

AMAN

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



#InServiceOfHumanity

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INTRODUCTION TO AMAN

Who we are

AMAN is a network that brings together individuals, groups and associations of Muslims in Asia subscribing to a progressive and enlightened approach to Islam. Since its inception in 1990, AMAN has been cooperating with groups from all faiths and believes that are working with grassroots communities or engaged in research and policy advocacy for the eradication of poverty, environmental protection, human rights, social justice, inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue, communal harmony and peace.

As a network AMAN provides a forum to share ideas and experiences and facilitates follow-up processes to synchronize the actions and programs launched by common interest groups and individuals in Asia within its effective reach.

AMAN's Vision is one of a just, peaceful and sustainable world, starting here in Asia. A world that celebrates both identity and diversity through tolerance and understanding.

Our mission

- Facilitate, interact, dialogue, and exchange in order to enhance inter-faith understanding and cooperation towards peace, women's human rights, and sustainable development in Asia and beyond.
- Facilitate and consolidate progressive voices to take up collective advocacy to promote the agenda of peacebuilding, women human's rights, and sustainable development at a national and global level.
- Collaborate with universities to perform research on the changing situation in Muslim communities in Asia in countering ethnoreligious conflict and violent extremisms.
- Strengthen national movement of AMAN to increase the capacity of associates organizations and local NGOs, and support partnerships with governments.
- Establish an appropriate mechanism in mobilizing financial resources needed for program implementation such as the capacity building of networks, facilitating CSOs forum, supporting national and international advocacy, and emergency response.

MESSAGE FROM AMAN FOUNDING MEMBER

Mohammad Abdus Sabur



*2020
Covid-19, Shock,
Despair
& Solidarity*

*2021
Hope, Challenges
& Opportunities*

In mid-2019, we started the preparations for celebrating AMAN 30th Anniversary. A program was developed by the secretariat and circulated among the members and partners. Having received enthusiastic responses, we confirmed the date of the conference for the first week of March 2020. The topics for the parallel workshops and speakers for the Anniversary conference were confirmed, with the main theme being: "Readdressing Inequality and Injustice and Promoting Peace". We received very enthusiastic responses from the young generation, senior scholars, AMAN members and representatives of other faiths communities.

Then, on 31st December 2019, Wuhan Municipal commission, China, reported a cluster of cases of Pneumonia, which within days was confirmed as coronavirus, or Covid-19. On January 13, 2020, Thai officials confirmed the first case of Covid-19 in Thailand. As the situation quickly manifested itself as very dangerous, we decided to postpone the AMAN Anniversary Conference. Instead we started shifting our energy and resources and planned for humanitarian responses.

Covid-19 not only took thousands of lives but created a devastating impact on people's livelihood. AMAN and ARF converted this crisis to an opportunity to mobilise the wide network of members, to reach out to Covid-19 affected families, including Rohingya, urban refugees, and displaced persons in South and South East-Asia and in Morocco, Africa. It was also an opportunity to share experiences and resources with network members on how to adjust, and continue our collective efforts in the spirit of sharing and caring.

We express our gratitude to funding partners, namely Niwano Peace Foundation, UCC, Maryknoll, Sheykh Ul Islam Office, Ummatee, Muslimehelfen, HHRD, LIFE, LOMEF, and individual friends.

CHANGE OF LOGO

Adapting to a new generation of change-makers

After 30 years from its foundation, AMAN has decided to update its logo.

The previous logo was often misunderstood by Governments of countries where AMAN works, or plans to work, because of its religious symbolism.

The team agreed on the necessity of its replacement for a more effective reach.

The new logo was chosen based on the universal acceptance of olive trees as symbols of
PEACE



CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

The International Institute of Peace and Development Studies (IIPDS) was born in 2004 from a joint initiative of the Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) and the Asian Resource Foundation (ARF) and offers courses all year round. AMAN promotes progressive teachings of Islam and forges inter-faith collaboration while ARF is engaged in education to children in 12 countries and has been offering humanitarian assistance in disaster-affected areas in Asia. The Institute aims at empowering women, men, youth, children, social and human rights workers, scholars, researchers, faith and community-based leaders, and at promoting the principles of humanity, education, development and inclusion.



20th School of Peace and Conflict Transformation

From February 22nd to March 5th, 13 international students, activists, scholars and practitioners from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and the Philippines gathered at the International Institute of Peace and Development Studies to attend the 20th edition of the School of Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation.

During two intensive weeks, the participants deepened their knowledge on conflict and peace, their understanding on the Asian regional context and exchanged valuable stories in their areas of expertise.

The course allowed the participants to acquire a better understanding, both at the local and regional levels, of initiatives that aim at undermining conflicts, at promoting peace and at enhancing resilience in the communities affected by strong hostilities.

The context of this 20th edition of the School of Peace was very particular, as 15 other applicants were not able to participate due to travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 emergency.



Mental Health in Effective Social Work and Peace Building

Conflict is normal in a Society. However, the question is how to address, manage and transform this conflict so that it brings peace to the parties and communities as a whole. Thanks to the interactive approach of the classes, the participants learned how mental and physical health are the cornerstones of effective Social Work and Peace Building.

The participants also had the chance to go on a field trip to the ancient city of Ayutthaya, where they had the opportunity to sense the cultural history of the Siam kingdom.

From the 6th till the 10th of January 2020, IIPDS hosted a workshop on the role of Mental Health in Social Work and Peace Building. Ten social workers, mainly from India and Sudan participated in the 5-day training.

The workshop aimed at empowering the participants with an understanding of peace studies and conflict transformation and explained how to handle values, beliefs, desires, and how to manage intra and interpersonal conflicts. The workshop enabled the participants to help others resolve conflicts, and ensure better mental health

WEBINARS

Since March 2020, AMAN, ARF and IIPDS have lived the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, which halted movements around the world, greatly impacting the original agenda of the Institute, which was full of capacity building training, workshops and consultations, with more than 300 expected participants from around the world.

As the prospect of a 'return to normality' slowly faded away, AMAN, ARF and IIPDS, decided to resort to online tools in order to continue inspiring constructive discussions around issues and topics that concern the world.

Accordingly, a series of Webinars was launched, which gathered great participation from IIPDS alumni, AMAN and ARF partners and the peacebuilding community.

	<p>'Impact of Covid-19 crisis on social work, peacebuilding and humanitarian operations'</p>	<p>8th June 2020</p>
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The webinar focused on the impact of COVID-19 on social work, peacebuilding and humanitarian operations, on the nature of the response and on the challenges and opportunities brought by the crisis. It addressed the possible new dimensions of humanitarian, peace and social work brought by the COVID-19 crisis.

This webinar collected the testimonials of three aid workers working in the field, from Bangladesh, Turkey and Nepal. They explained how they adapted their response to the new challenges brought by the pandemic and how they managed to use the crisis as a vehicle for transformation, towards a more inclusive and effective aid system. More than 30 persons, mostly IIPDS Alumni and ARF partners, participated in the webinar. Testimonials from aid workers from Pakistan, Iraq and India also contributed to enrich the discussion and confirmed that the COVID-19 outbreak is globally challenging for aid organizations and aid workers.



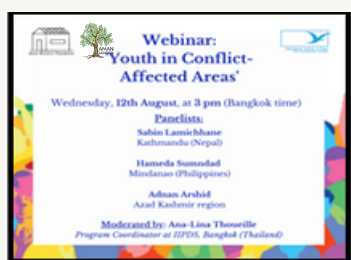
'Women and Girls: Asian Experiences'

8th July 2020

Over the last years, the concept of "empowerment" has become more and more popular in the development and aid sector. Empowerment is now increasingly used and connected to social development groups such as poor people, youth, women, older persons, differently able persons, indigenous people and marginalized people. Empowerment means achieving gender equality and is a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

The speakers of this webinar, from Nepal, Iraq and Bangladesh, talked about the state of play in terms of women's empowerment in their countries and shared good practices that can be replicated at a local level. They also highlighted different methods to empower women and girls and made the participants reflect upon the diverse dimensions of empowerment.

The webinar gathered approximately 30 persons, majority of which are followers of ARF, AMAN and IIPDS social media accounts.



'Youth in Conflict-Affected Areas'

12th August 2020

The specific issues faced by youth in areas affected by conflict entail both challenges and opportunities. From the impact of the conflict on young people and their futures to the innovative initiatives of young people who want to turn the page on violence and participate in building peace, the challenges are manifold.

Youth, as civilians, are often the first victims of conflicts, and the impacts on these lives "under construction" can be devastating in physical and psychological terms.

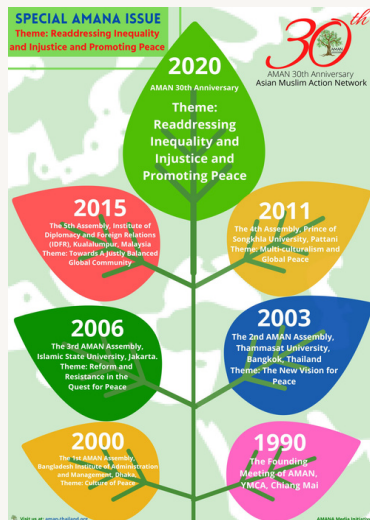
On the other hand, young people are also a prolific source of ingenious initiatives that aimed to create a better society and governance, in the face of the structural and social problems derived from the conflict.

The speakers talked about their experiences as youth workers and young people in areas affected by the conflict or in peacebuilding processes. In engaging presentations three socially engaged speakers from Nepal, Mindanao and Azad Kashmir highlighted how social engagement helped them to overcome conflict and build peace.

PUBLICATIONS

The AMANA magazine was initiated in 2005 following suggestions made at the first round of the Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) 'Peace Studies & Conflict Transformation' course. In Arabic, Amana means trust and embodies the primary objective of the publication in highlighting peace initiatives, peace collaborations, progressive Muslim action and inter-faith dialogues, cooperation and understanding. Throughout the years countless AMAN members, partners and alumni have contributed to the magazine.

AMANA Special Issue 30 YEARS OF AMAN

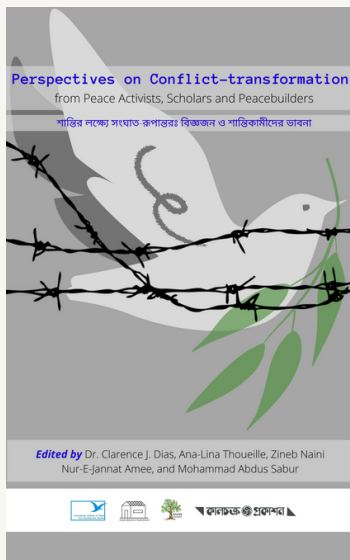


“Redressing Inequalities and Injustice and Promoting Peace”

AMAN networks' members in Asia, through local and national chapters and the Secretariat at the Regional level, held a series of consultations in preparation for the organizations' 30th Anniversary Conference which was scheduled to take place from 7 to 9 March 2020. The Theme was 'Re-addressing Inequality and Injustice and Promoting Peace'. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the conference had to be cancelled. A special issue of AMANA magazine was published instead, and distributed widely in celebration of AMAN's 30 years of relentless work.

The publication tracks down AMAN's foundation history and path throughout the 30 years of its existence. It contains thoughts and essays on the potential of religions in fighting racism and related forms of discrimination and articles on how to foster a long-lasting peace and establish values based on justice and equality.

This special issue is the result of the contributions of key members and partners of AMAN, who have highly influenced the spiritual side and humanitarian actions of the organization throughout its journey.



“Perspectives on Conflict-Transformation from Peace-activists, Scholars and Peacebuilders”

2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the International Institute of Peace and Development Studies - IIPDS. Since its formation in 2000, IIPDS serves as a meeting point of diverse minds, ideologies, professions, gender orientations, languages, religions and cultures from various countries and continents. In close coordination with ARF, the Institute has built the capacity and empowered thousands of youth,

women, children and young adults and has hosted dozens of workshops, consultations, roundtables and conferences where senior and junior scholars had the opportunity to exchange ideas and dreams. In celebration of its 20th anniversary, IIPDS has worked on a publication where senior and junior scholars have contributed to produce more than forty articles around the theme of conflict transformation from the perspectives of peace activists, scholars and peacebuilders.

Organized in seven chapters, the volume starts from authors emphasizing how the need of a meaningful transformation at all levels, of society and governance, is considerably growing, which, other authors argue, requires increasing respect for cultural diversity, interfaith understanding, mutual trust, and to nurture a deeper level of human solidarity enriched by a higher level of spirituality.

The book goes on highlighting conflict dynamics, and the existing contradictions between the ideal and the reality, with authors analyzing the Rohingya crisis, the reconciliation process in Nepal, the different outcomes of the Spring Revolution, the challenges of the Colombian Final Peace Agreement, and other conflicts which also pose significant mental health challenges. Development induced disasters are also discussed in the book, and how wrong approaches to development and modernization have disturbed local ecology and displaced communities are highlighted.

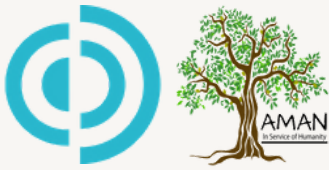


An entire chapter is expressly dedicated to gathering young scholars' thoughts and contributions. Here case studies, beginning from India and Bhutan's foreign policy to the role of youth in the promotion of freedom of expression in Bangladesh and of media in the global society; lead the sequences of constructive actions and reflections.

The role of civil society and students' organizations' struggles and initiatives in spite of shrinking democratic space in various countries is also pondered upon in the publication.

With the hope that this collection of articles will serve as a resource for further studies and research, IIPDS will conduct online discussions upon the publication of the book, which will be available at the beginnings of 2021.

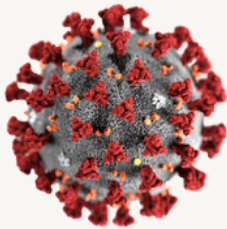
EDUCATION

AMAN has decades of experience in leading researches and promoting the education of young promising minds. In 2020 AMAN and its partners supported scholarships and fellowships that will strengthen knowledge building and sharing in the field of education and peace in the region.

<p>Higher Education Scholarship</p> 	<p>Ms. Ayesha Siddika, a Refugee from Pakistani origins living in Thailand, has received AMAN's higher education scholarship. This year scholarship was sponsored by the private company Excel Pipes SDN BHD from Malaysia.</p> <p>Ms. Siddika is a Master's degree student of the faculty of International Relations at the prestigious Thammasat University of Bangkok.</p> <p>In June 2020, she was awarded with 15,000 THB as a contribution for her tuition fee.</p>
<p>Impact of Covid-19 on higher education</p> 	<p>The Bangladeshi Institute of Islamic Thought - BIIT and AMAN joined forces and established a Research and Education (R&E) fellowship programme for professionals and researchers, with the aim of achieving a broader understanding of the changes faced by higher education in India and Bangladesh as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The main objective of this comparative research is to produce recommendations, which will serve as a base in improving the quality and structure of higher education in India and Bangladesh. Once the research comparative research is completed, it will also offer guidelines on how to turn the Covid-19 crisis into an opportunity for a positive change of the higher education system.</p>
<p>Asghar Ali Engineer Research Fellowship</p> 	<p>In memory of the great contribution of Asghar Ali Engineer, a founding President of AMAN, AMAN has launched a Fellowship Program to support young scholars to undertake objective research work on issues affecting society in general and women, religious and ethnic minorities in particular. The research Fellowship focuses on Intra, inter-faith, inter-ethnic understanding and peace; Democratic, accountable and just governance; Gender justice and minority rights; Protection of the environment and Application of non-violent approaches for conflict transformation.</p>

STATEMENTS

AMAN is committed to the most disadvantaged people and communities, irrespective of religion, gender, ethnicity and national identity. AMAN decided to step forward and take a position against injustice, persecution and human rights violations, in general, are extremely frequent, and speak in defence of the voiceless.



COVID-19 EMERGENCY

The enactment of extensive lock downs and forced closure of private business activities following the Covid-19 health emergency, and the lack of a welfare plan able to compensate daily earners for their economic losses, created an unprecedented crisis between the poorest of the world.

For this reason, AMAN highlights the urgent necessity for a widespread assessment of needs, and invites community-based organization to get involved in the areas that require an immediate intervention.

AMAN also reiterates its commitment in providing relief, in all its forms, where needed.



PERSECUTION OF UYGHUR COMMUNITY IN XINJIANG

More than a million Uyghur Muslims, from the Xinjiang region in China, are reported to have been imprisoned in detention centers, which the Chinese government insists in defining as vocational training centers or re-education camps.

AMAN members and partners commit on actively seeking and divulge information about the conditions of the Uyghur community, and on advocating for the improvement of their condition.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Covid-19 pandemic has swept the world, as almost 100 million confirmed cases are reported and 1,800,000 people already died in 2020. Even if the rate of infections and death is comparatively low in South and South-East Asia, the region is one of the most economically affected areas by the crisis and second and stronger waves of transmissions have remains a slow-burning threat for the whole region.

More than a billion people faced lockdowns and, consequently, millions have lost their jobs and earnings. Urban and rural poor as daily wage earners, maids and floating people who live on the footpath and temporary shelter and marginalized farming families have been impacted the most. The shut down of shops and businesses have also deprived thousands of people of an income and have exposed millions to important food security risks.

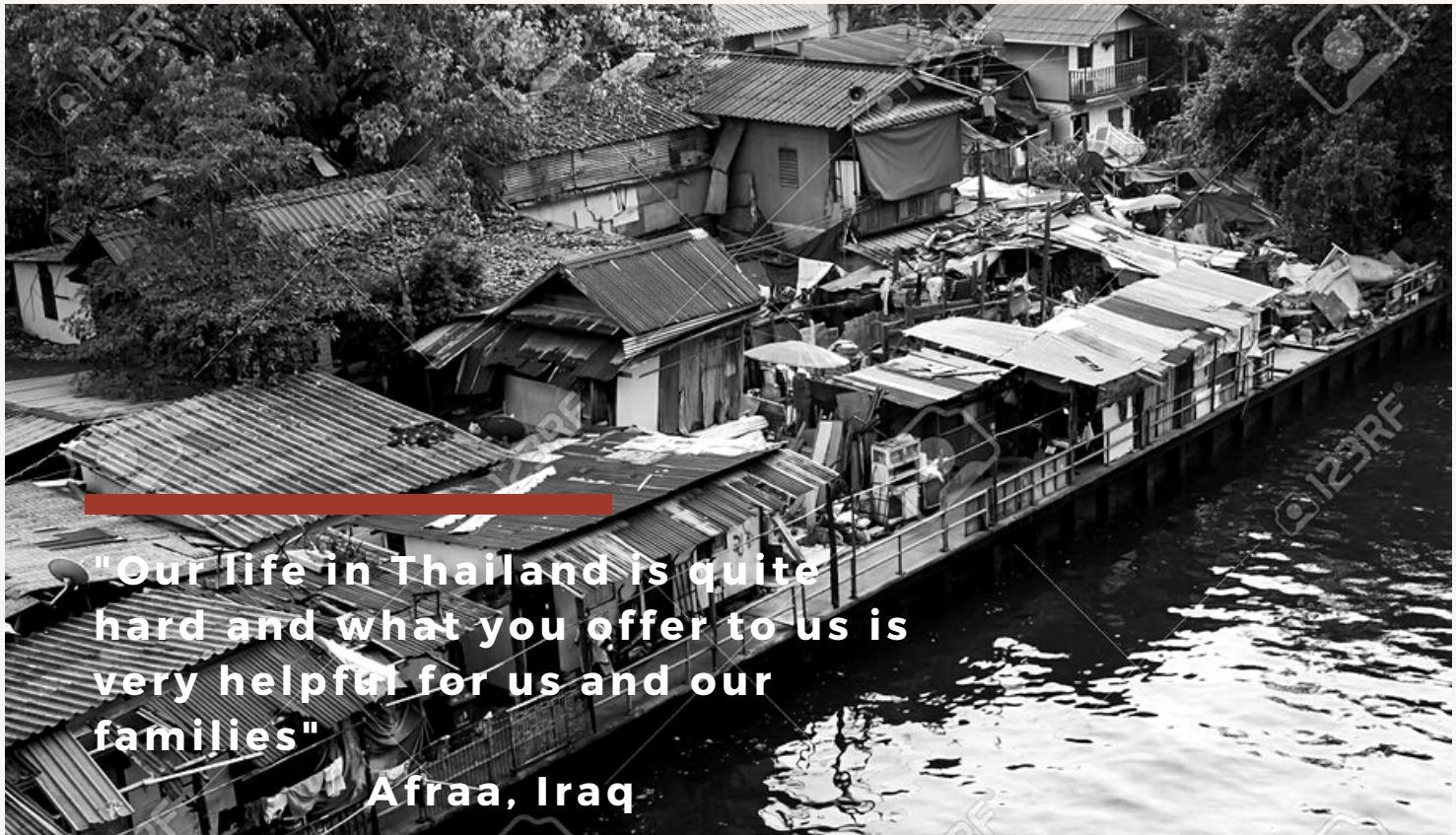
In order to address the increasing humanitarian crisis that struck the region, AMAN mobilized modest funds from UMMATI - Thailand, and private donations. These funds enabled AMAN to distribute humanitarian aid, in the form of food packs, in Afghanistan, Azad Kashmir, Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar Refugee Camp, Morocco and Myanmar.

In the exceptional situation that the Covid-19 pandemic has created, the problems encountered due to the restriction of movements and to the limitations on public gatherings were extensive. Despite these limitations, with the help of local authorities in some cases and through the adoption of adapted approaches in distributing in some particular places all the distributions could be completed successfully.

5
Countries

1,600
Beneficiaries

URBAN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN BANGKOK



"Our life in Thailand is quite hard and what you offer to us is very helpful for us and our families"

Afraa, Iraq

Bangkok, Thailand, is home to an increasing number of urban refugees and asylum seekers. However, Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 convention or the 1967 protocol. Due to its strict immigration laws, the vast majority of people seeking asylum and recognized refugees are regarded as illegal migrants by the authorities. Therefore they are subjected to arbitrary arrest and live in constant fear of being discovered by the police authorities. As there is no national framework for refugee status determination, the UNHCR registers and undertakes this process in urban areas. However, a UNHCR refugee status doesn't guarantee any protection from imprisonment.

AMAN, in collaboration with ARF, has been distributing food packs from early 2000 to urban refugees of Bangkok. Due to Covid-19, this year saw a spike of refugees seeking help in order to get end meals. Because of the pandemic, their economic circumstances have consistently deteriorated, as the informal jobs they had disappeared with the closing of Thailand's borders, leaving them without economic support. From the beginning of the year, AMAN distributed 1,417 food packs to as many refugee families coming from Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Jordan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

AMAN continues to explore ways to facilitate the lives of urban refugees and asylum seekers by empowering and strengthen their capacities.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Despite 2020 being a challenging year for every agency, institution, organization, and individuals around the world, we were pleased to find in our long time partners the support we needed to continue our mission of empowering and improving people's lives

Sheik Ul Islam Office and Ummatee / Thailand

United Church of Canada - UCC / Canada

Niwano Peace Foundation / Japan

Mr. Bob and Mrs. Nancy McFarland / USA

Mr. Steffan Bodemar / Sweden

Maryknoll / Thailand

AMAN Members

**We thank you for continuously believing in our
efforts to contribute to an empowered world**



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