



ASIA PACIFIC WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK RELIGIONS FOR PEACE, ASIA

Narrative and Financial Report of the APWoFN Activity, year 2022-2023

CONTEXT

In this 2022-2023 period, APWoFN started all its activities during the pandemic. In reality, this pandemic provided many lessons for APWoFN our women's organization within the Asia-Pacific, ACRP (Asia Conference of Religions for Peace or Religions for Peace (RfP) Asia). On the other hand, we hope this pandemic never happens again.

What lessons did our network learn? On the one hand, we should be grateful for the convenience provided by high tech video conferencing. But at the same time, video conferencing does not fully guarantee that the networks' ideas, goals, and expectations, let alone quality output and outcomes are realized as things do not communicate as well through Zoom screens.

In addition, during the pandemic, many of the leaders in APWoFN were very busy within their own organizations and other institutions, in their respective communities and/or their respective countries. Consequently, there was very limited time for APWoFN meetings even though such meetings are especially important for all our network which is concerned with issues surrounding life, humanity, a shared future, and living in a peaceful reality amidst various challenges and threats.

HOPE and OPTIMISM

Based on the experiences with the entire APWoFN team so far, the core team of three, as leaders, have always been greatly assisted by the Tokyo Secretariat team in extraordinary ways. We also appreciate the guidance and support from the General Secretary, as well as the ACRP Moderator.

All APWoFN network members from all ACRP member countries have provided input, shared ideas, experiences as well as providing critical, positive, and constructive thoughts for APWoFN's journey going forward.

In our first yearly plan we said we would meet regularly yet unfortunately due to the pandemic and our limited time this has not been possible. On the other hand, a positive factor to acknowledge is the atmosphere, open communication style and



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APWoFN willingness to improve with no one dominating the network. Such practical and attitudinal support gives us hope and optimism. We believe that such positive energy can strengthen, advance, and develop APWoFN solidarity and the togetherness of all ACRP members going forward. As an organization where religious leaders, women, men, and youth can join hands, and walk together in a joint movement to bring peace, not only within the body of the ACRP but in the community, society, where the ACRP is located, even in the entire world.

In general, it can be said that the existence of APWoFN, as a network, gives solid proof that gender equality is one of our key principles is upheld by ACRP and that we can all work as a good team.

For about 11 years, APWoFN has advanced to increase women's rights and women's participation in many ways in ACRP. The number of women appears not to have increased in decision-making structures. But the women's network has amplified women's voices and opinions.

One of the important things in our network movement is, we should not refer to just the advancement of women's rights and roles. But the goal is to have men and women as partners in contributing constructively to society as if we focus only on women, we believe this is not the right approach.

Based on the need for women and men working together on challenges and even threats that are happening everywhere in each ACRP member country and around the world via the current ACRP's flagship projects of: 1) prevention of Human Trafficking, 2) education of the dignity of life, 3) conflict transformation and reconciliation, 4) development and environment and 5) advancement of youth leadership. We believe such issues can be faced together.

Our hope and optimism going forward, is that there can be positive changes in the future with women and youth playing a more prominent role and becoming more recognized within ACRP.

ACTIVITIES 2022-2023

Several activities were carried out during 2022-2023

1. Three Seminars were held with these being on Human Trafficking, Climate Change and Conflict Transformation and Peace Building. All three were in the form of discussions, exchanges of ideas in an informative and critical manner. Also, exchange of experiences about what the concerns were and



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what the solutions are, what needs to be done together in relation to the seminar issue. What we know is that in several countries, several chapters have taken real action, such as in Pakistan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Indonesia with regard to Climate Change. Also, The Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia are active with the Human Trafficking issue and South Korea, Thailand and Myanmar are engaged with Peace Building efforts, and so on.

2. The following activity, namely the plan to publish all materials from the three Seminars in e-book form, including reflective notes from each coordinator. Currently, the Climate Change material is ready and the two others are still in the process of being completed then lay-out and publication can be finalized. In 2023 this will be finished.
3. Each Seminar (including an online human trafficking shelter visit) has a short video with this created by the Religions for Peace Philippines media team.

In addition to these three activities, APWoFN leadership have held several meetings including meetings with APWoFN leaders from different chapters to discuss future steps.

FUTURE PLAN

Based on our experience during this first year, there are several plans that are expected to be carried out between 2023 to 2026 with many needing action this year and support by ACRP.

1. The APWoFN team needs to sit together offline to plan programs and strategies for the next three years.
2. We need to strengthen the working mechanisms between the core APWoFN team and the Tokyo Secretariat so that our work can be better, more productive, and creative.
3. We need to prioritize future programs, namely the three issues that have been raised so far: Human Trafficking, Climate Change and Conflict Transformation and Peace Building as well as the issue of Gender Equality comprehensively presented in the APWoFN additional report on 'Advancing Gender Equality'.



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CLOSING

We APWoFN leaders really appreciate the cooperation of all parties and the support from ACRP leaders. We acknowledge we still have a long way to go with many things that still need to be done together. The more we can work together, the more our work will achieve and produce goodness for many.

The Leadership Team,

Rev. A. Elga J. Sarapung (Chair)

Dr. Suphatmet Yunyasit (Co-Chair)

Ms. Naoko Yasmin Kawada (Secretary)