



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

FEDERATION STRATEGY 2022-2030

Taking action, changing lives.



WORLD ALLIANCE OF YOUTH & AMERICAS OF ASIA, AUSTRALIA, AFRICA & AMERICA
JOHN 21
WYCA



! Keep clear

...are gathering to make a difference across the city

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YMCA FEDERATION STRATEGY 2022-2030



FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXT

Vision:

The vision of YMCA is of an inclusive Christian movement, transforming communities so that all young people can belong, contribute, and thrive.

Values:

The way we act at YMCA is characterised by five strong and distinctive values that flow from our Christian ethos.

- We seek out • We welcome • We inspire • We speak out • We serve others

Statement of purpose:

Everyone should have a fair chance to discover who they are and what they can become.

YMCA believes in fairness and opportunity. There are essential building blocks for a full and rewarding life: a safe home; acceptance; guidance; friendship; physical and mental health; academic support; employment skills; and access to real opportunities.

Many young people have never known these things; other people have lost one or more as they grew up, but we all need them. All of us.

At YMCA, we provide these critical foundations for a fresh, strong start for young people and a better quality of life in the community.

Family & Youth Work

Creating positive outcomes with children and young people in their communities, and support for families with nursery, day care, holiday, and year-round programmes

Health & Wellbeing

Gyms, sport and recreation for fitness, and community hubs for classes, social connection, and collaborations.

Housing

Providing a home and personalised support services for a fresh start in life

Support & Advice

A safe place to talk and get help through guided groups, mentoring, counselling, and mental health service.

Training & Education

Opportunities to gain qualifications, skills, and employment

Our Principles of Association are lived out in our strategy

Christian faith-based, subsidiarity, co-operation, openness, commitment

In the way the strategy was created — The Federation Strategy has been created by YMCA staff and trustees talking and listening, sharing knowledge and aspirations. It has co-operation – working together for the same ends – built in, and the pride and passion for YMCA work has come through clear and strong across all our conversations.

And in the way it will be delivered — Subsidiarity means that decisions and actions are grounded in the needs of each community served wherever possible. Each YMCA is different and responds to its local needs and priorities. Some elements of this strategy will be higher on some YMCA agendas than on others, but we also believe that a rising tide lifts all boats higher so we will work together for our collective benefit when that is what will produce the best outcome.

As a source of inclusive values — Our Membership Agreement sets out that there is a faith-based continuum with YMCAs placed differently along it. Both the Kampala Principles and Challenge 21 encourage YMCAs to talk about and use the values we all share, even though beliefs and practices may not all be the same, in a way that supports the needs and hopes of those we serve.

And putting others before ourselves — For YMCA, it is a natural extension of shared values such as kindness, love, and justice that we actively and deliberately reach out across all dimensions of diversity as a matter of both policy and practice. We are committed to being here for all, and that must be seen, experienced, and believed not just by us but by those in the communities where we work.

Together, we will pursue the best possible outcome for our beneficiaries above any other consideration. We have created the Federation Strategy not for ourselves, but to help bring about a better life for other people and a kinder, fairer, and more equitable society.

YMCA FEDERATION STRATEGY – 2022-2030

Everyone has within them the power to unlock their full potential when they get the right support and access to real opportunities. Again and again, we have seen people change the trajectory of their lives. The truth is that not everyone gets the same chances in life or the same help. There are children and young people who start life facing disadvantages that others do not; other people struggle with obstacles or suffer major setbacks later in adulthood and have nobody to help them.

This runs counter to everything that YMCA stands for and believes. Inequality of opportunity and support dims hope and limits achievement; it weakens the physical, emotional, and spiritual bonds that should connect and nourish us as people and as a society.

To drive change, well-meaning statements and isolated interventions are not enough. Lives are not changed by talk, but by action; not by solving one issue, but many issues. Inequality is complex and the work to overcome it must be too. We don't have the luxury of focusing on just one aspect because the people feeling the effects of social injustice don't have that luxury either.

During this process we have asked ourselves "in what way do we think the world should be different, and what can we do to make it happen?" The Federation Strategy points the way forward, and as we deliver it we will:

- ▶ *Reach those who need support, and those who can offer it.*
- ▶ *Ensure that the services we provide are second to none in quality.*
- ▶ *Prove that anyone can realise their potential if they get a fair chance and a helping hand.*
- ▶ *Create opportunities for people affected by policy to have real influence in making it.*
- ▶ *Stand up for policies that promote fairness and justice and speak up against those that cause harm.*
- ▶ *Be true allies to those seeking to take up their rightful place in the world.*
- ▶ *Respect experience gained from life as well as expertise gained from study.*
- ▶ *Champion change for the better and make sure that our actions match our words.*
- ▶ *Increase empathy and understanding in society at large.*
- ▶ *Promote true equity by working to set right the wrongs and redress the balance where disinvestment has created injustice.*

OUR COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

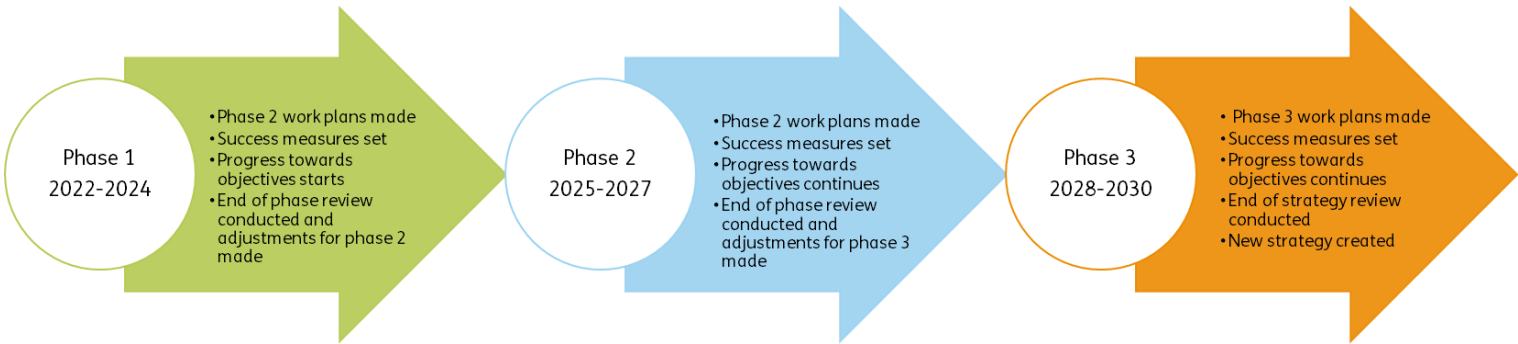
What is the Federation strategy? — A strategy establishes a road map, sets goals that will help the organisation and by extension its beneficiaries, and lays out what must be done to get there. Every member of the Federation has its own strategic plan, governing its own work.

The Federation Strategy operates differently. It encompasses the work that is best done together, and the goals that can only be accomplished if we pursue them together, for our collective benefit. It consists of priorities identified by YMCA and we will all drive its accomplishment together.

As we collaborate, we will acknowledge and celebrate the fact that our Federation includes two countries, England and Wales, with separate governments and different social, political and cultural contexts. Overall, the intent is to work as one to implement the Federation Strategy, but implementation will sometimes need to follow slightly different paths. Throughout, the delivery of our strategy will require flexibility, communication, joint planning and strong local relevance.

Federation Strategy Timeline

Agility—With ambitious goals, the work to deliver the strategy will stretch across the full timeline in phases. The flexibility to adapt as needed is built in, with space for innovations and responses to changing conditions.



LEADERSHIP & INFLUENCE

Lead change that brings about a more just, inclusive, and equitable future.

EXCELLENCE & IMPACT

Transform lives with programmes that are second to none in quality, and that embody our values and commitment to being a learning organisation.

GROWTH & REACH

Increase our collective ability to provide more support, in more places, to more people where there is unmet need.

AWARENESS & SUPPORT

Achieve high levels of understanding of YMCA work, driving urgency and empathy for others so that the public shares and supports our goals.



YMCA

OUR GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND OBJECTIVES

There are strong connections and clear interdependence among all the parts of this strategy. Success will be achieved by committing to 'joining up' both the thinking and the work across all the goals, strategies and objectives.

Goal 1

LEADERSHIP & INFLUENCE

Lead change that brings about a more just, inclusive, and equitable future.

If we work together, we strengthen our ability to create more change. Many voices together are stronger than those same voices speaking separately. While we don't always say or do the exact same thing in the same way, and even though issues and policy priorities in England and Wales will sometimes be different, we agree that there is more that we can do to have the influence we should, given the scale of the work that we do.

Strategy one

Take clear, strong, public positions to influence the direction of public opinion and governments in both Westminster and Cardiff in support of YMCA priorities and the reduction of inequality.

Objectives

- a) Build Federation capacity for collaborative and agile influencing and campaigning.
- b) Fully use our influence network across England and Wales to add additional weight to the positions we take and carry out shared campaigns on the problems we are working to solve in our communities.
- c) Create opportunities and mechanisms for people and communities to participate directly in local and national-level advocacy and campaigns using their own voices and their own priorities.

Defining success

In our work plans we will define specific measures of success from categories such as: levels of engagement and support for YMCA campaigns; evidence of policy change attributable to policy work; engagement of young people in campaigns, and of YMCA engagement in their campaigns

Strategy two

Define, adopt, and embed an overarching and inclusive YMCA ethos that puts the people we serve first and can be put into action in all our operations.

Objectives

- a) Give the people in our YMCAs and communities who have the lived experience real influence in deciding what YMCA culture should be by saying what sort of experiences and services they want.

- b) Articulate the characteristics of a defined YMCA culture in terms of actions and behaviours that can be put into action in any situation.

- c) Develop tools to widen understanding of what the YMCA faith continuum means, expressing not only its diversity but also how it recognizes and values people of all faiths and people of none.

- d) Develop specific plans to ensure that these actions and behaviours are integrated into YMCA work and used in decision-making processes and when creating policies and programmes.

Defining success

In our work plans we will define specific measures of success from categories such as: Federation members become signatories to the shared ethos and its implementation in policies and practices; the people in our communities and YMCAs are incorporated into decision-making; the numbers of young people gaining direct access to influence

Goal 2

EXCELLENCE & IMPACT

Transform lives with programmes that are second to none in quality, and that embody our values and commitment to being a learning organisation.

We are a collaborative organisation that shares learning willingly and adjusts its work for each local context. Neither our YMCAs nor our communities are identical, and ‘cookie cutter’ will never be a phrase that describes our work. But YMCAs have said that there is value in working together to define our shared approaches, prove their validity, and have a common language to describe results. YMCAs own the work and will engage with any individual initiative in a way that makes sense for them.

Strategy One

Develop a common basis for core programmes and services, defining a shared approach to quality improvement, outcomes, and measurement that can be used by any YMCA.

Objectives

- a) Articulate a clear theory of change for each named area of work that describes the theoretical basis for the work, the practices, the change created, and common measures of impact.

- b) Define and organise the common elements of YMCA programme provision in named areas of work, developing a shared language.

- c) Define the approach to measuring outcomes that will allow us to gather and meaningfully use both quantitative and qualitative data consistently across all relevant programmes.

Defining success

- **In our work plans we will define specific measures of success from categories such as:** replicable YMCA programmes defined; numbers of YMCAs using the replicable programmes; common measures of impact developed; defined quality measures in programmes reached; consistent qualitative and quantitative data collection across YMCA

Strategy Two

Embed systems that will strengthen our ability to be an inclusive learning organisation.

Objectives

a) Collect and share common data for testing, implementation, review, and adjustment based on local practice.

b) Learn from each other by engaging in mutually supportive communities of practitioners across all sizes of YMCA in all kinds of communities (see Growth & Reach 2b).

c) Incorporate the people who use the programmes into the design, consultation, and review process, consistent with true inclusion.

Defining success

In our work plans we will define specific measures of success from categories such as: common measures of impact tracked; success in incorporating programme users into programme design

Goal 3

GROWTH & REACH

Increase our collective ability to provide more support, in more places, to more people where there is unmet need.

YMCAs view growth and increased reach a little differently, depending on their starting point. Some are looking to expand into new communities, some want to offer a broader range of services where they are already working. Financial realities are different too. Some YMCAs need support, some could offer it, and some need a partner. But YMCAs agreed that smaller and larger YMCAs are all valuable, all make an important contribution, and growth should include them all to the extent they wish.

Strategy one

Scale up delivery of our strongest and most suitable programmes for national impact, adding value to work that is already happening, and developing new work where there is an opportunity to do so.

Objectives

- a) Establish a suitable, clear and effective approach to help YMCAs of all sizes join in with multi-YMCA scaling of programmes.
- b) Pursue collective opportunities to deliver programmes that have been optimised for scaling up.
- c) Produce a shared and consistent methodology for conducting community needs assessments that includes community members.
- d) Identify the financial models that support the creation of a new YMCA or expansion of services into new areas not currently served, including partnerships with other organisations where beneficial.

Defining success

In our work plans we will define specific measures of success from categories such as: number of collective opportunities successfully pursued; increase in services delivered to new people; increase in capacity of smaller YMCAs to deliver more or stronger services

Strategy two

Make it easier for different YMCAs to collaborate as allies with openness and confidence for the benefit of all YMCAs of whatever size and in whatever location.

Objectives

a) Establish a set of protocols that protect our principle of subsidiarity and increase mutual trust and confidence within which any YMCA, large or small, can safely work with others to expand services or move into new areas.

b) Streamline resources, tools, and existing innovation, planning and project working groups into subject matter “communities” to simplify and facilitate collaboration, communication and good working relationships among YMCAs. (See Excellence and Impact 2b.)

Defining success

In our work plans we will define specific measures of success from categories such as: increase in number of areas with high levels of deprivation gaining access to identified YMCA services; growth in the provision of services via the strategic programme collaborations.

Goal 4

AWARENESS & SUPPORT

Achieve high levels of understanding of YMCA and its work, driving urgency on issues and empathy for others so that the public supports our goals.

YMCAs want to increase the strength of our public identity. We want to increase support for YMCA, we want to be better allies to others, and we want to be the organisation that others turn to when they want to create change. Why? Because we want to change more lives, and we want more people to be able to change their own lives and create a kinder, fairer society. To do this, we must make sure that our work, our policy priorities, our fundraising and our campaigns are all joined up. We want the public to hear from us more often, more consistently, and more clearly across all our communities.

Strategy One

Build a compelling, highly visible, and relevant presence for YMCA that establishes for the public what we do, why it matters, and how they can join us in changing outcomes.

Objectives

- a) Increase our ability to make use of our broad presence and collective reach across England and Wales, through YMCAs of all sizes, to increase YMCA visibility across all available media and platforms.

- b) Together, execute a multi-faceted positioning strategy, aimed at the general public, that will build support for young people and their communities and understand of our work.

Strategy Two

Increase recognition of and trust in YMCA's reputation among decision-makers and influencers, including governmental, civic, business and partner entities.

Objective

- a) Collaboratively define and execute a PR strategy that targets business, governmental, civic, and other organisations that represent partnership and visibility opportunities.

Strategy Three

Collaborate to increase opportunities for donations, grant funding and partnerships for large-scale impact.

Objectives

- a) Create a shared basis for fundraising, articulating the problems we solve and the difference we make.

- b) Create a framework for how YMCAs join and commit to multi-YMCA approaches for funding, grants, and partnerships to enable us to be agile in response to opportunities.

- c) Identify, optimize, and implement shared propositions for fundraising around specific areas of work and programme offers.

Defining success

In our work plans we will define specific measures of success from categories such as: increased Charity Awareness Monitor measurements from current baselines across spontaneous, semi-prompted, prompted awareness, and affinity and support; strong presence in key national tables of charity activity; increase in social media reach; increase in size or number of partnership opportunities; increase in potential partners and funders seeking out YMCA; increase in fundraising receipts across YMCA





READINESS AND BACKGROUND WORK

Starting strong—To set the Federation Strategy for 2022-2030 on a successful path, we must take into account the current context, where we stand as a Federation, and what are the first steps that we need to take. This work is not separate from the strategy; it is part of it.

- I. **The complete financial picture**—Internal consultations have shown a need for review and understanding of our business model, both as a whole and in individual areas of work. Some of our operations are particularly challenged by the pandemic and other factors. It makes sense to take stock of the overall picture of YMCA. An understanding of our collective financial position will form a solid basis for the proper execution of our long-term goals.
- II. **Recovery from the pandemic**—At the start of 2022, we find ourselves in a situation that is different from any that we have faced before. Two years of the pandemic and the consequent social and economic fallout have placed significant strains on people, communities, and YMCA.

As always, YMCA has responded magnificently to meet changing needs and serve others, but none of this has been without cost. Resources have been drained, and the future landscape of funding is uncertain. Adapting to the new reality still requires our attention.
- III. **Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion**—this ongoing work to ensure we identify and live up to the highest possible standards in these three areas will continue, and its strategic relevance will be brought into heightened focus through its connection to our goals and strategies. This work is not only a matter of internal integrity and cultural development, but an imperative in our public-facing programmes and work.
- IV. **Wider connections**—World YMCA will soon be presenting to the international Movement a collective framework for strategy entitled Vision 2030, making this an apt moment to consider the synergies between our work and that plan and think through the ways we are contributing to the goals it sets out.
- V. **Collaborative frameworks and mechanisms**—To execute the Federation Strategy we will need to review and refine how our current collaborative work is happening. Rather than duplicate work, we will streamline and bring together work that is underway with new work that will be planned.





YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.