



*Advancement of Youth Leadership*  
**ASIA & THE PACIFIC INTERFAITH YOUTH NETWORK**

**Annual Report**

**April 2019 – September 2020**

**ABOUT THE APIYN**

*Religions for Peace* Asia & the Pacific Interfaith Youth Network (*RfP* APIYN) is the regional network of multi-religious youth leaders affiliated with *RfP* International and *RfP* Asia/ ACRP. *RfP* APIYN brings together the commitment of youth leaders to advance common actions towards peace. The *RfP* APIYN is one of the standing committees of *Religion for Peace* Asia and *Religions for Peace* Global Interfaith Youth Network.

Core Membership of the *RfP* APIYN includes the leadership of APIYN, the International Youth Committee members representing Asia, and all heads of ACRP National Chapters' Youth Committees. Extended membership includes all youth delegates who have participated in the annual Asia Youth Peace Camp. Currently, *RfP* APIYN has members from 17 national chapters of ACRP.

This Annual Report summarizes the key activities of the *RfP* APIYN which includes: Leadership Transition, Participation in the 10<sup>th</sup> World Assembly, the 2019 Asia Interfaith Youth Peace Camp, the APIYN Grant, and strengthening of youth networks.

**ADVANCEMENT OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP**

During the Executive Committee Meeting of the Asian Conference of *Religions for Peace* in Osaka, Japan on April 2019, the EC adopted the proposal for a flagship project on the Advancement of Youth Leadership. The flagship project aims to prepare future leaders of ACRP through capacity-building programs, exchange activities, and multi-religious collaborative projects. The flagship project also establishes support to continue the annual Asia Youth Peace Camp and the APIYN Grant which is a seed funding provided to deserving youth leaders so they can implement action projects to support the mission of ACRP and APIYN.

**Leadership Transition**

In March 2019, the APIYN Leadership considered a mechanism to sustain the Network's leadership due to vacancies in the positions of Moderator due to Dahnil Aznar Simanjuntak's end of term in the Muhammadiyah Youth; Secretary General due to Rachel Lee's absence; and Partnerships Officer Huma Ikramullah's election as Secretary General of *RfP* Pakistan. In Consultation with Rev. Kyoichi Sugino, *RfP* International Deputy Secretary General, and Rev. Masahiro Nemoto, ACRP Secretary General, the APIYN has agreed to enter a Transition Period to be headed by Co-Moderators and a Transition Committee. The decision was presented to the ACRP EC Meeting in 2019.

As part of the transition, Takashi Hashimoto (Japan), Renz Christian Argao (Philippines), Nivy Balachandran (Australia), and Gasun Han (South Korea) assumed the roles of Co-Moderator and the powers of the APIYN Executive Committee is vested in them *ad interim*. The Transition Period shall be from April 2019 up to the election of the new APIYN Executive Committee during the Ninth ACRP General Assembly.

The resolution adopted by the APIYN Co-Moderators also indicated the inclusion of elected IYC representatives from Asia. As such, Meera Lwin Mar Oo (Myanmar) and Yusuke Saito (Japan), were also included as part of the Transition Committee, including Shameer Rishad (India).

### **10<sup>th</sup> World Assembly and the Youth Pre-Assembly**

In August 2019, several youth delegates from the Asia-Pacific Region participated in the *Religions for Peace* 10<sup>th</sup> World Assembly held in Lindau, Germany. Youth leaders from the Asia-Pacific Region played key roles in the Assembly. Among them: Renz Christian Argao served as the Assembly's Master of Ceremony; Nivy Balachandran and Renz Argao served as Moderators of the Youth Pre-Assembly; Meera Lwin Mar Oo and Khin Htet (Myanmar), Jesslyn Metta (Indonesia), and Jacqueline Mallari (Philippines) were selected to participate in a training conducted by the DW Akademie and served as the Youth Media Team during the Assembly; Shameer Rishad presented a poster during the World Assembly's Global gallery on Best Practices.

During the World Assembly, three youth leaders from Asia were also elected members of the International Youth Committee. Renz Argao (Philippines) was elected to head the IYC as Coordinator. Yusuke Saito (Japan) and Meera Lwin Mar Oo (Myanmar) were also elected as members of the IYC.

### **2019 Asia Interfaith Youth Peace Camp**

The *RfP* APIYN held its 2019 Asia Interfaith Youth Peace Camp last 26-30 November 2019 in Manila, Philippines. With the theme **Fostering our shared wellbeing: Empowering Asia-Pacific Youth towards common actions**, the Youth Camp brought together 60 youth leaders from the Asia-Pacific Region. The Youth Camp featured a Plenary Conference where exemplary youth leaders from Asia discussed the important roles that the youth play in our shared wellbeing. Dr. Raymond John Naguit talked about the role of the youth in the sustainable development goals and Mr. Amiel Jay Lopez highlighted the role of the youth in protecting the Earth. Yusuke Saito, Gasun Han, Shameer Rishad, and Rabbi Rachel Rosenbluth also shared their experiences in a conversation entitled the Youth as Advocates of Peace. The delegates also had a Cultural Exchange hosted by the University of Santo Tomas through the Office for Student Affairs.

As part of the goal to train future leaders, several workshops were also conducted. Mr. Christopher Zefting, Program Officer for Partnerships and Education of *RfP* International, facilitated a workshop on Religious Literacy. Raddia Bakkouch, President of CoExister, conducted a workshop on Fostering Interfaith Communities. Takashi Hashimoto and Meera Lwin Mar Oo facilitated a workshop on Developing Interfaith Projects and Programs, while Renz Argao facilitated a workshop on Diversity and Shared Wellbeing.

The delegates also visited the Dumagat Community, an Indigenous community in the Sierra Madre Mountain Range, as part of the field workshop. The delegates learned about Indigenous spirituality and their knowledge on protecting nature.

The Youth Camp was supported by the Seoul Peace Education Center, ACRP, the University of Santo Tomas, and the Uniharmony Partners Manila.

### **APIYN Grant**

Annually, as part of the ACRP's Flagship Project on the Advancement of Youth Leadership, the APIYN Grant is awarded to APIYN youth leaders who submit a proposal for a project. In 2019, the APIYN Grant of USD 1,000 was awarded to the *RfP* India Youth Committee, through the Chair Shameer Rishad. *RfP* India Youth Committee's project was entitled **Our Earth Our Responsibility, An Interfaith Youth Camp on Harmonizing Peace and Climate Change**. They were able to plant 250 trees and conduct various lectures for the youth.

### **Strengthening of Youth Networks**

The APIYN Leadership has also supported the establishment of new youth networks and strengthening of existing ones. In *RfP* India, the Youth Committee was reestablished through the leadership of Shameer Rishad. The Youth Network in the Philippines was also strengthened through the election of a new youth committee leadership which was formalized during the 2019 Youth Camp. The APIYN Leadership has also supported the heads of the youth committees in Cambodia, Myanmar, Iraq, and Sri Lanka.

The APIYN Leadership has also met several times virtually to plan for activities and a virtual youth camp.