

The Third International Youth Assembly held in Rizal Province, the Philippines

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The third International Youth Assembly (IYA) was held last November 27–29, in Rizal Province in the Philippines, with the theme, “Principled Youth: Lead, Act and Multiply!” The three-day assembly, co-organized by the Youth Federation for World Peace, W-CARP and UPF, brought together foreign and local students and youth delegates from eight nations in our Asia region and from Korea, Japan, the US and the Philippines. This is the third time we have conducted IYA, which we based on guidance from Dr. Chung Sik Yong, regional chairman of UPF Asia. Its focus is raising young leaders.

Five hundred and twenty people -- delegates and young volunteer staff members -- were at the three-day assembly. The main event on November 29 attracted about two thousand six hundred young people.

International Peace Leadership College (IPLC) hosted the IYA this year. This was the first time since its inception that we have conducted IYA on a campus, but our plan is to institutionalize IYA by associating it with universities and colleges. This IYA had various programs and activities that helped the delegates remain upbeat and motivated, including the International Youth Forum, Friendship Night, the drafting of IYA resolutions, sports competitions, induction and awards ceremonies, mountain trekking, tree planting and the main assembly.

The mayor of Tanay, Rafael Tanjuatco, gave the welcome address during the opening program in the IPLC gymnasium. The government of Tanay -- including the provincial government of Rizal Province and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, 2nd Infantry Division -- was a major partner of the event. Dr. Venus Agustin, president of IPLC, delivered an opening message. As the chairman of the Philippines chapters of WCARP and of YFWP as well as the president of FFWPU in the Philippines, I delivered the keynote address.

During the first activity, the International Youth Forum, resourceful speakers presented several topics. UPF’s Prof. Celestino Jose Navalta, Jr., gave a presentation on the Principles of Peace. Mr. Kenny Chia from Singapore presented “Effects of Twenty-First Century Technology on Youth.” Mrs. Constance Gabb (IPLC) presented a lecture entitled “Straight Talk.” Ms. Baibon Sangid, from the National Youth Commission, gave an exciting presentation about “What Makes a Modern Hero?” A young student leader from Mindanao, Mr. Datu Pax Ali Mangudadatu, spoke about “Leadership, Politics and Social Change: Youth and National Development” and Mr. Inhyuk Chang from Korea, a Cheon Il Guk Special Youth Envoy to the Philippines, spoke on the topic, “Global Networks: Increasing Effectiveness through Exchange Programs.” During a Friendship Night, aside from the cultural performances and entertainment, the delegates also had a chance to present their talent in teams and to develop bonds of friendship. The young participants from forty-eight universities, colleges and civic organizations seem to fill with excitement as the various activities unfolded.

The second day

On November 28, Dr. Felicitas Sicam from IPLC and the PWPA conducted a workshop about writing resolutions and proposals. The outcome was deeply encouraging. The students, divided into seven teams, engaged in exciting interaction, emerging with a seven-point resolution, which we plan to submit to the Philippine Congress and the National Youth Commission.

We provided more opportunities for all the delegates to develop camaraderie through several team-building games and sports, which we dubbed the “IYAlympics.” The second day concluded with an induction ceremony into various CARP chapters and the awards ceremony for the competitions. General Roberto Santiago, a retired army general and the president of the Asian Peace and Unity Corps (APUC), delivered a congratulatory message. Many of the delegates were in high spirits and many of them firmly determined to succeed in CARP on their own universities. Others, who still do not have a CARP chapter on their campus, plan to organize one.



The final day

A flurry of activities brought the assembly to its conclusion. From early in the morning, all the delegates, plus hundreds of additional volunteers from universities and colleges, participated in planting trees. In spite of rain showers, the delegates met at a community school in Tanay. The provincial vice-governor, Frisco San Juan, Jr., delivered a message to inspire the volunteers. A provincial board member and the man in charge of the Tanay Environmental Protection team were also present. The volunteers planted around 1,500 tree seedlings that day. Though they had to travel for about an hour, there and back, over slippery, muddy mountain paths, the young people appeared happy to have contributed to the preservation of Mother Earth and to help mitigate the ill effects of climate change and global warming.

We ended the assembly in the IPLC gymnasium. The dynamic spirit of the young people was evident as they continuously cheered as the program unfolded. The celebration started with entertainment and performances from a hip-hop dance group, Tanay Hyperbeat, followed by an action-packed martial arts performance by IPLC students. Students from Sun Hwa International Academy performed a dance. The assembly participants appeared thoughtful and engaged through a lecture on Pure Love by Mr. Richell Jalipa, at the end of which everyone recited the Pure Love Pledge. The main event then started with praising the Lord and the singing of Lupang Hinirang, the Philippine national anthem, led by the University of Rizal System choir.

Rizal board member, Armando Villamayor, made some welcoming remarks. I read Dr. Yong's message, in which he emphatically called on youth to become owners in solving the problems of modern society, to take positive action and to become part of the solution instead of exacerbating the problems. A famous TV host and youth leader from the government TV channel, PTV 4, Mr. Jules Guiang, delivered a special message. Major General Romeo Gan gave a special message. Before the provincial vice-governor read the keynote address on behalf of Rebecca Ynares, governor of Rizal, the lovely pupils of Sun Hwa International Academy performed a Korean fan dance.

A highlight of the main assembly was the awarding of Youth Ambassadors for Peace (YAP) and Collegiate Ambassadors for Peace (CAP) to some exemplary student and youth leaders.

We conducted a moment prayer for peace for humanity, during which the singing group Koro Choreo rendered a moving musical number.

The president of WCARP Philippines, Mr. Rene Lansangan, concluded the third International Youth Assembly by leading loud cheers of mabuhay, a cheer in Tagalog somewhat akin to the Korean, mansei. The sound reverberated through the gymnasium, showing the unified voice of young people willing to take responsibility for building a better future.