

Minutes of 19th Regional Pre Women's Meeting



**Minutes of the Regional Pre Women's Meeting- WSCF AP
July 18-21, 2010, Yuta Hotel, Manado, Indonesia**

**Theme: Renewing the Earth: Climate Justice and Equity –
Feminist perspectives**

Women delegates of the Pre Women's Meeting

Rosalind Hewett	Australia
Mani Clara Mandal	Bangladesh
Phan Dara	Cambodia
Tsang Oi Leng	Hong Kong
Lam Hiu Fan	Hong Kong
Selfitriani Kulla	Indonesia
Ida Kondjol	Indonesia
Lauren Ester Damongilala	Indonesia
Kristina Lydia	Indonesia
Misato Sasaki	Japan
Sarah Nayer	Pakistan
Kristine Valerio	Philippines
Wan-Jou Lin	Taiwan
Jane Jinda Pawadee	Thailand
Necta Montes	Philippines/Hong Kong
(Regional Secretary)	
Sunita Suna	India/Hong Kong
(Regional Women's Coordinator)	

19th July 2010

1. Welcome and Opening Worship

The 19th Pre women's meeting was started with an inaugural worship led by the host region. After the worship Sunita Suna welcomed the delegates and conducted an ice breaking exercise to know each other better. During the introduction all the women were asked to draw a symbol/picture to define them or identify them with the symbol. All of them sat in a circle and shared their reflections relating to the symbols which were motivating while understanding each other with our own differences.



Women introducing to the group by sharing their reflection relating the symbols they identified with

2. Orientation – women leadership, Pre Women’s Meeting, Regional Women’s Committee(RWC)

After the sharing, Sunita briefly explained the aims, objectives and the significance of the Pre Women’s Meeting and the Regional Women’s Committee. She read the role and responsibilities of the members of the RWC. She said the objectives of the pre women’s meeting is as follows:

- to get to know each other and understand the significance of women leadership in WSCF
- to have a theological reflection from the feminist perspectives
to share, reflect and view the national women’s programmes and ensure future women programmes.
- to evaluate the regional women’s programmes and propose plan of actions for the next biennium
- to discuss and promote women leadership in SCMs
- to select the regional women’s committee for the next biennium

Finally she went through the programme schedule and confirm with the delegates.



Welcome and Introduction of the pre women's meeting

3. Bible Study- I

Post lunch was the bible study (I) facilitated by Dr. Hope S. Antone, the executive secretary of Faith Mission and Unity, Christian Conference of Asia. Dr. Hope helped us to develop theological reflections on the theme from the feminist perspectives by using ecofeminism as lens. The bible studies based on the Biblical text Genesis chapter 1. There was also group discussions and sharing of reflection by the participants during the bible study.

(Please find the bible study in appendix)



Dr. Hope conducting a Bible Study on ecofeminism

4. i. Sharing of National Women's Programmes by delegates

The delegates shared the programme activities on women's concerns initiated in their local SCMs. *(please find the detailed reports by the delegates in appendix)*. After the sharing of SCM Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong and Indonesia the meeting was concluded for the day.



National Women's Programmes report sharing



Community games in between the sessions

20th July 2010

The meeting started with a morning devotion led by Wan Jou, Rosalind, Lauren, Sarah, Misato, Mani and Oi Leng, Kitty

4. ii. Continuation of the Sharing of National Women's Programmes by delegates

Rest of the movements – Japan, Pakistan, Phillipines, Taiwan and Thailand continued to share the national women's programmes in their SCMs.

5. Analysis of the women's issues/programmes by summarizing the shared concerns

After sharing the activities by the delegates, the analysis of the women's programmes was led by Sunita Suna. She shared her reflection and concern that there is a decline of interest to promote women's concerns in the national movements. Women's programmes are no longer a priority of the movements since there are not much of women's programmes or activities on women's concerns is initiated in the national movements. Only few movements are having some regular women's programmes. There is also lack of proper analysis of the issues of women in the women's programme and our understanding of women leadership. She asked, how do we take this reality? Are our national movements saying that we have achieved our goal and we do not need to address the issues of women's concerns anymore? Is this true that we have achieved our goal of women's emancipation? She asked the group to contribute their reflection, suggestions on these challenging concerns.

Selfitriani Kula shared about the women leadership within GMKI. The struggle of gender equality within the decision making bodies in GMKI is still a challenge. She said out of 35 Executive (decision making bodies) members there are only 3 women members in the committee.



During the analysis of the women's programmes

While doing the analysis the group collectively identified some of the challenges to promote women's concerns within SCMs that needs to be addressed seriously.

Challenges to initiate women's programmes in SCMs

- most of the system in SCM is patriarchy and hierarchy
- lack of awareness and skills to address the women's concerns in the SCMs
- lack of staff in national movements to carryout the women's programmes/activities
- national movements are not prioritizing women's issue and concerns
- lack of feminist theology/ perspectives among the SCMs
- financial constraint to initiate women's programmes, as many SCMs struggling to sustain the financial support
- No women's coordinators/ person in charge in most of the national movements
- Lack of coordination and network between women students and women senior friends

After reflection from the group Sunita shared about the significance and the origin of the Regional Women's Programme in WSCF AP and women leadership in WSCF / AP through a brief history of the women's struggle within the federation to promote women's concern and women leadership since the foundation of the federation in 1895.

Followed by a reflection of the Regional Women's Programme from 2008-2010. *(please find the detail report of the RWP in appendix)*

The groups were divided with some guide questions to continue the analysis and discussion into small groups.



6. Bible Study- II

Dr. Hope continued the participatory bible study on Ecofeminism and concluded with the following song of prayer: and the meeting was over for the day to prepare for the cultural night.

The peace of the earth be with you

The peace of the oceans too

The peace of the heavens too

Deep peace falling over you

The peace of the rivers be with you

God's peace growing in you



Concluding the Bible study by saying the song prayer together



SCM women celebrating life of the diverse culture of Asia and Pacific during the solidarity night

21st July 2010

Today was our final day for the pre women's meeting started with a morning devotion led by Dara, Sarah, Wan Jou, and Rosalind.

7. Visioning and planning for the RWP 2011-2012

The delegates were divided into small groups to discuss and come up with propose plan of actions for the next biennium. They identified similar issues women are experiencing in their own contexts which needs to be addressed in SCMs. The small groups worked based on the collective women's issue and challenges to promote women's programmes in the national movements. They came up with the following proposed plan of actions for the Regional Women's Committee to work on this with more planning to execute these programmes in national, sub regional and regional level.

Women's issues/ challenges

- Patriarchy and hierarchy
- Gender stereotype
- System of discrimination and oppression in family, work place, communities including in the Church
- Religion, culture, tradition - biased against women
- Unwanted pregnancy – rejected by the man, family and community
- Unsafe abortion causing serious health problem
- Stigmatization by family, society and religious institutions for single mothers and divorced women
- Women as cheap labor often related them with domestication
- Unjust economic system
- Migration, trafficking, HIV/AIDS – global concern, as most of the women are forced to migrate
- Domestic violence, violence done by parents, sex industry, drug addiction

Proposed plan of actions for 2011-2012

I. Women's Programmes in National level:

- Women's empowerment training/ workshop
- Workshop on feminist theology
- Women's programmes for both women and men on partnership
- More critical analysis of global concerns like migration, trafficking, Marriage migration
- Critical analysis of the root causes of the VAW
- Open discussion – within SCM/ likeminded organization

- Involve in awareness campaign on VAW and participate in forums
- Exposure / live in experience to understand the issues women are experiencing in different contexts
- Vocational training(ex – organic farming etc planned by Cambodia SCM)

II. Women’s Programmes in Regional level

- Workshop on feminist theology
- Workshop on identity, liberation and transformation
- Women leadership training programme
- Workshop on going beyond gender analysis

Suggestions

- Organize more women’s programmes in national level
- Women’s programmes in sub regional level
- Guidelines/ guide book to help the SCM women to develop analytical skills and feminist perspectives and organize women’s programmes in local SCMs
- Measure / evaluate the programmes to follow up

Sunita and Necta briefly explained about the proposal by the WSCF Europe region to come up with a book on clergy sexual misconduct. This book is intended to tell the true stories of women experiencing violence by the Clergies within and outside of the Church. Necta said that its more relevant for the WSCF to work on this project, since we are not directly working within the Church, hence our viewpoint on this issue will be more appropriate. This is going to be a joint project with the IRO, Women’s Desk, (WCC), WSCF Europe region and WSCF AP region. The group agreed to go ahead with the proposal and recommend to the RCM.

Recommendations to RCM

- Empower women leadership
- Prioritize women’s programme in local SCMs
- Incorporate women’s concerns to be part of the whole programme
- Appoint women’s coordinator/ women in charge for the women’s programmes in the national movements
- Introduce the policy against sexual harassment in the national movements
- Increase women leadership in the decision making bodies in the national movements (gender balance)

- Establish support groups for the women who are experiencing violence
- Data base for resource persons list
- Proposal to Publish the book on clergy sexual misconduct with IRO, Women's Desk (WCC), WSCF Europe region and WSCF AP region

8. Discussion on nominations and selection of the Regional Women's Committee (RWC) members for the next Biennium – 2010-2012

One of the main agendas of the pre women's meeting is to select the Regional Women's Committee (RWC) members for the next Biennium. Sunita presented the received nominations for the RWC from the national movements and briefly explained about the criteria, roles and responsibilities of the RWC. She also informed about the members of the RWC from 2008-2010, who have been working closely with the regional women's coordinator. After having discussion on the received nominations the group selected the following member as the RWC representatives for 2010-2012.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Selfitriani Kula | SCM Indonesia (GMKI), South East Asia |
| 2. Misato Sasaki | SCM Japan, North East Asia |
| 3. Bronwyn Crow | SCM Australia, (Ex Co IRO – 2008-2012), Pacific |
| 4. Mani Mandol | SCM Bangladesh, South Asia |
| 5. Ga-Yeon, Lee | SCM Korea (KSCF) (Member at large), North East Asia |
| 6. Sunita Suna | Regional Women's Coordinator (ex officio) |



RWC members for 2010-2012

*Row1, L-R - Bronwyn Crow, Ga-Yeon, Lee, Mani Mandol
Row2, L-R - Selfitriani Kula, Misato Sasaki, Sunita Suna*

After the selection process, Sunita welcomed the newly selected members and thanked the out going members of the RWC. She also thanked to all the delegates of the pre women's meeting for their valuable participation. The pre women's meeting concluded with an affirmative worship led by Sunita.

Recorded by
Sunita Suna
Wan – Jou Lin
Rosalind Hewett

Contribution of photos by – Janejinda Pawadee



During a closing worship

Appendix 1 – Bible Study

Bible Studies on Ecological Justice

by Dr. Hope S. Antone

Joint Executive Secretary for Faith, Mission and Unity,
Christian Conference of Asia

Your theme “Renewing the Earth: Climate Justice and Equity” reflects how WSCF-AP is trying to address urgent issues of our day. However, I want to say that I prefer “ecological justice” to climate justice because climate change and global warming are mere symptoms of the deeper problem of ecological injustice which human beings have inflicted on creation. So for me it is not so much the climate [which general refers to weather conditions] that is in need of justice but the ecology [the totality of relations between organisms and their environment] itself.

I was asked to do two Bible studies with your Regional Women’s Committee on eco-feminism. I congratulate you for your interest in this movement. So, to begin with, what is Ecofeminism?

The word Ecofeminism is a combination of two words: Ecology + Feminism. We know that ecology is the branch of biology dealing with the relations and interactions between organisms and their environment, including other organisms; while feminism is the thought or movement toward political, economic and social equality of women and men. What ecofeminism has strongly highlighted is the connection between women’s oppression and the exploitation of nature. Just as women are oppressed, raped and violated, nature, which is often associated with women [e.g. Mother Earth, Mother Nature] is also oppressed, exploited and abused. Thus, in ecofeminism, the two movements of environmentalism and feminism are connected.

Two Views in Ecofeminism

Like feminism, Ecofeminism is not monolithic. There are also different views within ecofeminism. One view sees the link between women and nature as *empowering* in the sense that with their positions as mothers and homemakers, women are more likely (or even naturally) to be more environmentally aware. The other view is that the link between women and nature is *degrading* in the sense that it is even imposed by patriarchy. If there is an inherent connection between women and their likelihood to be environmentally aware, then it follows that men will hopelessly continue to exploit women and nature, seeing both as eternally fertile and for providing life.

For me, I believe that women and men are created in the image of God. Both women and men are naturally part of nature, consist of nature, and are also close to nature. It follows therefore that both women and men are capable of being caring and just rather than exploitative and oppressive towards each other and to the rest of creation.

Origins of Ecofeminism

There are different views on the origins of Ecofeminism. One view says the word was coined by French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 to represent women's potential for bringing about an ecological revolution. Another view recalls Rachel Carson, a marine biologist and naturalist, who embodied the spirit of ecofeminism through her work and writings. For example, Rachel Carson said that while humans are a small part of nature, they have an enormous ability to alter it. Carson was deeply troubled by the use of synthetic pesticides (namely DDT) and their potential long-term negative effects. Her 1962 book, *Silent Spring*, asserted the detrimental physiological and environmental effects of the pesticides, challenged government practices, and called for change in the treatment of nature.

Another view points to Ellen Swallow, an industrial and environmental chemist, who became the first female student admitted to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Later she became its first female instructor. As a teacher and active ecologist, Swallow educated women about environment in relation to their homes or homemaking while focusing on monitoring the quality of their water, air and nutrition.

Still another view refers to Ynestra King and activist Grace Paley who were among those who organized the “Women and Life on Earth” conference at the University of Massachusetts in 1980. Another conference followed that at Sonoma State University in 1981, following which eight women formed the first national ecofeminist organization, *WomanEarth*.

Another view highlights three defining movements of ecofeminism. The first movement came out of the Chipko movement in India. Chipko is from a Hindi word for cling and the movement is commonly known as tree-hugging movement. In 1974, some 30 women from the Himalayas hugged trees in a forest watershed that were marked to be cut down by companies. Vandana Shiva is known to be among those women but the Chipko movement did begin with a whole community of people, including men like Chandi Prasad. The main goal of their movement is not *saving* trees, but the *judicious use* of trees and the right of a community to control and benefit from the resources of its own home. The movement is concerned not only about the erosion of the land, but also the erosion of human values. It believes that if human beings are not in a good relationship with the environment, the environment will be destroyed and humans will lose their ground; if human beings halt the erosion of humankind, then humankind will halt the erosion of the soil.

A second defining movement was in Africa. In 1977, Dr. Wangari Muta Maathai became involved with the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) as a member of its Executive Committee. Her determination to inexpensively provide rural women of the NCWK with sufficient wood for fuel, building, and soil conservation, inspired the Save the Land Harambee tree-planting initiative. Thus began a widespread tree planting strategy in which seedlings were planted in long rows to form green belts of trees. These green belts help to provide shade and windbreak, facilitate soil conservation, improve aesthetic beauty of the landscape and provide habitats for birds and small animals. To date, around 40 million+ trees have been planted.

A third defining movement is attributed to what happened in the USA in 1978 – when Love Canal activism arose in New York. Twenty years after a neighborhood had grown at the Love Canal situated near the Niagara River, members complained of chronic illnesses, miscarriages, and birth defects. Then they came to know that their community was actually built on a large piece of land adjacent to a chemical landfill site and they were victims of a chemical waste leak. Lois Marie Gibbs, a homemaker in that neighborhood, led the protest which eventually led to the relocation of evacuated families, the continuation of health and environmental studies and the construction of a drainage system to prevent further migration of toxic chemicals.

While these three defining movements have been specially highlighted by writers of ecofeminism, we know that many other environmental disasters have happened. You may have heard about Bhopal in Madya Pradesh, India which involved the Union Carbide gas leak in 1984; or Chernobyl, the Russian nuclear power plant explosion in 1986; and of course various incidents of oil spill have happened recently.

Other Values of Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism highlights for us certain values that are often neglected. One value is *Immanence* – that *the sacred is in all aspects of the planet and her people*. Another value is *Interconnectedness* – that there is a relationship between all aspects, supported by ecology. Another value is *Unity-in-diversity* – the need to respect difference and valuing the whole as requiring its different parts. Another value of ecofeminism is the regard of the Earth as our Mother.

All these raise many questions for us:

- If earth is sacred, then mining and deforestation are blasphemous.
- If natural resources are our “relatives” then depleting them is not only disrespecting but even stealing from (even raping) one’s own kin.
- If nature is self-sufficient, why do we claim to improve it through the production of GM food?
- If we are only part of creation, why do we claim and act as if we own planet Earth?

Let us keep all these in mind as we go into our study of scriptures.

Bible Study 1: Affirming the Interconnectedness of all Creation

Let us borrow the lens of ecofeminism as we revisit some passages in our scriptures: Genesis 1:1 – 2:3; Genesis 2:4-25 and Psalm 8:3-6. Let us look at these passages with the following questions for discussion:

- How is creation viewed in the scriptures?
- How is humankind viewed in the scriptures?
- What is the impact of such views on our relationships with each other?
- How should we read the texts with eco-feminist lenses?

Genesis contains two creation stories. Bible scholars have found many similarities between the Genesis creation stories and the Mesopotamian creation stories, with the main difference being the monotheistic outlook of the Jewish creation stories. Old Testament scholars also believe that the creation story in Genesis 1 is actually a later story compared to that in Genesis 2. Genesis 1 comes from the later Priestly tradition, hence, it is more liturgical in style with a repetition of “Evening passed and morning came – that was the first day... second day..., etc.” Genesis 2 comes from the earlier Yahwist tradition, which is more anthropomorphic even in how God is depicted – one can visualize God planting a garden like a farmer, or forming a man from the soil like a potter, or operating on the man like a surgeon.

In the first chapter we see that creation had a certain order. Without being literal about the time that creation was done on a daily basis, we can find a sense in the order of creation. It started with matter (e.g. earth water, light); followed by living creatures such as plants, animals, birds; then followed by human beings, male and female. Matter is an essential stuff for the rest of creation and science tells us that matter needs space and God provided the space in God’s created universe. Then the living creatures in the water and on land also consist of matter but because they are alive, they need food to sustain life. Human beings are living creatures which also consist of material stuff – we need space, water, air, and food in order to live. What we see in the order of creation is not so much that God instituted the hierarchy of things but the interdependence and interconnectedness of all that God created. Interestingly in this creation story, human beings, male and female, were created together. Maybe the main difference that we can find between human beings and the rest of creation is this:

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Human beings, though created from matter, were created in the image of God. While we consist of matter and life, we also have a soul which hungers for the truth and seeks to be connected with our Creator. This image/likeness of God is also related to the original blessing that God gave to human beings:

So God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. (Genesis 1:29-30)

The image of God in human beings is the potential for human beings to be co-creators with God and stewards of God’s creation. In this connection there is a need to re-read the command to ‘multiply’, ‘fill the earth’ and ‘have dominion’ over all of creation – to go beyond stereotypical and traditional readings. Traditionally this has been understood in a very heterosexist way – that the purpose of life is to reproduce, and therefore only heterosexual relations and marriages are encouraged, family planning or birth control is discouraged. But we must remember that such was the case when the small community of Israel was struggling to increase at a time when life was so precarious. We also need to go beyond the literal translation of the words “multiply” and “have dominion” or “subdue”. Multiplying and filling the earth can also be taken to mean spreading awareness about issues and commitment to sustain the earth.

I like to understand dominion or mastery in the sense of doing a master’s degree. When you have a master’s degree in a particular field, it means you are an expert in that field – you know the scope and limits of your research study. So having dominion or mastery over the rest of creation includes knowing the potential and limits of the earth’s resources

by understanding and respecting the laws of nature, keeping the balance in the web of life, sustaining what is still available, and replenishing what we use and consume.

It is very clear in Genesis 1 that God created both woman and man in God's own image and it is to both that God gave the original blessing. So we need to go beyond the stereotype that only women can be as "mothers" (life-giving, caring and nurturing). Men also have the potential to be life-giving, caring and nurturing.

In Genesis 2 creation story, we see a different order of creation. God created the universe with water that would come up from beneath the surface of the earth. Then God formed the man out of the soil and breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils. After that God planted a garden in the East of Eden, with all kinds of beautiful trees, among which were the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Man was placed in that Garden of Eden to cultivate and guard it – to enjoy the fruit of any tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As the story goes, God finds that it is not good for the man to be alone. In an effort to make a suitable companion to help the man, God created the animals and birds – but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him. And so, as the story goes, God caused the man to sleep, took out one of his ribs and formed woman, which when God brought to him the man said: "At last, here is one of my own kind – bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. 'Woman' is her name because she was taken out of man."

If the Genesis 1 creation story provides the larger framework for the whole of God's creation, the Genesis 2 creation story is, to me, like zooming in for a closer look at the creation of humankind. Unfortunately, the order of creation in this Genesis 2 story – where man is created earlier than woman and woman is depicted to have been created to be man's suitable companion and helper – is often used to justify the unequal position of the sexes and eventually the oppression of woman. But feminists are critically re-reading this story highlighting the fact that the word "helper" is something that is used to describe God in many places of the Bible and the word translated as rib is really the "side wall" implying the equality of the sexes so that they are meant to be side by side. So taking the order of creation as the gauge for importance and hierarchical order is not helpful.

The anthropocentric view that we have been socialized with has put the human being at the center of everything. Thus, we often hear how the human being is described as the crowning glory of creation. We can feel this in the following passage from the Psalms:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God [divine beings or angels], and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet... (Psalm 8:3-6).

Just answer these two hypothetical questions: If creation dies, will human beings be able to live? If human beings die, will creation be able to live? Your answers only show that human beings are but a part of creation.

What the two creation stories signify is that there is variety in God's creation. While human beings are part of creation, they are blessed with the special task of tending, caring for, and nurturing creation. God created humankind in God's image so that they will be co-creators with God and co-stewards of God's creation.

The passage in Psalm 8 should not be understood as a license to do anything one likes with creation. Unfortunately, the desire to be creators, like God, is being taken even further these days – through the altering of the laws of nature, e.g. producing genetically modified food and goods, cloning, etc. But what is the purpose of all these human creations today? Profit, fame and power are never God's purposes of creating.

Today, in view of the many problems we are now facing as a result of ecological injustice, we need to build more awareness on ecological issues. We need to learn from and work with other religious communities who may have a stronger tradition than we do that respects nature, creation or environment.

Bible Study 2: Sabbath and Jubilee – Campaign for Ecological Justice

For our second Bible study, let us look at some passages from the scriptures [Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 23: 10-12; Leviticus 25:1-24] and discussing the following:

- Read the passage with ecofeminist lens.
- Summarize the message of the passage.
- What implications can you glean out of this passage for ecological justice?
- Show a way to convey the message of your passage to young people today.

Our passages talk about two important words in the Bible: **Sabbath** and **Jubilee**. Sabbath, which God instituted right in the story of creation, means rest on the seventh day when the work of creation was finished. Sabbath is therefore a day set apart, a holy or sacred day of rest. Its observance is stipulated in the Ten Commandments: “On that day no one is to work – neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country” (Ex. 20:10). It is strange that wives are not mentioned here at all when the 10th commandment clearly talks about not desiring another man’s house, or his wife, or his property – implying that these were addressed to the men. So do wives get a Sabbath?

Sabbath is also for the land. As workers (slaves and laborers), animals, aliens observe the Sabbath, land also gets to rest, not only on the 7th day of the week but also on the 7th year. Jubilee is the 50th year (after counting 7 x 7 years, the 50th year is jubilee) – a time of great rejoicing because it entails the returning to and of one’s property and family, no cheating of each other in the transactions involved, and eating only from what the land yields.

Sabbath and Jubilee are very revolutionary ideas –implying radical changes in personal, social, economic, and political arrangements of life. In fact, Jubilee is at the very core of a global campaign to free many countries from huge accumulative debts to international creditors (e.g. IMF-WB). So in fact, Jubilee can be at the very core of a global campaign for ecological justice. What does this mean for us today?

First, we need to know the injustices done to ecology in our respective contexts and we need to repent of our complicity in the crime. For example, we are familiar with the problem of deforestation due to illegal and unplanned logging, the development of forested areas into cities or golf courses or for the cultivation of cash crops. Deforestation is not only happening to the virgin forests of Asia. It is also happening in the beach forests (the mangrove areas). I just learned from a Filipina scientist who recently confessed of her being part of the problem when aqua culture was encouraged in the Philippines to raise giant prawns for export to other countries. She shared that for the purpose of aqua culture, many mangroves were converted into brackish water ponds. Unfortunately, this has resulted to a massive imbalance. Instead of 1:4 hectares of brackish water pond to mangroves, the ratio is now 1:0.5 of brackish water pond to mangroves. This is very alarming because mangroves do not only serve as habitat for aquatic and terrestrial fauna and flora and protection of associated marine ecosystems; they also provide protection from strong winds and waves, including tsunamis. Mangroves provide protective buffer zone which helps shield coastlines from storm damage and wave action, minimizing damage to property and losses of life from hurricanes and storms and preventing shoreline erosion. As mangroves absorb excess nitrates and phosphates and filter sediments and pollutants, they prevent contamination of nearshore waters. Mangroves also absorb carbon dioxide and store carbon in their sediments, thereby lessening the impacts of global warming.

Second, we need to be pro-active in doing something to address these injustices. Maybe what the SCM can begin to do is to promote mangrove preservation. This means getting to know what plants or trees can grow again in the beaches. Perhaps, at your SCM compounds or Student Centers, you can begin growing a nursery in your backyards of native species of trees, to help revive forests and plant trees in parks and church yards, etc. There are many practical ways which we can do starting at a personal level and also at a communal level – e.g. doing composting to help enrich the soil; paying for the clean-up of our carbon footprints whenever we travel – but also campaigning for the clean-up of pollution by factories and MNCs and TNCs in our countries; minimizing the use of non-biodegradable materials like plastic or finding biodegradable material that can be used like plastic; etc. Finally, we need more young people to go into the area of environmental studies. It has already been foreseen by many people that the next wars will be on water. Hopefully such wars can be prevented and water can be ensured for all the people in the world.

Third, learn more about biodiversity and the danger of invasive species. We tend to want something exotic – something from other lands or places. But recently, there had been some news about how exotic species are causing

more harm than good to the ecological diversity in a given place. In Thailand, for example, where I now reside, there was news about the harm being done in certain rivers by the water hyacinth, originally from the Amazon, and by *Salvinia molesta*, originally from South America. These plants which have been traded as aquatic ornamental plants have invasive behavior – they reduce oxygen diffusion into the water and reduce the quality of the habitat for flora and fauna by eliminating native aquatic plants and creatures. Meanwhile, we need to know more about our own native species of plants and trees, many of which we have lost through deforestation. I was shocked to know, for example, that the village I come from in the Philippines is named after a mangrove tree, *Piapi*. But I have never known that or seen what that tree looks like in my whole life. What this means, according to the Filipina scientist, is that my village was probably a mangrove area but which have been cleared to give way to the growing village community. And indeed, my village is very near Piapi beach.

So when do we observe the Sabbath? Is it just on the seventh day or on the seventh year? What is it that God gave us so our bodies can rest every day? God gave us the night so our eyes will close and our bodies will get to rest and re-energize. But our problem today, especially among young people, is that the night does not seem to get dark anymore. And this is not good for our bodies. We have a hormone in our body, called melatonin, which only works in the dark. As it is released by our pineal gland in the brain when it starts to get dark, it prepares our body for sleep and while we are asleep, it goes around, like a trash collector, cleaning every cell in our body of free radicals and other toxins. Thus, it is a naturally powerful anti-oxidant within our body. So God has a reason for instituting the Sabbath and it has both personal and communal dimensions. It is part of our calling to obey the Sabbath.

I hope that our Bible study together will inspire you to be vigilant about ecological injustices in your respective contexts and to be proactive in promoting the good news of Sabbath and Jubilee not only for humanity but also for the rest of God's creation. May you become evangelists, proclaiming the interconnectedness and interdependence of all that God created, and affirming God's original blessing to all people to be co-creators and co-stewards of God's creation.

Appendix 2 – Reports & Sharing

WSCF AP RCM Pre-Women’s Meeting July 19 to 21, 2010, Manado Indonesia

National Women’s Coordinator Report, Bangladesh SCM

SCM was come forward in Bangladesh under the East Pakistan in 1957. After the independence in 1971, the national movement was formed and then affiliated to the WSCF in 1976. Currently the movement is active in 9 different districts/ regions in Bangladesh which are called local units. Almost 148 women active students and 44 women senior friends are involved in the movement, it’s about 38% of the members are women. In the midst of this situation, SCM women leaders, with the help of male student has been playing important role to break this shackle.

Name of Bangladesh SCM Unit	update of 2009	Number of Full Member			Number of Senior Friend (Active)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Barisal	2009	14	20	34	07	04	11
Dhaka	2009	44	24	68	87	23	110
Khulna	2009	17	16	33	12	02	14
Meherpur	2009	26	11	37	10	02	12
Jessore	2009	26	25	51	10	04	14
Savar	2009	32	16	48	28	07	35
Pabna	2009	30	8	38	08	02	10
Faridpur	2009	28	12	40	13	0	13
Kustia	2009	24	16	40	09	0	09
Total		241	148	389	184	44	228

Membership Status:

Programs and Activities

Bangladesh SCM Women Sub- Committee designed its programs keeping alignment with the programmatic mandate, mission, vision and objective of WSCF and WSCF-AP Women Sub-Committee, and with the country context. The following activities have been performed by Central Women Sub Committee and Local Women’s Sub Committee for the year 2008-09

By Central Women Sub Committee:

1. Central Women’s Assembly (01)
2. Central Women’s Sub Committee Meeting (6)
 1. Workshop on Gender and Women Issues
 2. Unit Visit (11)
3. Participation in different program of local units (9)
4. Observing International Women Day (2)
5. Attend in the various women’s programs organized by ecumenical and church organizations and women organizations (6)

By Local Women’s Sub Committee (9)

1. Annual General Meeting and Election
2. Women Sub Committee Meeting
3. Women and Men Seminar
4. Attend various program organized at national level by Central Women Sub Committee
5. Attend various meeting and programs organized ecumenical and church organizations
6. Observing International Women Day

Achievements:

1. At present women's are more active than before. SCM women's are coming forward to take the challenges in the leadership and participating in various national programs on women development issues. Central Executive Committee for the year of 2009-2010 has selected through assembly, in which 60% committee members are women.
2. This year Ms. Daisy Roy, Ex National Women Coordinator had scholarship opportunity to study two and half year's theological course in Korea.
3. Ms. Monika Biswas, Treasurer, Bangladesh SCM attended the program of United Nations Commission on the Status on Women (UNCSW) in New York held on 26 Feb-12 March 2010.

Plan of action for 2010-11

1. Central Women's Assembly (01)
2. Publication of a News Letter named "NARI" (it is Bengali name means women)
3. Workshop on Gender and Women Issues
4. Unit Visit
5. Participation in different program of local units
6. Observing International Women Day

Name of Central Women Sub Committee (2009-2010):

1. Ms.Dr. Mani Clara Mondol : Women's Co-coordinator
2. Ms. Jesika Borrna Biswas : Member
3. Ms. Sutopa toma Shoigha : Member
4. Ms. Shamoli Badha : Member
5. Ms. Shouna Sarkar : Member
6. Ms. Mohona Biswas : Member
7. Ms. Jui Flora D' Costa : Member

We convey our special thanks to WSCF-AP and WSCF IRO office for their generous support and guidance during the last two years. Special thanks to Women Coordinator of WSCF-AP, Ms Sunita Suna for her valuable guidance, support and encouragement to the women leaders of Bangladesh SCM. We are also very grateful to General Secretary of WSCF-AP, Ms. Necta Montes Rocas who attended our National Women Program as a Resource Person and inspired us to move forward.

Thanking you all to the fellow friends of this RCM Pre- Women Meeting 2010 with His name.

Mani Clara Mondol
National Women Coordinator
Bangladesh SCM



SCM National Women's Programmes / Activities in Pre Women's Meeting 2010

1. If there is any specific structure to function women's desk/ women's programme in your SCM then kindly explain it

CSCM students agreed to design a women project that focus on gender issues and culture.

2. How many women members are in your SCM? Are women in the leadership position in SCM?

There are ten women in CSCM. Most of them are just a member due to their young membership.

3. Name and contacts of the National Women's Coordinator / person in charge of the women's programmes

We recently don't have a women stand in this position. Actually, we used to promote three women to be a leader in the women's desk but later on we decided to cancel it.

4. Briefly share about the women's issues/ concerns in your country in general and SCM in particular which needs to be seriously addressed?

When we talk about women in my country I could see that they have a low education for example; if the family doesn't have enough money to send their children to school, parents automatically will stop the girl and send her to do a labor work or garment worker. Contrastingly, they do effort to send the boy to school because they think that the boy will become a leader in the future.

The majority of the girls migrated to the city and does a job as a garment worker and other house work. With the global economic crisis; a huge of garment factories were shut and they lost their job. With a poor situation they decided not to go home and find a new job in the city. Some of them work as a massage lady; work in KTV, night club and beer garden or some force herself to do a sexual worker. So most of them were work with a high risk; sexual abuse, human trafficking and prostitution and so on.

As a report which found by CHAB DAI Coalition, there are school girls were attractive by materials. Consumerism is a one amongst other reason that causes them to sell themselves voluntarily for money. They persuade by advertisement and western culture. They do not able to think deeply what is bad or good to accept yet.

With a poor living standard in their family the girl decided to migrate to other country such as; Thailand, Malaysian, Korea and other Asian country. Some girls were force to married with a foreigner and finally they abused physically, emotionally in that country.

I could see women in the society much in discriminated due to gender issue and strength, and level of education and so on. They have rarely given a chance to join in or share their concern any public events. Women themselves not even comfortable share an idea or participate so that they become a voiceless in their society.

As my experience for the last few years that I have worked with women are, I noticed that young women or women are still happy to live in their fix box and not able to challenge the cultural oppression. THEY SHOULD CHALLENGE, ADVOCATE, AND STEP OUT FROM THEIR COMFORT ZONE SO THEY WILL SEE HOW PRECOUS THEY ARE WHILE THEY ARE IN THIS WORLD.

5. What are the women's programmes/ activities is organized in your SCM from 2008-2010
Besides having women to attend the Peace Education there is no any women programmes organized. Actually, in 2009 we used to have a joint program with KCC which proposing fund from CCA but it was cancelled due to the KCC staff was very busy.

6. What are the challenges to coordinate women's programmes in local SCM
No woman to represent in this post

7. Suggestion: what kind of women's programmes needed in the national and regional level and do you need any resource materials to organize / coordinate women's programmes? If yes, then what kind of resource materials?

Programmes needs:

- *Women issues focus on migration*
- *Women and culture*
- *Vocational training*

Resources needs:

- *Office supply*
- *Training material*
- *Financial support*
- *Resource person*
- *Office space*

**Phan Dara
CSCM**

SCMHK National Women's Programmes / Activities in Pre Women's Meeting 2010

1. If there is any specific structure to function women's desk/ women's programme in your SCM then kindly explain it

SCMHK doesn't have any specific structure to function women's desk/ women's programme.

2. How many women members are in your SCM? Are women in the leadership position in SCM?

All together 15-30 members in SCMHK. Women member are more than men member, 2/3 are women and 1/3 are men. There are 8 EXCO member in SCMHK, half of them are women.

3. Name and contacts of the National Women's Coordinator / person in charge of the women's programmes

Lau Kim Ling (Executive Secretary)

4. Briefly share about the women's issues/ concerns in your country in general and SCM in particular which needs to be seriously addressed?

At the beginning of 2009, SCMHK involved in the issue in Domestic Violence Law (Amendment) Ordinance which homosexuality also be included in this law. We have a speech in Legislative Council. SCMHK strongly agree homosexuality should be included in Domestic Violence Law.

5. What are the women's programmes/ activities is organized in your SCM from 2008-2010

We had bible study in feminist perspective in Universities.

6. What are the challenges to coordinate women's programmes in local SCM

Since we are facing financial crisis, we do not have enough money to hire a full time staff in order to maintain our ongoing work. It's difficult to coordinate women's programmes in SCMHK.

7. Suggestion: what kind of women's programmes needed in the national and regional level and do you need any resource materials to organize / coordinate women's programmes? If yes, then what kind of resource materials?

We think we need to have more training on feminist theology so that more Christian women can truly liberate from society.

**Indonesia SCM National Women's Programmes/Activities
Pre Women's Meeting of WSCF AP
Manado, July, 19-21, 2010**

8. If there is any specific structure to function women's desk/ women's programme in your SCM then kindly explain it!

National Congress of ISCM/GMKI in Surabaya, November 2008 defined the new structure in National executive Committee of ISCM called **Executive Secretary for Women Capacity Enhancement**. The National Congress also defined the **Outlines of Programs and Policy Organization** which explains the duties of Executive Secretary for Women Capacity Enhancement are:

- a. To coordinate and organize the field of strengthening the capacity of women on the functional tasks in the branches of GMKI.
- b. Carry out a review and strengthening the capacity of women nationally.
- c. Evaluate the capacity building of Women.

9. How many women members are in your SCM? Are women in the leadership position in SCM? 15, 000 people. There are 6 women's be the chairperson from 71 branches in GMKI

10. Name and contacts of the National Women's Coordinator / person in charge of the women's programmes!

Executive Secretary for Women Capacity Enhancement: Ms. Selfitriani Kulla

Address: Jl. Salemba Raya No. 10, Flat 21, Jakarta Pusat, 10430, Indonesia

Phone: +622132218702,

Fax: +6221 – 3150457

website : www.gmki.or.id

e-mail: ppgmki@yahoo.co.id, perempuan_gmki@yahoo.co

11. Briefly share about the women's issues/ concerns in your country in general and SCM in particular which needs to be seriously addressed?

The issues of women are in Indonesia: education and reproductive health of women, trafficking and migrant workers.

The issues of women are in GMKI: leadership and empowerment of women

12. What are the women's programmes/ activities is organized in your SCM from 2008-2010!

Then the plenum of National Executive Committee of ISCM defined program which will be doing by Executive Secretary for Women Capacity Enhancement is

13. What are the challenges to coordinate women's programmes in local SCM!

The challenges are:

- Patriarchy culture still a big challenging for us as women in Indonesia
- Gender or women's issues is less attention in our branches
- did not have data base and mapping problems

14. Suggestion: what kind of women's programmes needed in the national and regional level and do you need any resource materials to organize / coordinate women's programmes? If yes, then what kind of resource materials?
- We think leadership training and theology
 - We need a book of Training guide

**National Women's programs/Activities in SCM Japan
Pre Women's Meeting 2010, Manado, Indonesia**

Misato Sasaki (SCM Japan)

1. **If there is any specific structure to function women's desk/ women's program in your SCM then kindly explain it**

There is not specific structure. Women's programs have been held by, women senior friends, women SCMs, and women SCM staff

2. **How many women members are in your SCM? Are women in the leadership position in SCM?**

- The Number of Women Members
Now, there are about 200 women members. This number shows about 50% of wo/men members.

3. **Name and contacts of National Women's Coordinator/person in charge of the women's program**

Name:	Misato Sasaki
Contact:	barbysakusakuroz@yahoo.co.jp

4. **Briefly share about the women's issues/concerns in your country in general and SCM in particular which needs to be seriously addressed?**

The Women's Issues

- Domestic Violence
There are many types of DV. For example, the cases are usually happened married couples, family, or date rape. According to the investigation, the number of consulting about DV is 25,210. This number increase more and more by year.
- Abuse for the old
Recently, to abuse to people who look after old wife/husband, old parents or old mother/father-in-law use violence to cared person, is appeared. And almost caring people are women. (The idea that women had better play a role in taking care of someone is strong in Japan. Some people say the reason why women have mother love.)
Why do they use the violence? There are many reasons which people caused that. One of reasons is that it is difficult for them to consult someone about problems, such as how they are exhausted. For example, some are less relationship with the neighborhood as they live in urban area, so they are no friends that can help them. In case of rural area, the old look after the old who need caring because young population is decreasing. Caring people are likely to get frustrated. At worse, they may kill a cared person or commit suicide.
Now, not only SCM but also some NGOs do activity which SCM staff or social worker consult free by phone. But the issue is getting worse.
- Gender stereotype (Discrimination at the workplace)
Few women have taken high position in companies. And women politicians are also few. For example, there are only 2 women politician among 20 politicians in the Cabinet. This characteristic comes from gender role.

Miriam project was held last September. SCMer and senior friends share the issue. Through the project, SCMer deeply understood or concerned about the issue. And they try to consider how we improve the issue.


- Single Mother

Single mothers have a lot of difficulties. One of difficulties is to get a job. If their children are so young, almost employers hesitate to employ single mothers. Because infants often get sick, mothers have to take care of them. Another difficulty is to pay for kinder garden's fee. Most single mother work at night. So they need to find the kinder garden to take care until late evening. Then the fee is higher.

So, some of them apply for taking financial support by government. But most of them don't usually accept their request, If they are young or have a job. Because government judges them if they can make a living without someone support.

Many single mothers have a lot of difficulties.

What are the women's programs/activities is organized in your SCM from 2008-1010?

Program	Assertive Training
Date	September, 2008 & 2009
Program Profile	This program has been held for not only women SCMer but also men. Because we think that "Assertiveness" is necessary to share and pay attention to among many people. "Assertiveness" is to express opinion or desires strongly with confidence, so that people take notice. Through the activity, we hope it leads to appreciate honesty, straight forwardness, and equality for others.
Program detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ This program at this time conduct workshop with ASSERTIVE JAPAN, NPO, cooperated. ➢ There were over 30 participants (half of participants is men).
Shared Things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How important listening to other opinion is ✓ How we encourage themselves, self-confidence, and self-esteem through this communication skill training
Photos	 <p>Learning what "assertiveness" is from NPO Assertive Japan's trainer</p> <p>Sharing about how I have communicated with others</p>

Program	MIRIAM
Date	November, 2009
Program Profile	A women's program called "MIRIAM" have been held two or three times per a year at the national level. We have often discussed gender or sexuality issues.(i.e. Domestic Violence, marriage, women's role in tradition or family, sexual minority) We talk about how gender is related wo/men's working style and working environment in Japan at this time.
Program detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ This program at this time was suggested by Kaori Aoki, a senior friend. ➢ There were 13 participants (2 female senior friends, 8 female students, 3 male students).
Shared Things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How most women are likely to quite their job after marriage or having babies in Japan ✓ How few women have taken high position in companies ✓ How promotion rate of men are much higher than women at senior friends' companies. ✓ How some student felt their gender was a major factor in choosing a job

Photos



brainstorming about what interests wo/men have each other

Sharing the ideas



Sharing her work-life experience
(left) male senior friend, (center) female senior friend,
(right) facilitator, who is female senior friend

5. **What are the challenges to coordinate women's programs in local SCM?**

We have **2 challenges**.

One is **to enhance students' concern**. Now some students have a great commitment to the programs. But the number of them isn't enough. So, senior friends often suggest women's programs to students. Hence, the more active students try to hold women's programs, the stronger other students will have concerns.

Second is how students and senior friends have solidarity. It is hard to set up focused topic. Because not only there are many topics about women issues but also concerned topics change by generation. For example, students have a great concern about gender bias at workplace. While young senior friends concern about marriage or gender role in family. So, a challenge is **how to promote the consciousness, "each topic has strongly link from the viewpoint of women"**, among students, young senior friends and senior friends, even if we have different concerns.

6. **Suggestion: what kind of women's programs needed in the national and regional level and do you need any resource material to organize/ coordinate women's programs? If yes, what kind of resource materials?**

- Guide books of women's workshop
- DVD-R that new SCMer can know what WSCF is
- Name list of students or senior friends we can invite or talk about women issues

National Women's programmes - SCM Philippines

STRUCTURE

Chairperson

Vice Chairperson

Secretary General

Finance

The secretary general works as the head of the women's desk

More than 60 % are women

Theme for the year 2010:

SCM @ 50: In faith and Struggle for national democracy

Our continuing struggle for independence from the US and installation of genuine democracy in our country

-Political authority, authority of the family, authority of the church,

+ Authority of the husband/ men

Rooted from the feudal-patriarchal culture

Women will only be liberated if the society as a whole has liberated from oppression, domination, and exploitation.

SCM@50 : IN FAITH AND STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Continuing to harness the potential, initiative, skills and leadership of marginalized women towards empowerment, justice and equality

1. Discussions/ fora/ awareness campaign that tackle women's issues
2. Integration with the women's community
3. Alliance with other women's group- Gabriela, Amihan

GABRIELA as a partylist group has passed several pro-women legislation including the anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act.

4. Alliance with other churches that conduct activities regarding women's issues

5. Services

Medical Mission (especially for pregnant women)

Therapy for those who are abused

6. Social Action

2010 Plan:

JANUARY-MAY – national elections

- We run for Congress and Senate

March- International Women's day

Social action for the celebration of the women's day

May-Labor Day

Workers rights (fabric, shoes , cigarettes and candies, airlines, banks, restaurant, massmedia)

JUNE- JULY-opening of classes

Continuing struggle against the commercialized, colonial and fascist education in the Philippines

AUGUST – Indigenous people's month

Continuing struggle for the indigenous people's right to self determination

*Integration with the IPs

SEPTEMBER – Commemoration of Martial Law

Continuing struggle for justice to all the victims of political repression,

1. Free the political prisoners. Free the 43 health workers

2. Surface the desaparacidos
Karen and Sherlyn
3. Prosecute those who initiated the extra judicial killings

OCTOBER-Peasant month

Continuing struggle for genuine land reform

*Integration with the women peasant

*Work with the peasant women's group AMIHAN

NOVEMBER- Celebration of the foundation of Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth)

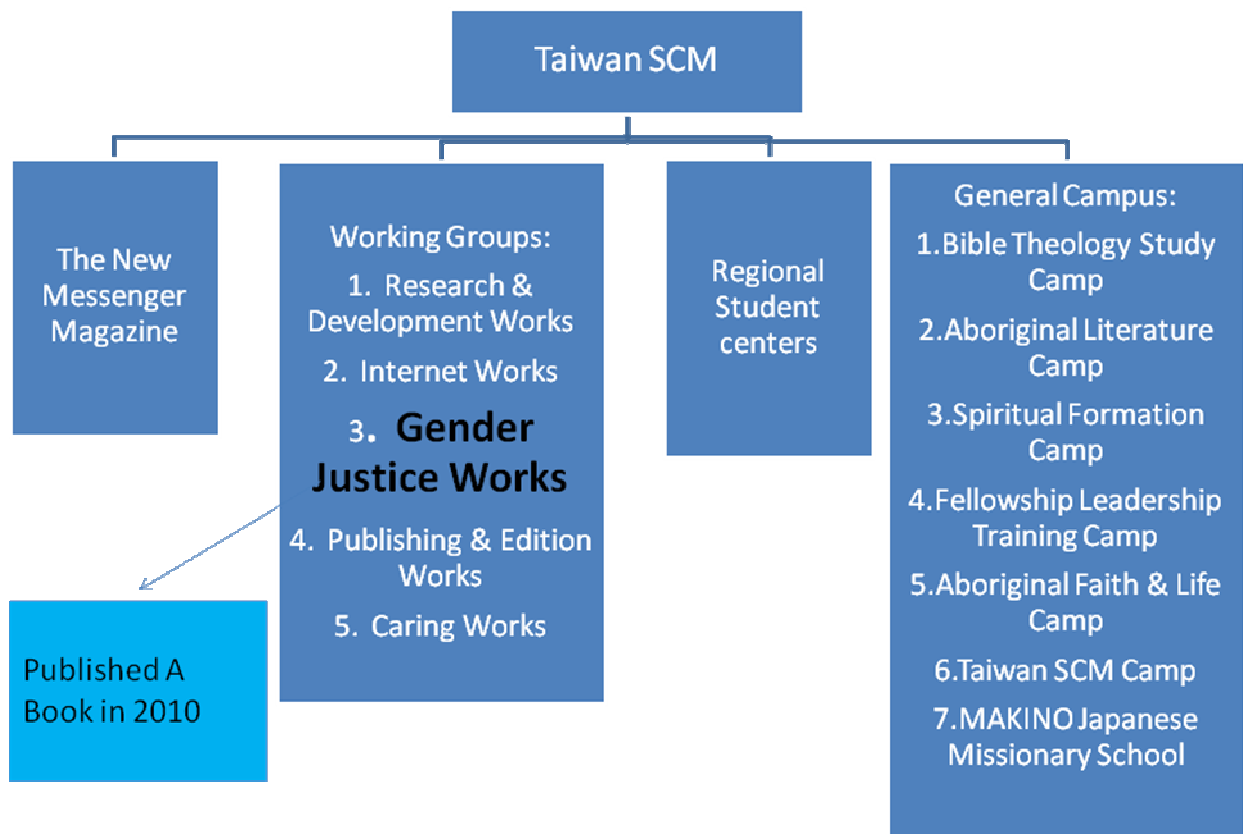
Continuing march of the youth for freedom

DECEMBER- International Human Rights Day

Continuing struggle for the people's rights

*women's rights

**National Women's programmes
Taiwan SCM
Lin, Wan-Jou**



Women's issue in local church

- The number of sisters is beyond brothers, 3/2 sisters-3/1 brothers.
- Elders are almost male. Lots of issues are decided by male.
- We have female pastors but not much as male pastors.
- Women in churches are doing service, but men are doing strategy decision.

Women's issues in Taiwan SCM

- The number of female is also much more than male.
- There is not much programmes for women, but the pastors in local SCM will teach some issues like gender equity, but it depends on each pastor.

Women issues in general

- In churches, women are working on education, teaching, or concerns. Men are working on plans decision, and strategy.
- In local SCM, there is lots of women leaders, and women have lots of chances than in churches to work in every field.

My experiences

- I am in Tamkang SCM (Tamkang University)
- **Male friends are more than female** when my 1st year in Tamkang SCM
- The 2nd-3rd year **female friends are more than male friends**
- Our pastor is Tin, we will arrange lecture like **gender, or sex** and Tin will suggest some pastors to share. Mainly focus on **relationships**, and he encourages us to ask problems when you are in relationship.
- I think women issue has become gender issue in Taiwan SCM.
- I think women activities happen all the time in my SCM.
- In TSCM women bonding has become a power to support women sharing difficulties in lives and giving supports or suggestions when facing problems.
- We won't tell or teach other women how to do, but mainly we accompany

Gender issues

- Sex before marriage:

Young Christians face the different value on sex with other young friends. Pastor gives the words from bible to teach and also encourage different perspectives.
- Work Right between men and women:

We arrange seminar for discussing and inspire youth to think.
- Have babies or NOT:

During semester, we will discuss and share opinions but not giving answers.
Conclusion

- Women → Gender
- Not only women but men
- Share instead of teaching

We expect to educate young generation in order to change situation when young generation enter into local churches.



Sharing on Thailand SCM Women's Programs/activities
 Pre Women's Meeting : July 19-21, 2010 : Manado-Indonesia
 by Janejinda Pawadee (SF)

Current Situation of Thailand SCM : Do not have Women's Coordinator in a structure and do not have any women activities in 2008-2010. Active women members currently are 6 persons (4 SF, 2 students) and remains close communications.

National Women's Coordinator and Contact :

Name	email	Telephone
Rangsima Khamsean "Jew" International Student, McGilvary College of Divinity (M.Th) Payap University, Chiangmai Thailand 50000	rangsimak@yahoo.com	Int'l call: (66-89) 560 1415 Mobile : (089) 560 1415

Women concern in Thailand :In general, status of Thai women are developed in many way but Thai women still facing many difficulties, eg :

- Unwanted pregnancy : no acceptance from man / families / communities
- Unsafe abortion / HIV and AIDS
- Lack of a chance for self-develop due to load domestic works
- Discrimination in family, work place, community and church
- Trafficking / force sex services
- Domestic violence / sexual abused
- Stigmatized when women choose to be "single" or "divorced"

In the last 20 years, many NGOs tried very hard to raise awareness on women issues and encourage law amendment to protect women in all aspect. Women study courses/programs are opened in many universities and taught in women issues particularly.

Recently, some law has been amended and new law has been enforced to protect women and promote women's rights :

- Rights to choose family name after married
- Criminal law (rape), amended from "whoever rape his wife...." to be "*whoever rape others....*"
- Family law (divorce), amended from "any husband who look after other women (not his wife) or any wife has intercourse with other men, can cause a divorce...." to be "*any husband or wife (legal) who look after others and treat them as husband or wife (illegal) or having intercourse with others, either side can ask for divorce.....*"
- Enforced Domestic violence protection law / Human trafficking law

Challenges to coordinate women's program in Thailand :

1. Small numbers of SCMs and lack of "full time" coordinator / staff.
2. Lack of Gender concern in church and community, less awareness on women issues eg :violence against women and children, HIV and AIDS. Many women do not understand women issues and do not want to involve in women activities.

Suggestion to WSCF-AP :

Regional level :

1. Produce handbooks/curriculums for women members to study and understand more on gender and women issues. This handbooks/curriculums can be translated in local languages (by national movement) as needed. The handbooks will help women and men to understand biblical teaching and deep understanding on Gender concern.
2. Create directory/contact of SCM women leaders in the region to help women in national/regional level to get to know their involvement with WSCF and how influence to WSCF/SCM life.
3. Encourage each movement to share information on women activities in their countries through all means of communication.

Sub-regional level :

1. Initiate a sub-regional discussions/programs on a common issues that women are facing in their sub-regional.

Women Leadership in WSCF and the Importance of the Regional Women's Programme of WSCF AP

1895 – World Student Christian Federation

- ▶ Men leadership projected
- ▶ Women in the Federation –invisible, her stories untold and unheard

1972 – 1976, 1977 – 1981 – Significant periods in WSCF

- ▶ WSCF Women's Project -North America – 1972
- ▶ WSCF Women's Project Europe – 1976
- ▶ Women leadership increased from various regions including Asia Pacific – 1977-1981
- ▶ Women in the WSCF be focused as one of the priorities – A mandate – 1977 GA
- ▶ Decision to hold Women's Pre – Assembly
- ▶ WSCF established its Inter – Regional Women's Programme
- ▶ WSCF Women's Project – Asia Pacific – 1978
- ▶ Women's Pre Assembly brought significant programmatic and legislative changes – 1981 San Francisco GA
- ▶ Formation of the Inter Regional Women's Commission

Need of the Regional Women's Programme in WSCF AP

- ▶ Women's oppression an experienced reality
- ▶ Theologizing the reality in the context
- ▶ Common framework of analysis – “ women hold in the region is that patriarchy is a system and ideology that have been the overarching rule over other social systems and ideologies”

Vision and Directions

- ▶ SCM WSCF women identified themselves in the struggle for change
- ▶ Struggle towards liberation and new humanity in the larger society
- ▶ Linking our faith with our stories
- ▶ Re read the Bible and doing theology from the young women's experience and perception

Where are we today?

- ▶ The structure of SCMs – Patriarchy or in Partnership?
- ▶ Space for women leadership
- ▶ Our participation in the struggle for liberation

(Power point presentation was done by Sunita Suna, Regional Women's Coordinator information are collected from Praxis and website)

Report of the Regional Women's Programmes Regional Pre Women's Meeting – WSCF AP July 19-21, 2010, Manado, Indonesia

RWP 2008

The objectives of the Regional Women's Programme (RWP) for 2008 were:

1. To provide a common platform to the young women from the sub regions to share experiences, exchange ideas and plan of actions to advocate effectively.
2. To create awareness on the emerging trends and develop skills for critical analysis and different mechanisms to address the issue in their communities.
3. To provide them an exposure and live in experience with the women affected by the issues of Migration, Trafficking, Women in war conflicts, Prostitution, /HIV /AIDS, and poverty in general.
4. To derive inspiration and develop perspectives from theological reflection and contextual Bible studies.
5. To facilitate them developing strong network with other like-minded women's groups who are working on the issue and strengthen the movement and develop a common strategy at the Regional level deriving the insights from the sub-regions to combat violence against women.

The Regional Women's Programme initiated four main programmes/activities for the young women from SCMs to achieve the above mentioned goals. They are Regional Women's Programme – SCM Pakistan Joint Women's Programme (RWP-SCM –JWP), two sub regional women's programmes and the Regional Pre women's meeting. Following are the brief description of the activities:

A i) South Asia Sub Regional Women's Programme on Young Women Leadership Formation
June 14-20, 2008
Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Goals of the programme were:

- 1) To provide a common platform to the young women from the National SCMs to share experiences, exchange ideas and plan of actions to advocate effectively.
- 2) To nurture and enhance their leadership capacities by creating awareness on the emerging trends and develop skills for critical analysis and different mechanisms to address the issue in their communities.
- 3) To provide them an exposure and live in experience with the women affected by the issues of Migration, Trafficking, Women in war conflicts, Prostitution, /HIV /AIDS, and poverty in general.
- 4) To derive inspiration and develop perspectives from theological reflection and contextual Bible studies.
- 5) To make them understand international covenants and conventions like the CEDAW
- 6) To help them developing strong network with other like-minded women's groups who are working on the issues and strengthen the movement and develop a common strategy at the Regional level deriving the insights from their countries to combat violence against women.

The Sub Regional Women's Programme was held on June 14-20, 2008 at KARITAS, Dhaka, Bangladesh on the theme; *Women's Response to the growing concerns of Poverty, Trafficking and HIV/AIDS: Challenges and Hopes* 12 young women from South Asia participated in the said programme, representing the national movements of SCM Bangladesh, SCM India, SCM Pakistan and SCM Sri Lanka

The content of the workshop was planned to discuss and reflect on *Gender analysis, Sharing of the contemporary realities of women in South Asian countries by the participants – followed by analysis, Women, Poverty Trafficking and HIV/AIDS- South Asian Context, Role of CEDAW to stop VAW, Core challenges in ending VAW– and Different Mechanism to address VAW, Role of SCM Women in their community to promote gender justice, Bible studies from the perspectives of women and Exposure to the community.*

Gender Analysis was conducted by Ms. Mohuya Nizam, Programme Manager – Rights, from Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Dhaka. She analyzed the gender stereotypes through various exercises and activities to understand how gender is constructed by the environment we live. She explained how women and men are conditioned and forced to accept the societal given roles and responsibilities to fulfill society's expectations. She also emphasized that this gender conditioning to maintain our life as woman and men has a direct implications especially for woman in the area of social, economic, political and religious field.

Contemporary realities of women in South Asian countries was a sharing session by the participants. The participants were asked to prepare on this topic from the context of their own countries, prior to the programme. The participants shared and reflected the issues and conditions of violence against women in their countries. The sharing session brought the common realities, and struggle of women in their regions, which helped the group to analyze how patriarchy is the manifestation of violence against women in every society and they were surprised to see the common concerns of women from every South Asian countries.

The interlink of the issue of poverty, trafficking and HIV/AIDS and its impact on women was dealt by Ms. Rowshon Ara, Dhaka Ahsania Mission. She explained the push and pull factor of the growing concern of trafficking in women. She said majority of women are living in abject poverty with no choice for survival. On the other hand the sex trade is growing as billion dollars business across the globe. The sex traders take the advantage of the vulnerable situation of women to exploit them and they are easily accessible for exploitation. Every year around 15,000 women from Bangladesh are being trafficked to the brothels in India and Pakistan. The situation in the country is pushing women to accept the exploitative way of survival. She said trafficking in women must address seriously, by Governments implementing laws, by communities and civil societies.

There was a session on CEDAW by Professor Mahamuda Islam, from Gender Studies Dhaka University and also the head of the Women for Women in Dhaka. She introduced the convention and the significance of the convention. She said, though CEDAW is ratified by the South Asian countries, every country has the reservation to certain articles

which is also creating obstacles to implement this convention. Moreover it's important to bring awareness of CEDAW among the grassroots women which is not happening in our society.

The role of SCM women to promote gender justice was conducted by Ms. Keka Adhikari – Senior friend of SCM and WSCF. She also serves as the Director of the HR department of The Leprosy Mission in Dhaka. Keka shared about her journey in SCM as a woman, her leadership role in the local units and in the region as the member of the Regional Women's Committee. She also explained in brief about the importance of women leadership in the national SCM and in the federation, her inspiration from other women in the federation which motivated her to commit herself to work in the SCM Bangladesh. She also tried to emphasize the challenges during her time and in today's context as a woman leader. Her personal sharing was also quite inspiring to other young women in the programme.

The **Bible studies** were conducted from the perspectives of women by Sunita Suna, the Regional Women's Coordinator, WSCF AP, Ms. Monisha Helen Sarkar, Asst Gen. Secy YWCA, Dhak and Bishop Mondal, the patron of SCM Bangladesh. The Bible studies were focused on the Re reading the Bible from the women's perspectives, Contextual Bible study on Violence against Women and the contribution and leadership role of women in the Bible.

Exposure Programme was a different experience for the group. They visited 3 different organizations. 1. *Durjoy Nari Sangha*, working for the upliftment and empowerment of commercial sex workers, 2. *Mukta Akash* is creating awareness and working with people living with HIV/AIDS and 3. *Badhan Hijra Sangha* – The transvestites' community. The group interacted and met with the women in the community to understand the realities. Their true stories of exploitation enraged the participants for the unjust systems where always women face the brunt of it. The group also visited the shelter for the children of the commercial sex workers. The exposure was quite moving when the group met with this community. The main intention of the exposure was to expose the realities and suffering of women in the society, and to change our attitudes towards the people who are marginalized in the main stream society.

A ii) **South East Asia Sub Regional Women's Programme on**

Women and Migration

24-27 October 2008, NCCP, Manila

International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees

28 – 30 October 2008, Bay view Hotel- Manila

The main Goals of the programme were:

- To understand the issue of Migration and critically analyze the implications from the perspectives of women
- To develop awareness on the GFMD and challenge the policies of labour mobility across the globe with the IAMR community.
- To expose and experience the negative implication of migration by organizing 'Exposure programmes' to the community for the participants.
- To reflect on the theological understanding from the perspectives of women and migration
- To network with other like minded social groups, participate in the event of IAMR and organize workshop on Dissecting Global Migration and Education

The Regional Women's Programme of WSCF AP decided to hold this Sub regional women's programme on Women and Migration for South East Asia in Manila for two reasons. 1) Philippine is the best exposure country for the issue on migration as Philippine experience in developing the export of labor as an industry. 2) Participate in the International Assembly of Migrants and Refugee in order to join hands with the international community for solidarity to the migrants across the globe and oppose the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The programme was held from 24 – 31 October 2008, at the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, and the Bay View Hotel, Manila. 10 young women from the National SCMs of Myanmar, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Philippines, Hong Kong and Korea

participated in this programme. Participants from Thailand, Cambodia and Singapore couldn't attend the programme for practical reasons.

The 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2008 was held in Manila on October 28-30, 2008. *The GFMD, is a permanent forum open to the 192 member-states of the United Nations. first held in Brussels, Belgium in July 2007. It is a non-binding forum that serves as platform for participating states to discuss various concerns on migrants and migration. In paper, GMFD aims to "strengthen the positive aspects of migration to be used for development".*

The International Assembly of Migrants, Refugees and Advocates (IAMR) was held in Manila on October 28-30, 2008 to discuss about issues surrounding migration and development from the perspective of Migrants' Challenge to the GFMD.

The theme of the International Assembly was - *"Migrants Challenge to the GFMD: End poverty, ensure jobs at home, stop forced migration! Uphold and Protect the rights of Migrants and Refugees!* IAMR is a collaborative effort of the like minded organizations.

Therefore the Sub regional women's programme of WSCF AP was planned to execute in two parts. In the 1st part preparation, orientation on GFMD and Biblical / Theological reflections from the women's perspectives took place. And in the 2nd part the participants participated in the IAMR through different activities.

In the 1st part the following activities took place:

Ms. Connie Bragas-regalado from Migrante International took a session on **Women and Migration from the Asian context - A Critical analysis**. Connie was the most important resource person for this session to explain the plight of the migrant workers, especially the female migrant workers who herself was a migrant worker as a domestic helper in Hong Kong for around 10 years. Connie gave an overall understanding of the issue of migrant workers from her own experiences and explained the labor export policy of the government who decided to export people as migrant and failed to provide decent jobs to the people in the home country – Philippines and elsewhere.

Ms. Jazz Lumang, the executive director of IBON Foundation took a session on **Critical analysis on GFMD**. She gave a clear understanding of GFMD and the interlink of the Neoliberal globalization and GFMD and how it implements the policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization. She said migrants represents 2.9 percent of the global population of these almost half (48.6%) are women. Today the remittances by the migrants has reached to US\$226 trillion. The real objectives of the GFMD is to continuously offer the neo liberal policies to various countries and systematic labor export for "development" equal to commodification. The significance of GFMD to the Philippines is labor export programme. The impact of the GFMD to migrants are migrants' wage, service, employment protection and rights are always under attack.

The Bible study was led by **Ms. Liza B. Lamis**, National Council of Churches in the Philippines on the theme **Today's Sarah and Hagar in Dialogue**. Liza's Bible study was from the context of the Philippines. She said, the phenomenon of the overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) 60% of whom are women, underlines the class division between first world, rich women and third world poor women. In re-reading Hagar's story in view of the life experiences of OFW, the shared oppression of rich and poor women are brought to light as well as patriarchy in dividing women - thus continually perpetuating its self. She raised some of the thought provoking questions like what are the possibilities of a dialogue that would bring a fuller life to these women and their children. How can the Hagar's and Sarah's of today support each other and reject the working of patriarchy? The Bible Study on the said topic was a relevant theological reflection from the context of the female migrant workers in the Philippines and other developing countries.

For the **Exposure** the participants visited **Tatalon, the Urban Poor community in Quezon City**. Tatalon is the living example of the neo liberal globalization in the Philippines. The population of Tatalon is around 110,000, and they live in dire poverty. The exposure to this community was shocking for all to see people living in cubicles with no sanitation

facilities. The living condition of people is inhuman. The community leader said, Government doesn't pay any attention to the misery of this community rather there is always threat from the government of demolishing our houses. According to the community people they came to this area and settled since 1960s. but they don't own the land and very recently MERALCO an Electricity Company is claiming the village and guards are employed to keep an eye on people. MERALCO provides electricity to many in the city, yet the people of Tatalon live in darkness in spite of having the presence of the company they do not have access to the electricity. Our group interacted with the women leaders of **Samakana – Samahan Ng Maralitang Karbabai Hans Nagkakaisa (Association of United Urban Poor Women) community in Tatalon** and they explained about their suffering. Their husbands are migrant workers in Saudi and other countries struggling to send money back to their families to keep them alive. Since the government doesn't help them in any ways so the people especially the women organized themselves and form this association in the year 1997 with one chapter as the Day Care Centre for the street children. Today it has 7 chapters, serving the community in the areas of health, and hygiene, education, micro financing for small business and organize women to create awareness and empower women to resist Violence against women.

The intention of the exposure to this community was to expose the realities of the abject poverty people live with and the disparity between the rich few and poor many. The widening gap between these two communities is the example of the liberalization, deregulation and the insensitivity of the irresponsible government towards her people. participants were shocked to see the living condition of the people. Philippines is also a place for the skyscrapers shopping malls. As the shopping malls mushrooms the slums spreads along with it. After seeing the situation and listening from the women leaders the group was able to understand the situation that how they are forced to leave their country and migrate for their livelihood. There is no good news to the poor in this community by the government but impose them to accept the labor export policy and leave the country to survive their family as well as the government through the remittance.

In the 2nd part the participants were ready to participate in the IAMR activities:

"The youth are not for export, the youth's future is not for sale" and "No to forced migration, no to labor export" were the slogans by the students and youth during a demonstration on October 27, joined by WSCF AP, SCMP, the International Youth Action Day spearheaded by national youth groups in the Philippines together with the Asia Pacific Students and Youth Association (ASA) and International Movement of Catholic Students Asia Pacific. The youth and students came to the street and demanded for a decent life in the home country. The young women from the WSCF AP were symbolically put the boxes written –**"Nurses, Care takers, Domestic helpers, entertainers, mail ordered brides for export"** The women were chanting **"We are not for export, we are not for sale"**

The International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees was held on 28th -30th October at the Bay view Hotel, Manila. Around 180 delegates from different parts of the world attended the assembly. The theme of the International Assembly was - **"Migrants Challenge to the GFMD: End poverty, ensure jobs at home, stop forced migration! Uphold and Protect the rights of Migrants and Refugees!** The 3 days assembly was consisting of presentations by activists, workshops on the issue of migration from different NGOs / Civil societies and Students movement, plenary, speak out by the migrants, protest/rally. The IAMR was a space /platform for the activists, advocates, migrants and the like minded groups who are working for and with the migrants to oppose and stop forced migration. The presentations on the topics were – *The Political Economy of Migration and development- Promotion and Protection of Migrants rights: Issues and Challenges - Unmasking the Labor Export Policies of sending countries - War and globalization: impact on migrants and refuges and A critical analysis on the GFMD process.*

IAMR critiqued the neo-liberal framework of GFMD—liberalization, deregulation and privatization—its promotion even by imperialist countries to replace the "official development aid" to underdeveloped countries and exploit the desperation of people of poorer countries to move out of their countries primarily for economic survival. According to the IAMR, "While there is some truth that remittances temporarily alleviate the financial woes of families of migrants, this perverse notion signifies greater commodification of migrants and the perpetuation of conditions for cheap labor, not to mention the social costs of migration, especially on children and families." The IAMR convinced that forced migration is the modern day form of slavery.

While the presentations unmasked the labor export policies and the agenda to sustain the ailing economy of the country by critical analysis the migrants shared the bitter truth of the misery and their suffering in the foreign land. The

IAMR was also a space to build the international solidarity to address and confront the issue of migration in a more systematic manner .

On 29th October A multi - sectoral protest action was held on the opening of the GFMD.

The international community of IAMR came down to the street to show their solidarity and resist/oppose the ongoing GFMD, which is paving the way for forced migration. The huge rally walked in the street of Manila chanting the slogans – No to GFMD, No to Forced Migration, No to labor export, No to Modern day of Slavery, Create jobs at home etc..

On 30th October many NGOs organized workshops on Migration from various perspectives. ***Global Migration and Education: Dissecting the Links and Impact of Globalization on Education the Youth and the Family*** was organized by the WSCF AP, Asian Students Association, Alliance of Concerned Teachers, and ANAKBAYAN-ILPS Youth Commission.

**B) Pre Women's Meeting
Your Daughters Shall Prophesy
July 24-26 2008, Hong Kong**

The Goals were:

- To understand the historical significance of the women leadership within the WSCF Asia Pacific region and the federation as a whole and the importance of the Regional Women's Programme
- To do theological reflection on the theme 'Your Daughters Shall Prophesy'
- To share and reflect of the National Women's Programme by the members
- To evaluate and re visioning the Regional Women's Programme
- To discuss and promote women leadership – beyond the General Assembly of WSCF
- To Select / elect the Regional Women's Committee for the biennial (2009-2010)

The Pre-women's meeting was held from July 24 -26 2008 at the Chungchi University, Hong Kong on the theme 'Your Daughters shall Prophesy'. 10 young women from the National SCMs of Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Australia attended the event. The Women's Pre-Meeting is vital in the history of WSCF AP, to ensure the active participation of women in the Regional Committee Meeting, the decision making bodies of the WSCF AP and the General Assembly the highest decision making body of the whole Federation, and prioritize women leadership and women's concerns in SCMs.

Rev. Phyllis Wong, the minister of the Kowloon Union Church, Hong Kong led us to the Bible study on the theme Your Daughters shall Prophesy (Joel 2:28-29) that was a channel for much discussion focused in the area of feminist theology, women's rights, body politics, what it means to dream, visioning, and being a prophetess in our time.

The final session was electing a new set of members for the Regional Women's Committee to work for the next Biennium 2009-2010

1. Cha Eun Hye – KSCF- Korea
2. Ashari Rhoda John – SCM Sri Lanka
3. Thin Siden – SCM Cambodia
4. Bronwyn Crowe – SCM Australia (Ex co)
5. Wanyun Poon – SCM Hong Kong (Standing Committee)

Bronwyn and Wanyun are the members at large and the Regional Women's Coordinator will be the ex officio. (*please refer the pre women's meeting report of 2008 for more information*)

Evaluation

The RWP was aim to nurture and enhance the leadership capacity of the young women from SCMs (Asia and Pacific Region) who are actively involved in the local movements in promoting gender justice. The activities was implemented through the Regional Women's Programme of Young Women Leadership Formation. The Leadership Formation provided a space to the young women from different Asian countries to share and critically analyse the challenging issues women in general are confronting in the regional context. The issue of migration, trafficking, women in war and conflict situation, prostitution, HIV/AIDS and poverty are some of the serious concerns which challenged the women to respond and take action in the grassroots level to stop violence against women. The leadership formation helped them to being aware and deepens their understanding of the realities of women and the above said emerging trends. The young women were not only able to critically analyse the problem, but also experienced the realities through the exposure to the affected communities. The Biblical/theological reflections on the issues challenged their faith to be more active and vocal against the injustices in our society. During this process the young women were also able to relate their own experiences as women and generated passion to serve the local communities.

The evaluation process of this programme followed in two levels.

1) In the individual written evaluation participants have shared that this programme was an unique experience for many which was informative and challenging on the issue of forced migration. It helped them to identify the problems and causes of forced migration of both women and men and the input during the sessions helped them to relate and analyse the situation of their own context.

The exposure to Tatalon was shocking and unacceptable of the fact that there is a darker reality behind the sky scrapper shopping malls in metro Manila. For some this was the 1st time visit to the urban poor. The programme and exposure has widened their perspective and motivated them to participate in the struggle of migrants in their own countries. The space was also to know the realities of different countries. They said this programme has definitely deepened their understanding on the issues and helped them to change their attitudes towards the migrants.

2) In the second part this programme will also be reviewed and evaluated by the Regional Women's Committee based on the report by the Regional Women's Coordinator.

The young women were excited and determined to share the information about the issue on forced migration in their local SCMs and encourage the student community to support the migrants especially the women migrants.

RWP 2009

The objectives of the Regional Women's Programme (RWP) for 2009 were:

1. To initiate a process for young women leaders of SCM to articulate their life experiences, struggles, challenges with critical analysis
2. To create awareness of the social, political, cultural and religious implications on women's identity in their own contexts.
3. To re-define a woman's identity and reclaim self as subject, self towards liberation and transformation through A Critical Feminist Hermeneutics of Liberation.
4. To re-read the Bible together as young women centred on the focus/theme from critical feminist perspectives.
5. To promote and practice "Doing Critical Feminist Liberation Theology" in SCMs on all levels as well as in Asia and the Pacific.

6. To form a working group with a two-fold aim of i) making a critical evaluation of the significance of the ongoing “Women Doing Theology” programme of WSCF AP; and ii) coming up with a guide book for the National Movements to encourage and enable the young women and men to promote “Doing Critical Feminist Theology” in the SCMs.

In the Year 2009, the Regional Women’s Programme initiated one sub regional workshop, one regional workshop and the Regional Women’s Committee to execute our vision and goals.

A. Workshop on Feminist Critical Analysis through Re reading the Bible from the Feminist Perspectives, March 11-13, 2009, Bangkok, Thailand

Goals:

- i. To enable the women members to develop perspectives and guide them to envision the future women’s programmes of WSCF AP
- ii. To enable the women members to develop feminist critical analysis framework, and looking at gender for the purpose of going beyond gender analysis
- iii. To study Bible by using critical feminist hermeneutics

This workshop was held from March 11-13, 2009 at the Bangkok Christian Guest house just before the WSCF AP Regional Women’s Committee (RWC) Meeting. The representatives of the RWC from South Asia, East Asia and Pacific were the participants of this workshop. The intention of this workshop was to help the members develop perspectives and guide them to envision the future Women’s Programme of WSCF AP. The contents of the workshop were: forming perspectives and develop feminist critical analysis framework, and looking at gender for the purpose of going beyond gender analysis etc. Bible studies were done using critical feminist hermeneutics. Yong Ting Jin, a feminist theologian from Malaysia was there to facilitate these sessions.

All the sessions were conducted through various exercises and active participation of the group. The participants were able to identify the issues/problems and root causes of violence against women when they did an analysis of stories on VAW depicted in the news papers. They realized the need to develop a tool of analysis which is more wholistic, going beyond gender analysis and include the intersectionality problem while doing the critical feminist analysis.

There were two Bible studies conducted on the texts Luke 10:38-42, and Mark 5:21-43. The method of reading the Bible together was quite insightful to discover the important roles of Mary and Martha in Jesus’ movement and their leadership roles in the House Churches. Even in the 2nd Bible Study it was an eye opening to read the text from the perspective of the hemorrhage woman and understand the relations of power and authority. The group realized that our mindset or frame of thinking is also based on patriarchy and androcentrism. Hence it is important to develop the critical feminist analysis an alternative analysis for liberation and transformation of “self” and society/ structure.

B. 19th Regional Women’s Committee of WSCF AP Region, March 14-15, 2009, Bangkok, Thailand

Goals:

- i. To share the on going activities on women’s concerns in the WSCF AP region and critical analysis of the women’s issues
- ii. To review the Regional Women’s Programmes and National Women’s programme from 2007-2008
- iii. To envision and planning for the RWP for 2009-2012
- iv. To evaluate the work of the Regional Women’s Coordinator of WSCF AP
- v. To work on budget for 2009-2012

The 19th Regional Women’s Committee (RWC) met on 14-15, March 2009 at the Bangkok Christian Guest House, Bangkok, Thailand. The Regional Women’s Committee is the decision making body of the Regional Women’s programme, comprising of six women. The committee meet once in two years to concrete plans for the Regional Women’s Program in the new quadrennium; evaluate the program and the work being done; implement concrete plans; drawing up specific plans for program implementation,. The following members attended the RWC. Ashani Rodha John – Sri Lanka- South Asia Representative, Bronwyn

Crowe- Australia – Ex Co of WSCF AP and Pacific Representative, Cha Eun Hye- South Korea – North East Asia Representative, Poon Wan Yu- Hong Kong – Standing Committee Member at large and North East Asia Representative, Sunita Suna – India (Regional Women’s Coordinator) Yong Ting Jin – Malaysia (Observer), Janejinda Pawadee – Thailand (Vice Chair – WSCF Global Ex Co -Observer), Necta Montes Rocas – Philippines (Regional Secretary)

The evaluation and analysis of the ongoing programmes helped the committee to envision the thrust and direction of the future women’s programme as follows:

The WSCF- AP and SCM women strive to :

- seek for self-liberation and transformation;
- build an inclusive non-violent community,
- break the structures of domination and subordination,
- promote equality and build up women leadership within SCM and the Church

The RWC planned the women’s programmes for the next quadrennium 2009-2012 based on the vision, direction and thrust. In addition to the above mentioned activities the RWC also did the evaluation of the Regional Women’s Coordinator based on her report and personal reflection and recommended the Standing Committee to renew the contract of the Regional Women’s Coordinator for another term.

C. Women Doing Theology Workshop on the theme Women and Identity , November 14-22, 2009, Jakarta, Indonesia

Goals:

1. To initiate a process for young women leaders of SCM to articulate their life experiences, struggles, challenges with critical analysis in relation to the workshop focus/theme.
2. To create awareness of the social, political, cultural and religious implications on women’s identity in the Indonesian context.
3. To re-define a woman’s identity and reclaim self as subject self towards liberation and transformation through A Critical Feminist Hermeneutics of Liberation.
4. To re-read the Bible together as young women centred on the focus/theme from critical feminist perspectives.
5. To promote and practice “Doing Critical Feminist Liberation Theology” in SCMs on all levels as well as in Asia and the Pacific.
6. To form a working group with a two-fold aim of i) making a critical evaluation of the significance of the ongoing “Women Doing Theology” programme of WSCF AP; and ii) coming up with a guide book for the National Movements to encourage and enable the young women and men to promote “Doing Critical Feminist Theology” in the SCMs.

The Women Doing Theology Workshop was held from November 14-22, 2009 in Jakarta, Indonesia on the theme “Women and Identity”. 18 young women from Asia and the Pacific participated in the said workshop, representing the national movements of **Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Timor Leste and Thailand.**

The 9 days workshop focused on the general and broad theme “Women’s Liberation and Transformation” with a specific focus on the concern of “Women and Identity”. This theme/focus was recommended by the Regional Women’s Committee (RWC) after a deep reflection on the issue of women leadership in SCMs, followed by a critical feminist analysis on the issues/concerns of women in SCM, Church and Society during the RWC meeting in Bangkok 2009. The Committee strongly felt that we must address the issue of women’s liberation and transformation among ourselves as SCM women who struggle also for emancipation, equality, justice and peace in church and society.

The process and methodology of the workshop was based on the steps/tools of a critical feminist hermeneutics of liberation in the following components:

- Using feminist critical analysis, participants shared Her Story of their life experiences, struggles, challenges as women in their own context.
- Thematic inputs by the resource persons on:
 - Women's Identity in Islam
 - Socio-political, cultural and religious implications on women's identity in Indonesian context;
 - Doing Critical Feminist Liberation Theology and A Critical Feminist Hermeneutics of Liberation.
 - Re-reading selected Biblical texts using critical feminist hermeneutics.
- Exposure to the local communities to understand and experience the struggles and challenges of women in Indonesian context.
- Prepare feminist liturgies and conduct creative worship by the participants around the theme of the workshop.

The following resource persons were present to facilitate the whole process:

Amina Wadud – Islamic feminist and scholar, currently a visiting professor at the Center for Religious and Cross Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Anna Marsiana – Coordinator of Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology (AWRC), Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Yong Ting Jin - Feminist Theologian and former coordinator of (AWRC) Malaysia

Nina Nayoan – the former regional women's committee member and intern of FIM from 2007-2009, Timor Leste

Sunita Suna - Regional Women's Coordinator of WSCF-AP, Hong Kong, and the coordinator of this WDT workshop.

The workshop started with an opening Worship. The worship was prepared based on the theme "women and identity" led by Nina Nayoan followed by a series of community building activities conducted by Sunita Suna

Sharing of Her Story

Sharing of Her Story was an essential process of the WDT workshop as feminist theology begins with our lives, our stories and struggles. This was a space for the women to share and listen to each others life story as we engaged in doing theology. Sharing of Her Story initiated a process of storytelling on women and identity and enabled them to articulate and critically analyzed their own life story to understand and reclaim their identity. The critical analysis of their own story led them to identify the factors which are the stumbling blocks in reclaiming their identity. This process helped the group to realize that though the struggle for women's emancipation is common, but the struggles and challenges women are confronted in their lives are diverse and multifaceted. Therefore, SCM women must be encouraged to tell their stories and sharing Her Story was the basis to set tune for the rest of the process in the workshop.

Re-reading selected Biblical texts using critical feminist hermeneutics

Luke 10:38-42 – who is Mary? Who is Martha?

Ting Jin explained that the text shows many struggles and questions in the first Christian communities that there are 2 types of ministry, namely "teaching" and "diakonia". this text is a result of the struggle, which the term integrated "diakonia" was separated into two models of ministry, namely teaching and "diakonia" as narrowly defined into "serving". The one integral meaning, role and praxis of "diakonia" were "eucharistic table service, proclamation, and ecclesial leadership". Martha and Mary were both prominent leaders of the Jesus movement and community. In view of the above critical study of the text, each reader as a subject self is asked what has been oppressive, negative and inhibiting? What has been liberating, empowering and transforming based on one's experience of struggle for change, liberation and transformation?

Four Biblical Paradigms/models: A theoretical framework to look at the Bible Tingjin explained the following 4 paradigms:

1. Doctrinal-Revelatory Paradigm

2. Scientific-Positivist Paradigm

3. Hermeneutic-Cultural Paradigm

4. Rhetorical-Emancipatory Paradigm

Women's Identity in Islam was facilitated by the Islamic feminist **Amina Wadud**. This session was more of dialogue with the resource person. The group discussed about polygamy, Sharia law, women religious leaders in Islamic community, the struggle and obstacles for gender justice etc. She explained to the group that there are no roles designated for women in the Qur'an except **khilafah** (a **khilafah** is one who is a trustee of Allah). Women and men are created to serve Allah, each other and the creation as agents or trustees of God.

As a moral relationship: everything that enhances fulfilling that **khilafah** is encouraged everything that limits fulfilling that **khilafah** is discouraged. The most noble of you in the sight of God is the one with the most **taqwa**. **Taqwa** is a moral spiritual term that carries the dimension of awareness and remembrance of Allah, action, transparency in actions, moral responsibility. The **Qur'anic Models** Eve: Hawa'a, Aasiyah, Bilqis: leadership, Maryam: mother of Jesus.

It was also interesting to know that when she explained, in Quran its mentioned that both Adam and Eve are responsible for disobeying God. This helped to rethink how Christianity has created the image of Eve as a sinner. She said, Gender relations are prescribed and promoted in families. Gender asymmetry has been a major part of human culture and history. She said, Muslim women in every country, every economic class, every level of education, every spiritual inclination are engaged in transforming life for the betterment of all humankind.

Socio-political, cultural and religious implications on women's identity in Indonesian context was facilitated by **Anna Marsiana**. Anna tried to give a general picture of the status of women in Indonesia. She said, Indonesia is declared as a Muslim state and the religious laws/family laws are implemented faithfully which are often biased against women. Indonesian society is highly patriarchal and man is the decision maker for everything including what kind of clothes women should wear. Women have a secondary status in the socio, political field and women are more vulnerable economically. Many young women are forced to migrate to other countries as domestic workers.

It is a challenge to talk about religious and cultural implications against women within the community, because the laws are accepted within the religion and the oppression and exploitation is carried out in the name of religion. So there is a small room to talk against the laws and its quite challenging to bring awareness within the Indonesian community. Yet, there are women's groups and social movements trying hard to make people understand and change the mindset of the people, and the good thing is gradually changes are happening.

Exposure: the participants were divided into 2 groups to visit the communities. Group 1. visited to the **National Commission on Violence against Women, Migrant Care, and Association of Migrant Workers**. They met and interacted with the women domestic migrant workers, heard their painful stories as well as courageous stories of their life experiences when they lived in a strange/ foreign land. Some of them were raped, sexually abused, and exploited by their employers, even some of their friends are being killed. But the government does not help or has not taken any serious action against the violence occurring to the women. The group was able to analyse the issue as a power game and political abuse for economic reasons. Indonesia is one of the largest exporters (sending countries) of domestic workers in South East Asia. The government is definitely benefiting by the remittance, hence the government is promoting the labor export policy. On the other hand majority of the Indonesian women do not have any choice, but migrate to other countries for survival of their families back home.

The National Commission on Violence against Women, Migrant Care, and Association of Migrant Workers are providing shelter, legal support to the women and advocating against the labor export policy.

Group 2. Visited **Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace(ICRP) and the Islamic college of Nurul Kasyat – the Pesantren putri (boarding school for females)**. The group met with ICRP they explained that more than 80% of the total population in Indonesia are Muslim, hence Islam and religious laws plays a significant role in the country. The government has declared Indonesia a Muslim state and has literally imposed on citizens to identify themselves by a

religion. It is mandatory for every citizen to mention religion in their ID cards. The Sharia Islamic law is biased against women and women's identity has to be identified with a male member of the family. Motherhood is a strong part of identity among Muslim women in Indonesian community. The issue of polygamy is having a significant influence on women and affecting them socially, politically, economically. The laws are sanctioned by the religion, and imposed on women in the name of religion.

Visiting the 2nd place the Islamic college of Nurul Kasyat – the Pesantren putri (boarding school for females) was very meaningful and related to the theme “women and identity” of the workshop. They women students study religion – Islam, but they cannot become the leader or Ulema. The female students have no choice and freedom what they want or how they decide for their own life. The authority of the boarding school will decide and determine their life. In the name of religion, the school will control, and shape their identity how Muslim women should be.

Systemic Analysis or a Critical Feminist Analysis was facilitated by Tingjin. She said, **Story telling** need to interpret experiences / stories. our stories/Life experiences are shaped by social, cultural, religious locations and constructions.

Social Location and Domination-Subordination Analysis: It is important to analyse, examine our own social location and participation in the power relation of domination and subordination. become conscious of how our experiences are constructed by you yourself / we our selves and construct your/ our self identity in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, age, class, sexuality, nationality/ nation, colonialism, education, state, social status, health, geographical location.

Social location group categories / systems and structures – interfere/ interact / multiply each other in different situation, context etc. by these and through these categories women are assigned identities, women and individuals are defined, determined, constructed, which are not voluntary. Social, cultural and religious location has shaped our life experience. All are social, cultural and religious construction. She challenged us to ask ourselves who am I? What am I? Who defines my social location? In whose interest within the structures/system? Who does it function /work?

Reclaiming self as a subject within the Ekklesia of Wo/men. Tingjin said our own self is a constructed self, a lot of self denial, self hate and self alienation. We need to reclaim and re affirm our own self as subject. Love of self – as a subject, meaning we must have faith in our own self. Self love, self realization, self- affirmation and reclaim self as a subject. At the end of the session Tingjin asked every one to make a paper bird and write down there how are we going to determine our identity, and how are going to affirm our own self as subject as an act of commitment.

Reflection and Evaluation

The RWP in 2009 has certainly provided opportunity to young women by creating unique space for them. These workshops have challenged, motivated, empowered and transformed the young women. Sharing their stories made them empowered to love themselves, love friends, and love neighbors. This space has made them realized that the Bible can be re read, which is liberating and their faith conviction has enabled them to accept that women are created in the image of God, and there should not be any violence against women. They have determined to fight for their own rights and fight for the rights of the women who are oppressed and exploited. Some of the delegates shared their feelings that this space is sacred and we develop the courage to share, to listen and learn from each other – that made us feel great and powerful. They were enable to do the analysis of their own life stories, and were able to identify the stumbling blocks in the path of liberation and transformation. Re reading Biblical texts using critical feminist hermeneutics helped them to be critical and Rhetorical-Emancipatory biblical Paradigm has opened their mindset to read Bible as a subject and affirm self as subject against structure of domination and subordination.

The evaluation process of each women's programmes happens in 2 levels.

1) At the end of the programme there was an Individual written evaluation where each one of them have given feed back of the programme. There was also group dynamics where participants came up with different action plans to initiate the activities in local level according to the context and situation in their countries.

2) In the second part this programme will also be reviewed and evaluated by the Regional Women's Committee – which is a committee of 5 young women representing South Asia, South East Asia, North East Asia and the Pacific based on the report by the Regional Women's Coordinator

The committee is in the process to come up with the guide book of the Women Doing Theology for the women leaders in the national movements. This guide book would help them to continue the follow up work and promote WDT

Programmes and conferences attended and space created for young SCM women

South Asia Women Leaders Capacity Enhancement Training Programme

The South Asia Women Leaders Capacity Enhancement Partnership Programme was organized by the Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment (EGY) CCA and South Asia Ecumenical Partnership Programme – SAEPP (WCC). The programme was held from 18th to 22nd November 2008, hosted by the Church of North India at the CNI Bhavan, New Delhi. Thirty five Women from the six South Asian countries namely Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal & Bhutan participated in the training programme. **Ashani Rhoda John**, SCM Sri Lanka who is also a member of the Regional Women's Committee attended the programme

Scholarship for Women Students in Ewha Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Seoul, South Korea

I am happy to inform you that Ms. Daisy Roy from SCM Bangladesh and Ms. Milka Hanook from SCM Pakistan who are being selected by the EGST for full scholarship to study Masters of Theology in EGST. EGST has been one of the best theological institutions for Korean and Asian Christian women. Ewha faculty members have strong academic commitment to develop theological study and practice from Asian feminist perspectives. EGST also has strong networks with other Asian theological associations and feminist organizations. Ewha graduates have contributed to women's humanization and liberation, and promoted ecclesiastical and social transformation in Korea, Asia and the world. Daisy and Milka is in EGST since 24th February 2010.

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

This year the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held on 1st March to 12th March 2010 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The CSW focused on reviewing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted 15 years ago with the support of 40,000 women. Around 8500 women and men from the NGOs, civil societies, faith based groups, students, youth, government officials participated in the said event. **Monika Biswas**, from SCM Bangladesh attended the event and represent WSCF Asia Pacific.

Celebrating Life: Women Prophets, Healers and Reconcilers

The Women's Pre-Assembly of the Christ the King Conference of Asia (CCA) was held on the above said theme from April 10-13, 2010 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. More than 60 women and few men from Asia and the Pacific representing the churches and ecumenical organizations participated the event. The pre assembly was intent to promote wider participation of women Church leaders in the decision making process of CCA in its ecumenical pilgrimage. This event was also aimed to strengthen Asian Ecumenical Movements to promote gender justice in Church and Society and also to recognize the prophetic voices of Asian women in building communities of peace. **Sunita Suna the regional women's coordinator**, attended the pre women's assembly as an ecumenical partner.

AWRC Coordinating Team (CT) Meeting

The Coordinating Team (CT) of the AWRC is the policy/ decision making body of the organization, and is responsible for coordinating, oversight of the affairs of the organization,

planning, and appointing any necessary committees. The WSCF AP and AWRC have a historical significance of working together. The

Regional Women's Coordinator of WSCF AP region is co-opted as voting member of the CT. This year the CTM meeting took place in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, on May 16-21, 2010. This meeting was attended by **Sunita Suna, Regional Women's Coordinator- WSCF AP.**

Regional Women's Programme – SCM Myanmar Joint Women's Programme

The Joint Women's Programme was organized by the SCM Myanmar on the theme "Women and Men in Partnership for empowerment". The programme was held from June 22-26, 2010 at Myanmar Council of Churches. Around 40 women and men student members attended the programme. The Regional Women's Coordinator attended the programme and also one of the resource persons to facilitate the sessions and conduct Bible study.

Learning experiences

The learning experience from the RWP is very much inspiring, yet challenging. One of the learning process was working with different cultures, languages and nationalities. This certainly helps to be more open which creates space to accept the differences. The most inspiring process was to realise how each one of us are unique and having hidden potentials and creativity to change ourselves and make a difference in our communities. It is important to create space like this for young women who are vulnerable in our society to come forward and empower themselves by enhancing their leadership potential. They will be the agent of change makers as they dream for a better world.

Some of the challenges are:

- Visa issues has been always one of the challenges for the regional level programmes. This time also in spite of all our efforts, preparation, the women delegates from Pakistan and Bangladesh were not given visa to enter Indonesia.
- There were some logistic problems in the beginning, which was resolved soon.
- Language barrier was another challenge during the programme. Though we celebrate the diversity of Asia and the Pacific at the same time we are challenged to adopt English as the medium of communication for the programmes. So we had to do additional arrangement for the participants who needed interpretation to express their ideas and participate actively during the programmes
- another major challenge with the present generation of students is – the consciousness and skills for critical analysis is declining. We need to take extra efforts to deal with situation like this.
- Apart from the above mentioned challenges one of the major challenges is to deal with the patriarchal structure within the SCM movements. Women's programmes and activities are no longer a concern or priority for most of the national movements.

Vision

WSCF AP women envision to:

- seek for self-liberation and transformation;
- build an inclusive non-violent community,
- break the structures of domination and subordination,
- promote equality and build up women leadership within SCM and the Church.

Sunita Suna
Regional Women's Coordinator
WSCF AP