



# Y-TALK

[www.saymca.org.za](http://www.saymca.org.za) | Empowering Young People for Life, Leadership & Service

Y-Talk will be produced every Tuesday during the COVID-19 crisis.

## National Office news

In line with the SA lockdown, the SAYMCA national office and local associations suspended all office work by Thursday 26 March 2020. The national office team is working remotely and we are available for communication with locals, stakeholders, networks and partners.

## Covid-19/SA YMCA

### Communication Channels

Facebook Public Group: **South Africa YMCA**

Facebook Closed Group

Y-Talk newsletter

Whatsapp groups (internal)

Website: [www.saymca.org.za](http://www.saymca.org.za)

For updates and news to be included in the next edition of Y-Talk, contact:

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## Message from the NGS

YMCA colleagues, partners and friends

Not even a month ago, we had the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in South Africa. Now in day 5 of lockdown, we see Ubuntu in action in our SAYMCA movement. In this time of fear and panic, let us stand true to who we are as a movement: empowering young people for life, leadership and service.

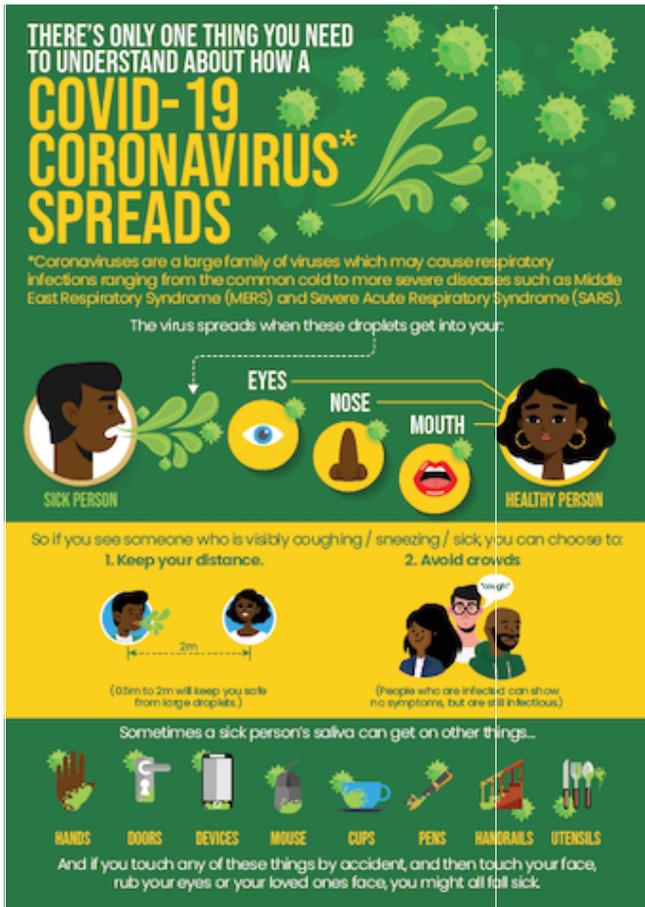
As we respond, we do so with spiritual covering and with a mindful attitude. In the midst of this crisis, let us provide safe spaces for our people. Safe physical spaces to those who are opening facilities, safe emotional spaces for those engaging in home care, counselling and work at clinics. And spiritual spaces through prayer and providing dignity to the vulnerable.

On behalf of the NEC, I encourage you to do what you can right now. Rise to the challenge; serve and innovate. And always look after yourselves while ensuring the crisis and workload does not lead to burnout.

The YMCA is characterised by our commitment to each other and our mission. I encourage you all to reach out to each other at this time. And keep each other in our prayers.

Yours in hope

Sipho Sokhela, General Secretary of SAYMCA



## Church Leaders Response to Covid-19

The SAYMCA is part of an ecumenical Covid-19 disaster response initiative. Coordinated through and based at the KZNCC, our NGS Siphso Sokhela is part of the 10-leader coordinating committee that is driving this.

The initiative covers different aspects of need from relief to care. As this is evolving, there is already support from churches and individuals. Of note, was the prayer on the eve of the lockdown. The Premier of KZN Sihle Zikalala attended the event and joined in the discussions and prayer.

Siphso led the proceedings, calling for strength and health for our people and wisdom for our leaders, the Premier and President in particular. We ask that you keep Siphso and the team in prayer.



**Still Empowering Young People for Life, Leadership & Service**

## Local YMCA response to the Covid-19 pandemic

### Homeless Shelters

Homeless people need urgent assistance now during the coronavirus crisis. With lockdown, they are even more vulnerable in many ways: shelter, underlying illnesses and HIV needs, health, food, protection from violence, cleanliness. They are high risk for contracting and passing on the virus, and for surviving the crisis.

**Soweto YMCA** and **Durban YMCA** have made the YMCA facilities open to shelter the homeless in the nearby areas. They have worked tirelessly with municipalities and relevant stakeholders. They are also within a network of other organisations doing this, and are determining how to address the many and varied needs of these street people. **PMB YMCA** has worked with the city and stakeholders to ensure shelter for the youth who regularly attend the YMCA, as part of the city-wide response to shelter all street people in the area. The YMCA is involved in food distribution at the homeless shelter centre.

### Frontliners in the Community

In **Cape Flats YMCA**, there are 52 home-based care workers still serving the local community. They continue to see to the health needs of the vulnerable in the area. They are now attending to 500 more people and have taken on the task of delivering chronic medications from the clinics to the homes. This ensures that those who are in vulnerable economic and health positions are able to stay at home during this period.

Counsellors attached to the **Cape Flats YMCA** are continuing their work at the clinics and day hospitals which is about counselling related to wellness testing for diabetes, high blood pressure, HIV and another needs. They are also now assisting at the Cape Flats YMCA office, sorting out medicine packages.

**At Athlone YMCA** there are 101 Community Health Workers (CHW) who are now working hand in glove with the local Day Clinic by screening patients before they enter the facilities. The Athlone YMCA Professional Nurses and Enrolled Nurses manage the daily activities of the CHW, and coordinate other health programmes which are still running.

In **Ravensmead YMCA**, the General Secretary is part of the ministers fraternal that is working tirelessly to ensure that vulnerable community members are being cared for with food, medical support and spiritual counselling.

**Student YMCA UCT** has allowed 3 International students who were unable to leave the country, to stay in their hostel, in quarantine, until the lockdown is over.



### Young Advocates for Change

The YAC programme has been postponed until later in the year (August).

**The Youth Led Solutions Summit** that was going to be held in San Fransisco in July has been postponed until a later date.

### Local Action Group/LAG Response to Covid-19

The focus for LAG this year is on masculinity, as a response to high Gender Based Violence rates in South Africa. Due to Covid-19, we have reworked the program so it kicks off with online work. The core group of local association LAG leaders is working online to research, share experiences, share realities in local areas and test out some modules of training that has worked in SA and Africa. We know that violence against women is going to increase during lockdown and beyond. Through this program, we will look at the role that YMCA can play as the crisis unfolds and potentially increases the already high rates of violence against women in our society.

## International Exchanges

### Communication for Change

3 young people from YMCAs in South Africa are currently in lockdown at Sunmore Folk High School, in Norway.

The Norwegian YMCA/YWCA has assured us that they are doing well. Should the lockdown in Norway extend beyond the end of April, it is likely that the CfC programme will be closed down for 2020 and the 3 will return home to SA as soon as it is possible.

The 3 are **Minenhle Khumalo** from UKZN Student Y, **Carlton Marks** from Athlone Y and **Keenan Whyte** from Ravensmead Y (Keenan is currently one of the CfC Coordinators).

**Emergency Hotline: 0800 029 999**

**WhatsApp Support Line: 0600-123456**

**COVID-19**  
Online Resource & News Portal  
SAcoronavirus.co.za



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