

# Y-Talk



## Reflections / National General Secretary

Before the memories of the General Assembly fade... I would like us to celebrate a key achievement.

We came together as a cohesive movement with a common purpose and unity of mission.

Because of this, we have an excellent foundation to develop our new strategic plan. We need to position ourselves as a leading youth movement in South Africa. It is time for us to claim this space. Our leadership development and programmes are unique. So is our local to global connection.

### Business model based on sustainability

We need to be bold to develop a new business model. We must be mission driven! Spiritually based and focused on our niche of youth development – to be relevant now and

proactive for the future. For this, it is vital that we generate income ourselves, without losing our mission focus.

### Relevance through programmes

As the unemployment crisis in our country escalates we must prioritise a **re-evaluation** of our current National Signature Programme strategy and modify where the movement deems necessary.

### Powerspaces for change

Driven mainly by programmes, the **Powerspaces** develop youth identity and skills so they can act as agents of change in South Africa and the continent. Powerspaces are at the heart of what is happening now and what needs to change for a better future.

Yours in service,

**Sipho Sokhela, NGS, SAYMCA**

**This issue of Y-Talk focusses on young people's reflections on the recent Africa Alliance of YMCA General Assembly. We start with this reflection on Transformative masculinity.**



The afternoon hangout power space session started by an educative short play that connected clearly to the topic hence provoking a discussion. It was facilitated by former YAC participants who are currently Change Agents.

Different people had their definition on the subject of **transformative masculinity**. Some referred to it as;

- Opposite of toxic masculinity
- Others said a real man is the one who is caring and respectful
- Whereby a man or a woman performs duties not just because of their gender but they have the will to do so.

The moderators took us through the initiative of transformative masculinity and the program 'a real man is'. It's a YMCA man purpose program. It promotes respect, peace and harmony between young women and men as partners hence reducing high levels of GBV and imbalances.

**Participants opinion about why woman are silent.**

- Victimisation
- Shame
- Society expects women to be submissive
- Stigma
- Religious setting
- Teenage pregnancy hence lowering self esteem
- View of marriage as an achievement hence they rather silent than step up and speak
- View of being humble in the society
- Women seen as basis of failure of community
- Women look to man as superior

**How can we support woman to speak out?**

- Demonstrate Love and care to them
- Seek to Understand them
- Share their space, voice and opportunities
- Have Women inclusive conversations
- Ensure men learn the roles of women
- Conventions, culture and gospel to be inclusive in points of referencing

## **Conclusion**

We had the opportunity to have people who are in a marriage relationship address us. They ended up giving practical examples and situations that they had to encounter in their marriage life and how best they conquer their differences.

In the session it became clear how easy it is for roles and responsibilities to become stereotyped and for both genders to fall into these roles even when they no longer serve the relationship well.

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### **Article by Martha Wanza**

YAC participant in South Africa/2019.  
Martha is from Mombasa, Kenya



## Reflections from a Youth Advocates for Change participant - Ragnhild Maria Matre Løvik from Norway YMCA/YWCA

During the first week of June, the 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Africa Alliance of YMCAs was held in Johannesburg. As a YAC-participant, I got the opportunity to participate with National General Secretaries, volunteers and staff of YMCAs in Africa and International partners. We even had Carlos Sanvee, World YMCA Secretary General and Patricia Pelton, President of the World Alliance of YMCAs, together with us.

A flag ceremony celebrating the participating countries marked the official opening of the Assembly, as well as the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the African Alliance of YMCAs. The whole of the first day was spent catching up with old friends and getting to know many more. Even me, a European who's only been involved in AAY for a short time, couldn't walk into a room without seeing a familiar smiling face!

Throughout the week the program was hectic, and as exciting as the first night. The theme for the Assembly was **'Powered for the Renaissance: Youth in the Driver's Seat'**. The African Change Agents for this cohort, as well as current and previous Young Advocates for Change were in charge of the hangouts and vibe sessions. Each of the sessions focused on key elements of YMCAs in Africa such as PowerSpace, Youth Scenarios and Youth Justice. Together with Eugene Tshuma, a previous YAC-participant from Zimbabwe, I got the chance to facilitate Sex Manenoz, and what an experience it was! With such a diverse group of participants, we had no problems in getting to hear different points of view on relevant questions and statements.

The diversity of the representatives was visible in the General Assembly's plenary discussions.

Some of the topics on the agenda were 'Issuing of charter certificates', 'Sustainability' and 'The Role of Advocacy'. However, the most engaging of them was the discussions related to the elections of the new executive committee, where we heard the differences in opinions of youth and elders.



Even though most of the time in Johannesburg was spent in meetings and workshops, South Africa YMCA had arranged excursions for us to experience the city and surrounding areas. We could choose from three guided tours, all ending in Soweto YMCA at sunset. Here we were warmly welcomed by Y-Arts, starting the festive night for us.

The Assembly was an important week for all of us involved in AAYMCA, and getting this opportunity was a big honour. Building networks, sharing ideas and getting a greater understanding of the work that is being done on the different levels in various African countries, are only a few of the things we are left with after this 11<sup>th</sup> assembly. We are now, more than ever, ready for youth empowerment and putting youth in the driver's seat.

**In this issue of Y-Talk we feature impressions of the General Assembly from 3 young people who attended the event. Their impressions were focussed on 4 questions we put to them.**

### **1. Something new and innovative**

The Youth Resolution that was taken. This could definitely be implemented in South Africa. More youth representation on boards would show that youth are indeed in the driving seat and SA YMCA would be more relevant. However, it is up to us whether or not we are willing, to adapt to the changes that these new and innovative ideas bring.

### **2. Personal learnings/reflections from the GA**

If I want to be in the driving seat I would have to be willing to take the wheel and drive. Meaning I will have to be open minded about learning from someone who was in the seat I find myself in. This I can use in all spheres of my life.

### **3. Overall General Assembly impressions**

It was definitely something to remember. It was indeed youthful and teamwork was displayed in every aspect. Highlights were:

1. The opening ceremony- "wow"
2. Devotions- really had the delegates in good spirit
3. Breakaway sessions- "they were thoroughly thought through and everybody in

those sessions could freely express their opinions, while giving others an opportunity to learn something new and look at situations from a different angle".

### **4. If there were anything you could change about the logistics of the conference what would it be and why?**

The circulation of reports. Most of the reports were on screen and this made it a bit difficult to read. Hence very few questions were asked.



**Samantha Stuurman,  
Nelson Mandela Bay YMCA**

### **1. Something new and innovative**

In my opinion there were no new and innovative ideas but we managed to identify issues that hinder progression such as finances, lack of support from local YMCAs and dependency on national offices.

### **2. Personal learnings and reflections**

It was mind blowing. I had an opportunity to interact with so many people, got to understand how different YMCAs work, their approach to solving challenges and how they sustain their YMCAs. I appreciated so many young people putting in the hard work to be the leaders that Africa needs. I would rate it 9 out of 10.

### **3. Overall General Assembly impressions**

It was very nice seeing young people being united and taking a stand together, understanding that we should be citizens and not subjects. Young people asking for a constitutional amendment, to say we are said to be at the driver's seat but yet we are sitting at the back. Such young people have ideas that will make a generational impact.

### **4. If there were anything you could change ...**

It would be nice to have more young people attending such conferences. There were few young people compared to the older ones. National Movements are to work with the Africa Alliance so that more deserving young people attend such conferences because their input is really valuable. Also there is need for improvement with the transport logistics.



**Dasley Ngako, UKZN Student YMCA**

### **1. Something new and innovative**

For South African youth to have more interactions between locals in South Africa. This way we are more connected and prepared for local and international assemblies.

### **2. Personal learnings and reflections**

I had nice interactions with the Monitoring and Evaluation group. Reasons M&E is important was highlighted in this meeting. This was a real learning experience for me.

### **3. Overall General Assembly impressions**

Seeing how African countries can come together as one Alliance was definitely a highlight for me. Interacting with the other youth from other African countries and forming relationships was another highlight.

### **4. If there were anything you could change about the logistics of the conference what would it be and why?**

Timekeeping. There were times when I wasn't sure what was going on with the schedule. Also due to poor timekeeping we couldn't enjoy everything that was said to happen on the excursions.



**Qulen Lottering, Ravensmead YMCA**

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## AAYMCA General Assembly

**“My lasting legacy- And it is a precious one - is the Young Men’s Christian Association. I leave it to you, beloved...of many countries to carry on and extend” a quote by George Williams, founder of the world wide YMCA movement.**

The Africa Alliance of YMCA’s converged in Johannesburg for the 11<sup>th</sup> Africa Alliance General Assembly, in the city of Ekurhuleni, meaning ‘Place of peace’ in Xitsonga, one of the eleven official languages in South Africa. The theme of this year’s General Assembly was **‘Powered for the Renaissance- Youth in the driver’s seat’**, which was also a steppingstone into a future of an organization.

The event was a landmark in the history of the movement in Africa. We celebrated 175 years of the YMCA’s existence in the world as well as the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Africa Alliance of YMCA’S. The opening ceremony saw 18 countries unite in celebrating our achievement with the world renowned Umoja gracing us with their presence and philosophy of ‘The Spirit of Togetherness’.

Thirty-four young people of diverse backgrounds representing their African countries pioneered the future of the continent at the Youth Summit held a few days prior to the General Assembly. Resolutions were made by the youth to drive the Movement to reach its goals and even exceed them.

Amongst many other activities, there was the African Youth Scenarios for 2063, the Hangouts and vibes sessions where the intergenerational gap was bridged, where topics such as ‘Sex Manenoz’, the Power Space were discussed, as well as the Hot bench discussions which brought heated debates amongst delegates.

The highlight for many was the day of the excursions in Soweto, which gave the diverse delegation a taste of Jozi and a night in Soweto. The delegation visited Kliptown, the birthplace of

the South African Freedom Charter, Mary Fitzgerald Square, Constitutional Hill and Nelson Mandela’s home.

The event was an unofficial launch of Youth Month in South Africa and it was only fitting to visit the Hector Peterson Memorial and to re-ignite the spirit of the youth of 1976, who fought for freedom in South Africa.

Guests such as the World Alliance Secretary General, Carlos Sanvee and the First Female World Alliance of YMCAs President, Patricia Pelton, were also part of this important event. Delegates were inspired by various speakers and guests visualizing the future of our organization and the continent.

The underlying theme of the General Assembly was taken from the scripture in Ephesians 6:13-18, ‘The Amor of God...’

I believe young people across the world and Africa in particular are indeed powered with the Amor of God, ready for the future, standing firm as leaders for the African Renaissance!



**Mongadi Makhetha - Soweto YMCA**

## The Executive Committee of the Africa Alliance of YMCAs elected at the 11th General Assembly held in Johannesburg, June 2019.



From Left seated is Loleyah Noriss, Dr Adrien Coly, Du Prince Noubissi, Ruby Francisco Mathang  
From Left Standing is James Rhule, Irene Ayimba, Rakotomalala Lantonirina, Reynolds Kissiedu  
Last row standing is Ronald Senghore and Yirga Asefa  
Missing from the picture is Queen Ndlovu.



YMCAs are represented in 24 countries across Africa.

**Sisonke:** Derived from the South African Zulu language, the word 'sisonke' means 'to bridge'. Today, it is commonly understood to represent notions of togetherness; unity; solidarity; peace; and love.

## **In this edition of Stakeholder Spotlight, we talked to Lindsay October who is the founder of Cape Region Campers (CRC) which is one of Athlone YMCA stakeholders.**

### **Who is Cape Region Campers Pty Ltd?**

Cape Region Campers - CRC has been around for +-6 years. Lindsay October is the founder and has brought on board Theo Scullard to run CRC. Our passion and desire was always to work with our Youth of today.

### **What work does the Cape Region Campers do?**

We facilitate organised structured Camps and focus much on Motivation to always want to make a difference - MaD in the communities and schools. We also prepare and design programmes to our clients' needs. We also strive to drive energy and our main aims are to enrich lives with positive values to MaD.

### **How are you involved with the YMCA?**

In the past I volunteered for the youth department working alongside Ryan Benjamin. I was put in charge to organize a Youth Rally Coffee night. I also assisted with events by being a driver. Today YMCA assists me when CRC needs skills facilitators to run a camp and we are very pleased by their experience in working with youth.

### **What motivated you to do the work you do?**

I am always on the lookout for our youth to not wander off in life and unfortunately in today's life there are so many that do. I have grown up in the church and as I grew up, I developed a heart desire to work with our Youth of today. The youth needs spiritual, God-fearing leaders who will continue to be examples for them.

### **What is your view of the Athlone YMCA programmes? Are they making a positive change in the community?**



I like what I see because they have a good workable programme. I would say yes, they are producing good results because they are keeping the kids coming back, which is a good sign.

### **In your own opinion what other problems faced by the community that YMCA should try to solve?**

I would recommend that YMCA get more involved with parents. Get into their homes and share their vision and make themselves available to parents as well teaching them to care more for their children, get more involved in youth community work.

### **Any ideas for future partnership with YMCA?**

Just to keep going and continue to uplift one another to achieve greater things for God.

**Thank you CRC for your great work and commitment to partnering with the YMCA in Athlone.**



**The launch of the SA YMCA/Charlotte Coleman-Smith Fund, at KwaMakhutha High School, to support deserving high school students from the South Coast of Kwazulu/Natal.**

The National office is proud to be in partnership with the **Charlotte Coleman-Smith Fund**. The Fund is focusing on supporting deserving students from KwaMakhutha High School (KHS) and a few other selected schools on the South Coast of Kwazulu. The Fund will also support a Mathematics after school programme for students who excel in Maths to prepare them for University courses requiring higher levels of Maths achievement.

The Fund came about after the tragic passing of Charlotte Coleman - Smith Helm in Oct 2018. Charlotte, along with James Helm, taught in a Supplementary Education Initiative of the Amanzimtoti YMCA in 1992. As graduates of Cambridge University they were part of a group of 22 students placed by the Toti Y in schools with a shortage of teachers.

James and Charlotte remembers their time in South Africa with great fondness and gratitude. Not to mention that they met for the first time in South Africa and married a few years later.

James and his three sons, Joseph, Patrick and Charlie visited South Africa in April to see where their mum had met their dad and to assist James in launching the Fund. They fell in love with South Africa.

Y-Care International is partnering with the Fund and SA YMCA to raise money and to ensure that all the legalities of foreign funding into South Africa is above board. To date the Fund has raised over R500,000. A student is being supported at UKZN and a supplementary programme run by KHS is also part of the initiative.

# The Future of Work

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY MARTHA WANZA

YAC PARTICIPANT 2019, SOUTH AFRICA

FROM MOMBASA, KENYA

“As 2025 approaches we don’t know yet the type of jobs our children born from 2000 will work on”. Dr. Gillian, one of the panellist addressing delegates on future of sub-Saharan Africa during 11<sup>th</sup> General assembly of the AAYMCA.



I choose a rarely spoken about session by young people. To give you at least a hint why this conversation is a must talk, not because I am an economist nor have experience as an economist, but because it’s a topic every young person should be interested in: **the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial Revolution.**

I wonder if our education allows us to balance technical skills at risk of being replaced by automation, with timeless “soft” skills? As young people, will our education prepare us for a career, and will that career even exist by the time I am ready to join the workforce? As part of Youth Month, June, there was a series of youth indabas organized by different sectors of Government and organizations.

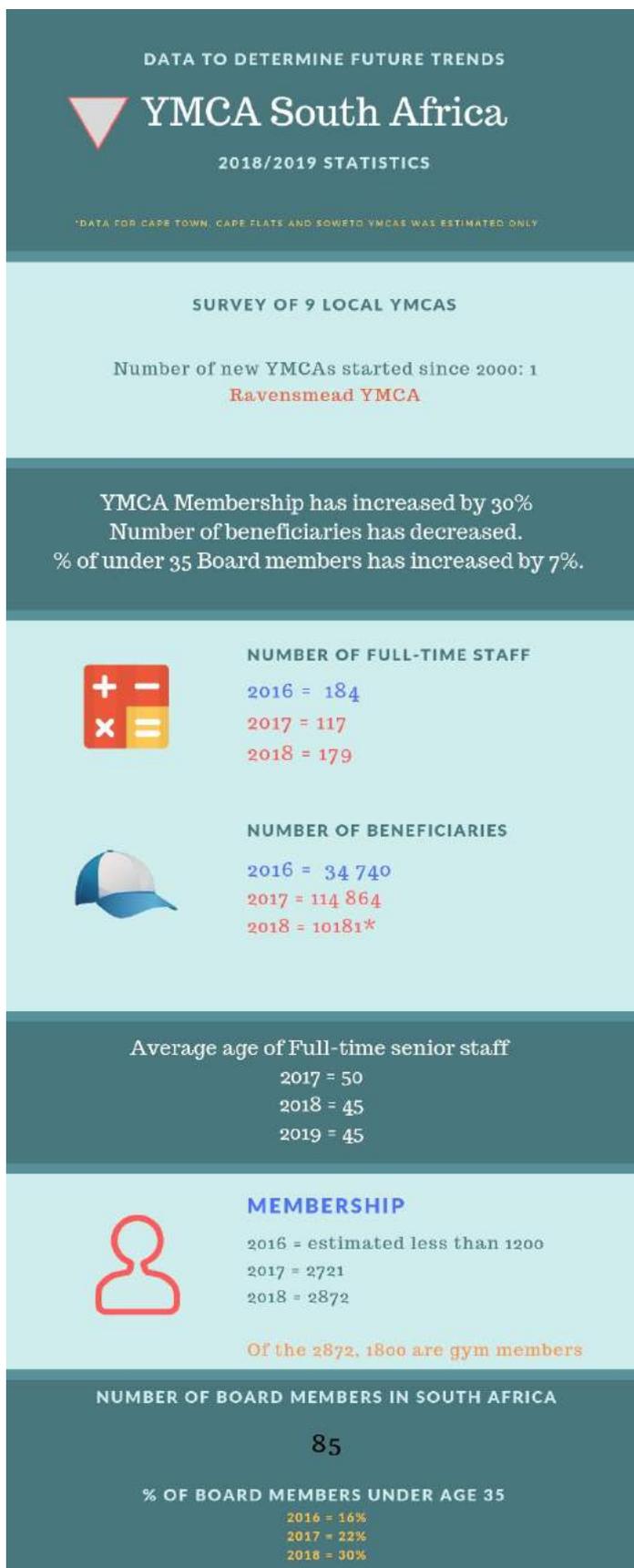
Having had the opportunity to attend 3 of them, one point that was clear is that systems and individuals need to speak to each other to ensure sustainable, innovative ways to secure jobs for our youth. One of the youth indabas organized by the trade and investment sector in the municipality, encouraged youth to move away from being job seeking to job creators. Most young people need to invest in entrepreneurship because they lack soft skills which is a key in the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution.

Rukudzo Kalahari, a young person from Zimbabwe YMCA (below) is a Change Agent in 2019. He presented the dilemma of future work for young people. Dr. Gillian indicated clearly that it needs a creative nation with ability to adapt in the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution. Some of the top skills that will be needed include critical thinking, creativity, people management, emotional intelligence and cognitive flexibility among other skills. What are we as YMCA doing to support the development of these skills in young people?



**YMCA**  
**young people – as we take up the challenge of being in the driver’s seat, it’s evident we all need to have a paradigm shift on jobs, come up with more innovative ways as we embrace the power of technology.**

The information below comes from an online survey of all local YMCAs in South Africa, conducted in July 2019. Data from 9 YMCAs was received at the time of writing.



## BREAKING NEWS!

# YMCA Youth Employment Summit

The unemployment crisis (see statistics below) continues to play itself out in our communities where young people grow increasingly restless, with less hope for the future. The 4th Industrial Revolution is passing them by without much positive effect on their job opportunities. As YMCA, we need to take some responsibility, collectively, as a movement, and begin focussing our action on relevant interventions. A YMCA youth employment Summit is being requested by young people in the movement. Watch out for it soon!

## Department of Statistics South Africa - July 2019

The youth aged 15–24 years are the most vulnerable in the South African labour market as the unemployment rate among this age group was 55,2% in the 1st quarter of 2019. Among graduates in this age group, the unemployment rate was 31,0% during this period compared to 19,5% in the 4th quarter of 2018