



INTERFAITH COOPERATION FORUM

Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, 23 Waterloo Road, 6/F., Kowloon
Hong Kong SAR, China.

Tel: (842) 9772 5126

Fax No: (852) 2385 4692

e-mail: Forumicf@yahoo.com

Website: www.daga.n3.net/icp

School of Peace

Bangalore, India

February 1 – May 15, 2008

Facilitating Organizations

- *Interfaith Cooperation Forum
- *Asian Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
- *Christian Conference of Asia
- *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, Germany
- *Visthar Resource and Learning Centre Bangalore, India

Background

We live in a seriously threatened world. Since the end of World War II new conflicts, local, intranational and international, have killed over 25 million people. According to EarthAction, 90% of those war casualties are civilians and furthermore three out of four of these war fatalities are women and children; the ones least likely to cause or to carry out such devastating conflicts. In fact, in the wars of the last decade, more children were killed than soldiers. Some writers have suggested that, in the history of warfare, the twentieth century stands out as the bloodiest and most brutal – three times more people have been killed in wars in the last ninety years than in all the previous five hundred.

But violence is not just limited to arenas of war. Economic violence, violence against women and children and the violence of a variety of enforced poverties devastate the lives of millions of people all around our troubled globe. About 1.1 billion people lack access to adequate drinking water and 2.4 billion are without adequate sanitation. Every day more than 30,000 children around the world die of preventable diseases. Malnutrition contributes to the death of 11,000 children each day. At least 113 million school-age children are not in school – 97% of them live in developing countries. More than 300,000 young boys and girls currently are serving as child soldiers around the world. Many are less than 10 years old. Many girl soldiers are forced into different forms of sexual slavery. These forms of violence marginalize people and push them toward the brink of despair. Healthy communities and societies can not long survive amidst such cruelty.

A world thus threatened needs alternatives: alternatives that will rekindle the flame of hope, dispel our fears and our distrusts and infuse our lives with a renewed sense of peoplehood and communityhood. Surely our various religious faiths, which cherish so

many common values, are imbued with the spiritual wisdom and strength needed to bring out these alternatives.

Vision

We must evolve a new vision for justpeace, and the vision we hold in our spirits must be this: Militarization and preemptive wars will give way to united efforts to end economic slavery, heal the sick, free the imprisoned and bring all people into harmonious relationships. Resources used to produce weapons of mass destruction will be used to build weapons that destroy poverty, disease, hunger, inequality, and illiteracy. Technology used to develop systems to deliver missiles and “smart bombs” to any part of the world at a moment’s notice, will be changed into systems that can deliver necessary food, medical and other resource assistance. Swords will be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks. Mouths that speak out propaganda and falsehoods meant to divide and conquer will turn into ears that listen and spirits that empathize. And all movements for peace and justice will shift from a Culture of Reaction to a Culture of Transformation.

To work toward this vision of justpeace in our selves, our communities and our world the Interfaith Cooperation Forum will initiate the School for Peace (SP) in 2006. The SP is designed to encourage young people from around Asia to become agents of transformation in the task of building cultures and communities of justpeace.

Objectives

Three objectives will govern the SP program:

- * encourage individual transformation
- * encourage the development of a national strategy for justpeace through local action
- * encourage the development of a regional strategy for justpeace advocacy

Participants

Twenty participants will be selected from areas of violence or potential violence within Asia. Three to four participants from each area will be chosen so they can form a support team after completion of the course.

The requirements include:

- a) 20 to 30 years of age
- b) active in peace and justice issues at the local level
- c) supported by a local organization which can provide support and encouragement during and after the course
- d) English will be the main language of communications during the SP.

Resource Persons

Resource persons will be drawn from various academic and activist communities in India and other parts of Asia. At the same time, all participants will also serve as resource persons, sharing their experiences, case studies, culture, faith traditions and stories.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the SP will focus on action/reflection rather than long theoretical inputs. Case studies, films and field visits will help make the modules more practical so participants can think more creatively about application to their local situations. Three flexible modules will comprise the course.

Module 1: Poverties

Aim: Critique the dominant/standardized economic notions of poverty and offer alternate perspectives resulting from an understanding of human needs.

Subjects include:

- a) Human Needs and Causes of Poverties
- b) Poverties and Globalization
- c) What is Violence in the Context of Poverties
- d) Development, Violence and Disintegration of Life
- e) Development and Role of the State and Civil Society Organizations in Relation to Poverties
- f) People's Responses to Poverties
- g) Religious Perspectives and Responses to Poverties

Module 2: Pluralities – Religion, Faith and the Sense of the Sacred

Aim: Enabling participants to recognize and understand differences; moving from tolerance, to respect, to engagement.

Subjects include:

- a) Identity and the Politics of Identity
- b) National Identity and Global Citizenship
- c) Constructions of the Sacred, Religious and Secular
- d) Communalism, Fascism and Religious Fundamentalism: Their Development and Growth
- e) Fragmentation and Loss of Community
- f) Responses to Stereotyping and Profiling
- g) Affirmation of Plurality and Connectedness of Life: Examination of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Module 3: Toward Transformation

Aim: Enabling participants to envision cultures and communities of Justpeace and initiate strategies for transformation of self and society.

Subjects include:

- a) Understanding of Power
- b) Myths of Peace
- c) The Logic of Deterrence
- d) Review of Modules 1 and 2
- e) Understanding and Theories of Nonviolence
- f) Responses to Present Realities by Civil Society
- g) Grassroots Initiatives and Wisdom for Justpeace

For more information contact:

Max Ediger, Coordinator
Ediger.max@gmail.com