

International Friends and Partners Update

A monthly review of SAYMCA National Office's
resource and development efforts

June 2004



...Empower the Youth... Develop the Nation... Empower the Youth... Develop the Nation...

Welcome from Chair Vezi Mncwango:

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The past 10 months have been challenging for the South Africa YMCA. The leadership and staff have endured agonizing times, but we remain committed to moving the organisation forward toward an even brighter future.

First, some background: Just before the National Assembly in September, a financial governance review had been performed at the request of one of our partners. This report, along with the annual audit presented at the assembly, highlighted a number of financial governance weaknesses.

Corrective actions were subsequently implemented and presented during a partners meeting in January. But, the majority of our partners still expressed misgivings about our new strategic direction, called the Shared National Agenda and Roadmap (SNARM). As a result, they would not provide any further significant support until we addressed those concerns.

SNARM, which was shaped in large part by YMCA youth, provides us with a new vision. It challenges us to review our organisational ethos, structures and programmes.

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Fundraising Progress Report

Recent Contributions:

- ↪ YMCA Canada has kindly provided 33,000\$ CAN to support the Better Life Options programme in the Gauteng and KZN provinces. Their generous contribution will be transferred this month.
 - ↪ A professor from San Diego State University, who has visited YMCA associations in South Africa, raised \$3,500 for the organisation by hosting a yacht outing.
 - ↪ The German YMCA kindly contributed E5,000 to support the National Council.
 - ↪ CitiBank will contribute R500,000 for the 2005 Youth Worker Intern Programme. Their wonderful support will be provided in September.
 - ↪ The Harlem YMCA has generously committed to sending \$5,000 to support the movement.
 - ↪ A big Thank You goes to the YMCA associations of Durban, Cape Town, Kwa-Mashu, Ga-Rankuwa and Soweto for contributing their Fair Share. Our goal is to receive R7,000 monthly from local associations.
 - ↪ The Embassy of Finland is dedicating R135,000 for the expanded Advocacy and Democracy Education Programme in KZN, and may help the program continue through 2010.
 - ↪ Our annual letter-writing campaign has already generated several generous donations, including:
 - R1,000 from Clicks Stores
 - R2,000 from Pic 'n Pay Stores
 - R5,000 from the Carl and Emily Fuchs Foundation
- Our goal is to raise R300,000 this year from the letter-writing campaign.

New Developments:

- ↪ The African Heritage Society will host a black-tie dinner in September. The goal is to raise awareness about the YMCA and raise R200,000 for the organisation. The guest list will include pharmaceutical companies and other corporations interested in HIV-Aids issues. In the coming months, we will seek sponsorship to support the event.

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Fundraising Progress

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Updates:

- ↳ Our joint proposal with CEDPA to USAID for PEPFAR funding has successfully cleared the first round of reviews. By 9 June, we expect to hear whether the proposal receives final approval. If so, we will receive \$200,000 per annum for five years to update and continue the Better Life Options programme, beginning in July.
- ↳ The Ford Foundation is reviewing our concept paper on the Better Life Options programme. We hope to hear from them this month requesting additional information to support the programme.

Upcoming:

- ↳ Aaron will meet with the Open Society Foundation on 11 June in hopes of securing funds for the Advocacy and Democracy Programme in KZN.
- ↳ Treven and Aaron will meet with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund on 29 June to discuss funding for the Better Life Options programme. Aaron has a personal connection with the project administrator with whom they are meeting.
- ↳ The National Office hopes to arrange initial meetings with 40 corporations and foundations in June, such as Telkom, Volkswagen, Coke and others, in hopes of securing funds for BLO and the Advocacy and Democracy on a national or regional level (see programme news for more information).

Chair's Welcome

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Our new focus is to create an environment that builds capacity and enhances programme delivery at a local level. Nine strategies serve as the foundation to drive the direction of programmes.

Our partners, however, lamented the lack of programmatic focus and felt it provided few funding opportunities for them. They were also concerned that, if programmes were managed at a local level, there would be a possible lack of national accountability.

These factors were compounded by the fact that funding of two major national programs - KHAOP and BLO - ended in 2003. We were then unable to sustain the overhead expenses of the national office. It also became clear that unless we 'sorted' out our strategic direction, no further support would be forthcoming from our partners.

Given the above circumstances, the National Executive Committee (NEC) made a number of bold decisions:

- NEC meetings have been held telephonically (rather than face-to-face) since the beginning of 2004;
- NEC members were requested to make personal contributions to support the national office;
- Costs incidental to the implementation of SNARM will be covered largely by NEC members;
- Overhead expenses in the national office were reduced to a minimum through release of all support staff, reduction of salary packages, and reduction of operational expenditure;
- Senior management have not been paid their full salaries from April to present, and will only be paid once further funding is raised.

The NEC is committed to implementing SNARM. The National Chair, President and Vice-President will therefore engage all regional councils and local associations in creating a specific plan to build capacity at a local level. New programme conceptualisation will then be done, taking this plan into account.

A movement filled with sustainable local YMCA associations -- which receive local financial support and community-wide recognition -- is a movement with a positive future. As we strive for this goal, your prayers and support will be most appreciated.

Programme News

Better Life Options

On 5 May, Memelodi Y trained 10 BLO youth leaders who will implement the programme in schools. Two weeks later, the group recognised the International Candlelight Memorial under the theme, "Reflecting Life."

The Cape Flats YMCA is seeking additional peer educators to accommodate its growing programme, which is in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Education. The programme serves 16 schools, and hopes to serve more once the updated BLO curriculum is approved by the department.

Youth Interns

The first training of 2004 was held in March at the Aubrey Street YMCA in Port Elizabeth.

Sixteen young people from around the country came together for the project management, YMCA mission, and leadership modules.

All the interns are now back in their local YMCA's for practical work and assignments. They will receive their second training in June, traveling to Durban for another week-long session.

More exciting Intern news:

National Office's Sandra and Aaron are working with the Sector Education and Training Authority Programme (SETA) to transform the YMCA's Youth Worker Internship Programme.

The goal is to turn the programme into a learnership system, which leads to greater training opportunities for young people and to accrediting the YMCA as a direct service provider.

SETA would provide up to \$300,000 each year for training once the YMCA is accredited.

Advocacy and Democracy Education Programme

Six KZN YMCA associations are joining with the KZN Council of Churches to implement an exciting programme that engages youth in the culture of democratic participation within their communities.

Originally, the Amanzimtoti YMCA participated in the Advocacy and Democracy Education programme. Toti had such success, the Council asked that more YMCA's help mobilise youth to learn about social issues and campaign for improvements or changes.

For the past month, youth workers have received training and are recruiting others to serve on youth councils. National Office's Aaron and Sandra have visited the region twice to provide support.

The Finnish Embassy is so pleased with the programme, it hopes to extend the funding until 2010.

Tensing

Several YMCAs are carrying out the resolutions developed in the National Tensing Training held in December.

The Gauteng/NorthWest region is planning a regional Tensing Festival to be held this month.

The KZN Regional task team will host its own programme on 4 July in Durban. This will raise funds for the KZN Tensing groups and promote the YMCA's arts and cultural contribution to local communities.

Ten Tensing volunteers will travel to Norway on 17 – 30 June for the leadership training and attend the Tensing Festival.

Four SA YMCA staff - representing Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and the National Office - will attend a Tensing seminar in Norway in July.

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Staff News

Best Wishes and Farewell:

- Mpume Zama, regional development officer for KZN, who resigned to open her own consulting business.
- Felicia Dube, regional BLO coordinator, who resigned to work in the private sector.
- Lizelle Glover and Judith Hendricks, who both were able to find employment.

Welcome:

- Thembinkosi Ngcobo who has been appointed KZN Regional Advocacy and Democracy Programme Co-ordinator.
- Charles Khoza from Mamelodi YMCA, the newly appointed Chairperson for the G/NW Regional Youth Council.
- Mike Van Haelewyn and Lisa Applegate, volunteers for one year through a partnership with the YMCA of USA. Mike has 11 years managing and fund-raising for the YMCA, and Lisa is a journalist who has experience with NGOs. The couple has already spent six weeks in the Western Cape, and will reside in Durban and work in the Regional Office for the next several months.

Far from home:

- The Cape Town / Athlone YMCA youth volunteers will be participating in the ICCP Programme in Chicago, Minneapolis, England and Germany this summer.
- Sepanya Mahlangu is now on his last phase of his work in the exchange programme in Norway and will be coming back to South Africa in August.
- Cathy and Solumuzi are now settling in Sri Lanka and Palestine, respectively, for the second phase of the exchange programme.

Date to Remember:

The NEC will hold a week-end meeting 25 to 27 June. The theme is "Building a shared understanding on corporate governance and the Shared National Agenda and Road Map."

Other news:

- The student YMCAs at UCT and Pen Tech held their annual Evangelical Student Convention the first weekend of May. Almost 40 people attended.
- Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage are planning youth clubs in nine high schools. BLO and Tensing will play a vital role in the clubs, and members will plan activities related to pressing social issues.
- Cape Town YMCA recently graduated 24 boys from its Youth Offenders Programme. YMCA volunteers visit Pollsmoor Prison each week to teach life skills, sports activities and literacy to the boys. Cape Town and Cape Flats are exploring ways to seek funding support for these programmes, which serve four prisons in total.

Something to Celebrate!

South Africa YMCA has been blessed to be selected as the host for the 2006 World Council meeting. Planning is already underway for a world class event in the beautiful city of Durban. An estimated 1,000 people from around the world will attend the meeting, something Durban officials are pleased to hear!

In May, African Alliance President Clifford Sileya and Secretary James Gomez kindly visited Durban to help begin planning. In July, the Mayor of Durban will host the planning committee for a reception to celebrate this exciting event. Corporate sponsorship will be sought to help make this event a one-of-a-kind African experience.