

Annual REPORT 2015

South Asia CHRISTIAN Youth Network



Introduction

The year 2015 has been an eventful and fruitful year for the South Asia Christian Youth Network. This year was marked with various programmes and activities of different kinds. The epitome of which was marked with the evaluation of the life of SACYN thus far done at New Delhi, India. It is with immense joy and happiness, this annual report of SACYN for the year 2015 is presented before you.

Mission of SACYN

The Mission of SACYN is to encourage, motivate and enable South Asian Young People from the region's churches to link up, overcome barriers and work together for His kingdom whilst being continually strengthened as a networked movement of young peoples in mission.

SACYN is committed to help a generation to live the kingdom experience enabling them to transcend all possible boundaries that separate people from people.

Aims of SACYN

1. To challenge disunity and promote peace and unity between and within churches.
2. To be an expression of inter-denominational and ecumenical co-working bearing witness to our oneness in Christ.
3. To enable critical reflection upon key issues in society and culture and address these through prayer and practical action.
4. To identify and work with key Christian youth leaders from major regional churches who can impart vision and motivation, extend the network, provide leadership and be catalysts for change and mission in their own church and in their local and national context.
5. To help South Asian Christian Youth be regionally and globally connected with other youth, mission, church, faith and advocacy networks and initiatives.
6. To seek to strengthen and renew regional churches in their faith, their commitment to make Christ known, in their engagement in practical mission for the Kingdom of God in unity with one another and as co-workers with Christ through the enabling of the Spirit of God.

A. SACYN Core Group Meeting 2015



Participants of New Delhi 2015

Background

The concept of evaluating the life of SACYN emerged out of the previous meeting in Dubai. There has been a growing concern on the part of the organisers and enthusiasm from the participants in the recent past to have a review on the worth of time, energy and resources spent on SACYN events; as well as to know how far have SACYN been effective in the mission and ministry of the member churches to equip and motivate the younger generations. The SACYN 2015 is the outcome of those discussions on the efficiency of this network, which completes 12 years of its existence in the year 2015. These discussions gained a formal shape at the core group meetings during the Dubai 2014 and final decisions were made in order to formulate SACYN 2015 as an evaluative and reflective planning meeting to be held at New Delhi, India. This venue was further preferred due to Mr. Kasta Dip's offer that the India Peace Centre could be the host of the programme and make available the conference facilities, accommodation and food from the Gandhi Peace Foundation for the meetings. Special thanks must be reserved for the success of the Delhi conference to IPC and Kasta Dip along with Gandhi Peace Foundation, who hosted and facilitated this event by opening their doors to the SACYN team.

SACYN New Delhi

The 12th SACYN gathering was held from 16th to 20th October 2015 in New Delhi, India. The whole meeting focused on stocktaking the past 12 years by bringing out the persons, events, impacts and hopes that SACYN dealt with during the years of its existence. This meeting focused on the journey of SACYN, beginning from 2002 to thus far on the theme Spirituality and Integrity in Youth Leadership. These sessions were designed to be reflective evaluation that finally culminated in designing the future directions and planning the way forward for SACYN. The 24 participants came together from the countries of Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, United Kingdom, and India. However, the participants from other South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan could not make it because of various reasons related to visa and other unforeseen difficulties. Each of the participants brought their own contextual experiences and reports on the impacts of SACYN in their own churches, which enriched and equipped this strong reflective group. Raj Patel, the Asia Manager of CMS UK played the leading role in the whole process of this evaluation and reflection within the theoretical framework of Appreciative Enquiry.



Sessions

The Welcome and introductory session led by Stephen Edison and Miranga Peiris set the scene and introduced the aims of SACYN to the participants. This session gave a vivid picturesque view of the journey of SACYN thus far, as the presentation highlighted the various core group meetings and the larger conferences of the past years. The Ice breaker session led by John Chettri facilitated the whole group to get to know and be integrated, which set a joyous mood for the whole programme from the beginning. Raj Patel facilitated various interactive sessions to construct SACYN Timeline 2002-2015, which allowed the participants to reflect on the events, their highs and Lows as well as the rationales. Each of the participants got a chance to reflect on their own past experience – both positive and negative - with SACYN and together a timeline was created. The personal reflections in the mornings were focused on the thoughts put together by Vinod Victor based on Psalm 26. These reflections were guided by the themes of 'integrity,' 'the spirituality of trusting without wavering,' 'spirituality of seeing the steadfast love of God and being faithful to God,' and 'spirituality and being in the Right company.' The daily worship sessions, led by the participants laid the foundation for the daily deliberations with meditative elements that brought closeness to God. Daily Bible Studies provided with a biblical understanding of the theme based on the specific biblical passages. These sessions, led by Rev. Anilal M. Jose, Rev. Sam Ponniah, Rev. Arvind Balaram, and Ms. RiniIngelby provided inspirational reflections on the scriptural passages, and these studies set the stage for the sessions to be followed on each day. The outing to Humayun's Tomb and Qutub Minar enlightened the participants with the historical importance of New Delhi.



The session on 'Spirituality and Integrity' taken by Rev. Monodeep; session on 'Gandhian Principles' led by Ms.Radha Bhatt, the president of the Gandhi Peace Foundation; session on 'Inner-security, Resilience and Exercising Courage' by Ms. Amelia Andrews, Director of Communications & Campaigns, CREA; session on 'Developing a leader and developing others' by Ms. Shamira Manwar from International Justice Mission; provided the needed input for the participants.

Participants were encouraged to present case studies from their respective Church context. The presentations comprised of reflections on the impact of SACYN in the mission and ministry of their own respective churches by the SACYN alumni, and activities done by them, as well as shared insight on how SACYN impacted and promoted Ecumenism and oneness. Moreover, they shared the future hopes and anticipated directions for the journey of SACYN forward.

The evaluative sessions were led by Raj Patel using the theoretical framework of Appreciative Inquiry which helped the delegates to identify the depth of the SACYN context by Clarifying, Appreciating, Envisioning, Co-constructing and Sustainable cycles. In these sessions, Raj helped the delegates to make patterns for the growth of SACYN as a network based on the evaluations of the feedbacks given by them.

A Picturesque Narrative of SACYN 2015



Evaluation of the Journey of SACYN

The evaluation brought out the following aspects to light.

1. It was emphasized that SACYN should not be limited only to an annual event. But, needs to organize grass root level events in partnership with the local churches. Core group needs to come up with suggestions and proposals for the future.
2. SACYN to be self-funded by 2021 with the contributions from South Asian churches. The local churches needs to take ownership of the programs by contributing an appropriate amount annually for the furtherance of the movement.
3. The contributions from the European partners and local churches for the last 13 years were highly appreciated. We will look forward to invite all our partners for the next leaders training module in 2016.
4. Decided to have main training modules in 2016, 2017 & 2018. The participation of all member churches needs to be ensured and therefore the conference venues needs to be finalized based on the availability of visas for all the participating countries. Apart from visa, hosting costs, local organizing team, and availability of required logistics should also be taken into consideration.
5. The 4th phase of the Leadership training module will be held in Nepal in July 2016.
6. The major conference is anticipated in 2018 considering the current context and large fund requirement for such a major event. Sri Lanka, Kerala in India and Mizoram in India were suggested to be the probable options for the venue.
7. The member churches are advised to submit a budget proposal to host 300 participants along with the guarantee of local hosting team, visa availability and other logistics.
8. The possibility of hosting future conferences in Pakistan needs to be considered.



B. SACYN Ambassadors program

The SACYN Ambassador programme to UK was organized from 11th to 22nd September 2015. Reshmi Rajamony from Sri Lanka was sent as SACYN Ambassador. This visit had two main objectives: firstly, it aimed to raise awareness about SACYN and its work among the mission partners; and secondly, to give awareness to the partner churches in South Asia, through exposure to Christianity, church life and youth work in the UK. The programme is designed with meetings and conversations with key mission partners and youth workers; observation of ministry and church services and participation in certain youth projects. This was mainly concentrated in London and Oxford.

The ambassador had conversations with three mission partners – namely CMS, the Methodist Church in UK and US (Formerly known as USPG). According to Rashmi, “this not only hastened my induction to SACYN's history, its aims and ways of working but also allowed me to look at SACYN with fresh eyes and also from the perspective of a mission partner. Whilst these conversations centered a lot around the work SACYN has been doing in the South Asian region, it also raised interesting and thought provoking discussion about the future of SACYN and our long term vision... The visit provided a broader perspective to ministry especially that pertaining to youth and also helped me appreciate the quaint-ness of England. Staying with wonderful hosts such as Rev Rana Khan and his wife Moshini, Raj and Merry Patel and David and Jane Fulford also helped to further build on those experiences and understand some of the context to what I was seeing.”



C. Nepal Earthquake Relief Project

Nepal Relief Project was initiated after the massive earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015, where it took away many lives and kept many families with no shelter or a living.

In response to the devastating earthquake, SACYN provided relief materials to the Nepali representatives directly and through other countries to help the victims of the devastating disaster. According to Bikash Adhikari, one of the SACYN volunteer from Nepal, "on 16th June 2015, SACYN Nepal distributed 30kg of rice sacks for each 142 households at Koshidekha, Kavrepalanchowk District of Nepal and distributed blankets and Hygiene kits for them in partnership with Sundar Dhoka Saathi Sewa. On 13th September 2015, SACYN Nepal distributed 94 school shoes for students under 5th level, studying in the Janajagrati Primary School. One of the active SACYN alumni, who attended the Dubai leaders training from Jhiri was also affected. The SACYN Nepal group supported him to build temporary house for his families and they do continue to help him to recover."



D. Coordinator's visit to Nepal

The first official visit of SACYN Coordinator was to Nepal. This visit had two main objectives. Firstly, it is to meet the Church Leadership and Youth Leaders in order to look at ways of taking SACYN into grass-root level and to encourage them for youth mission. Secondly, it aimed at exploring the possible options for the venues to host SACYN 2016 and initiate preliminary planning with the SACYN team in Nepal.

Though the visit happened to coincide with the crisis in Nepal due to petroleum and gasoline shortages, the Nepal team had arranged and managed the situations and gave their full support for the visits and meetings. They were diligent to find ways even when they didn't have fuel available. The coordinator also attended the worship services at the SundarDhoka Church and an International service at Patan Church and shared about the mission of SACYN.

The meetings were organised with the Board members of NCFN, Mr. Kumar Kafli and Mr. Dinesh Sunwar, Mr Adhikari & Mr. Bikash Adhikari - Head & Director of SundarDhoka Saathi Sewa, Ps. Richan Karmacharya - Acting Pastor of Himalayan Evangelical Church, Mr. Ram Prasad Shrestha - Co-Mission partner, CMS, Mr. Bhbin - Grace Community Services and discussed about the young people on the church and how SACYN trainings could be taken into grass-root level for the benefit of these youth.

This visit was fruitful as the meetings with John Chettri - Ex-SACYN Coordinator, Bikash Adhikari – Country Coordinator for Nepal, Prasansa Subba, Richan Karmacharya, PradeepShahi & Ambeswar Karmacharya in order to lay the foundation for the next leadership training. The SACYN Nepal team has already geared up for the event and is having initial discussions. The visit to one of the potential venues, the Nepal Theological College provided an opportunity to meet the Principal Dr. Bal Krishna Sharma and discuss on the possibilities of hosting the training at NTC. Also another place in Dhulikhel was also explored. The SACYN Nepal team is exploring few other places and will come up with an appropriate decision.



E. Stephen & Raj visit to Nepal, Sri Lanka & Bhutan (CMS & ACMS)

In the last week of June and first week of July, CMS UK Asia Manager Raj Patel and AsiaCMS South Asia Coordinator Stephen Edison travelled to Nepal and Sri Lanka and met with SACYN Alumni groups in Kathmandu and Colombo. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and reflection on SACYN-related initiatives in these countries. The visit to Nepal was just a few weeks after the massive earthquake and aftershocks, which caused great devastation and loss of lives in the country. SACYN alumni belonging to different churches came together and have been part of the response to meet the needs of the people.

In Sri Lanka it was wonderful to meet a group of SACYN alumni who ranged from participants from early years of SACYN to those from last year. It was a blessed time of fellowship and an informal reflection on SACYN experience and the way forward in Sri Lanka.

Stephen Edison in September made the first official visit to Bhutan. Bhutan is the only remaining Himalayan kingdom in which Christianity is not recognized and the local church, though growing, continues to face challenges. As an outcome of the visit, a local committee of younger leaders was formed who organized a leadership workshop for younger leaders from different churches in November which was Facilitated by Raj Patel (CMS UK) assisted by Stephen.

Meetings with the SACYN alumni and other youth was a great encouragement and a time of reflection as to how to have a long-term plan to continue to meet the needs of the Youth in respective countries.



F. Nepal - The 19th Eastern Regional Conference, Nepal

The 19th Eastern Regional Conference was held from 10 - 12 November 2015 at Bhorleni Church Udaypur, East Nepal on the theme, 'He fulfils the desire of those who fear him' - Psalm 145:19. This programme was a space for spiritual awakening and a platform to bring out hidden talent of youth through Singing contest, Bible quiz and other activities. 500 youth from different Churches, between the age group of 15-30 years participated in the programme. SACYN contributed resource persons and financial aid for the conferences. Bikash Adhikari (SACYN Country Coordinator for Nepal) and John Chettri (Ex-SACYN Coordinator) led sessions on Disabilities and their abilities and introduced SACYN to the participants. This provided a space for bringing awareness about SACYN and to share SACYN to the grass root levels and with a wider group.



G. SACYN Prayer Chain

The SACYN prayer chain was initiated in November 2015 to pray for each other and to strengthen SACYN with the support of prayer. This is currently coordinated by Ravi from Pakistan. The prayer requests are shared among the members and regular prayer sessions are conducted at 10.00 pm on every Saturday.

H. The Journey Forward - Action Plans Proposed

The SACYN 2015 has discussed and proposed the following plans and programmes for the forthcoming years.

1. Abuse / Addiction Workshop

This would be a three day workshop on Abuse / Addiction in December 2017, for 80 Teenagers and Young adults from the member churches, belonging to the age group 13 yrs - 25 yrs. This workshop would be led by Trained Medical Professionals on the theme 'Understanding True Spirituality' and is anticipated to bring awareness about ill-effects of addiction and substance abuse; to sensitize the young people to become agents of change. This workshop would incur an approximate expense of INR 500,000 and to be met by tapping local Resources and the SACYN support. Rev.Solomon Paul, Ambeshwar Karmacharya, and Shalom Christdoss would take leading roles in making this a reality.

2. Inter-Religious Dialogues

This is conceived as a one day programme for 50 young people of various religions. This would bring together at least 5 delegates representing each religion. The programme would be organised by the SACYN Inter-religious department partnering with respective national councils and local ecumenical partners. The expertise of resource persons working at Inter-religious departments in the respective countries would be gathered to facilitate sessions based on the theme 'Diversity and Ecumenism'. This would build up an Inter-Religious department team of SACYN to and equip SACYN members to be in the forefront to promote Inter-religious dialogue, and thereby achieving communal harmony by developing results oriented goals. This workshop would incur an approximate expense of INR 500,000 and to be met by tapping local Resources and the SACYN support. Rev Jackson Jacob, Jharna Gill, Miranga Peiris take leading roles in making this a reality.

3. Strengthening and Extending the SACYN Network

Three level programmes would be organized to achieve the objective to build SACYN as a network of all churches from South Asian countries in the next 6 years. Ruth Balan, Vanlalpeka, and Neethu Elsa Varghese would take leading roles in making this a reality.

a. Conference with church leaders: These would benefit the youth of each church within South Asia as well as extend the SACYN network by including all churches in South Asia to be part of SACYN. The SACYN Core group will take a leading role in conceptualizing and implementing by using the SACYN funds within the target year, 2021.

b. Building and Sustaining Constant Communication with the Churches: SACYN would connect with the Youth of the member churches and sustain constant communication with churches, using Direct meetings, Newsletters, Video conference as well as Social media updates.

c. Church Level Youth Programmes: SACYN would facilitate in organizing the youth programs in collaboration with the member churches in the local church levels. SACYN would provide the support in terms of conceptualizing the programmes, providing resource persons, if needed, and the hosting churches would bear the financial obligations.

3. Vision 2021

The vision is to Develop Youth Leadership across the globe and Moving towards GCYN. The future of SACYN in developing future leadership will be brighter only when the door of participation is open wider for new participants. SACYN can be a global Hub for producing Global Leadership by becoming Global Christian Youth Network (GCYN). Thereby changing the name to GCYN. Samuel Laldinglana, Rev. Abraham Pulinthitta, and John Chettri would take lead roles in conceptualizing this.

a. SACYN to continue to organize conferences, trainings and Seminars for the Young Christian leaders and churches in the region and by 2021 the participation of delegates would increase by 25% in representing each churches and denomination, compared to the participation in conferences, training and seminars of previous years. This would achieve a goal in changing the participants/ delegates to 60 : 40 ratio, where 40 represents the previous participants and 60 represents new participants from each church/denomination. As the number of participation would be increased, the funds has simultaneously to be increased by 35%.

b. SACYN would emerge into GCYN, the Global Christian Youth Network, a new World wide Christian Youth Organization. This is to be achieved by 2021. This could happen by identifying needs of the youth ministry in a global level and sending out invitations to Young Christian leaders and churches worldwide to take part in GCYN. As the new vibrant Christian Youth Organization extends to various regions beyond South Asia, the network character needs to be sustained and focus on a mission among the youth in the world. The required funds needs to be gathered from the members and partners.

4. Sustaining Dynamic Participation

Representation from each Diocese and SACYN should not be limited to the participation in an annual event, but to become a process. SACYN is envisioned to change lives through the empowered leaders by strengthening relationships, expanding the network and producing committed spiritual role models. Prasansa Suba, Rev. Asish Khristi, Paul Devadasan would take leading roles in achieving this.

a. Representatives of each Diocese from each country: This would be achieved by involving representatives of each Diocese from each country, by bringing at least 2 representative from each Diocese, from existing and willing countries, while participation not exceeding 100. This would

ensure the participation of representatives from each Diocese, from each Country, rather than having multiple representatives from one Diocese. Local Churches can be encouraged to fund the participants and exploring possibilities for the SACYN Country group to start a collective fund by organizing innovative fund raising programs.

b. Strengthening relationships & Continuous follow up: All SACYN participants from each country would contact each other regularly. The relationships will be strengthened through regular contacts, ideas can be shared about how they can work together as a group and make an impact in their local churches or communities.

5. Ownership and Communication

SACYN to become a key self-reliant movement in which Christian youth leaders from all South Asian countries collaborate and network to achieve its' vision through practical and realistic objectives, which is equally owned and lead by Christian youth leaders. Coordinate effective communication with member churches leadership team by all attendees. All the reports by the attendees to all church leadership will be forwarded to the team by the 1st and 2nd months. SACYN participants, youth leaders, all member churches would benefit out of this by developing more ownership and contribution from member churches.

Conclusion

It is with much hope and anticipation that SACYN enters into the New Year 2016. The evaluations and experiences have proved that SACYN has been growing in levels of influence and reach. The vision to connect and strengthen the youth across South Asia and to build up connection between different churches in various countries in South Asia could be achieved to a great extent. This gives us hope to look forward to another decade ahead and plan multiple programmes for the years ahead. We look forward to the guidance and blessings from the Almighty as well as support, encouragement and participation from the member churches and SACYN alumni.

SACYN intends to expand its' mission work in 2016 and by expanding our boundaries to the Gulf region and also to expand more local training sessions, for which we will be providing resource persons and assist in way of funding as per the requirement.

The team is working hard for the 4th phase of the Leaders Training in Nepal in July, focusing the major conference for 300 youth in 2017/18.

The members of the Core group will visit churches / countries in order to meet the Heads of Churches and youth leaders as it is important to journey together as a network. We intend to discuss our plans for 2016 & beyond and also we need to see how best we can support the young people of each country for GOD's mission.

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