communities of faith with people living with HIV/AIDS and their families - to build caring communities, ensuring promotion and protection of human rights, with the support from governmental and non-government organizations, international agencies and multi-sectoral organizations.

The event provided opportunity for both interfaith and intra-faith sessions, which was a breakthrough for Asian religious communities to showcase the work they have been doing. The last day had eight workshops which brought practice to theoretical discussions. The IIPC came up with a **Joint Interfaith Statement** which was guided through by James Cairns of the World Conference of Religions for Peace. As an FBO CCA's leadership role in this event was creditable showing the way faith leaders can deal with HIV/AIDS issues.

The highlights of the events were:

- The substantive engagement of participants from four religions (Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian) - in positive and inclusive dialogue and discussions.
- The commitment expressed from each religious groups in pursuing specific follow up in terms of enhancing national and regional inter and intra faith cooperation in the field of HIV/AIDS work.
- The specific commitment to work with and engage substantively with those among us who are HIV Positive and their respective networks.
- The motivation of the groups to accompany, equip and challenge leadership within their own religious contexts to enhance community response to HIV.
- Realization that changes and innovations have to be made in religious practices, theology and ceremonies to deal with HIV more effectively

Meetings held in conjunction with IIPC: 14-19 August:

1. CCA Strategic Task Force Meeting to formulate CCA AIDS policy: 14-15 August

In keeping with CCA's AIDS Program plan for 2007, and keeping WCC's Workplace Policy as a beacon, the Strategic Task Force of CCA met in Colombo from 14 -15 August to formulate HIV and AIDS policy for CCA. On the second day the Task Force also discussed the plans and projects of the AIDS Program Desk for 2008.

The two day meeting was chaired by Dr. Prawate Khid-arn and Dr. Manoj Kurien, respectively. Ms. Rachel Ong ensured the inputs from the HIV positive people. It was decided that that CCA Policy Paper will be formulated (with a possibility of including a workplace policy for CCA) for the following reasons:

- Putting down the theological basis for CCA's perspective on HIV and AIDS
- Responding to the contextual situations that affect people's lives

- To highlight guidelines based on Christian ethics and faith; necessary for communities to bring churches together to address the issue of HIV/AIDS.
- To provide a framework that will have adequate space so that national councils and member churches use the framework and 'own' the policies they develop.
- To encourage churches to be part of CCA work and support people infected with virus.
- CCA as a workplace also adopt the related policies.
- In order to make it a priority issue CCA should support national councils to address issues relevant to their contexts including tourism and violence.

In doing this CCA is called to:

- 1) Deepen the theology and spirituality of HIV/AIDS and reflect this into the pastoral life of the church.
- 2) Assert the roles and rights of affected people in the church and in its work
- 3) Integrate prevention, treatment, care and support
- 4) Conduct lobby and advocacy for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS
- 5) Ensure stewardship of finances and resources.
- 6) The active response to HIV/AIDS cuts across fair and respectful relationships, human sexuality, and gender. The ministries of the churches need to address vulnerable children, young people, women, men, sex workers, and prisoners.

2. EAA Asia Regional Meeting hosted by CCA: 16 August

Another meeting which was held in conjunction with IIPC was Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance-CCA's partner, was able to convene **Asia Regional Meeting**. Linda Hartke, Thabo Sephuma and Dr Manoj Kurian led the discussions. Delegates were given orientation into the workings of Global Trade and HIV /AIDS Advocacy, and discussed in what way they could support such movements.

3. AINA and Stakeholders meeting: 16 August

Another meeting was held involving stakeholders from interfaith arena to discuss AINA's future with the members of AINA's Steering Committee. WCC, UNAIDS, ANERELA, WCRP and CCA discussed the future directions of AINA for the next two years. This highlighted the importance of interfaith response, with each of them promising to assist AINA in its aspirations, and possible financial assistance. The support for the concept of AINA as a regional body striving to coordinate interfaith response in Asia was very positive. INERELA (African Network of Religious Leaders living with and affected by HIV/AIDS) proposed to have a joint office with AINA, possibly in Chiang Mai.

International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP-8): 19-23 August

The Congress was a boost for the Sri Lankan government, besieged by many problems. It was staged in the BMICH Stadium and was attended by over 2500 delegates. The congress started with AINA's Chairperson Ven Phra Maha Boonchuay reading out the Joint Interfaith Statement at the inaugural session. The five days comprised of plenaries, workshops and discussions. From discussions what emerged was that although the number of PLWA's in the Asia Pacific region (5.4 million) is less than previously estimated (8.3 million), there is no place for complacency. And TB –the biggest killer of

PLWA's – needs to be integrated with HIV programs across the region. ICAAP opened a dialogue between the faith communities for a better understanding of Asian problems and Asian solutions. At both the International AIDS Conferences in Bangkok and Toronto, Africa was pre-eminent and Asia, a very distant priority. A great deal of mingling was very much evident here, since in Asia, MSMs (Men having Sex with Men), CSW's (Commercial Sex Workers) and IVDU'S (Intravenous Drug Users) do not get a chance to travel or network freely, mainly due to stigma. The next ICAAP in 2009 will be held in Bali, Indonesia.

National Training Program-Bangladesh: 6-9 September

Three National Training Programs were scheduled for 2007, viz., Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. The first program was held in Bangladesh from 6-9 September. At the inauguration, NCC Bangladesh Leaders admitted that they were too complacent about the virus in spite of having a large and porous border with India. Dr. Hirak Martin Chowdhury was the initiator of this program and a witness for CCA's Regional Training Workshop held in Chiang Mai in 2006, which encouraged delegates to go back and conduct programs within their own areas. Over 45 delegates –from churches and FBO's– were present in the three day event. Their enthusiasm to prove Christ's love to the least and lost in spite of being a minuscule minority in their predominantly Muslim country was evident. The Action Plans which each of the delegates had to bring to the closing plenary showed their interest to put their knowledge into action. Among the delegates were several who were involved with PLWA's at grass roots level, and they felt that similar programs at district level would benefit and reach a far greater number of people. Considerations by CCA in future trainings in this region were recommended.

Meetings in Bangladesh: 9 September

A meeting was also scheduled with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whom the consultant met earlier at the South Asian Inter Religious Council (SAIRC) in Kathmandu (2004) and again at the ICAAP 8 in August. He is a senior cleric in Bangladesh and director of the Masjid Council (MACCA), who has brought out a '*Khutba*', or book of 12 Friday sermons concerning AIDS to be used once a month throughout the year from the mosques. Discussions were held with FBO collaborating with CCA, AINA and MACCA in Bangladesh and also the other Muslim countries of Asia. The consultant also met with the President of National Council of Churches, Bangladesh, Mr Elgin Saha and the CCA President Ms Manju Baroi. Discussions focused on how the CCA could be more involved in future HIV programs in Bangladesh.

AIDS Policy for Indian churches: 18-19 September

CCA selected two countries to bring out a Country Policy in 2007. Indonesia and India were selected. In continuation with the first joint workshop organized by Christian Medical Association of India and CCA in Kolkata earlier this year, a second meeting was organized by Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI) in New Delhi on 18-19 September in the YMCA, called the 'National Ecumenical Consultation on HIV and AIDS-related Stigma and Policy for Churches'. This had a much larger representation from Indian churches – about 35 participants - and ended with a statement and a draft policy. Fr. Thomas Ninan and Dr Vijay Aruldas from CMAI guided the church leaders

and workers to initiate the formation of a task force within their churches by April 2008 to take forward the policy development process. Unfortunately, the GIPA (Greater Involvement of People living with HIV and/or AIDS) principal was not followed. NCC India's Executive Secretary, Ms Sagarika Chetty agreed to join with CCA and other stakeholders to convene a larger meeting between November 2007 and January 2008 to bring out a National Church Policy.

Conclusion: The Last Quarter of 2007:

Two postponed national meetings are to take place in Nepal and Myanmar once the political situation allows. The CCA 'AIDS Policy' is yet to emerge, as well as the "Country Policies" of India and Indonesia. Indonesia's PGI is planning a meeting for this in October, and NCC India is planning a follow up meeting in December. The AIDS Day (December 2) liturgy will be held this year in conjunction with EAA. The Annual Ecumenical AIDS Educational and Campaign Training Workshop is scheduled to take place in Malaysia in November, in conjunction with the Malaysian Council of Churches.