



The Peacebuilders

Christmas Edition

"Keeping the ICF Circle informed; Connecting with Community of Interreligious Peacebuilders"

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The School of Peace 2018 concludes; 17 received certificates

On November 28, 2018, sixteen participants who came to join the School of Peace 2018 in October received their certificates of completion. One participant who joined SoP by the end of October upon the recommendation of YMCA Yogyakarta received his certificate of participation. The symbolic giving of the certificates was done during the solidarity night and closing ceremony of SoP 2018 that was held at the chapel of Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW).

Guests from the faculty UKDW and from

YMCA Yogyakarta came to celebrate with the participants. The Dean of UKDW Faculty of Theology, Dr. Paulus Sugeng Widjaja congratulated all SoP 2018 participants. He expressed his appreciation to ICF for the initiative of nurturing the youth for peace-building in Asia and hopes to see this collaboration to continue in the future.

On behalf of ICF and APAY General Secretary, Nam Boo Won, Dr. Muriel Orevillo Montenegro gave the words of appreciation and gratitude to the faculty of theology of UKDW, and the Indonesia YMCA for actively

hosting, and assisting in organizing the program in spite of the short time given for preparation.



Group photo after the Solidarity and Closing Ceremony

As expression of solidarity, the participants who were stunning in their traditional attires, performed their respective countries' lovely songs and dances.

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Shanti Nepal holds advocacy skills development training

Shanti Nepal held a three-day advocacy skills development activity on November 28-30, 2018 in Dang, Nepal, where its central office is located. There were 23 participants, 7 of them were women; 6 are an all-male School of Peace alumni, namely, Mohammad Ayatulla

Rahaman, Umesh KC, Rabi Chand, Bibek Shahi, Bhagi Ram Chaudhary, and Shreeram Chaudhary. The rest come from local organizations and social activists. This three-day activity is supported by the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), which is a program of Asia and Pacific Alliances of YMCAs



Shreeram Chaudhary

(APAY). Shanti Nepal is the registered name of the national forum of the School of Peace alumni in Nepal. It holds office in Dang, located in province

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Tanyaporn interpreting
"As the Deer Pants for
Water" through Dance

The overarching objective of the ICF programs is to equip young persons with necessary skills and knowledge so that they will be able to create a movement and a network of peacebuilders in Asia.

The School of Peace 2018 concludes . . .

The Closing Ceremony was marked by the lighting of the candle by Dr. Yusak Tridarmanto, who coordinated the hosting and Dr. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, symbol of the light of peace that each one must carry. While the light was passed on, everyone sang the song, "Heal the World" written by Michael Jackson (1991).

This was followed by the symbolic giving of the certificates to the representative of the participants by the National General Secretary of Indonesia YMCA, Retha Andoea and Yogyakarta YMCA President, Dr. Jozef M.N. Hehanussa. In response, the participants offered to the guests flowers. Two participants led the prayers.



NGS Retha and Dr Jozef with Ranny Rith (Cambodia) and Joyson Jaffry Chelvarajah (Sri Lanka)

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Shanti Nepal holds advocacy skills . . .

5 of Nepal. Dang valley is the biggest valley in Asia.

Shreeram Chaudhary, chairperson of Shanti Nepal, initiated the program. He facilitated the sessions along with fellow SoP Alumni 2006, Bibek Shahi. To illustrate some points in structural analysis, Bibek used a bucket simulation game

where a bucket is placed in the front of three rows of participants. 10% of the participants were seated in the front row, 60% were seated in the second row and 30 % were seated in the third row. The bucket symbolized the society's leaders, power, and resources of the

government. Access to the bucket was signified by the candies – as symbol of requests - that are thrown into the bucket by the participants. Those few seated in the first row easily had their candies thrown into the bucket.

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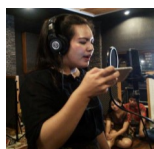
SoP 2018 participants records peace song for youtube

The School of Peace Participants plunged into a recording session on November 25, 2018. They sang "Let there be Peace on Earth", a song composed by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson. Rev. Ariel Aditya Susanto proposed the project to ICF Coordinator, Dr. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro through Rahma Melia

"Rani" Maharani, one of the SoP 2018 participants. As the project will become a blessing to young people in Asia and beyond, ICF and the SoP participants accepted the challenge. Rev. Ariel Aditya Susanto is the pastor of Indonesian Christian Church, where Rahma

Melia "Rani" Maharani and Hosea Mahanaim Riyanto are youth members. Rev. Susanto had a previous project of recording the song "As the Deer Pants for Water" based on Psalm 42:1 sang by the participants of Christian

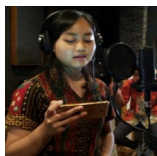
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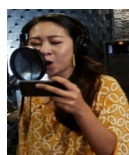
Kwang



Hosea



Rani



Tanya



Kyaw



Thura

The School of Peace 2018 concludes . . .

Mohaimen Kating Arba from the Philippines chanted the opening prayer according to the



Baidido doing the Maguindanaoan Malong Dance with Mohaimen

Muslim tradition, while the closing prayer was done in a Buddhist way by Thena Posysenthong.

With gusto and hope, everybody sang the closing song, "I See a New World Coming," composed by Steve Engle (1974), with a chorus that says:

"I see a new world coming, where everyone is free; And all shall be God's people In justice, love and peace."

This is one of the group's favorite songs. During the closing ceremony, the participants sang the song with the accompaniment of the band – with keyboards, recorder, saxophone, guitars, and drums—comprised of the Local Committee members, who are also musicians led by Ms. Setya Rkj Liebe Jc. Hosea, a participant also played the keyboard.



The Local Committee also composed the band that provided music and accompaniment to the songs during the "graduation" of SoP 2018.

SoP 2018 Participants record peace song . . .

Conference of Asia's Asian Ecumenical Youth Assembly in May 2018 in Manado. He wanted a similar project with the participants of the School of Peace 2018. He collaborates with a group called IGNITE, an outfit that creates a magazine for Indonesia Christian Church, and is now going

digital to "remain relevant to the times." Radinal Surmaatmaja heads IGNITE. The 6-member crew of IGNITE flew from Semarang, Jakarta and Surabaya to meet with the participants in a recording studio to do the recording, bringing with them their cameras and other equipment.

Four of them took care of the video shoots from different angles, while one, in the person of Philip Kevin Christopher, took care of pre-recording of the accompaniment, the actual song recording, and voice editing. One came as an understudy-

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Rev. Ariel Aditya Susanto



The Recording Crew with IGNITE Coordinator

Shanti Nepal holds advocacy skills . . .

The ones seated in the second and third rows had difficulty throwing their candies into the bucket. Some made it; most of them did not make it because of their distance from the bucket. In society, the economic, social and political structures are not accessible to most of the 90% of the people. It is

also observable in Nepali families, where boys are given more access to education and health services. The girls usually are not given access and opportunities because of the idea that they will just become housewives and would live in their husbands' homes. This is gender discrimination.

Shreeram led the session on the art of



Group photo of the participants with the members of the Women's Cooperative

peacebuilding and discussed how to overcome violence and abuse in the schools' classroom. Umesh KC also had a session on some tips in public speaking and the professional personality development.

The Visit to Help Society Nepal

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Shanti Nepal holds advocacy Skills . . .



The local Women's Cooperative members welcome the participants during the community visit

The participants visited a women's cooperative, one modern elementary school, and some of others famous place in Dang, Nepal.

Shanti Nepal collaborates with Help Society Nepal, a local organization that works for issues such as right to food, education with multilingual curriculum development, livelihood,

gender justice and peace. The participants also had conversations with members of the Juntara Society Entrepreneur, a women's cooperative established in 2012 and led by Dila Kumari KC. One member named Dhana Basnet, a married woman, shared that before being involved in the cooperative, she was so shy to go outside of

her home and engage with other people. When she became a cooperative member, she feels free and empowered to engage with the community. Dhana said: "Everyone has skills but the problem is we did not find and recognized ourselves, what [potentials] we have inside us."

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ICF introduces SoP 2018 participants

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum is happy to introduce the participants of the School of Peace 2018. They come from different religious traditions and were endorsed by YMCA, churches and Peace Networks. They are the following:

Bangladesh (YMCA)

- ♦ Mohammad RajahRahman Chowdhury
- ♦ Mohammad Sabbir Talukdar

Cambodia (YMCA)

- ♦ Rith Ranny
- ### Indonesia (church)
- ♦ Rina Yannike Krebru
 - ♦ Hosea Mahanaim Riyanto
 - ♦ Rahman Melia Maharani
 - ♦ Seprianus Pereru (YMCA)

Laos (Mennonite CC)

- ♦ Thena Posysenthong

Myanmar

- ♦ Hein Thura Htet (YMCA)
- ♦ Sai Kyaw Than (by SoP 2007 Alumnus)

Philippines (peace network)

- ♦ Baidido M. Saganding

- ♦ Mohaimen K. Arba
- ### Thailand (YMCA)
- ♦ Sirikanya Chaiwongkaew
 - ♦ Tanyaporn Chusuwan
- ### Sri Lanka (YMCA)
- ♦ Joyson Jaffry Chelvarajah
 - ♦ Malik Lawrence Daniels
- ### Timor Leste (YMCA)
- ♦ Magdalena Joana Rosalina Pinto

Thank you all for your support by sending these young peacebuilders to SoP 2018. 🙏🙏🙏



And we must say goodbye to each other. 'Til we meet again. . .



Shanti Nepal holds advocacy skills . . .

Now, this women's cooperative have 104 members.

The participants also visited the Gyan Jyoti Elementary School where most of the students come from the Dalit community and areas affected by armed conflict. Help Society Nepal also gives technical support to this school. Today, this school has become one of

the modern schools around Dang district.

The three-day program concluded with the visit to the famous place in Shree Pandaveshwor Mahadev Temple in Dang Ghorahi where the tallest Trishul (trident of Lord Shiva) around the Asia is located. The participants

were so grateful for this activity, and requested Shanti Nepal to organize again this kind of program. ❧❧❧

- Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman
Nepal, SoP Alumni 2017
mdayatulla2012@gmail.com

Bibek Shahi



The Trishul
Photo Credit:
<https://www.tourismmail.com>



SoP 2018 participants record peace song . . .

observer. Setya Rkj and husband Roni came to provide the batik outfits. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro prepared the singers through vocalization and making sure the singers hit the right notes. YMCA Indonesia NGS Retha Andoea also gave her support by helping Tanya of Thailand do the makeup both for the women and men.

To make the recording process shorter, the crew decided to divide

the group into two, instead of doing a single recording for each of the 17 participants. Thus, the first group of six participants – Rani, Tanya, Hosea, Kwang, Thura and Kyaw - was tasked to record as individually for the first round of the song. The second group was tasked to sing the second round of the song. They recorded the song separately. The voice and video entailed too many takes, so that

the whole process took six hours. This was because all the participants were neophytes to record production.

ICF is grateful to Rev. Susanto, ICC and IGNITE for giving this opportunity to the participants of SoP 2018. IGNITE hopes to release the record and publish it in IGNITE youtube in January 2019. ❧❧❧

- by Rani and Hosea
SoP 2018



Inside the dark recording studio.



Vocalization. "Rina, give me a C.
Now everybody sing, Ma me mi
mo mu. . ."

From the ICF Coordinator's Desk: A Christmas Reflection

monopoly of Christianity. Some Asian religions also believe in the revelation of the divine in an embodied, this-worldly form, usually human but also in non-human forms. In Hindu tradition, an *avatara* is the incarnation of a deity. The Bhagavad Gita tells us that Krishna is the 9th incarnation of

Vishnu, the "all pervasive one." Krishna became human to teach and enable believers to see the path to liberation. Through incarnation, Christians believe that the nature and will of the Divine becomes "recognizable and intelligible to humans." Philosopher G.W.F. Hegel theorized

that humanity may incarnate the divine Absolute or the Spirit. In this sense, we, human beings can embody the christic nature and make the world a better place to live for every being. Believers need, therefore, to understand that incarnation is the continuous flow of the

relationship between God and human beings, between God and other created beings on this Earth.

Have a meaningful and blessed Christmas season and a peaceful New Year everyone!

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"Keeping the ICF Circle informed; Connecting with Community of Interreligious Peacebuilders"

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum is a program of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. It values the significance of interreligious understanding and unity. Thus, it offers opportunities for study and appreciation of the different perspective of religions on peace, and discern the role of religion in peacebuilding. Yet, considering that unpeace is brought about by many factors, including the onslaught of neoliberal economic globalization, more people experience poverty, internally displaced people are increasing as communities are destroyed, native wisdom and values are overrun by Western and consumerist outlooks, patriarchy and racism persists, and climate change is now felt as the destruction of the Planet Earth seems unabated.

Peace is celebrated as a gift from the Divine, yet, we, the earthlings have the responsibility to make peace a reality. Although its contribution may just be like a drop of water into the lake, ICF seeks to equip young people of different religious traditions, especially from the marginalized communities of Asia and Pacific, to make waves of peacebuilding actions.

From the ICF Coordinator's Desk: A Christmas Reflection

As a young college student, I delved into my feelings of sadness when Christmas comes. After college, I worked people in the slum areas. I saw the suffering of many innocent children in this world. It dawned upon me that the melancholic feeling I have had every Christmas had some connection to Rachel's lament (Matt. 2:18). Herod ordered the killing of the children of Bethlehem. The story echoes the lamentation of the Babylonian exiles (Jeremiah 31:15) who regarded Rachel as symbol of all Israelite mothers. Mothers wept when their children were held in Ramah, from where the exiles were deported to Babylon. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob (Gen. 32:22-30) and mother of Joseph, died when she gave birth to Benjamin, and was buried in Beth-

lehem. I realized that my feeling is somehow connected to the other end of the Christmas story — the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

Incarnation is the Christian doctrine that articulates the belief that God became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. In a paper written for an academic journal, I argued that the doctrine needs rethinking not only because it conveys androcentric concepts that privilege men and marginalize women, but that it has also provided a romanticized justification for the violence of the cross. It discriminates the female body and sexuality by associating it with sin. Consequently, it removes Mary from her femaleness and humanity, and makes maleness ontologically necessary for incarnation. The traditional doctrine of incarnation is exclusivist and privileges the

story of only one people from the Mediterranean basin.

Yet, God is incarnate in many ways. Asian feminist theologians have dismantled the grand narratives of Christianity that fixes God's revelation in Jesus. While Jesus is recognized as the epiphany of God in Christian tradition, he may not be the sole embodiment of God's revelation. Incarnation is not even limited to a human figure.

Women also experience God as Christ embodied in other ecological forms. The idea of incarnation is not a

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ICF Coordinator, Muriel with
Indonesia YMCA NGS Retha