



# Y-TALK

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Empowering Young People for Life, Leadership & Service



## Message from NGS

Dear friends and colleagues. During this shutdown, the days seem to merge into each other like a blur. Its easy to forget that we are heading into the backbone event of our Christian lives. The special thing about Easter is that God is first located in the historical context of Israel's pain, oppression and slavery and then revealed Himself as Saviour and Redeemer. May we be reminded as YMCA members and staff, and be encouraged, that even in this Corona moment, that God's redemptive and healing power brings us

hope...that God can and will heal our land and our world. May we not allow the fears and sufferings occuring around us daily, to disempower our thoughts and minds and rob us of hope. May we seek to find ourselves involved in the action of bringing hope to our communities and the world around us. Peace and blessings. Siphosiso.

## Local YMCA Response to Covid-19

### Athlone YMCA

... continues with their nurses and 101 Community Health Workers (CHW) on the ground. Coordinators and CHWs are playing a vital role in getting chronic medication to 15 000 people in the area. We are educating community members to steer them away from fake news and other hyperbole – on covid-19 and all health-related issues concerning high risk. Digital communication keeps the team running: management, HOD, coordinators, supervisors, CHWs, transportation and administrations. Great need – great team, great collaboration.

### Durban YMCA

We are 1 of 9 organisations in a city-wide group who have come together to provide shelter for homeless people. Of note in our work so far is the incredible inter-faith network that drives this. Here is a picture for you just on meal provision:

- Volunteers from the Hindu tradition provide lunches
- Volunteers from the Muslim tradition provide suppers
- Volunteers from the Jewish tradition provide refreshments and a quiet refuge at the Durban Jewish Centre for all emergency personnel

We are currently providing shelter for 40 women and a few couples, who are in quarantine, under supervision of YMCA staff.

## Pietermaritzburg YMCA

... is focusing on response to the homeless in the area. The municipality has coordinated shelters and there are 300 in the male shelter and 30 in the female shelter in the city. Working with Youth For Christ (YFC), we visit the male shelter where the YJ YMCA males are. They have even played social-distancing-soccer!

The virus crisis has opened up an opportunity for the YMCA to engage with the women in their shelter. It has always been difficult in the past, as they are dominated on the streets by the men. YFC and YMCA provide sanitary packs and food to the shelters. Most importantly, we are building relationships with the women during lockdown and into the future.

Working with KZNCC, we are developing programmes for the youth during lockdown as this is really needed now. We also work with Departments of Health and Social Development.

## Cape Flats YMCA

...we have a team of home-based care workers who continues to care for the core group, with 500 now needing chronic meds distribution. We are going into the homes of people to ensure care, meds, wound assistance and are able to do a lot of one-on-one with them on education around covid-19 precautions and meds regime.

In a new development, we have teamed up with **Oasis** for the homeless shelter in Strandfontein. Under city coordination, this involves 500 homeless people. We are all pitching in as a network to provide necessary safety, food, and general necessities. Our guys who are on placement with us from Extended Public Works Programme are playing a key role in developing programmes to keep the new residents occupied and lower the anxiety levels.

The Y-Justice programme, funded through Sweden YWCA/YMCA and Swedish Mission Council, has established an Emergency Fund to support Y-Justice programme activities in South Africa.

## A young persons experience of working in the frontline of the fight against Covid-19

Hi. I am Romano from the Cape Flats YMCA. It is day 2 (6 April 2020) of us working with the homeless in the tent here in Strandfontein. Today numbers went from 130 – 600 and this number will change. The guys have so many challenges: some do not understand, others resent the ‘imprisonment’, others are anxious with street withdrawals. So many are hopeless, feel worthless, are lost.

So I am here risking my health because that is what we do if we are true citizens. It is my duty. And my honour. We start early in the morning and we don't count the hours. So how do I deal with this? We have to be strong because these homeless people are not. We have to do the tough love thing. And we walk with them spiritually. They have time now to talk to the Creator. I never pictured myself doing this type of thing.

To all young people reading this: appreciate what you have and reach out to others now as this is what ubuntu is all about. Alone, together.

## Nelson Mandela Bay YMCA

Dear All. We, the NMB YMCA, have partnered with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator to bring credible content to young people around the Covid-19. This is meant to reach 3Million young people across the country. People are faced with fake news all the time and getting the right information will educate them and this correct information will eventually filter down to their families. Lockdown is a struggle in some parts of the country and educating young people and removing all misconceptions in their minds, will be taking a step in the right direction.



Lerato Lebopo  
General Secretary  
NMB YMCA

## Staff Experience of Covid 19.

Hi. I am Sanele and I work as the site manager at the Durban YMCA shelter housing 41 homeless people. The group consists of women and a few couples. The group was screened for Coronavirus before being sent to the YMCA.

I am responsible for the well-being of the group. My responsibilities include ensuring they take 4 meals a day, take their medication on time, ensuring that doctors attend to them when required and I plan daily activities for the group. Activities include spiritual sessions, going to the gym to keep them fit and watching movies.

I have learnt a great deal about people over the past week as I interact with the group and discover them as people just like you and me. I never expected to find myself in this position. This experience is teaching me that to be an active citizen means to stand up and be available to our fellow citizens when the need arises. The YMCA has taught me this.

My message to young people is this: during the lockdown, take time to reflect on your life and remember that the choices you make today, will make or break your future.

Sanele Makhathini

Durban YMCA Frontline Staff worker

## International - Y-Glocal

Y-Glocal is the volunteer group of young South Africa YMCA members, in partnership with the Danish YMCA/YWCA and the Cameroon YMCA.

The current group of Y-Glocal members are working with Mo Makhetha, the SA YMCA National Executive Committee's youth rep, to link in with LAG on the masculinity mission, aligning this to their work with SDG goal no 5: **Gender Equality**.

They are also looking at how to get involved with community health issues which aligns to SDG goal no 3: **Good health and well being**.

