



YWCA of Japan: Appeal on the 31st General Assembly

The YWCA of Japan has held its 31st National Council on 23rd-25th November 2012, deciding to maintain its theme “Blessed are the Peacemakers (Matthew 5-9)” from the last triennium. It has also decided to continue working on its “Vision 2015”, aiming to learn from Jesus Christ and to realize a world of co-existence and harmony. It also held sub-sessions on individual issues, where there were active sharing of challenges and views on future developments of action.

The YWCA of Japan, based on its identity as a “Young Women’s Christian Association” and in light of the resolutions listed below, hereby declares its commitment to pursue its work on the “Vision 2015” for the 31st quadrennial term starting today, by carrying out the concrete actions discussed in the sub-sessions.

As a Young People’s Organization

As a young people’s organization, the YWCA of Japan values active intergenerational cooperation while promoting young women’s leadership. In order to realize vibrant growth in our work, there is a necessity to secure a space for young people to freely speak out and be involved in activities. At the same time, collaboration with experienced members is also essential. The YWCA of Japan aims for a world where all women are equally empowered toward a peaceful future, as precious individuals regardless of their ages.

As a Women’s Organization

In order to realize a society where all women can exercise their leadership, it is necessary for us to revisit the nature of our society from a gender perspective. We should also review the work of our YWCA from this point of view, and further refine our strength as a women’s organization. The YWCA of Japan will treasure new encounters with women and listen to their voices, in order to create a safe and secure world for women and children.

As a Christian Based Organization

The YWCA of Japan, as an organization based on Christianity, follows the Bible verse “Blessed are the Peacemakers” and maintains hope even under difficult circumstances. We will closely listen to the voices of women and children who are marginalized in society, always stay beside them, and through our work send them a message that “you are not alone”. The YWCA of Japan learns from the footprints of Jesus Christ and works with all our hearts, taking part in concrete actions in order to regain “life” in our world, including lives of us humans.

As an International Non-Governmental Organization

As an international NGO, the YWCA of Japan carries out its work utilizing networks within and outside of Japan. Besides working closely with the World YWCA and YWCAs throughout the world, we will also continue to work with different other partners in order to visualize the complexly intertwined issues and share its ideas with a wider range of people. We carry on with advocacies with institutions within and outside Japan including the UN, and continue working to change social systems for the better.

As an Empowering NGO

As it strives on its work, the YWCA of Japan believes that it is important to enable women and children to gain full understanding of their own surroundings, make decision, stand up and go step forward. We also encourage women to feel confident as independent individuals, as we promote women's active participation in decision-making positions.



Concrete Actions Based on the “Vision 2015” For the 31st Quadrennial Term of the YWCA of Japan

Take Action for the Protection of the Japanese Peace Constitution

The Japanese Constitution is at risk of amendment which disregards the ideas of the article 9 which denounces war. During the National Council, we reconfirmed about the procedures of constitutional amendment, which has been rendered invisible to a vast majority of Japanese society. As an organization which strives for achievement of real peace based on our regret about the World War II, the YWCA of Japan reaffirms its strong move towards prevention of the amendment of the Constitution and widely spread the valuable message of the Constitution of Japan.

<Local and national actions before the House of Representatives (Lower House) election on 16th December, 2012>

- Launch a high-impact and easy-to-understand campaign aiming to reach out to the population who are not aware of the process of amendment. Widely advertise the vital importance of the Article 9 of the Constitution as well as spreading concrete information relating to the election.
- Visuals, analog and digital tools should be well utilized in order to reach to various generational and social groups.

<Local and national actions after the election>

- Steadily fight back the constitutional amendment in the national referendum which might occur in the near future after the election.
- Observe the Commissions on the constitution set up in both the Upper and Lower Houses and publicize the proceedings.
- Spread the value of the Article 9 by collaboration with musicians which usually can attract a greater public attention.
- Hold seminars and workshops in order to promote grassroots movement.

Take Action for Women’s Rights and the Military Base Issue

The military base issue in Japan has often been regarded as a problem specific only to prefectures/communities hosting the US military bases. During this National Council, YWCA members from such communities specifically Okinawa and Iwakuni testified about the harsh reality they face. We confirmed that this military base issue indeed is a shared problem for all of us, and we should continue to learn, face up, and take action for military abolition. The military base issue in Japan is closely connected with issues including the Japan-US Security treaty, peacekeeping in the Asia region, post WWII compensation, economic and social issues within communities with military bases, regional disparity within Japan, and violence against women and children. The YWCA of Japan continues its advocacy and works for a peaceful society without military bases.

<Local and national actions>

- Organize a study tour to Okinawa.
- Launch “Okinawa Week” and carry out joint actions on a national level.
- Create a Peace Calendar for action.

Take Action for a Creation of a Society without Nuclear Power Plants

After the nuclear power plant accident in March 2011, we have renewed our commitment to choose a way of living that places importance in “life”. Since 1970, the YWCA of Japan has held its principle of “denying all forms of nukes”, opposing to all nuclear weapons as well as nuclear energy generation. However, as a tactic advertisement spread that nuclear energy was clean and eco-friendly, our voices had regrettably weakened. We pledge to start again here, learn from those before us who declared that “humans and nuclear cannot coexist”, and take actions toward a nuclear-free society. “Stop nuclear power! Stand up now!”

<Local and national actions>

- Continue to provide vacation programs (detoxification and emotional stress care) for those affected by radiation, as well as supporting parent(s) of young children.
- Work in collaboration with campaigns by other organizations, such as action for evaluating political party’s policy on nuclear power issue, and joining nuclear power plant legal actions.
- Aim to realize a resolution on global action against nuclear power generation in the World YWCA Council 2015.

Reviewing YWCA’s Work from a Gender Perspective

The YWCA of Japan’s priority issues have been peace-making, nuclear, Japanese Constitution and human rights. However, we need to revisit these activities and ask ourselves if we have carried them out with clear consciousness of our identity as a women’s organization. In this National Council, we have placed a special focus on the “W”omen’s aspect included in the letters “Y,”W,”C” and “A”, and reconfirmed the meaning and value represented by the letter “W” and take them into our activities as a women’s organization. In the coming quadrennial term, we will pay full attention to the “W” aspect, reflect gender perspectives on our work, and refine the strong-point of our organization. By doing so, we aim to improve our YWCA into an organization that contributes to the realization of a society where all women are able to exercise their leadership.

<Local and national actions>

- Create a safe space where all women can share their thoughts openly.
- Organize seminars.
- Create original pin badges for International Girls’ Day for advocacy.