

Inner Growth Program- Training the Trainers

Pagadian City, Philippines
September 25- October 3, 2008

(Prepared by: IofC Pagadian: Star, Mary Joy, Marilou, Sitti Mailyn)

THEN



The 13th Asia Pacific Youth Conference held in Pagadian City last July 20-28, 2007 was an important turning point for the Philippine team, most especially for the people of Pagadian.

For the first time, an international conference happened in this unknown city in Southern Mindanao – here, where even our own Filipino brothers & sisters were quite scared to visit; here, where ‘war’ was always happening as most people imagined; here, where there was nothing to see - - or so they, (and even we), thought.

Thanks to the undying support coming from our international IOFC friends, APYC was a success. With the theme *“Change Begins With Me: Who I Am Today, Will Make A Difference Tomorrow”*, local participants mostly from Pagadian plus our international delegates had a meaningful interaction thru the plenary sessions, family time, quiet time sharing, workshops & other activities.

At the outset, one would think “well, they come & they leave” – “after APYC, it will just be a memory” ...*but deep within, each local participant was touched by the sincerity & love from the IOFC community - - it was precisely this act of LOVE initiated by IOFC that had planted a SEED in Pagadian.....And the Growth of that SEED is just beginning with the “watering” of more LOVE initiated by our committed friend, Mr. Nandor Lim of Malaysia...*

THERE IS A PURPOSE & PLAN

10 of the Core Team in Pagadian plus 2 from Manila committed to join the INNER GROWTH PROGRAM TRAINERS TRAINING earlier...unfortunately, when the chaos broke caused by the attack of MILF rebels in areas near Pagadian City, immediately a high security risks warning was raised in our part of Mindanao just a month before the scheduled training. The question now, will the training continue? Will there be changes?

When most people were apprehensive to travel to Mindanao, Nandor was determined. In his message he said, “*I find no reason not to be there...*” - - *there is a Purpose & Plan...*



THE TRAINING

The training was held on September 25-October 2, 2008 at the conference room of the Tecson Residence. This venue was free of charge as support to the IOFC community & its works.

On the first day was the orientation; the first meeting between the local participants and the trainer couple Nandor Lim and Weny Lim of Moral Re Armament- Initiatives of Change Malaysia and Ngan Le of MRA- Initiatives of Change Vietnam. The rest of the participants had known Nandor Lim and the MRA Initiatives of Change during the 13th Asia Pacific Youth Conference in 2007 held in Pagadian City, Philippines. There were nine (9) local participants all from Pagadian City. Mr. Nandor Lim gave specific instructions/ house rules to be observed by the participants for the duration of the Inner Growth Program. It was essential for the participants to listen when a person is talking during the sessions of the program.

Each participant came without really knowing the purpose of why he/she was there. Each had a different reason for attending the training. Why we were brought together is a question we are yet to find out until the end (of the training).



The first session about how we see ourselves and our own genogram structure gave each of us a realization that this training will be an adventure *into ourselves*: exciting, interesting, scary, painful, confusing, liberating...challenging? Hmm...VERY MUCH.

SENSITIVITY TRAINING

In the sensitivity training, each participant shared about his/her life using his/her own genogram structure. Each was given 45 minutes to share. While someone was sharing no one was allowed to talk nor stand up or go out of the circle to get something. After each sharing, the group reflected for 5 minutes before giving his/her feedback to the sharer. This training is one of the most challenging since each must give feedback but he/she must avoid giving suggestions, projection, and criticism.

We realized in the end that this was most helpful to us in becoming an established team. We learned how to listen, not just to hear; we learned that eye contact is important; we learned the language of the heart - - sharing and giving feedback with love & sincerity - - is fundamental. Most of all, we learned to go beyond our inhibitions; not only were we able to establish TRUST in each other, this is also the first time we discovered that we need to TRUST & LOVE ourselves...despite the wounds we have and the scars left.

MY FAMILY & ME: HOMECOMING, HEALING

The participants were provided with fact sheets: Family Reconciliation: 1. The Crisis; 2. Chapter 8: Profile of a Functioning a Family System; 3. Chapter 4: Profile of a Chronically Dysfunctional Family System; 4. Chapter 7: The "Bad" Child Checklist for How Your Self- Esteem was Damaged in an Emotionally Abusive Family; 5. Chapter 8: The Most Chronic Family Dysfunction: Co- dependency; and 6. Homecoming.

With what we have learned about our lives & about each other from the Sensitivity training, this session about the Family & healing became an eye-opener.

It was very surprising to discover how much pain our families can & have actually caused us; how we were not allowed to be who we truly are; how, until now, there are still many things we have yet to re-discover in ourselves; how much LOVE we missed; how little we needed when we were children, how much hurt we had for getting nothing; how long the anger has been kept within...how much courage it will take to face those feelings of hate, betrayal, pain, loss, rejection...abandonment.



All the time, we, the participants, were properly guided by the facilitators led by Nandor to reflect on our feelings and get in touch with ourselves. These topics were the most sensitive since it requires total honesty and openness within us. With the help of the IOFC movies we watched, quiet time/night, sharing, the family reconstruction drama and other activities wherein we had a chance to understand better the family theories, we were able to understand more.



This was a necessary process for each of us, just like a caterpillar in process of changing into the beautiful butterfly, we now know that facing our pains, as well our joys, is part of growing and becoming who we are meant to be. This is a journey each of us had to start. This is a step each of us had to take. For if we want to heal our lives, we can.

COMMITMENT

The nine-day training seemed more like nine months...around this time, each participant had mixed emotions.

At the start of the training, we were all eager to go through the sessions- each in a hurry to finish for varying reasons... in the end, we all felt a bit weary to go back to our individual reality, eagerly wanting to extend the time before ending...perhaps apprehensive to take the next step in our journey...so what best way to end than to give each one a pat on the shoulder, assure our continued support to one another, make certain that we shall not be alone in our journey...all the way.

It is not always easy to share our lives, ourselves to others...to most of us, this training meant moving out of our comfort zones; risking vulnerability; journeying to a place in our lives we have long wanted to forget (well we thought we could- or did). To some, it meant reconnecting with our true selves whom we have long denied because we were not yet ready to face where we were hurting...thinking that by denying, we could lessen the pain & suffering. To the others yet, this was an opportunity to unload, to cry, to face their open wounds, to stand up with courage & say, "I deserve to be loved!"

No one knows what will happen next...but what we do know is that after the training, each one of us cannot just sit and do nothing. We committed to continue our fellowship and have regular sharing as a team. We commit to continue the discovery of our "lost selves" and go on the journey like the "ugly duckling transforming into a lovely, beautiful swan". We all look forward to the next phase of our training in Inner Growth Program; we shall enhance our skills, develop our potentials so each of us may become initiators of positive change turned change-makers, eventually leaders in our community. More importantly, we commit to start the "*change within ourselves*", taking it one step at a time – and no matter how much we stumble along the way, we shall always be back on our feet ready to try again and again and again.

While each of us had different realizations, we are one in saying that the most important thing we gained in this training is OUR TRUE SELF...or at least we're getting there...and we're not in a rush to re-discover, to forgive, to understand, to heal...to LOVE ourselves. We acknowledge that this is a process, a journey..."*in this world, the one person you will never lose and who will never leave you is YOURSELF*" ...at least now we know, we are not alone...not anymore.



Each one of us was handpicked by someone up there to be in this training...*there is a Purpose & Plan...*