Asia Pacific
YOUTH EXCHANGE
Thailand, 9-22 January 2017
Program Report
Summary of **APYE**

**Asia Pacific Youth Exchange (APYE)** is a regional youth programme, which responds to the global need of actively engaging youth in localised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiatives. By working with multiple stakeholders in local communities and in decision-making processes, selected youth delegates are given a unique opportunity to learn and hone the skills necessary to participate in SDGs-related activities.

Together with more than 56 partners from United Nations Development Agencies, local and international Governments, Universities, Corporates and Organizations, from January 9 to 22, 2017, APYE was held the first time in Thailand under the theme “Empower Youth to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, mobilized and engaged over 300 young leaders, as well as representatives of youth-led civil society organizations and universities from Thailand and more than 21 countries across the world.

APYE featured three main parts to improve the understanding and capacity of young people to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs: (i) Leadership Development Training, (ii) Local Immersion, and (iii) Youth Symposium.

**Program Objectives:**
- Improve young people’s understanding of SDGs and their roles in achieving them
- Increase understanding and cooperation among young people across Asia and the Pacific through cross cultural dialogues, networking and partnerships
- Build the capacity of youth in implementing projects and activities aligned to the SDGs
- Strengthen global and regional partnership for the SDGs and youth development in Asia and the Pacific
- Identify opportunities for inclusion of youth in decision-making and implementation of the SDGs
- Promote youth volunteering as a tool to support achieving the SDGs.
Leadership & Development Training

The Leadership Development Training will provide knowledge on sustainable development and equip the participants with skills on project management, research, and community integration.

This component consists of a 3 days of residential workshops aiming to achieve the following objectives:

a. Improve Self-Awareness of Participants
b. Understanding Context and Role of Youth in achieving SDGs
c. Improve Design Thinking and necessary soft skills
d. Team building & Networking

Components
- Program Orientation
- High Level Forum on Youth, Thailand and Sustainable Development Goals
- Soft & Hard Skills Training Sessions
- Team Building Sessions
- Cultural Exchange Event (Global Village)
Local Immersion

The local immersion to 4 different communities in Thailand gave the participants the opportunity to engage with communities to develop a deeper understanding of existing development challenges on the ground in relation to the SDGs. Delegates are divided into 22 teams in alignment with 16 SDGs to enhance solutions for existing challenges in the local communities, with customized agenda and focus to best utilized their skills trained on teamwork and social entrepreneurship. Each local engagement helped form tangible outputs in the form of research and social projects recommendations.

Through 6 days immersed into local communities, following objectives will be met,
   a. Immersion into local reality
   b. Put theory on practice
   c. Improve cultural understanding

Components:
- Meeting with Local Government and Authority
- Survey and Data gathering
- Home Stay and Cultural Exchange activities with host community
- Soft Skills Training & Team Work Sessions
- Idea Presentation to the Local Communities & Feedback
Community Engagement

Suvitsereeanusorn School, Bangkok:

SDG 4: Quality Education  
SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation  
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities  
SDG 14: Life Below Water

Bangkok is renowned as the Venice of the east due to the essential role played by its waterways in the past. During recent times rapid urbanization of the city has brought heavy pollution to its well spread canal system. Youth as the torch bearers of sustainable development is vital in bringing change to these challenges. This is well received by the youth at Suwitsereeanusorn high school who invest their efforts to bring change to the existing canal system through cleaning and organic farming activities. The community also hosts a zero baht shop which support local livelihoods by recycling. This community can act as a role model for urban suburbs which are grooming in this region.
Rice production has been one of the key economic drivers of Thailand over centuries. However, rice farmers are prone to many challenges during their day to day activities which has resulted in making them one of the poorest segments of the entire society. Late King Bhumibol took significant approaches to address this challenge during his reign. Thus the concept of sufficiency economy came into its life across Thai communities. Mab Aung is one such communities which act as a role model to the whole nation by showcasing how to improvise the sufficiency economy principles at the community level. This approach has enabled them to be economically sustainable while establishing the food security in the community, which can be a great example for many similar communities in Thailand.
Community Engagement

Bangnampeung Village, Samutprakarn:
SDG 3: Good Health & Well-Being
SDG 5: Gender Equality
SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
SDG 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

With its close proximity to Bangkok, Bangnampeung played a key role in fulfilling the agricultural input to the urban habitat. However, crop production in the community suburbs had a deteriorating impact due to the recent floods and increasing impacts of climate change. The community has improvised significant steps in order to address this challenge through the principles of sufficiency economy. They have crafted economic opportunities through capitalizing the ever growing tourism in the nearby capital. At present they offer unique tourism products such as floating market, cycle tours and sightseeing in lush green habitats quenching the thirst of tourists who seek freedom from a concrete jungle.
Community Engagement

Maekampong Village, Chiangmai
SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
SDG 13: Climate Change
SDG 15: Life on Land

Maekampong village is situated around 50 km away from Chiangmai. This refreshing environment faced the disastrous impacts of the wildfire which is common in this region. This impacted the local livelihoods causing youth to leave their ancestral lands searching for higher returns in the city. Chief of this community took this as a challenge and devised unique proposals to rehabilitate the weakened community structure. His blueprint consists of avenues such as coffee farming through reforestation, setting up cooperative systems to improve the financial efficacy and promoting ecotourism to strengthen local livelihoods. These strategies has generated opportunities for youth to remain in the community, thus increasing the resilience of the community.
Youth Symposium

During the Youth Symposium, the participants showcased their social project outputs developed during Local Immersion to the plenary. The symposium also featured mentoring sessions for each SDG team lead by key development partners and specialists in related areas. Future planning and Career Fair were held on after the competition to help guide career orientation of youth delegates to be active achiever of the SDGs. On the last day of the program, participants went on Study Tours to experience one last time the essence of hosting country Thailand.

Through 3 days conference the following objectives will be met,
   a. Validate solutions and seek resources to sustain them
   b. Meet the demands of the future
   c. Planning for next steps

Components:
- Mentoring session
- Final Project Pitching
- Feedback & Award Ceremony
- Career Fair & Future Orientation
- Study Tours & Social Dinner
“The whole APYE journey was amazing. The experiences and the learnings that I got from the program was life changing and I hope to turn that into reality. Not to forget, the incredible new family members from all around the world was the most beautiful gift. Lastly, keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground.” **Juna Rai - Nepal**

“Incredible, life-changing experience. It allowed me to explore and pursue a different path from my learning background. I met an extremely diverse range of like-minded individuals with whom I embarked on a 2 weeks journey to change the world.” **Marc Zaharescu - Romania**

“The most important and memorable part in APYE was the Local Immersion. People, culture and environment in Mae-kompong provide me by energy, inspiration and confidence. In terms of teamwork that is the most interesting and challenging thing for me. Because we all have different opinions, we all from different countries and different cultures nevertheless, we could became one team and we could found solution for problems.” **Nyamdavaa - Mongolia**

“The experience at Mab Euang was amazing. I learnt from the community the selfless spirit of giving, strength of self-reliance and simple happiness of an easy life. The people at Mab Euang and Bhutanese students are incredibly warm and kind. Wish there was more interactions with the students, they are so wonderful.” **Li Yu - Singapore**

“I have to say thank to all for such an meaningful and precious lessons and experiences. I was given the most crucial, spiritual inspiration. It was given an unforgettable memory and experience.” **Anh Tho Nguyen - Vietnam**
“Mab Euang was the place that covered all of happiness. I’m impressed by the way of people in this community. They lived in the community with Sufficient Economy Philosophy. I got many new experiences. For example, how to make coconut oil, how to live sustainably, how to find food by yourself. I felt so amazing because they live without using money. They live by growing and making things by themselves. At this point, this community made me believed that money couldn’t buy everything. Lastly, I hope that I will return to Mab Euang again. It was so unbelievable.” **Mild Jirada Vasuvanitchanchai - Thailand**

“Being here and getting a chance to be with these local people makes me want to prove more that indeed, that youth are heroes of the world. There is nothing more fulfilling than creating an impact, no matter how small it may be, for the betterment of the world.” **Janine Iris Lontac - Philippines**

“After APYE, I had a window full of opportunities. I was certified as an Ambassador for Youth4GG campaign by making numerous youths all over Nepal aware of SDGs. Furthermore, I had an opportunity to compete for Asia Pacific Social Venture Idea Competition (APSVIC), an Asia Pacific level competition where best social enterprise idea would get funded by LINC Foundation and Hanyang University of Seoul, South Korea. Fortunately, my project “Eco-Farmket” (Ecological+ Farm+ Market), a concept which makes use of Ecological Sanitation (ECOSAN) toilet, a double vault Urine Diverting Dry toilet in the promotion of organic farming, got selected from Nepal among the top 5 projects.” **Bisam Gyawali - Nepal**

“I really appreciate to join APYE program. I got teammate which will be in forever friendship. And the knowledge from this program will be always a part of my life” **Boonsuchada Inthapat - Thailand**
ONE OF PROJECT OUTPUTS

SDG 13 Project Output - One of the 3 winning projects of APYE

We are Team SDG13 - Climate change. We went to Mae-Kampong village at Chiang-Mai the north of Thailand and stayed in homestay. We went for a village walk around the forest in the first day and came to know about the different species found in the forest. Also we gained deeper knowledge regarding coffee farming. After understanding the situation on Mae-Kampong, rough plan was created for the following day to be carried out to get the better insight on the problem. We decided to focus on our research on waste management issues to create eco-friendly community as a solution.

As for the second day, survey was carried out in different households on wastes management as well as coffee shops to know more about coffee wastes. Unlike other products, a cup of coffee can bring a great amount of coffee wastes (When a cup of coffee is made, less than 1% of coffee beans end up in the cup). If the waste goes in to the landfill, they will be create methane which is harmful greenhouse gas.

Grounds of coffee wastes are really rich when growing mushroom with coffee. There only few bits of waste by growing mushrooms in the coffee ground. It is actually up cycling coffee. The quality of mushrooms is good and we don’t need to sterilize the grounds. Urban mushroom farming has very low input in terms of water use, electrical use and chemical input. 10 tons of coffee waste can be recycled into 3 tons of mushrooms for local scale. The community also produced around 7 tons of fertile of compost that will be used for local soils.

The project plan to plant a mushroom in a mix of coffee ground wate and oyster mushrooms spawn in a box, mist twice per day and after 10 days, mushrooms are produced and ready to be sold.

Special Thanks To Our:

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And more than 300 youth delegates and participants helped make “Asia Pacific Youth Exchange January 2017 - Thailand” a Success!

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