Register now for YMCA World Council, July 2022

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World Council News #1, 8 November 2021

Dear friends - the global YMCA prepares to meet again!

Register now for the 20th YMCA World Council from Sunday 3 to Saturday 9 July 2022 - a truly hybrid event which is both in-person in Aarhus, Denmark and online. In-person, we offer an ‘early bird’ discount fee until 31 January.

The YMCA World Council is the global YMCA’s highest decision-making body, as well as its biggest and most important shared space. It meets once every four years, and the 20th YMCA World Council will be unique: one event, two experiences ... all for one YMCA.

We continue to react responsibly to Covid, and our greatest desire is for the whole YMCA family to come together, be it in person or online. North, South, East and West: all are welcome, all are equal.

Core components of the World Council are:

- **Strategy**: the adoption of a Movement-wide YMCA Vision 2030: one collective Vision, one collective Mission, four shared priority ‘pillars’ of action
- **Co-creation**: working ‘Co-Lab’ sessions featuring inter-generational debate examining existing solutions and developing new ones, in line with the four core pillars of Vision 2030: ‘Community and Wellbeing’, ‘A Meaningful Future of Work’, ‘A Sustainable Planet’, ‘A Just World"
- **Governance**: the election of new officers to the World YMCA Executive Committee
- **Fun & fellowship**: the global YMCA family comes together in-person and online after a year full of challenges for us and for the world.

The theme of the 20th World Council is *Ignite* - and specifically *Ignite - Vision, Collaboration, Solutions*. The YMCA Movement and young people worldwide have been hit hard by the Coronavirus pandemic, but with crisis has come the imperative, the opportunity and the acceleration for reimagination. The meeting seeks to provide the spark, the flame, the combustion to *Ignite* and take the Movement forward: crystallising its *Vision* and the ways in which it will *Collaborate* and work together, and further developing *Solutions* - primarily youth-led solutions - to create the world the YMCA wants to see.

The website address worldcouncil2022.ymca.int will be available very soon. For now, please find more information on the event here.

### A first look at the programme

The agenda comprises plenary sessions (for instance as we present and adopt YMCA Vision 2030), the election of leaders, ‘Co-Labs’ over four days as groups come together in person and online to debate and plan work under Vision 2030’s four pillars, themed sessions, morning devotions, and much more.

Some live events will be live-streamed to the online audience who will be able to take
full part. Other events will be separate for both live and online audiences. All events will be captured on video and audio and made available: in the long term, for posterity; and in the short term for sharing at the times within World Council week when they are best enjoyed by all our YMCA people in all the different time zones.

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A first look at Aarhus

Aarhus, Denmark’s second city, is a green and beautiful place. An old city with a young population, a port city with a view on the world, a city built on sustainability. The World Council itself will be held in the world-famous Musikhuset (Music House).

Meet the team!

Thank you to the Implementation Team who are working so hard to put together the 20th YMCA World Council. They are weighing up an ever-changing Covid situation and many other very complex considerations, aiming to deliver the best possible experience - in person and online - for as many people as possible in the global YMCA Movement.
Steve Butz, Canada
President and CEO, YMCA of Greater Vancouver, Canada

Years with YMCA: 42 years over 8 jobs in 6 yrs

First YMCA memory: I was hired on the spot by a YMCA Director, who after showing me the YMCA’s mission, asked only one question... “Do you think you can live up to it?” 42 years later, I’m still trying.

Best thing you’ve ever done with the YMCA? I strive to surround myself with smart volunteers and team members. I listen to what they say. I give them opportunities to exceed their own expectations. Try not to be too annoying.

Role within the World Council Implementation Team: Co-Chair. Mostly involves unlocking the potential associated with reconnecting the YMCA movement, within the context of a global pandemic. Also, doing whatever my co-chair partner Christine tells me to do.

What does the World Council theme ‘Ignite’ mean to you? The opportunity to reconnect and engage at a critical point in time for our world, our communities and our movement. The pandemic has revealed both inequality and opportunity. How will the YMCA step up, adapt, grow and learn? What gets ‘Ignited’ as a result of World Council 2022?

Christine Lund Larsen, Denmark
Volunteer in the YMCA and YMCA of Denmark and YMCA Amager

Years with YMCA: I started volunteering for YMCA international work in 2013, and now I have also joined a local YMCA in Copenhagen.

First YMCA memory: My first experience was a partnership visit to Madurai, India. We were a group of young people that I didn’t know beforehand. Together we explored Madurai YMCA and India. We met great people and had excellent hospitality.

Best thing you’ve ever done with the YMCA [max 60 words]: There are so many great memories. Two things that are on top of the list are the Change Agent programme, and the journey of taking the lead in re-developing and opening up a local YMCA in Copenhagen and becoming relevant to the local community.

Role within the World Council Implementation Team: Co-chair, and the Danish representative.

What does the World Council theme ‘Ignite’ mean to you? It ignites me to see that we will catalyse engagement, motivation, inspiration and action in the YMCA, especially among young people. Our means to do this is cooperation within the YMCA family and with the ‘outside’ world which will help us empower young people and create a more just world.

Kerry Reilly, Scotland
CEO, YMCA Scotland; Board member with Youthlink Scotland and YCare International.

Years with YMCA: 29

First YMCA memory: In 1991, as a student volunteer, I took a group of young people to a camp in the Yorkshire Dales. I then started working with YMCA in 1993.

Best thing you’ve ever done with the YMCA: So many wonderful memories, but one that stands out for me is working to establish the Scottish Youth Parliament 22 years ago. It’s a Parliament that is still at the forefront of young people influencing and shaping policy and society in Scotland.

Role within the World Council Implementation Team: Chair of the Concept Design Team

What does the World Council theme ‘Ignite’ mean to you? For me, World Council is an opportunity for us to re-connect and to IGNITE new solutions and initiatives that will enable us to deliver the aspirations of VISION 2030.

Emily Greco, Australia
Youth Voice & Participation Manager YMCA Victoria (Australia)

Years with YMCA: 17 Years as a volunteer, 3 as a staff

First YMCA Memory: I attended a camp called National Youth Parliament in Canberra when I was 16 years old. I knew I had met my people when all of the silly games and songs began. I am still friends with many of the people I met on that camp to this day.

Best thing you’ve ever done with the YMCA: Being a Change Agent. Some people didn’t like the Peace Boat but it was one of the craziest and best experiences I have ever had. The following year in Chang Mai was even better. All up, these were some of the best weeks of my life at the YMCA.

Role within the World Council Implementation Team: member of the Programme team heading up the design of the co-lab concept.

What does the World Council theme ‘Ignite’ mean to you? For me it is igniting some of the passion and drive we have understandably lost as a Movement over the last two years. It has been tough, but we are stronger together and by coming together I hope we can ignite the fire that will lead us into 2030.
Role within the World Council Implementation Team: Help develop the overall Programme so that all World Council participants (both online and in-person) can have a really meaningful experience.

What does the World Council theme 'Ignite' mean to you? This is an opportunity to identify, elevate, and celebrate the untapped potential of the global YMCA movement. The core of that potential is inter-generational collaboration, and the Y is positioned to lead in that space.

Mathilde Thue
YMCA-YMCA Norway, and Member of World YMCA Executive Committee (Chair of the Strategy Committee)
Years with YMCA: 29 years
First YMCA memory: Children’s Choir practice, singing songs with hand moves - it was so much fun
Best thing you’ve ever done with the YMCA: Collaborating with committed and inspiring volunteers and World YMCA staff to build up a strong YMCA participation at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and seeing what we could accomplish as a broad international team coordinating advocacy together for the future we want.
Role within the World Council Implementation Team: The Strategy Committee in the World YMCA Executive Committee is providing oversight in the planning and implementation of the World Council.

What does the World Council theme 'Ignite' mean to you? The World Council is a fantastic opportunity to ignite the movement, with young people in lead, towards coordinated impact and the collective 8-year vision for the world we want to live in.

Maria Fernandez Giraldo Roa (Mafé), Colombia
Marketing coordinator, YMCA Colombia
Years with YMCA: I joined the YMCA in 2016 as an intern in the administrative area in the international department of the National Office of YMCA Colombia. In this same year there was a project with the Ministry of Education with English Camps around Colombia with Public Schools. I saw the passion and mission in the eyes of my colleagues planning those camps, so I asked if I could be part of that program. I had the best two weeks of my life. At that moment I fell in love with the YMCA. I understood the need of youth to have safe and life changing experiences for a better today and future. Later, I had the opportunity to be a Bilingual Leader in Colombia and a Camp Counsellor in Canada. After gaining some experience I had the opportunity to co-create the marketing area in the YMCA Colombia with support of amazing leadership and coworkers and in that moment I started my current journey of learning and new challenges.

First YMCA memory: My first YMCA memory was when I first met the team of the National office of the YMCA Colombia. I was a little afraid and insecure, but when I saw that no matter who I was or where I came from I was given the same kindness, passion, and honesty, I felt at home.
Best thing you've ever done with the YMCA: It is difficult to choose one thing, but I recall when the YMCA collaborated with the U.S. Embassy and we went to a indigenous community in La Guajira and helped doing activities with young children. The kids only spoke their native language, so the language we had to speak was LOVE.
Role within the World Council Implementation Team: I am supporting the Communications Committee, and representing YMCA Latin America and Caribbean.

What does the World Council theme 'Ignite' mean to you? IGNITE for me is the representation of a Movement that is alive thanks to the transformational POWER of our youth. It is also the ACTION, passion and spark that characterizes our Chang Agents who raise up their voice everyday and take big steps for being the light that the world needs.
Allina Pop, Romania
National General Secretary/CEO of YMCA Romania Federation

Years with YMCA: I joined the local YMCA in my hometown Băia Mare in 2001 as a volunteer in an after-school program. I stayed engaged as volunteer in local and national governance, and in 2011 I was appointed as NGS.

First YMCA memory: My workshops - teaching English through music - for kids - in the YMCA after school program in 2001. It was an innovative program for those years, for our hometown. The joy of the beneficiaries, school, parents, their development, the confidence in themselves, in us, led to the creation of the ‘YMCA spirit’ - sense of belonging, sense of community, the feeling that we are multiplying ever since in all our programs and projects.

Best thing you’ve ever done with the YMCA: Empowering young people to become active citizens in their communities, gathering in YMCA governance and operational positions young people who are connected with the needs of our communities, who inspire and motivate others to better serve our communities through local, national and international programs and projects, by creating youth work quality standards and relevant youth policies for Romania.

Role within the World Council Implementation Team: Member of Registration, Logistics and Facilities Sub-Group

What does the World Council theme ‘Ignite’ mean to you? For me, “Ignite” means a new beginning of an exploration - for a common vision, connections, deeper collaborations, relevant solutions. It is a strong emotion that we all need in order to get inspired and be relevant; to share the light with our communities from all over the world for another 177 years.

Peter Kameel Nasir, East Jerusalem, Palestine
General Secretary of the East Jerusalem YMCA

Years with YMCA: I was born and raised in the Y. I’m a 3rd generation General Secretary. I have been affiliated with the Y for close to 41 years now (my age). I am a Board member at the East Jerusalem YMCA since 2013, and was a World Alliance Executive Committee member (briefly from July 2018 to January 2019).

First YMCA memory: My first memory was learning to swim at the pool of the Y. The trainer threw my older brother in the deep end, and when he looked to throw me in, I was already in the deep-end swimming...

Best thing you’ve ever done with the YMCA: Delivering food parcels to needy families at the start of the COVID pandemic, despite lockdowns and the military occupation. We reignited the East Jerusalem YMCA’s role as a community organization that responds at the most adverse times to the needs of its community.

Role within the World Council Implementation Team: Co-chair of the communications committee.

What does the World Council theme ‘Ignite’ mean to you? To me, it means to ignite hope again after a very disrupting two years of COVID pandemic. The YMCA’s safe-space and community building is more important than ever.

Tsegayed Zewdu, Ethiopia
Communication & Resource Mobilisation Director, YMCA Ethiopia

Years with YMCA: I was the member of YMCA Arat Kilo when I was a student and I spent many happy hours staying out of trouble at the YMCA. I grew up being heavily involved in different sport activities. I began volunteering by participate in a summer program and doing peer to peer life skill training. I have served on the national YMCA as Executive Board member and women representative for two terms (8 years). Besides, I served the Africa Alliance of YMCA as an Executive Board Member and a female representative for 4 years. Then I joined as a staff to direct a communication and local resource mobilization department in 2018.

First YMCA memory: A summer program: great outdoor games, making memories with friends old and new, learning and trying new things, and having fun!

Role within the World Council Implementation Team: Member of the Engagement & Experience subgroup, filling the gap between the main programme elements by keeping attendees actively engaged and creating memorable experiences throughout the entire involvement.

What does the World Council theme ‘Ignite’ mean to you? It means that the global YMCA movements and young people hit hard by the Coronavirus pandemic and many YMCA’s have had to stop doing the things they have been doing for years. The 2022 World Council will provide the spark, the flame, the fire to ignite and take the Movement forward by manifesting its Vision, Collaboration and Solutions.
Share this far and wide

Always use the hashtag #YMCAignite2022. For your use now, here’s a ‘Register now’ banner which has been sized for use on the different platforms of social media. The logo remains in English, but we have translated elements into French and Spanish too. If you’re a national YMCA, feel free to replace the generic worldwide YMCA logo at the bottom right with the logo of your YMCA National Movement.
And stand by for many more social media assets to follow (all in English, French and Spanish), as we try to encapsulate some of the big themes of the meeting. Here is a selection below.

Please follow World YMCA on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn.
Be in touch

We’re here to help: worldcouncil@ymca.int

This is World Council News #1, the first World Council news bulletin. It is sent to all our World YMCA contacts, and subsequent bulletins will be sent to World Council registrants only. However, all audiences will be kept informed about the World Council via the monthly World YMCA news bulletins. These specific World Council news bulletins will appear monthly until June 2022, and daily during the event, 3-9 July 2022.
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