



Project Title/Project Ref. No: Communication is Peace: Building viable communities in Asia
XS01-26

Region/Country: Asia / Regional

Project Holder: Asia Region–WACC
AR-WACC Secretariat
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Period Covered: May 2008

Project Objectives:

Short-term objectives

- To arrive at an understanding of the emerging issues affecting peace in the region;
- To identify the obstacles in developing viable communities for peace;
- To define the role of communicators as agents for peace-building;
- To sound off the World Congress 2008 theme; and
- To carry out echo activities on the theme as a build-up towards World Congress 2008

Long-term objectives

- To develop a framework for the holistic understanding the roots of unpeace in the region, including the social, economic, political and cultural dimensions.
- To develop communication models that would contribute to the vision of building viable communities for peace throughout the region.

Activities which implemented the objectives:

The Asia Region-World Association for Christian Communication (AR-WACC) held its Pre-Assembly Seminar last May 17-18, 2008 at the Pornping Tower Hotel in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The theme for Seminar was "Communication is Peace: Building Viable Communities in Asia."

The Seminar sought to expound on key issues in the realm of economy, polity and social-cultural that brought about situations of unpeace in the region. The AR-WACC held the belief that a lasting solution to the problems necessitated an understanding the framework and context of unpeace and how this affected societies across the region.

The Seminar started with a creative form of worship and welcome from the Christian Communication Institute of Payap University in Chiang Mai. The dance spoke of the second coming of Jesus Christ, where justice and peace will reign. Greetings from the different WACC regions also sounded off messages of solidarity and good wishes for the success of the seminar and assembly, which echoed the theme of the WACC Global Congress.

Dr. Prawate Khid-am, General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), stressed that WACC and CCA carried the mutual mission of 'building communities of peace for all', where Christian communicators carry the great responsibility of challenging negativities in media. According to Dr. Prawate, peace is not just the absence of war; it must be rooted in social and economic justice, and connected with convictions and commitments to the removal of poverty, social inequality and discrimination. Furthermore, Dr. Prawate said that building communities of peace is possible through the pursuit of human dignity, the protection of human rights and resistance to every form of abuse of power.

The Seminar focused on exploring the economic, political and socio-cultural impediments to peace. Central to the presentations was the analysis that before there was conflict, there was poverty; and that before there was war, there was oppression. The discussion on the economic impediments to peace highlighted the disastrous effects of neo-liberal globalization, which is but colonialism in a new and fancy package. The discussion on the political impediments also rooted conflicts in the poverty and inequality in the region, which included oppressive social and political structures. The presentation made a cursory evaluation of the characteristics of the political structures in many Asian societies: feudalism, patriarchy, nepotism, high levels of corruption, oppressive legal systems, increasing state of militarization, among others. Meanwhile, one presentation on the socio-cultural impediment focused on the current alarming state of media in Thailand, where fundamental civil liberties such as the freedom to expression are compromised. The other presentation focused on the initiatives to address stigmatization due to HIV/AIDS.

Aside from trying to arrive at a common understanding of the lack of peace in the region, the Seminar also provided an opportunity to hear of current initiatives from Christian communicators. There is a recognition of the urgent need to focus on peace-building and transformation. There is a need to find ways to build viable communities of peace; i.e. these should be viable politically, economically, and socially. The participants agreed that if access to mainstream media is restricted, then communicators have to create venues to reach out to the people. The participants also agreed in the 3 Cs to fulfilling the prophetic role of Christian communicators; i.e. creativity, compassion and credibility.

May 16 (Friday)		
Full Day	Arrival and Registration of Participants	
7:00 – 8:30 pm	Dinner	
May 17 (Saturday)		
7:30 – 8:30 am	Breakfast	
9:00 – 10:00 am	Opening Worship Greetings	Rev. Randy Naylor General Secretary World Association for Christian Communication Rev. Prawate Khid-arn General Secretary Christian Conference of Asia
10:00 – 10:30 am	Tea Break	
10:30 – 11:30 am	Keynote Address: <i>Communication is Peace: Building Viable Communities in Asia</i> <i>Theology of Peace and Harmony</i>	Rev. Dr. Buakab Ronghanam Executive Director Voice of Peace Rev. I Made Priana, M. Th General Secretary Protestant Church in Bali
11:30 - 12:00 nn	Housekeeping Announcements	
12:00 - 1:30 pm	Lunch Break	
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Session 1: Challenges to Peace-building <i>The Economic Impediments to Achieving Peace in Asia</i>	Mr. Ramon Bultron Managing Director, Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)
2:30 – 3:30 pm	Session 2: Challenges to Peace-building <i>The Political Impediments to Achieving Peace in Asia</i>	Mr. Chan Beng Seng, Executive Director, Documentation Action Groups Asia (DAGA)
3:30 – 4:00 pm	Tea Break	
4:00 - 5:30 pm	Session 3: Challenges to Peace-building <i>The Socio-Cultural Impediments to Achieving Peace in Asia</i>	Ms. Supinya Klangnarong Ms. Debbie Lai St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Center
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Free Time	
7:00 - 8:30 pm	Dinner	
May 18 (Sunday)		
7:30 – 8:30 am	Breakfast	
9:00 – 9:30 am	Devotion	South Asia
9:30- 10:30 am	Session 4: Initiatives for Peace-building	

	<i>Communication Rights</i>	Rev. Cyril Cornelius, CARAVS
	<i>Poverty and Media</i>	Dr. Arul Aram, Indian Online Media Forum
10:30 – 12:30 nn	Session 5: Group Discussion and Report Back	
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch	
1:30 – 6:00 pm	Heritage Tour: Chiang Mai	
7:00 – 8:30 pm	Fellowship Dinner	

People involved in the planning/management/implementation of the project

The Pre-Assembly Seminar was primarily the result of the efforts of the AR-WACC Executive Committee to build on the successes of the 2005 Seoul Pre-Assembly Seminar, and to be in sync with the theme of the WACC Global Congress. The program was conceptualized and designed by the Executive Committee.

The Excom undertook preparations for the said activity. The Excom deliberated on the project proposal, the program design, resource persons, and other details for the project. However, much of the technical and logistical groundwork was very ably facilitated by Rev. Dr. Buakab Ronghanam and the staff of the Voice of Peace.

1. Self-evaluation results:

a) *Gains and benefits to church/organisations/community, resulting from the project*

The Pre-Assembly Seminar paved the way for a number of positive results insofar as consolidating the Regional Association is concerned:

- It was able to facilitate the identification of key issues/priority areas for the Regional Association. This is a significant achievement especially since the members' inputs are very important in setting the direction and focus of the Regional Association. This is also important in the thrust towards the expansion and strengthening of national WACC networks.
- The activity showed the region's ability to reach out and extend its solidarity with other WACC global regions.
- The activity served to unite the membership on the need for the Regional Association to assume a pro-active role in issue advocacy.
- The Chiang Mai Declaration 2008 is a testament to the unities arrived at during the seminar (*see attachment*)

b) Specific problems and set-backs encountered

Preparations for the Seminar were generally smooth. The Secretariat released two circulars through email and by post that contained the invitation to the Pre-assembly Seminar and Triennial Assembly, one in the last quarter of 2007 and the other during the 1st quarter of 2008. Deadlines for registering and confirming participation were also extended since it was noticed that a number of participants would confirm even beyond the deadlines set.

A keynote speaker had to withdraw his participation due to health condition, but he nominated a replacement. Resource persons invited readily accepted the invitation, but most of their written presentations were handed to the Secretariat just before the actual seminar, which made for some minor problems in terms of reproducing copies.

2. Plans for further development of the project

The results of the Group Discussions as well as the Chiang Mai Declaration will serve as a guidepost for future actions and direction of the Regional Association. Already, there are a number of ideas and recommendations for future projects, which is an important input for consideration in the First Excom meeting to be held in the 1st quarter of 2009.

The participants recognize the need of becoming part of the movement for peace. A movement that does not simply nor blindly call for the cessation of the social conflict and wars raging in many countries and affecting many different societies, but one that points to the fundamental issues of injustice and promotes a lasting solution to war and conflict by addressing these issues.

Among the most immediate plans to develop the project further would be to organize explorations on the theme during the WACC Global Congress in October.

List of Participants

	Name	Organization	Email
Bangladesh			
1	Ms. Sabrina Sharmin	RDRS Bangladesh	sabrin
Hong Kong SAR			
2	Mr. Ramon Bultron	Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants	rbultr@...
3	Rev. Judy Chan	Hong Kong Christian Council	judych@...
4	Rev. Matthew Vernon	Religious Broadcasting & Television Advisory Committee	radio@...

	5	Ms. Debbie Lai Tak Yin	St John's HIV Education Center	genera
India				
	6	Dr. I. Arul Aram	Indian Online Media Forum	arulra
	7	Rev. Dr. Ashish Amos	Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge	ella@i
	8	Rev. Dr. JH Anand	Hindi Theological Literature Committee	htlc_jb
	9	Bishop Cyril Cornelius	CARAVS	cyrilsa
	10	Fr. Dominic Emmanuel	Communication/Information Bureau	caravs
	11	Mr. Raja Rakesh Lokku	Student Christian Movement India	frdomi
	12	Mrs. Anitha Mahendiran	Institute for Development Education	scminc
	13	Rev. S.S. Majaw	Presbyterian Church of India	anitha
	14	Dr. Moses Manohar	ICSA Books	pcshil
	15	Mr. Philip Matthew	Asia Pacific Ecumencial News	icsa@
	16	Dr. Samuel Meshack	Gurukul Lutheran Theological College	philma
	17	Mr. Chitaranjan Nag	Community Contextual Communication Center	cccc@
	18	Mr. Michael Paul	The Upper Room	lphko
	19	Mr. Ravindra Paul	Lucknow Publishing House	lphko@
	20	Mr. Kalyan Peterson	Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge	ella@i
	21	Dr. Sunny Prasad	Dhyan Kutir	lphko
	22	Ms. Sushma Ramswami	Church of North India	sushm
	23	Mr. Roche Victor Chinnappan Selvanathan	Resource Instittue for Social Education (RISE)	riseind
	24	Dr.Felix Nesaratnam Sugirtharaj	Association for the Rural Poor	arpmd
Indonesia				
	25	Mr. Yohanes Dwi Koratno	Kanisius Publishing House	office@
	26	Ms. Carla Natan	Urban Community Mission Jakarta (PMK HKBP)	cimw@
	27	Rev. I Made Priana	Protestant Christian Church in Bali	gkpbb
	28	Rev. Agustinus Sarwanto	Kanisius Publishing House	office@
	29	Mrs. Hetty Siregar	Yayasan BPK	hettisr
Korea				
	30	Rev. Cheon Young Cheol	Advanced Institute for the Study of Life	ecume
	31	Rev. Soonim Lee	Olive Tree Production	6491s
				olivetp
Myanmar				
	32	Saw Min Lwin	Myanmar Baptist Convention	
Pakistan				
	33	Mr. John Michael	Development Communication Association	johnmi
	34	Ms. Sanjila Noshi	Development Communication Association	
Philippines				
	35	Ms. Maria Theresa Lauron	IBON Foundation, Inc.	tlauron

Thailand

36	Mr. Chan Beng Seng	Documentation Action Groups Asia
37	Mr. Khuensai Jaiyen	Shan Herald Agency for News
38	Dr. Prawate Khidarn	Christian Conference of Asia
39	Ms. Supinya Klangnarong	Campaign for Media Reform
40	Ms. Naveen Qayyun	Christian Conference of Asia
41	Rev. Dr. Buakab Ronghanam	Voice of Peace

[bengs](#)
[shan@](#)
[prawa](#)
[supiny](#)
[navee](#)
[vop@l](#)

Canada

42	Rev. Randy Naylor	World Association for Christian Communication
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Date of submission of Final Report. July 7, 2008

B. FINANCIAL REPORT

(In USD)

Grant from WACC	23, 451
Advance from AR-WACC	49
Total funds remitted to Voice of Peace	23, 500
Less: Disbursements	
Travel	12, 977
Lodging & Accommodation	4, 258
Food	2, 920
Conference room	322
Local transportation	826
Materials/supplies	697
Local organizing cost	1, 500
Total disbursements	23, 500