

YATRA

Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity

Together Towards Justice and Peace: Walking the Talk in a Multi-Religious World

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Busan, South Korea called the churches to embark on “a pilgrimage of justice and peace”. Recognizing the need for such a pilgrimage to have an inter-religious dimension, as well as an inter-generational one (particularly with a focus on young people), the WCC’s programme on Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation initiated a new programme YATRA (Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity) in June 2014. YATRA is envisaged to be a training course which will enable young Christian leaders from Asian churches to contribute towards the building up of just, harmonious and peaceable communities by equipping them for ministries of justice and peace from an inter-religious perspective. The choice of name for this programme – YATRA – (which is a common term for pilgrimage in many Indo-Asian religions and languages) is intended to reflect the idea of pilgrimage.

Objectives: YATRA will bring together young men and women between 20-35 years who are in positions of leadership within their respective churches, ecumenical organisations and national councils as co-pilgrims, to:

- **Analyse** the complex intersections between religion and politics in contemporary Asian contexts.
- **Build up** a peer-network of enablers - who can sustain and strengthen each other (through mutual encouragement, challenge and the sharing of resources) in the ministry of accompanying local churches, ecumenical organisations and national councils in their interfaith engagement for justice and peace.
- **Conceive** creative and constructive models of inter-religious collaboration by offering participants opportunities for orientation and exposure to inter-religious projects.
- **Discover** both the diversity of Asian Christian experiences of living and witnessing in a multi-religious world, as well as the rich resources which different Asian religious traditions offer on questions of justice and peace.
- **Engage** with important theological questions and ecumenical documents relating to mission, inter-religious prayer, the Church, inter-religious solidarity, Christian witness and Christian self-understanding in a multi-religious world.

This Year's YATRA Programme

YATRA 2017:

YATRA 2017 (residential course) will take place from 8-22 July in the Jakarta Theological Seminary, the oldest university-level theological seminary in Indonesia. Pioneered by the well-known Dutch missiologist Dr. Hendrik Kraemer and founded in 1934, the seminary has a strong emphasis on the need of developing a *theologia in loco* (local theology) <http://sttjakarta.ac.id/?q=englishpage>. It also envisions studying theology with people at the grassroots level to enable members of both communities to live out their faith in context. This year's YATRA will be jointly organized by the Jakarta Theological Seminary, Communion of Churches in Indonesia and the World Council of Churches.

The residential course will be preceded by an online preparation programme from 12 June – 7 July.

The Theme:

The theme for YATRA 2017 will be "Passionately Christian and Compassionately Interreligious". 2017 marks 50 years of the historic Kandy Conference of the World Council of Churches. This pioneering conference which took place in Kandy, Sri Lanka, in 1967, proved to be a landmark both as the beginning of serious interest in interfaith dialogue as such in the WCC, and as the first involvement in the ecumenical discussion of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians. One of the important challenges of interfaith dialogue over the last 50 years has been the concern to reconcile one faith as a Christian to the wider call to dialogue. YATRA 2017 will offer an opportunity to reexamine this theme in a creative and critical manner.

The Structure of the Programme:

The structure of training will include theological reflection, workshops, bible studies, academic lectures, study of recent ecumenical and interreligious documents, contextual analysis, exposure visits and the cross-cultural experience of living together and learning from each other. The 2 week residential programme will be preceded by an online preparation programme involving substantial reading and written work and followed by a written assignment to be submitted upon the completion of the residential programme.

Eligibility:

YATRA 2017 is open to up to 30 young Christian leaders aged between 20-35 years. These Christian leaders should belong to the WCC's ecumenical networks and be interested or involved in interreligious dialogue. It is expected that participants have completed at least a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent and are positioned to influence and inspire their churches, ecumenical organisations and national councils to be actively engaged in interreligious work. Balanced representation in terms of region, denomination and gender will be ensured in the selection process. Participants aspiring to

participate in the programme are required to commit themselves to both the online and the residential parts of the programme.

Costs:

The cost of the course is highly subsidized by WCC, which allows us to reduce the tuition fee to 300 US Dollars. This includes tuition, full board and lodging, exposure visits and local transport during the course, as well as medical insurance. The church/organization recommending and endorsing the applicant must pay an endorsement fee of USD 50,-(for accepted participants only). The church/organization is also requested to pledge further financial support towards tuition fees and international travel. All applicants are also requested to pledge a personal contribution (minimum USD 50,-) towards tuition fees, and a contribution to international travel. Local travel in the home country and visa costs are not covered by the organizer. Some scholarships are available to subsidize course fees and international airfare for those in need.

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