



**Interfaith Cooperation Forum** Justpeace Newsletter

September, 2016

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## International Day of Peace

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

ICF is planning a campaign to commemorate the Day of Peace with a focus on children. On the theme of “A Piece of Peace” ICF national forums have been asked to hold some activity with children, asking them what peace means to them and what ideas they have for building communities of peace.

The responses will be added to the ICF webpage ([interfaithforum.org](http://interfaithforum.org)). ICF believes that children must have a strong voice in calling for peace as well as building peace. We hope this small campaign will help give a loud voice to children around Asia.

# CCA and APAY Mini SOP in Cambodia

by [Max Ediger](#) on September 01



From August 8 to 22, a group of 11 Asian youth met in the Metta Karuna Center, Siem Reap, Cambodia for a 2-week Mini-SOP. The participants were selected by ICF's two project holders, CCA, and APAY with the aim of promoting more cooperation between local YMCAs and churches and the ICF national forums. The participants came from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Philippines, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia. Resourcing for this Mini-SOP was provided by Hem Sopharak, Bruce Van Voorhis and Max Ediger. Along with participatory sessions on identity, faith, religion, and spirituality, dialogue, and engagement, conflict, violence, and war, and socratic circles, the group also visited the nearby War Museum and attended the Phrae Circus.



Joining the opening ceremony, Nam Boo Won, APAY General Secretary shared words of encouragement with the participants. Duncan Chowdhury, also of APAY attended the closing ceremony.

All participants have now been introduced to the ICF national coordinators in their respective countries and will begin attending national ICF meetings and assisting in local activities.

# Karen Youth SOP

by [Max Ediger](#) on September 01



Hem Sopharak (Small) and Gunawan Primastaya (SOP 2010) are in Thailand working with Saw Mort (SOP 2007) to facilitate a short Mini-SOP with young people from one of the Karen refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border.

The 10 days will focus on drama and community organizing. The aim is to help equip these 20 youth with skills to more effectively analyze the situation facing the refugees and also to share their stories more creatively with the larger society.

# Meditation and Retreat with Brahmavihara Cambodia

by [Paddy Noble](#) on September 01<sup>Á</sup>



I was fortunate to go on retreat for 10 days in Siem Reap from the 6th to the 14th of August, organised by Brahmavihara Cambodia a local organisation that provides Buddhist Chaplaincy services to patients with HIV AIDS in the hospital, homes, and prisons in Phnom Penh.

We spent at least 8 hours per day in silence meditating and learning the Dharma taught by

our Zen Teacher. Throughout this time I found it challenging and difficult, given that as a novice to the whole Buddhist meditation discipline, it took me time to adjust to the rhythm of the retreat itself. Nonetheless, with the help of our teacher Beth and the staff of Brahmavihara, alongside the support and hospitality of Mettha Karuna, I was able to settle and fully participate in the meditation schelde set before us as the days went on.

Out of the 10 parami (10 perfections) I chose 8, resolve, and determination. I chose this because it reflects much of what I have been feeling throughout this whole year, lost, uncertain, delusion, uncertainty in where my life is taking me. I made a commitment to myself to reflect upon why I tend to hold myself back in much of the goals that I want to achieve. One significant part of my meditation was learning to understand where my emotions take me from time to time.

I'm not a professional meditator but I'm beginning to realise how important this is for me. It helps me find focus on the goals that I set out for myself. I haven't been feeling well emotionally suffering depression and anxiety at the same time, so after taking part in a 10 day silent retreat meditating it has helped me reflect a little clearer about my future, focusing on the present and reflecting on the past. I'm beginning to find clarity in much of the delusion that has engulfed me and the emotional trauma I've been suffering from with the help of learning and practicing meditation as a daily mantra.

Peace.

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COMING UP  
ICF Events

**Laos Human Rights Workshop** September 11-17

**ICF Re-Envisioning Meeting** September 26-30 in Hong Kong at the Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs head office in the Kowloon area.

Max will be a resource person for the **APAY Advance Studies Program in Hong Kong** from November 18-21

**Timor Leste National Forum Meeting** and workshop November 25-29

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Announcements  
Exciting news from within the ICF family

**Congratulations to Mahbuva Parvin Moni** (SOP 2013) who was recently married. She also has now completed her study and is waiting the result for her Bachelor Degree.

**Mijanur Rahman** (SOP 2013) will be studying law. He is also involved in advocacy for land rights of rural people.

**Abdurazaq Madale** (SOP 2015) has been named as coordinator of the National Forum, Philippines, and will replace Tirmizy Abdulla whose two-year term is now ending. We thank Tirmizy for his hard work and look forward to the leadership Abdurazaq will bring to the forum.

**In Indonesia, Lioni Beatrik** (SOP 2008) will replace Suwarti Ningsih as coordinator of the Indonesia National Forum. Much thanks to Ningsih for the leadership she has given the forum. Welcome to Lioni as she takes over this task.Á

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