

First Brief Report of 2022
(January – August 2022)

‘Intergenerational and Interreligious Peacebuilding

By

Religions for Peace-Interreligious Council of Thailand
(R/P-IRC Thailand)
www.thairfpirc.com

Secretariat office: Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University

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Secretary-General, Religions for Peace Thailand

First brief report from the previous SG meeting in March

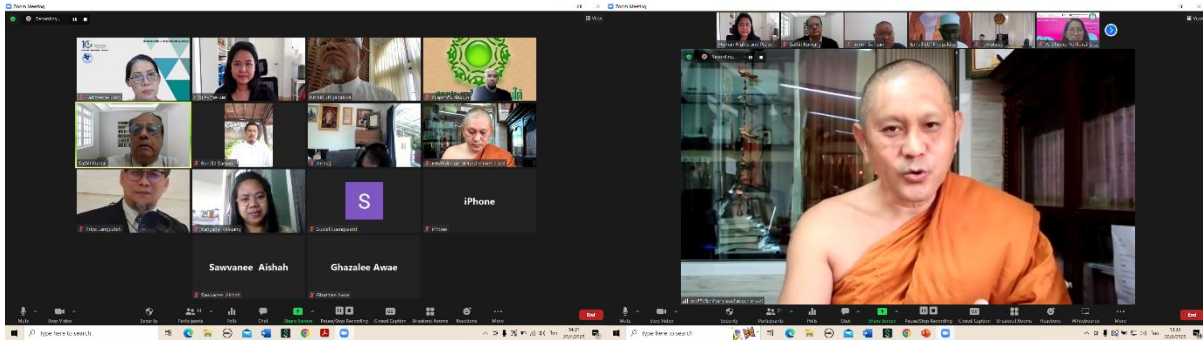
1. Rational and background:

From the 5th National SG Meeting set on March 16th until August 25th, 2022 Religions for Peace Thailand has embarked 3 missions which are 1) enhancing the capacity of Interreligious Council (IRC), 2) increasing *R/P* Thailand’s visibility and partnership exploration with other organizations and 3) implementing ACRP funded flagship project entitled ‘*Promoting Ethnoreligious and Intergenerational Harmony for Peace in the Digital Age*’. Other routine tasks of the secretariat office is to update our website and provide information about our organization to national and international NGOs whenever requested.

2. Activities (from March 16th - August 25th 2022)

2.1 Enhancing the capacity of our Interreligious Council Activities and increasing visibility and partnership with other organizations

No.	Activity	Number of participants	Period	Output or outcome
1.	4 Interreligious council meetings (IRC Meeting)	Around 12-15 council members/time	2-2.30 hours per each meeting Every last Monday of the month from March until July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 minutes of meeting • Finalized list of council’s committee and advisors • ToR of committee and advisor
2.	The production of 5 religions guidebook	Council members reviewed manuscript	At each IRC meeting for 7 times	Manuscript of 5 religions guidebook (sent to publisher already)
3.	Bilateral or multilateral meetings with national and international ngos	Dr. Yunyasit joined those meetings with representatives from those organizations	About 5-7 times from March 16 th until August 25 th	Some initiatives being discussed for future collaboration between <i>R/P</i> Thailand and other organizations



Examples of our IRC meetings: April and June IRC meetings



Example of *RfP* Thailand’s visibility enhancement and partnership exploration with other organizations

2.2 Implementing the flagship project entitled ‘Promoting Ethnoreligious and Intergenerational Harmony for Peace in the Digital Age’

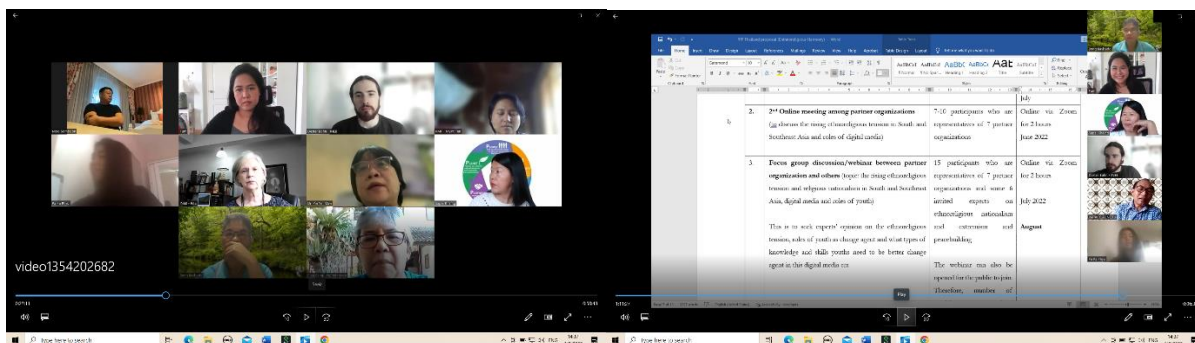
Since March 16th *R/P* Thailand has organized zoom meeting to kick start the flagship project on July 14th and August 4th. The first meeting was for the 7 partners organizations namely 4 *R/P* National Chapters (namely Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, and the Philippines) and 3 reputable peacebuilding NGOs of Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, namely Thailand- International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), Myanmar - Kalayana Mitta Development Foundation (KMF) and Sri Lanka – International Youth Alliance for Peace (IYAP) to get to know one another and discuss the scope of work as well as activity schedule. The 7 organizations participated actively in the meetings in which they brainstormed for the issues/topics to be included in the youth training curriculum (the final product of the project-phase 1). The outcome of the discussion from 2 meetings are as follows:

- **Summary of 1st meeting**

Date and time: July 14th, 10.00 hrs. BKK/Jakarta (9.00 Colombo, 9.30 Yangon, and 11.00 Manila) until 11.38 hrs. BKK/Jakarta (11.00 Colombo, 11.30 Yangon and 13.00 Manila)

Attendees:

Religions for Peace Thailand	Religions for Peace Myanmar	Religions for Peace Indonesia	Religions for Peace	International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)	Kalayana Mitta Development Foundation (KMF)	International Youth Alliance for Peace (IYAP)
Dr. Suphatmet Yunyasit (Sec-Gen)	Dr. Yin Yin Maw (Sec-Gen)	Rev. Elga Sarapung	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pablito Baybado (Sec-Gen)	Somboon Chungprapre (Moo) (Sec-Gen)	Pa Pa Phy	Thirikumar
	Patrick Aung Tu			Rita	Myint Tun	
	Sapai khaing			Dexter Bohn		



Summary of discussion/exchange

- Representatives from 7 organizations introduced themselves and said briefly about their current works and whether they have engaged with youth and have done any youth initiatives before. Each has strong interfaith work/experience that is not only about youth. Most have several other target groups too such as religious leaders (INEB, KMF, RfP Thailand, RfP Phil, RfP Indonesia, RfP Myanmar) and women (RfP Thailand and RfP Myanmar supporting and building capacity for women to participate meaningfully in the peace process). The partner organizations also collaborate for peacebuilding initiatives with national, regional and international bodies for humanitarian works and other issues.
 - Project’s rationale, objective and tentative activities and timeframe were presented by Suphatmet. For the first phase of the project, partnership building (between 4 RfP national chapters and 3 peacebuilding Ngos) and curriculum design are set as the main goals.
- Timeframe is April 2022-March 2023. However, as there is a delay in the project approval and budget transferring, the first activity is organized later than originally planned. But it is still a 1-year project and the deadline is still fixed at 31st March 2023, meaning that there will be an adjustment of activity dates to fit the remaining 9 months.

-Activities will be 6 online meetings, 1 focus group discussion with experts, and 1 face-to-face meeting at the end of this year or before middle of January 2023 at Mahidol University, Thailand.

-Output: 2 reports of activity (mid-term report and final report) and 1 training curriculum module to be used for the next phase of the project (if granted financial support from ACRP or any other funders)

-Budget granted by ACRP/RfP Asia: **10,000 USD**. Each partner will receive an amount of 10,000 THB for their time spent attending meetings, giving input face-to-face and via email exchange and drafting the training curriculum.

- *Scope of task for each partner:*

-RfP Thailand serves as the project's manager overseeing the execution of tasks, book-keeping and report writing (2 narrative reports of activity will be submitted to ACRP/ RfP Asia at the 6th month and 12th month while the financial report will be submitted at the end of the project). It will also report regularly to ACRP/RfP Asia on the progress and update of the project.

-The rest of the partners (RfP Myanmar, RfP Indonesia, RfP Philippines, International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), Kalayana Mitta Development Foundation (KMF) and International Youth Alliance for Peace (IYAP) will participate in activities listed in the project's plan, give input on issues of concern/request via email and whatsapp and be responsible in the drafting of training curriculum. Each organization will design and provide content for a minimum of 2-3 training sessions based on its expertise and experience.

- *Discussion and exchange regarding Activity 3 (Focus Group Discussion/webinar with Experts)*

-Dexter suggested that we invite some representatives from Digital Reach (a Thailand-based group with research on hate speech, violent extremism, and raising ethno-religious tension in South and Southeast Asia) to join the activity.

-Closed group discussion or public webinar? : most, especially the Myanmar partners feel it would be better to organize this activity in private (not open for the public) as there can be some sensitive issues and we can discuss and exchange more candidly.

-Date: Thirikumar suggested 12th of August (International youth day). But since it will most likely not be opened for the public, we can choose any day in late August or September that works for us as well as for the experts.

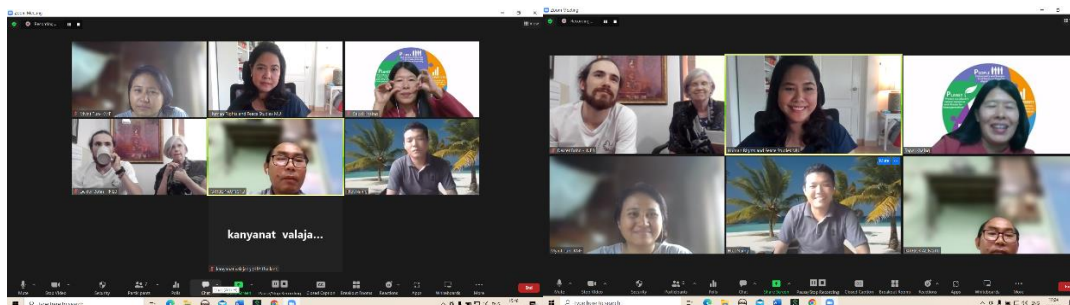
- *Social media group for internal communication:* it is agreed that a *whatsapp* group will be created for the 7 partner organizations to communicate and keep in touch. Dr. Yunyasit will have the group set up.

- **Summary of 2nd meeting**

Date and time: August 4th, 15.30 hrs. until 17.30 hrs. (BKK/Jakarta time)

Attendees: 7

Religions for Peace Thailand	Religions for Peace Myanmar	Religions for Peace Indonesia	Religions for Peace Philippines	International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)	Kalayana Mitta Development Foundation (KMF)	International Youth Alliance for Peace (IYAP)
Dr. Suphatmet Yunyasit (Sec-Gen)	Patrick Aung Tu	-	-	Rita	Myint Tun	-
Kanyanat Valajang (RfP Coordinator)	Sapai khaing			Dexter Bohn	Htet Naing	



Summary of discussion/exchange

Agenda 1: Discuss/exchange on ethno-religious situation in each country and in regions (South and Southeast Asia)

Guiding questions: what is the current state of ethno-religious interaction/coexistence in your country? what are factors contributing to that (whether it is peaceful coexistence, not so good-so bad relationship, or rising tension)?

- All agree that the current state of ethno-religious interaction/coexistence at national and regional levels is quite worrisome. In Myanmar the increase in power of the military after the 2021 coup worsens the already bad ethnic relationship (especially in Rakhine and Karenni states) and there are reports of members of ethnic and religious minority groups receiving bad treatment or being discriminated or violated by the state authorities. The military also monitor closely the use of social media and it becomes increasingly difficult for peacebuilders to work even for humanitarian assistance tasks. Some express that religion has increasingly intermingled in politics (MaBaTha and 969 movements) and

religious actors sometimes create misunderstanding between religious groups or misinformed the members of their own communities. This becomes one of the factors hindering Buddhist-Christian (or other religions) relationship in Myanmar. In Thailand although the situation is not as the ethno-nationalist movement seems to be on the rise.

Agenda 2: Discuss and exchange on roles of digital media in the aforementioned situation

Guiding questions: What does digital media mean in our usage? What kind of roles have those digital media played in your country? any concrete example (s) on how digital media can create social cohesion or tricker tension between ethno-religious groups?

- Digital media here refers to 1) videos & texts that are shared in a small format and 2) the technology that is used for spreading those video and texts in the society. Content appearing in digital media can be both positive and negative. The term digital media also signals the high speed in which the content travels to reach the mass (a great number of recipients) at one time.
- Examples on how digital media can create social cohesion or tricker tension: *Black Lives Matter* and *Me Too* movements, 'Trump's and his supporters' attempt coup, 'Thai youth using social and digital media for political movement before and after the recent Thai Election, Chadchart (Bangkok gubernatorial election 2022), Anti-Coup movements in Myanmar and how a group of artists in Myanmar use digital media to create social cohesion during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Agenda 3: Discuss and exchange on youth and their role(s) in the aforementioned situation

Guiding questions: what do youths need (skills, knowledge and etc) if they wish to play more active role as agents of change/peacebuilders or conflict transformers in your country?

- Skills and knowledge youth peacebuilders in South and Southeast Asia need are as follows: types and usage of digital media, digital media *hygiene*/well-beings, conflict analysis, actor-mapping, leadership skills, facilitation, peace process, critical thinking, inner peace, peace education, peace journalism (related to how to create good content that can promote peaceful coexistence), trends and trajectories of ethno-religious interaction (Buddhist-Muslim one in particular). One of the ways to enhance their peacebuilding skills is to have some role-models (youths who are successful peacebuilders) come to share their stories and experience with our youth trainees.

Agenda 4: Brainstorming for Activity 3 (Focus group discussion between 7 partners and 6 invited experts)

Guiding questions: when will be the best time to organize it? Who should be invited to join as experts? What will be the topics to discuss and method of discussion for those 2 hours?

- All agree that the activity should be organized with in August. This is for us to use the outcome of the exchange with the experts for the curriculum design (outline) which has to, according to the original plan, come out within August or early September.
- The date for this activity will be discussed further and concluded in Whatsapp group asap.
- Session design: Breaking the expert meeting into 2 sessions, each with 3 experts.
- Proposed experts: 1 speaker from Digital Reach, Anwar Koma from Pattani Forum, 4 speakers/experts more from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The finalized list of experts should come out before 15 August.

Budget note for the flagship project: None of the 10,000 USD is spent yet.
