

World E-News April 2013



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WORLD YMCA NEWS

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What does love have to do with it?

- May 1, 2013



In April, 2013 NAYDO (North America YMCA Development Organisation) held their annual conference under the theme 'Bringing People Together' in Vancouver, Canada. We were seventy-five international delegates from 29 countries participated in a group of more than 1,100 people who came together to learn and share best practices in philanthropy and resource mobilisation.

In one session, a volunteer of the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina spoke about his personal journey. He said the YMCA gave him a sense of belonging. The YMCA was a welcoming environment - where people can come together to change and be changed. It is where you can experience the potential of the YMCA.

"Love has much to do with it. It is when you speak from the heart. It is when you listen from the heart, and it is when you give from the heart"

Experience From Previous Naydo Meetings

We observed that NAYDO is a safe space to learn and to be challenged to do more. The final session with the delegations from around the world showed that we, outside the North America region, have begun to measure the impact of several years of successive participation in the NAYDO conference.

- We have developed and modeled new experiences of annual campaigns,
- Some of us launched new marketing strategies, developed new policies and practices for recruiting and engaging volunteers,
- We have ventured in to capital campaigns, and strengthened the capacity of their boards and professional staff.

Learning at NAYDO is not solely focused on participating in workshops and hearing keynote speakers - it takes place in the spaces where we sit next to each other and share stories and tell about our experiences. At Naydo we connect, learn and unit around common language of caring, giving, and belonging.

Beyond North America boundaries

On the last day, Secretary General Johan Vilhelm Eltvik participated in a panel on Impact Investing. He spoke passionately about young people and the difference YMCAs are making everyday working to reverse the trends that are affecting and harming young people. 'Young people are on the top of all the bad statistics', he said. 'I have witnessed the YMCA work around the world - seeking to empower young people to bring hope and change for a better life'. He told the story of young prisoners in Togo who participated in a programme to develop their skills and empower them to look for a new and better future. These young people felt valued and found love through the YMCA - the unconditional love that every human being deserves. This is impact - the impact of the YMCA worldwide - it is part of our Christian commitment to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Will you give from your heart to support young people to find their sense of belonging and be part of a change process for a better life for all?

Write to comment@ymca.int

Selma Zaidi

Senior Executive Secretary, World Alliance of YMCAs

A Nairobi Statement: One year on

- May 1, 2013



Nairobi Meetings, April 2012

Held in the historic city of Jericho, the 63rd Executive Committee of the World Alliance deliberated and assessed the progress of the NEW WAY strategy from 2011 until now and planned for the next important YMCA global milestone: the 18th World Council.

It was also a platform to assess another important milestone that took place a year ago In Nairobi, Kenya. Last year, 80 world leaders met to discuss the important decision made in Hong Kong in 2010 regarding the visibility of the YMCAs worldwide. Through a consultative process, these world leaders agreed on Youth Empowerment as the core focus of the YMCAs. The Nairobi Statement bears testimony to this decision:

**The YMCA wants to achieve its full potential
We therefore must be a stronger movement
We therefore must attract greater resources
We therefore must have more visibility**

We therefore must demonstrate greater impact
We therefore must have a shared focus
Relevant to the world
Grounded in our mission
Worthy of our aspiration
Connected to our current work
We therefore choose to collectively stand for youth empowerment

A year later where are we? Much has been achieved, and of note this includes:

- Development of the “[Youth Empowerment in Action](#)” concept
- Wide circulation and buy in of the Change Model: Space-transformation-Impact.
- [Launching of the Change Agents initiative](#) which culminated in the recruitment of 240 Change Agents worldwide.
- Establishment of the Change Agent Training Team (CATT) selected from all areas, which develops the training process and curriculum of the Change Agents.
- Identification of Mentors with a specific plan to support the Change Agents.
- Development of an impact assessment tool to track the progress of the Change Agents.
- Training and orientation for Change Agents at area level: Asia (Sri Lanka, and Hong Kong, March 2013), Europe (Turkey, Africa (Zimbabwe, June 2012 and Kenya, February 2013), Latin America (Uruguay, March 2013), Middle East (Egypt, April 2013). North America, USA and Canada planning is in advanced stages.
- Securing of more than 50% of the financial resources of the Change agent initiative by the end of 2012.
- Development of a concept for “[ONE MILLION YOUTH VOICES](#)” research project through high-level academic advice. This research is aiming at positioning our movement as the world leader in understanding and addressing youth issues. We plan to repeat this research every fourth year.

A year since the Nairobi agreement, the response of our movement to the Youth Empowerment agenda has been overwhelmingly positive. There has been consistent unanimity around Youth Empowerment as the core focus of the YMCA worldwide, whenever the concept and progress has been discussed, be these gatherings National Movement assemblies, Area meetings, International Secretaries and National General Secretaries Consultations.

The world movement has not reached such wide consensus for a very long time. Not a single resistance to the concept of Youth Empowerment as the core focus of all YMCAs.

With such consensus the Alliance is continuing to work for an increased visibility of YMCA in this world, and to unify the movement around key messages connected with Youth Empowerment.

This is a huge task and the small staff team in Geneva is quite challenged in terms of capacity. A unique experience has being launched with a staff placement scheme. Jesus Abraham from Mexico is the first one - he is an experienced staff member of the Mexican YMCA Federation, and is working now in Geneva for three months, supported by his YMCA. An experienced colleague from Brazil will be the next in this placement scheme.

There is growing interest in this scheme, so please find your place in the line! Do you want to build the collective capacity of our movement for Youth Empowerment? Do you want to enroll with this scheme?

Contact: romulo@ymca.int

The journey of change continues

- May 1, 2013



Change Agents in Latin America

In previous news we introduced to you the Change Agent initiative. The response of the Movement to this initiative is impressive.

To date 240 young people have been registered by their movement as change agents.

- They are from over 60 countries.
- They are 18 to 30 years old.
- 55% of them are young women leaders.
- They are both staff and volunteers
- Majority of them have a bachelor degree or are studying at University level.

The young leaders recruited have very different profiles and backgrounds, amazing personal stories of transformation and growth through YMCA programmes and activities but they have one thing in common: the willingness to lead our World Movement and increase its

impact and visibility.

The journey for change aims to equip the Change Agents with leadership skills to become the change themselves and to initiate change in their respective YMCAs. This will take place over a period of two years and will include:

- Face-to-face meetings in area level in (Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Middle East, USA and Canada).
- Online learning through an e-learning platform and live internet sessions.
- A global training initiative which will take place in Prague, Czech Republic, in August 2013 at the European Youth Festival
- A unique and global platform to exercise their leadership skills at the 18th World Council in Estes Park USA, Colorado in July 2014.

The training scheme is supported by a Curriculum designed by the Change Agent Training Team and includes a Mentorship plan. Mentors have been recruited at the highest leadership levels of the world YMCA structure. They are National General secretaries/CEOs, Board Chairs and presidents.

The entire system is coordinated by the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva, Switzerland, in partnership with the YMCA Area Alliances in 7 different regions of the world.

The motivation and commitment of the participants is amazing. We have had hundreds of online meetings and thousands of words exchanged in forums. Each area (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East) has also organised their regional training with their Change Agents.

Change Agents are about advancing the YMCA movement by **being the change, communicating visions of a strong and relevant YMCA and inspiring action worldwide.**

Romulo Dantas
Executive Secretary Youth Empowerment
World Alliance of YMCAs

A leadership training with a difference

- May 1, 2013



One leadership training is pretty much like another, right? Not so, would be the answer of the S2C (From Subject to Citizen) Ambassadors [who underwent second phase training](#) in Kenya in February this year. For them, the training was life-changing and their experiential learnings have pushed them to transform themselves and other youth. The basis of S2C training is that it works on two levels: inculcating belief in self and belief in being able to work for a better future, and skills development in order to do so.

From the recent communication received from the ambassadors, future change agents, we have the following testimonies:

“The session on the African Renaissance has awakened in me a sense of belonging to the African land and motivated my desire to work hard for its revival and recovery of dignity.”
Akpéné Kayi Adama-Amavi, Togo

“Before this last training, I was someone who goes blank whenever I stand to talk. But after training I have been able to overcome this particular challenge which makes me a better speaker. Back home the learnings from the training have helped me to be able to advocate on behalf of my fellow youth. These skills which I acquired from the training will bring the change we want to see. S2C has made me a role model, which makes me to be able to effect

change globally and in my National Movement.”

David Nana, Sierra Leone

“The change that I want to see begins with me so I will lead by example and others will follow.”

Careen Magaah, Zimbabwe:

Reaching out

The 20 young S2C ambassadors tasked to conduct presentations and facilitations on S2C, engage in advocacy and work with their National Movements to empower youth through S2C. From the reports received, in total, they reached just over 8 900 people through and on S2C this last quarter. Further, one of our S2C Ambassadors, Jonah Makau Matua, who is on a youth exchange, conducted 225 workshops and presentations in Norway during this last quarter. They were also tasked with writing articles, and wrote a total of 42 articles for publication via Africa Alliance of YMCAs’ newsletter and website.

Reverse Mentorship

Another area is that of mentorship. Each Ambassador has a mentor with whom they have to engage in reverse mentoring, sharing and ‘teaching’ their mentor their new learnings and skills. They were also tasked with engaging in group mentoring of elders both within and outside of the YMCA. The initial response of the mentors is overwhelmingly positive, with mentors commenting on how pleasantly surprised they have been to learn from their mentees. Many of the Ambassadors have also conducted group reverse mentoring or are planning to do so soon. Reverse mentoring is worthy of another article... coming soon!

What is your experience of Mentorship programme?

Are you familiar with Reversve Mentoring? Please share.

Gil Harper

Executive Secretary

Africa Alliance of YMCAs