



Y-TALK

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Empowering Young People for Life, Leadership & Service

From the NGS



There is no YMCA without the Y. The views of young people matter. Most of the discussions, views on events and circumstances surrounding Covid-19 has been more informed and driven by adults. Young people feel they are hardly consulted in decision making. The YMCA is taking note of the deep concern and cry of young people, who find themselves as subjects, not believing their opinion matters. The empowerment of young people within the YMCA is informed by a vision of S2C (Subject to Citizens) which aspires to the notion that young people have potential to become transformed citizens with a voice in society that adds value to decision making. The Y-Talk is affirming that young people count, that they have an opinion about their future and need to be given space to talk and influence decisions about that future. We trust that as leadership in our YMCAs we can model this and be listening; where necessary take action to strengthen their voice; making it audible to decisions makers.

This is actually the true purpose of a Y-Talk.

COVID-19 IMPACT on the YMCA MOVEMENT LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic effect on the world – killing millions of people, crippling the world economy and exposing deep socioeconomic and health disparities across communities worldwide.

Much like the South African YMCAs, U.S. YMCA's have been challenged by the economic collapse. We temporarily closed our facilities and suspended many programs and services in March which resulted in substantial company-wide furloughs, staff layoffs and loss of significant operational revenue.

During times of crisis however, the YMCA has a long history of pivoting in response to the critical needs facing our communities. We quickly mobilized and found ways to use our resources to offer new solutions. A few of these services included offering emergency child care for first



responders and essential workers, providing food to families and youth in need and engaging our senior population to make sure their needs were met. We also launched new, virtual exercise classes and kids programming on our website and LIVE on our Facebook page to keep families active and engaged while at home.

While the pandemic has been hard on everyone, the stay at home policy has had a particularly negative impact on our young people who are no longer in schools that previously provided a critical safety net. School environments help to ensure youth in vulnerable communities receive educational, health and emotional support. YMCA's are stepping up to be part of the solution to students facing these challenges. On the First Coast, we quickly transitioned to virtual afterschool programming and created a platform to ensure the most under-resourced and at-risk students could continue to receive academic support through online homework from certified teachers. While virtual learning is a great tool, we also wanted to pick-up the phone and call all of our youth. Our afterschool staff made over 3,000 phone calls to connect with these students to offer more support and encouragement.

As U.S. YMCA's slowly reopen, it's clear that we are facing a new reality. The world as we knew it is no longer. In Northeast Florida, we are thrilled to be back open. To date, one of the best parts of reopening is seeing how happy our members are to be back and hear how much they missed coming to their Y. These testimonials only highlight what we already know: the Y is more than a gym.

While our mission remains the same, how we deliver this mission will be different. With every

shared experience, there are key learnings to guide us forward as we seek ways to best serve our communities: families were forced to spend more quality time together, working remotely can lead to better work/life balance for employees; and virtual offerings such as telehealth, fitness classes and educational services will become the norm.

Through it all, YMCA leaders are resilient servant leaders who have an entrepreneurial spirit that will lead us through this transition and into a brighter future for our organization.

For 15 years, the South African U.S. YMCA Coalition's primary goal has been to help our South African YMCA partners deliver on its mission. I am so proud of how South African YMCAs have pivoted operations to respond to the critical needs caused by Covid-19 in their local communities. I've been closely following your work on social media and throughout the comprehensive electronic newsletter. Led by South African YMCA National General Secretary Siphso Sokhela and local Y General Secretaries, South African Y's have impacted over 120,000 lives through food distribution, helping the homeless, and providing health care to those in need.

As we move forward, we will continue to look for ways to support our South African YMCA partners along with YUSA.

Keep up the great work!

Eric K. Mann

Chair, U.S. YMCA - South Africa YMCA Coalition

President and CEO-YMCA of Florida's First Coast

11 Members in the SA-USA YMCA Coalition



Jacksonville, FL
Atlanta, GA
Nashville, TN
Hartford, CT
Washington, D.C.
Boston, MA

St. Louis, MO
Austin, TX
San Diego, CA
Montgomery, AL
Minneapolis, MN



HOW COVID19 HAS AFFECTED MY STUDIES

Like most students, COVID 19 has affected my academic year. The negative impact is happening at the worst time of my University life – my final and most important year. I have had to realign with the new academic calendar which is not easy. It has not been easy, try to do my best to keep up to date with schoolwork (attending lectures online and doing assignments) taking into consideration the many hurdles in the way. For example, as a female, I'm expected to do some house chores at a time when I need to study. Anxiety has been doing the most. My friends who happen to be my study mates are not around to help

me where I am lacking and to keep me motivated. However as much as things haven't been easy during these unprecedented times, it has taught me to work even harder and try to keep up to date

and show how much I want this Law degree. I welcome the call for Universities to reopen amidst the COVID 19 and my peers share the same sentiments as we understand and see the need of being on campus. I have been able to attend a few lectures online which have given me an advantage as opposed to some my fellows who are in places that do not have poor or no network access at all and

going back to school will help them catch up with school work. Also in Law, as 4th year Law students we are required to do what is called Moots as part of our degree and we can't graduate without mooting as it amounts to 70% of the Professional training module. We can't moot online as this will prejudice us in various ways. It would be easier to meet with opponent to discuss the topic for the Moot. We need to visit the law library since a lot of materials cannot be found online and sometimes, we encounter difficulties in accessing a case law.



The fear of contracting the virus is still there in many of us and some students have highlighted that they prefer to study online at homes, which is something I think should be respected by the

University. Personally, my biggest worry is sharing rooms at Res and how do we police each other with roommates to ensure we don't contract Coronavirus. I hope the University will look into that and assist students with precautionary measures.

Written by Sunshine Mbutho

4th Year Law Student at UKZN

EDUCATE, EDUCATE and... EDUCATE

I am Nonkululeko Nzimande, the Founder and Director at the X Foundation, a non profit company established in 2010 with the sole purpose of empowering the youth of Umlazi, Durban, through educational bursaries. I am a partner with the UKZN YMCA for “The Economic Entrepreneurial Education Program” (TEEEP) which teaches primary school children basics of economics and entrepreneurship.

My passion for education has been tested over the past two months, as the country debates on the reopening of schools amid the COVID 19 crisis.

The best way to prevent infection by the corona virus is to avoid exposure to the virus. Secondary to that is to adopt ‘hygienic’ habits, which come at a financial and psychological cost. The United Nations issued a framework for the reopening of schools and it states that one of the six (6) key dimensions used to assess the state of readiness to open schools is safe operations. One of the prerogatives under safe operations stipulates that ‘detailed protocols on hygiene measures, including handwashing, respiratory etiquette, use of protective equipment, cleaning procedures for facilities and safe food preparation practices’ must be developed. I agree with this point in particular, but it can’t be seen in isolation. It has to be conceptualized and adapted to Umlazi for

example, a township where public transport, over-populated schools, poor water and sanitation are a challenge. Are Covid 19 related personal protection equipment supplies readily available for all pupils, teachers and workers?

It goes without saying that the lockdown disruptions to teaching time in the classroom will have a negative impact on the curriculum for the year 2020. That being said, the guide for the opening of schools should be the best interests of the child. I am of the view that the lives of pupils and teachers are more important than saving the academic year.

That being said, the spread of the COVID 19 among pupils will be inevitable. The most important precautionary measure to be taken to reduce the spread is to educate, educate and educate. An educated pupil is an empowered pupil. An educated teacher is an empowered teacher. Pupils, teachers, workers and cleaners must be trained on physical distancing, hygiene practices and disinfection. They must be equipped with the requisite personal protection equipment. Lastly, teachers must be trained on procedures, medical and emergency plans to be followed should a teacher or a pupil become unwell or be suspected of having symptoms of the virus.

Nonkululeko Nzimande / UKZN Student

We take a moment to honour 3 YMCA connected people who passed away in the last 2 weeks.

Zameka Faku - **Cape Flats YMCA staff person working in the Health project**

Charlene George - **sister of Clinton George - General Secretary of Pietermaritzburg YMCA**

Mother of Portia Tshepe - **General Secretary of Soweto YMCA**

May the Lord grant the family and friends of those who have gone before us, the strength and peace to get through the days of mourning for their loved ones. May the Lord make His face to shine on them and give them Peace. Amen.

FROM A CONCERNED MOM

As a mom of three kids residing in the Western Cape, which is the recognised epicentre of the virus COVID-19 in South Africa, I have multiple concerns about allowing children to return to school. Although my children attend an Independent School who I commend on the health protocols recently implemented, my concern is about putting them at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Although none of my three children have any comorbidities, I cannot guarantee that they will be able to pull through if they were to contract the virus. Having said that, my 6 year old would also be too young to fully comprehend why she would need to self-isolate or even remain in a hospital room on her own without being able to see or touch us. The thought of her being alone

or any of our three children for that matter, is daunting and brings about a level of anxiety that I believe no mother should have to experience.

I do believe that the education of my children is important and home schooling has really worked well. I also understand that not all homes have the privilege or access to home schooling, but I still believe that we have followed on how the rest of the world has managed this virus and it is clear by both France, Denmark and the UK that it is way too soon for children to return. Therefore, my husband and I have made the decision to not send our children back to school at the moment. We will continue the home-schooling process until we feel safer about the spread of Covid19.

Tracy Benjamin / Athlone YMCA / Mom of two boys aged, 14 and 11 and a daughter aged 6.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ACTIVE CITIZEN



Hello! My name is Mo. I'm a blogger and social entrepreneur but most importantly, I am an active citizen.

I love my continent and country but I am also very rooted to my community, so this means I take local actions to make positive change wherever and whenever I can.

Being an active citizen mean I am acting and fostering real impact at all spheres of influence. Young people are today's leaders so we need to become social innovators and create ideas for our own future.

I believe in the Renaissance of Africa and all her children, therefore it's all of our duty and responsibility to get into the driver's seat and lead this change and rebirth. The YMCA has, over the past decade, developed a model of empowerment for youth. The philosophy of S2C addresses the economic, political and moral crises of young people. We achieve this by providing

empowerment spaces for youth. While in the past, these spaces have been physical, we need to reimagine and transform them to meet the digital demands of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

The YMCA can only thrive in the 21st century by investing in the potential of our young people, and by providing the necessary tools for them to become role players in their own development.

The volunteers and staff across local communities in South Africa have been working selflessly and tirelessly in various interventions for victims of the Covid-19 pandemic. Such efforts are what active citizenship is all about. Covid-19 makes this more urgent. Life will never be what it was. The new normal means that we get the opportunity to redefine our lives now.

This means we as young people. must act. Let us own our future. Let us all be active citizens.

Mo Makhetha / National Youth Representative on National Executive Committee of SA YMCA

Homeless People Find a Home with the YMCA

For the first 2 months of the Covid 19 shutdown in South Africa, the Cape Flats YMCA worked tirelessly to provide thousands of meals to homeless people who had been quarantined in several large tents at Strandfontein on the Cape Flats. When the temporary shelters were removed, the City of Cape



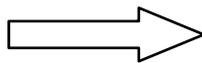
Flats YMCA, put his head down, got on the phone and with the help of SA YMCA National office, raised enough money to redo the renovations. He also managed to purchase an industrial washing machine and dryer for the group.

The group will receive counselling, food, recreation facilities, skills training in the food garden and the skills they have will be used to maintain and develop the site.

Over time the goal is to reintegrate them as active citizens with their communities, families and friends. Its a long journey.



From This at the end of May...to...



Town appealed to several organisations in the Cape to provide a 'home' for those who were wanting to stay off the street. Cape Flats YMCA stepped forward to offer a safe place for 30 people, some couples, some 'older' people and several young people. The Western Cape government is supporting the project although the future of this support is still uncertain.

The group moved to the YMCA campsite facility in Strandfontein on 20th May. Some renovations and reconstruction of the site had to take place to accommodate the group. 24 hrs later a vicious Cape storm lashed the site, causing thousands of rands damage and setting the whole project back a few weeks. Ricky de Reuck, General Secretary of Cape

The current situation



Since the start of the lockdown in South Africa on March 26, local YMCAs in South Africa have reached the following numbers of people:

- at least 150,000 individuals for health issues, awareness campaigns
- has served about 50,000 meals and distributed over 3000 food packages
- provided direct support to over 300 homeless people
- housed 124 people who were unable to return to their homes
- distributed over 1500 masks, 1200 litres of hand sanitizer and 100's of aprons.