



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 | A NOTE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

5-20 | PROJECTS IN DATE ORDER

21-22 | RYS FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2009

A Note from the International Director

Dear Reader,

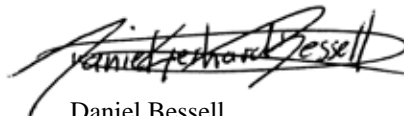
This Annual Report gives you an overview of our projects in 2009.

To get detailed information and find out more about RYS, please visit our website at www.rys.net.

Even though there were many hurdles this year, our project developers and educators have created amazing projects for many new RYS friends. In 2009, RYS revisited the Philippines and Jamaica and continued annual projects in Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India. Our methodology and social service-learning experience has a lifelong impact on our participants, as we can see from our online alumni forum that has grown dramatically in the past year. Many alumni of past projects have been able to connect to new RYS participants through the worldwide Web. This has given a new dimension to RYS.

Special thanks go out to our staff for their dedication and efforts and to our advisory council for their wise counsel and encouragement.

Sincerely,



Daniel Bessell
Director, RYS International

A Desire to Be Loved

APRIL 26 | CHENNAI, INDIA

On April 26, 2009, Global Youth Service Day, RYS alumni volunteered at “Udhavum Ullangal,” a free home in Chennai, taking care of more than 100 orphan children.

RYS volunteers spent quality time with the children, playing, reading and interacting with them. Most of the children had lost their parents or were from impoverished families.

The volunteers split their time between different duties at the orphanage, providing meaningful recreational activities for the children. They shared fruits and ice cream, and sponsored a full day of meals for the children.

Such things are so easily taken for granted but, to these children, it was like a festival. When we were about to leave, our young friends clung to us, their tiny arms wrapped around our legs and their little hands pulled at the bottom of our shirts. They begged us not to go, not to leave them. Their smiles became a reminder to us that what we had given of ourselves meant the world to them.

They asked us when we would return, hoping to continue the fun and love we shared during the time we spent together. Their eyes communicated their desire to be loved, to have just a few more minutes of our time, to receive one more hug or simply to hear a promise that we would return.

For us, it may have been just one day out of our busy week but, for them, it was a moment of great hope. They felt valued and deeply cherished with each hug and in realizing that someone in this world wanted to be with them and loved them.

Through this wonderful experience, the RYS alumni felt a profound joy radiating from these amazing children, witnessing their happiness despite their extremely difficult living conditions.



Even the Small Things

MAY 1 | PORTLAND, JAMAICA

In Portland, Jamaica on May 1, 2009, RYS youth joined Father Francis in refurbishing his church, the St. Agnes Catholic Church. Young people from the local community washed the exterior of the church in preparation for painting. Inside, work continued with scraping old wall covering, filling holes and rolling and brushing on a new coat of paint. The work materials were donated by the Archdiocese of Kingston and the members of St. Agnes Catholic Church.

Building Bridges of True Love for Peace & Unity

MAY 23-26 | COMPOSTELA VALLEY, PHILIPPINES

The Religious Youth Service held its project in the Philippines primarily in Nabunturan, the capital town of Compostela Valley Province. Muslim-Christian dialogue, visits to mosque and church, leadership and peacemaking skills training, daily reflections, a cultural program and community outreach at Maahad Nabunturan Al-Islamie highlighted the four-day project.

Participants invested their hearts in service together to renovate an old, dilapidated Muslim preschool through repairing the roof, painting the exterior and interior of classrooms, and beautifying the stage. They also did a bit of gardening around the preschool. Locals residents in Nabunturan within a five-kilometer radius of the site benefit through this school.

As always, participants created strong bonds of friendship. One expression of that

dynamic was shared by participant Sanimar “San,” as follows:

“If I’m not mistaken, it’s more than 24 hours since we said goodbye to each other and everyone departed from Nabunturan. But until now, I’m still HIGH on RYS! RYS really ‘left a mark on me’: a mark of hope, peace, friendship, fun, learning, and growth. Even considering how short a time it was, I must say that it was really a life-changing activity.

To all participants: Thanks for everything. We may differ in many things (religion, culture, personality and experiences), but still it will not hinder us from becoming united and helping each other to achieve one single goal—world peace! Thanks a lot!”

This RYS project was co-organized by Muhammad Riza Dalkilic of the Risale-I Nur Institute Philippines and Raul Caballero of the Municipal Council of Nabunturan. Facilitators of the program were Dr. Sherwin E. Agravio, M.D., an RYS alumnus from the Youth Federation for World Peace and Ms. Fazida A. Razak, RYS Project Director and Educator. Massimo Trombin, Executive Adviser of RYS International and Service for Peace, and Charles Philipps, Ph.D., President of Service for Peace, also visited the project during the third day.

Muslims as well as Christian youth leaders from various churches—Roman Catholic, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecostal Church—all participated. Participating groups included: Ateneo Law Student-Advocates for Bangsamoro Rights (AL-SABAR), Ateneo de Davao Legal Advocacy Works (AddLAW), Sigma Legis Fraternity and Sorority, Ateneo Samahan Central Board—Campus Clubs Organization (SAMAHAN-CCO), University of Mindanao (UM) Student Government, Ateneo Moro Youth Organization (AMYO), Mindanao Inter-Muslim Youth Organization (MIMYO), Inter-School Muslim Organization (ISMO), Learn Kagan Muslim Foundation, Nabunturan Christian Fellowship Youth, Central Baptist Youth, United Youth of the Philippines, and Risale-I Nur Institute.

Patchwork

JULY 3-5 | NETHERLANDS

RYS Netherlands 2009 participants both made a patchwork as well as became a patchwork. Project volunteers partnered with Thuis Op Straat (TOS), a local organization which offers after-school programs for children. Participants set up a tent and some tables in a playground where they assisted the children in decorating pieces of cloth. The children were very imaginative and enjoyed painting, turning each small square of cloth into an original creation. For two days, the participants then helped piece together the squares into a larger cloth, adding as well their own creative sections. All the smaller patches were then sewn together into a beautiful tablecloth, which was given as a gift to the Stichting Marme, where it would be used in regularly feeding the homeless.

In addition to working with the children on the playground, RYS members also had an opportunity to hear a lecturer speak on the Hindu faith, who then took us through a guided meditation. On Saturday, we visited an Islamic mosque which was built in the Turkish style, and opened in 2001. We toured the facilities and used this opportunity first, to offer prayers together, and then to ask questions about the Islamic faith while sharing Turkish tea. Later that day, we had dinner in a Turkish restaurant in downtown Rotterdam.

On Sunday, the group viewed the RYS video and listened to a summary of RYS history, which was given by Georgia, RYS international representative. In the afternoon, participants visited the Sikh Gudwara, where a representative explained the tenets of the Sikh religion and also led a meditation session. This was followed by their Sunday Ceremony, snack, and lunch. Finally, the group traveled to the shopping area to purchase food for our intercultural closing banquet meal.

After a short period of reflection, our group was entertained by a famous multicultural choir. The choir offered songs from Holland, Germany, Russia, Suriname, Portugal, and Indonesia. The project closed with a international meal prepared by all of us together. This concluding meal was French, Dutch, Japanese, American, Marshall Islander, Surinamese, Jamaican and Italian, and it was the best meal of our project!

Creating World Peace for the Next Generations

JULY 11-18 | BALI, INDONESIA

Under the theme of "Creating World Peace for the Next Generations," RYS Indonesia held an annual, international project in Bali, in conjunction with Youth in Action for the Next Generations as part of a worldwide joint project with eight other Asian, African, and European countries.

This project focused on activities within the SOS Desa Taruna, a nongovernmental, social development organization for orphaned children. Given the organization's social commitment, emphasis is always placed on family-based, long-term care for orphaned and abandoned children, and integrated, community-based relief programs for families in need.

Altogether, 35 participants joined in this project. A Hindu-Muslim-Christian dialogue in the RYS style, a visitation to a Hindu temple, leadership and peacemaking skills training, daily reflections, a cultural program, and community outreach were the core activities implemented at both the SOS children's village at Tabanan and the SOS boys' dormitory at Denpasar.

Highlights of the eight-day project, held July 11-18, included a welcome by the SOS

leader and performances by the children. The Orientation Program began with enthusiastic introductions, ice breakers, sharing of fears and expectations regarding the project, united visioning, and team-building to bond participants in the project. One participant referred to the orientation as a “Wow opening.” As the orientation ended, the service project was introduced. The central service component of this RYS project was the renovation of two fishponds, expected to provide a food source for SOS. The initial work on the fishponds was to transfer the sand and bricks nearer to the work area, then close the holes in the fishpond with bricks, and then begin the process for a new dam foundation. All the participants formed a human chain to carry tons of sand and bricks to their designated work places.

An introduction was offered to Pistes Solidaires, the main coordinating group for the worldwide project “Sustainable Youth Development for the Next Generations,” followed by a stimulating interactive “Dream Workshop.”

In the days that followed, the service work consisted of clearing the fishponds of cans and plastic trash, digging the soil near the dam area, and preparing and pouring the cement into the ditches to build the dam for the fishponds. It took only two days for the united participants to achieve the first project goal—renovation of the fishponds. It was very satisfying to see the final results of our hours of hard work and cooperation!

Participants also invested their hearts and souls into renovating the garden around the SOS boys’ dorm, where they planned to plant vegetables as a source contributing to the SOS boys’ healthy diet. Additionally, the SOS boys attended a series of educational programs taught by the RYS trainer from Malaysia, Shanta Venno Gopal.

Simultaneous with the RYS project in SOS Bali, some quality time was allocated for the Pistes Solidaires project to do research via interviews with the orphan youths, in order to evaluate how their outlook had been transformed as a result of the changes they

had gone through in this orphanage, including basic education and life skills learning.

The RYS work project finished with a Cultural Night, which included great performances by every group in contributing their unique songs and dances.

Though the youth participants hailed from different cultures, they concluded the project in sharing common experiences and common emotions of appreciation for one another, gratitude for their own lives, compassion for the SOS students, and a strong hope to bring a better future.

During the reflection time, the group also shared in the scenic beauty of Bali, and had opportunities to visit different religious sites and to experience different faith traditions—culturally eye-opening experiences for all. This activity included a visit to Tanah Lot, a Hindu Temple perched precariously on a rock by the sea, where everyone took part in a Balinese-Hindu ritual. Later, the group offered prayers in a big mosque in Tabanan town. These were new and amazing experiences for everyone that will not easily be forgotten.

At the closing ceremony, the SOS leader R.B. Haryono offered a beautiful and colorful, framed painting of a Balinese garden, created by a SOS third-grade elementary student, as a thank-you gift from SOS to RYS Indonesia.



Rustic, Spacious and Quiet

AUGUST 7-19 | TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

This was a project targeted to work with the not-for-profit Wildlife Orphanage and Rehabilitation Center in Petit Valley. The Center was in urgent need of maintenance and repair of its grounds and animal cages.

While in Trinidad, participants also worked with the St. Vincent de Paul Society's Home for the Aged where volunteers helped feed and care for the elderly residents.

Our main theme for the project was "One Can Change the World." The project received interested youth participants from the United States, St. Lucia, and Guyana, as well as from various parts of Trinidad and Tobago.

Prunella Mungroo from Trinidad, our main Educator/Trainer, inspired participants with her lecturettes. Guest educators included Project Director Georgia Pearson and Project Coordinator Maurice Burke.

The youth volunteers did an excellent job at the Wildlife Center, clearing the grounds and performing general repairs on the Center. The founder of the Wildlife Center was elated with the service that the participants volunteered and looked forward to future projects.

RYS Trinidad included visits to religious sites such as Mt. St. Benedict Roman Catholic Cathedral and the Spiritual Baptist Church, and other places of cultural interest and significance, including the Port of Spain Waterfront, Fort George, Las Cuevas beach, and the Emperor Valley Zoo.

Quiet reflection took place at Guayaguayare, a village in South East Trinidad. During morning reflection, the participants walked along the beach and the reflection period ended with a sunrise journaling session. What made this trip special is that the participants had the opportunity to enjoy the rustic, spacious, and quiet settings of Trinidad.

"Light of Hope in the Dark"

AUGUST 9-15 | SRI LANKA

Minority communities in Sri Lanka have often felt that they have been left in the dark, but our RYS project sparked new hope and dreams in their lives, as well as in ours!

The project location, Badulla, is situated in the hill country of Sri Lanka, about 275 kilometers from the capital city Colombo. According to Buddhist folk stories, Lord Buddha visited this city.

The Blackwood Village in Beragala, Badulla did not have pipe-borne water. Religious Youth Service volunteers helped renovate the existing mini-reservoir which had been abandoned in recent times, thus restoring the pipe-borne waterway. RYS also supported the road repair, including the reconstruction of a bridge, which was badly damaged, on the roadway that led to the Hindu Kovil, which was also in a very dilapidated state.

The service component of this project, themed "Light of Hope in the Dark," directly benefitted the villages of Haldamulla in Badulla district, but the education component and cooperative work experience benefitted the participants, helping them to change their attitudes positively toward fomenting intercultural and interreligious harmony and to embrace a wider concept of world peace.

The Annual Gorkha Project

AUGUST 9-15 | NEPAL

The RYS 2009 Gorkha Project was held in the Democratic Republic of Nepal last month during the visit to Nepal by Shri Maharaja of



India who paid a courtesy call to the President together with Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, the CA member, and Mr. Piya Ratna Maharjan, RYS Nepal Project Director. The President was very happy to hear that such RYS interfaith projects will continue to take place in Nepal annually.

This year, participants came from Bahai, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, Unificationist, Hindu, and Islamic traditions. The opening ceremony with beautiful dancing and cultural performances was aired on local FM and Avenue TV channels. Following the opening ceremony, everybody went to the project site to lay the foundation for the community hall construction. Foundation stones were set in place, with the prayers and invocations offered by Buddhist and Hindu leaders.

Dr. Robert Kittel conducted the education programs on the “Universal Principle of Peace.” Presentations were also made on Human Rights and on Youth and Conflict Resolution. Each morning, the participants had devotional and cultural learning sessions. Meditation and prayers were taught by inter-religious representatives. These were followed by the working session in the misty, breezy weather of Nepal.

The participants worked in different areas carrying bricks, cement, sand, and gravel, plastering the roof and building, while others worked on the waterway, did garden cleaning and planted some beautiful flowers. The school children and some of the residents of the local community came to help at the work site. With support from RYS, the Gorkha community now has many treasured experiences of working together and will benefit from the project for years to come.

The project also included religious site visitations, visits to cheer hospital patients, and a friendly soccer match with the (under 14) Nepal Football Association.

A seminar was organized by RYS Nepal at the Gorkha Bisauni Hotel, and many Ambassadors for Peace of Gorkha, VIPs, religious leaders, the chief attorney and RYS participants attended. The purpose of this



seminar was to promote interfaith harmony among those living in the local community. Many people expressed their gratitude and thanks to RYS for having such a wonderful project and seminar in Gorkha.

Taking Responsibility and Developing Compassion

AUGUST 26 - SEPTEMBER 1 | POOBONG, DARJEELING, INDIA

Twenty-nine participants, representing various faiths and cultures, hailing from Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and others parts of India—including Assam, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Kerala, and West Bengal—attended this year’s RYS India. RYS India 2009 took place at Poobong, Darjeeling from August 25 to September 1, 2009.

This year’s endeavor was to construct a 1,100 sq. ft. community center for the needy peoples of three villages, thereby providing a much-needed meeting place. Ongoing efforts are being made in the development of a global peace village, and to encourage villagers to become effective decision-makers in the development of their own communities. The community center will also disseminate important information concerning health and education.

Because of the difficult economic times, the diverse communities will share the Center as a place where many of their ritual, cultural, and traditional events can take place. The “RYS Peace Center” will be a multi-purpose center where everyone can nurture self-respect, living in freedom, cooperation, and prosperity. It will serve as a foundation for peace by encouraging the local people to come together to support the community. The shared meeting space will promote religious tolerance and cooperation by helping them to learn about each other’s traditions, religions,

and cultures.

The RYS project was an amalgam of various activities, including education, construction work, meditation, trekking, yoga, and sightseeing. RYS educators and trainers inspired all the participants with motivating lectures, service activities, educational workshops, and morning meditations.

At the conclusion of the project, the participants reluctantly departed from one another. The youth shared in the common language of the heart. The participants unanimously felt grateful to meet on a common platform and work together, experiencing the joy of knowing they are part of one human family. Key sponsors included UPF International, UPF Darjeeling, Sai Baba Trust, The Government Primary School, Alu Baari, The Panchayath Office—Ghoom, and The Football Club, Alu Baari.

“You Got Schooled”

SEPTEMBER 6 | NEWARK, NJ, USA

On Sunday, September 6, 2009, United Initiatives for Peace, in partnership with the City of Newark Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs, hosted the 2nd Annual “You Got Schooled” (YGS) tournament at Central High School in Newark, New Jersey.

For two consecutive years, Religious Youth Service has been a part of the “You Got Schooled” tournament by conducting a Peace Mosaic project on-site. The Mosaic is created by all YGS players, coaches, and fans. Together everyone is encouraged to put their “peace” in. The mosaic represents a vision of peace and community unity.

The event offers an alternative means to earn college scholarship funds and promotes the importance of higher education and community activism for inner-city girls. This year, \$7,000 was awarded to 17 girls from the Greater Newark Area, bringing our two-

year total to \$20,000 of awarded scholarship funds.

RYS Alumni on the Move

SEPTEMBER 18-20 | SARACCA, SURINAME

Alumni partnered with “De Surinaamse Jeugd Instituut”/Youth Parliament to set up a cattle farm at the Maria Internaat, in Saramacca, Suriname.

The Maria Internaat is a girls’ home run by Catholic nuns in Suriname. On September 18-20, 2009, RYS alumni collaborated with the Suriname Youth Parliament to assist the nuns in setting up a cattle farm. The land for the farm was still in its original, rustic state. The participants prepared tools for the job, including chain saws, machetes, water boots, and insect repellent. There was a participant assigned to the job of “animal predator outlook.”

As the work began, the volunteers were totally unable to see the sky through the trees; however, after a few hours of tree-cutting, the clear blue sky finally revealed itself and the big sun came shining through. The participants worked tirelessly to clear two acres of jungle as the foundation for the cattle farm. After two full days of work, the jungle undergrowth had been completely cleared away and the land was ready to accommodate the farm and cows.

The participants took an afternoon off and enjoyed the evening in Groeningen by the Surinamese River.

The farmland was then handed over by RYS Alumnus/Youth Parliamentarian Raynell Fraser.

RYS Financial Overview 2009

To complete our RYS 2009 fiscal overview, the pie charts at the bottom of this two-page spread provides an example of expense and financial patterns of an average RYS project. Detailed project records and reports are available on our website at:

www.rys.net

Income Overview

UPF/GPFF Grant	\$31,219.79
In-kind Contributions	\$45,405.59
Indirect Donations	\$8,761.64
Direct Donation	\$3,900.00
Total	\$89,287.02

Income Details

Approx. In-kind Contributions

Philippines	\$5,050.00
India	\$8,500.00
Indonesia	\$298.59
Trinidad and Tobago	\$8,650.00
Nepal	\$5,100.00
Sri Lanka	\$6,755.00
Netherlands	\$7,052.00
Conferences (x4)	\$4,000.00
Total	\$45,405.59

Indirect Monetary Contributions

Philippines	\$1,236.55
India	\$515.00
Indonesia	\$599.98
Trinidad and Tobago	\$1,437.66
Nepal	\$38.89
Sri Lanka	\$815.25
Netherlands	\$4,118.31
Total	\$8,761.64

Direct Contributions

Combined Total	\$3,900.00
-----------------------	-------------------

Expense Overview

Project Expenses & Grants	\$29,609.79
Projects In-kind	\$45,405.59
Indirect Expenses	\$8,761.64
Administration	\$5,510.00
Total	\$89,287.02

Expense Details

Grants & Expenses by Nation

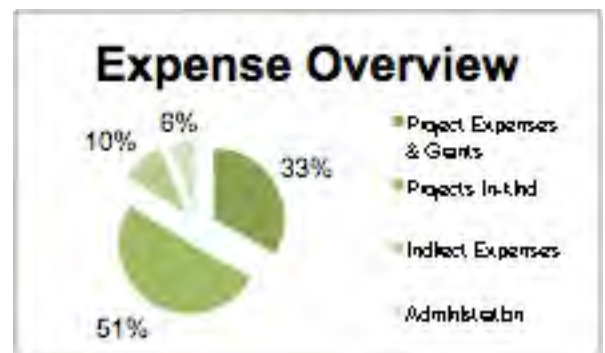
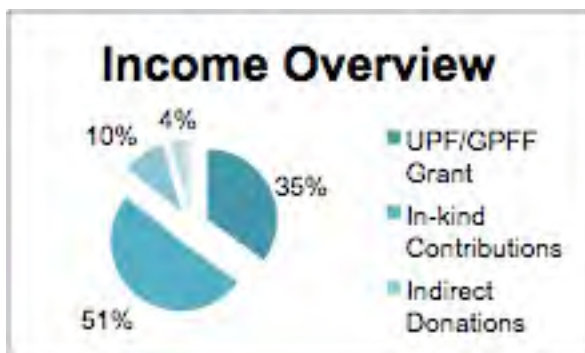
Philippines	\$3,650.00
India	\$4,400.00
Indonesia	\$5,000.00
Trinidad and Tobago	\$4,000.00
Nepal	\$5,500.00
Sri Lanka	\$4,400.00
Netherlands	\$1,864.00
Meetings	\$43.70
Seminars	\$732.09
Internet-related	\$20.00
Total	\$29,609.79

Indirect Monetary Expenses	\$8,761.64
Approximate In-kind Value	\$45,405.59

Est. Participant Travel & Expenses (not recorded)	\$12,000.00
--	-------------

Direct Contributions Spent

Combined Total	\$3,900.00
-----------------------	-------------------





Find out more @ www.rys.net
info@religiousservice.org
International: +1 212-239-1421
United States: 1-800-880-2987