Y-TALK

Telling our story

NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY COMMUNIQUE

The YMCA story began with a local YMCA, its communities and partners, and continues that way today, rooted at local level. The YMCA story began with youth empowerment and through many phases and paths we are again firmly rallying around the call of youth empowerment. In the recent past, people knew the YMCA story so well that a song was written about us – "it's fun to stay at the YMCA..."

The focus on youth empowerment was evident at the recent World Council in Thailand with its theme of Youth Empowerment for Good, #YE4Good. Young people, including from SA, took on leadership roles during the event. A key aspect was the **PowerSpace** which developed from studying best practice at local YMCA's, percolated up to continental and world levels and is now being introduced across the worldwide movement.

Our SA volunteer leadership were greatly energised by the spotlight on the strategic role that board members and volunteers have to play in governance, especially around resource mobilisation.

The heart of the National Council lies in the value of youth empowerment that local associations extract from and embeds in our communities. It's how we embrace our diversity and how we get young people into the driver's seat of change. It's what local Y's offer to the world movement, through the SAYMCA and the Africa Alliance. It's about our impact. It is time for the communities to start telling our story. It is time for a new song to be sung!

Rev Sipho Sokhela

Welcome to the first edition of the newly launched Y-Talk magazine. The original Y-Talk magazine was started in 2000, with over 30 editions published. This new digital format is only available as a PDF, accessible through the SA YMCA website and s as an email attachment. A smaller version will be available via WhatsApp. The focus of Y-Talk will be on providing young people with a voice in the movement. The content for this edition was provided entirely by young people.

Carlos Madjri Sanvee – World YMCA Secretary General elect

I am humbled, as a son of the African soil, to be the World YMCA Secretary General elect. I am ready for the challenge and I feel prepared due to the time I have spent as head of the Africa Alliance, representing our continent and you, members of local branches and national teams.

I take with me the resilience of the Africa people... its youth, women and the emerging leadership. I take with me the youth empowerment core focus to prepare to take it to the next levels. I take with me movement strengthening and the need to move this to its next frontier of growth and relevance and finally, I take the still-developing economic model that need to be consolidated.

YOUTH TRENDS

Generation Z is with us!

Gil Harper

We have been bombarded with info and marketing about Generation Y, but while we have been catering to these Millennials, Generation Z has snuck up on us. It is generally accepted that the iGen's were born from 1995, making the oldest 23 – right in the middle of the YMCA's target market. So for YMCA, whose core focus is Empowerment of young people, we should be equipping ourselves with knowledge on this youth grouping.

What characterises Generation Z?

- Competitive living and working is attractive to them
- Like independence and working alone
- Want responsibility of projects so their worth can be known
- More than Millennials, many are skipping tertiary education, going straight into the workforce
- Function best with technology, they are 'native digitals'
- Very social, especially on different online platforms but in real life too
- Ultimate multi-taskers who can easily have four or five tasks on the go at the same time

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- Lower attention span (possibly due to their insatiable multi tasking!)
- Lean towards entrepreneurship
- Like to gain knowledge and learn for themselves via YouTube, podcasts etc.
- Are early adopters and many are earning money online at an early age
- Very global/considering online connections to be just as important as a friend next door.

An interesting picture of the typical techno iGen youth emerges from this, but it is important for us to bear in mind that many of the youth we work with do not have this access to technology. What are the implications of this then? These could be many and varied: new and different waves of crime, forced isolation, frustration at the huge divide between them and those who have. Bearing this in mind, perhaps we can tease out the positives, while we try to close the gap for the iGen in our programmes.

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Question is:

How do we empower iGen's, who potentially, have more technology and access to information than any generation in history?

The NGS with his wife Makhosi on his right, and a group of young people from Denmark and Cameroon. This visit forms part of the triangular partnership between SA YMCA, Cameroon YMCA and Denmark YWCA/YMCA.

The first YMCA in Africa was established in which city/country and what year?

Answer on page 8.

IMPACT STORY

Stix's Story

"The faces of those beautiful looking ladies I had seen and had been told they work for YMCA, made me want to attend their sessions. That meant I was giving up my free time to hustle cigarettes around the prison but I was willing to lose that just to be around such beauty. I never knew attending the sessions would lead to a turning point in my life," said Nduduzo Shelembe better known as "Stix".

Stix is an ex offender who was introduced to the YMCA while serving a three- year sentence in Westville Prison, Durban, for armed robbery.

His journey into a life of crime started when he decided to be a **"woonga"** dealer which was meant to be a side hustle for supplemental income to provide for his 3 month old baby and his mother as he was not earning enough from his job in Glenwood. Business went so well that he ended up hiring someone to sell for him until he was addicted to the drugs he was selling. Nduduzo would have a little bit of the woonga while he was packaging it because it made him feel so good. It turned out to be a terrible mistake.

"Apart from my addiction, what I also regret about the woonga business is having introduced it to so many young people in a place called Mamba where I used to sell. Some of them have died because of it while some are still addicts and their lives have been destroyed. Seeing them brings so much pain and guilt because I managed to change my life while they are still stuck in the drugs."

As time went by, Stix started purchasing woonga mostly for his own use. At that time he was working at a car wash in Verulam, earning way less than before as a result of business being slow and some days they would not work especially during rainy days. "I started to steal from cars that came to the car wash and with my friends we would rob people during month ends to sustain our drug addiction. I went to jail about 3 times for that and every time I would come back and continue robbing people. I even became a supplier of stolen electronic gadgets such as expensive phones, laptops and television sets," said Stix. This proves that there is still a long way to go in terms of reducing

Stix telling his story to young people

crime in communities because **"in as much as there are efforts to curb crime we have community members who promote it by buying stolen goods".**

The turning point in his life came with his fourth arrest for armed robbery which he calls his "blessing in disguise", because he almost lost his life on the day of the armed robbery as the general public wanted to kill him for it. Being taken away by the

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EVERY ISSUE, WE TURN THE SPOTLIGHT ON A STAKEHOLDER TO FOCUS ON THE IMPACT OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS.

This issue we talked to Rashaad Allen, the founder and manager of Foundation for Positive Change, Cape Town.

Rashaad Allen

What work does your organisation do?
The Foundation helps in the process of signing out ex-offenders who have nowhere to go after incarceration. We offer them heads on beds at the half-way house before the gang leaders or drug merchants pull them into their criminal web. We then link them to job opportunities by first identifying their talents through the Circle of Courage programme. We also have a drug rehabilitation centre for males and females. The Foundation offers a safe house for abused women and their children. Further, we offer counselling, anger management classes, and life skills programmes for young people at risk who get sent to us from schools in the area.

Why do you do the work that you do?
I spent just over 20 years in prison for gang-related issues. One day in prison, it hit me that I had to change my life because I realised I was robbing my four-year-old son of having a dad. I then found my divine purpose from my life experience. My purpose is to be there for people who are busy with negative activities, like there wasn't anyone when I needed guidance on the straight and narrow. So I have devoted my life to this through the Foundation.

How are you involved with the YMCA?
We work in partnership with the YMCA to reduce crime in the areas. They offer pre-release programmes in prison and we offer accommodation for the ex-offenders they have been working with who have nowhere to go. The YMCA in Observatory offers computer lessons for the people who stay at our half-way house. The YMCA also assists us with donations of items such as beds, which is really useful as the Foundation is not sponsored.

What is your view of the YMCA youth justice programme?
The in-prison programme they run has a positive impact in changing the lives of people in prison, preparing them for the outside world and making them aware that they can start a new life outside prison.

Ideas for future partnership... I wish we could together partner to really fight the `gang numbers system' that is being planted outside prisons especially among juveniles. I believe the gang numbers is a satanic force that robs people of their lives and doing good deeds in the communities. I believe the Foundation and the YMCA can have a huge impact in the community by working together in a long-term way.

Y-ARTS NATIONAL FESTIVAL 2018 – hosted by Cape Flats YMCA

On the 2nd of June, Cape Flats YMCA, in partnership with the Norwegian YMCA/YWCA and SA YMCA National office, hosted a National Y-Arts festival at Yellowwood Primary School in Tafelsig. The festival gave young people who have the love and passion for music, to shine by showcasing their talents in different genres. The event was graced by the presence of the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sports – Anroux Marais and the Norwegian Tensing group. Those who did not attend had an opportunity to glimpse what took place as the event was featured in a local newspaper. One of the interesting statements provided by young people interviewed by the newspaper, was **"music keeps me away from gangsterism and keeps me going while I am unemployed."**

Stix's story from Page 4...

police saved his life. Through the YMCA he learnt life skills, anger management and was connected with his loved ones while in prison as well as being trained in upholstery skills during the post release program. Being in jail also made him realise the need to change because he says is mother was suffering because of his and his siblings bad choices. His two brothers, who are both woonga addicts, were harassing their mother as well as stealing from home to buy woonga. Hearing the different stories of what his brothers would have done every time she visited or when he called her, made him want to be a different person who would protect his mother, sister and his little boy.

Asked how he has managed to stay out of drugs and crime since his release, Stix says that it has been mostly through the grace of God and the support from family and YMCA. God has given him that strength to let go and never look back. "It has been a tough journey. I mean the transition from making quick money to being unemployed at the same time having a son whom you have to provide for. Im currently trying to find a job and from the money I will get I want to get Upholstery equipment so I can start my own business".

In his parting words Stix said " **my greatest wish is that YMCA will continue the good work they do and to reach out to more young people who are at risk of committing crime before they destroy their lives."**

SAYMCA TO REPRESENT THE WORLD YMCA

Our very own Sharnelle Cader, a volunteer with YMCA Ravensmead and former staff member at Cape Town YMCA, has been selected to represent the global YMCA movement at the Olympism in Action Forum (OiAF), the theme of which is Sport for Social Inclusion and Cohesive Societies.

As a graduate of the Africa YMCA S2C Ambassador and World Alliance Change Agents programmes, Sharnelle was selected because of her diploma in youth development and experience in student and volunteer mentorship. It is a honour and privilege to represent youth and our whole movement on such an international platform," said Sharnelle

Taking place on 5-6 October this year, in Buenos Aires, Sharnelle is the only YMCA member in a workshop focusing on Social Inclusion and Cohesive Societies. She joins several other illustrious panel members:

The workshop aims to explore how sport can bridge the divisions in a world that is impacted by divisions, with the mainstream excluding migrants, refugees, people of differing cultures and faiths, and other marginalised populations.

Sharnelle commented, "I believe that over a decade's volunteer work and skills development at the YMCA, as well as various other organisations, has equipped me to fulfil my role at the Olympism In Action Forum."

"Just because you are right doesn't mean I'm wrong". YMCA stands for diversity which means we accept people's different perspectives when we see things differently.

What do you see first in this picture on the left?

ENTREPRENEUR TALK

by Lethu Shongwe

Entrepreneurship is crucial in that it not only acts as a source of income but also creates new job opportunities. There are several government programmes and private companies willing to support young people as entrepreneurs.

At the YMCA we are contributing to the development of young entrepreneurs through The Economic & Entrepreneurial Education Programme (TEEEP) that empowers young people (Grade 5 - 7) to think differently about the work place. This allows them to have an Entrepreneurial mindset. Beyond economics, **making the right financial choices is a fundamental principle they learn.**

The first year **(Unit 1)** of the programme with grade 5's, is an introductory unit into basic economic concepts that will guide them through the unit. The first year they have a mascot, Thembi, an explorer who takes them on a journey of economics. Learners have their own classroom economy where they implement all the concepts within a manageable economy. This gives them an opportunity to visualise and practice what they learn.

When they graduate to **unit 2** in grade 6, they are introduced to components of the economy that come together to form an operational economy. In this unit a new mascot is introduced to them, Paki the parrot. Paki takes them on a journey of the skills and knowledge required to be active in the economy in their community. Understanding this will prepare them to make wise, informed financial choices as an adult.

TEEEP learners from Scottsville Primary (PMB)

Unit 3 for grade 7 is the most exciting. Now they understand all about spending and saving, skills and knowledge and the resources required to make the economy operational. We teach them through how to start their own business, how to identify a gap in the market and how to take advantage of the gap.

It's fun, it's experiential and it's life changing.

TEEEP Statistics

2015 - 2018

106 Facilitators trained

Over 1,100 learners equipped

Answer to Fun Facts Question:

Cape Town

South Africa, 1865

THE 19TH YMCA WORLD COUNCIL, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND.

ABOVE: Delegates from South Africa. Missing from the picture are Rev. Caeser Molebatsi and Phumla Khuzwayo

RIGHT: Nompumelelo Thabethe being congratulated by the World YMCA Secretary General elect, Carlos Sanvee, shortly after being elected to the YMCA World Alliance Executive Committee

LEFT: Members of the newly established Global Youth Justice network at WC19. This network is being led by the SA YMCA