

EAY ROLE AND STRATEGY

2001 – 2006

PREAMBLE

1. OUT INTO THE BLUE....

Do you remember the bus journeys to camp or when you went on tour with Ten Sing or the first time you travelled abroad with your basketball team?

The journey itself was an experience. You did not always choose your travel companions, but you got to know them and the journey itself changed you from being an outsider to the group to become a participant, a part of the travel experience. You were integrated into the group.

We have chosen a "blue" metaphor to illustrate how we see the development of the EAY over the next few years. In the European Alliance of YMCAs (EAY) the term "Blue Music" has come to represent creativity, new visions and inspiration. "Blue Music" is a gift from God. "Grey Music" is the necessary practical work, structures and resources needed to implement our blue visions.

We do not plan to build a house or a castle. We are a movement. We are all invited to join in a journey. We hope it will build a new feeling of community. The EAY is not in the driver's seat. The bus and the bus-driver are tools. All of us inside the bus are the EAY together and together we will decide where we will go.

The journey is not starting today. Those of us having participated in this journey over recent years have experienced enormous changes.

During the years 1989-1991 we experienced one of the most dramatic changes in the history of Europe - the collapse of Communism and opening of all borders across our continent. History will decide if the European YMCAs reacted in a relevant way to the enormous challenges we were faced with. Did the journey go in the right direction?

We do believe that the two previous strategic plans of the EAY reflected relevant efforts to develop emerging and re-emerging National YMCAs behind the fallen Iron Curtain. These two strategic plans gave us 10 years of focus on Movement Development.

Still there are major challenges in this field. Therefore the Movement Development will remain a high priority for the whole period of this strategic plan. Still we see the need now to change the direction of the journey. If we continue to focus on certain geographical areas only, we will establish the feeling or understanding that the YMCAs in these areas remain special cases and we will postpone a process of normalisation of the situation. Therefore we suggest we focus on a process of integration. This process should ideally effect all the EAY Members and inspire all of us to enter the bus and journey together. This journey will change us, it will give us a new European YMCA identity where we all have rights and we all have responsibilities, and where we all belong to one another.

The term "BEGLEITUNG" has become famous. In the beginning it described the process between two individuals or between two movements, sharing a piece of the road together, walking hand in hand. Now we want to see "BEGLEITUNG" as a journey where we all participate and where we all share the road together, a process where all of us benefit and where all of us contribute. None of us have reached the final destination.

With this background we suggest to formulate a new Mission Statement for the EAY. Our suggestion is based on paragraph 5 in the EAY Constitution and we add this essential focus on integration.

Any journey will take in only a limited number of stations. Therefore, for the next five years we have chosen four main stations for the journey. Since the journey will be ongoing, we plan to

include other stations for the subsequent 5 year period. At this stage we do not know where the next stage of the journey will take us. ...out into the blue? For some this is an exciting concept, totally blue. For others this may produce a fear of the unknown, breaking new ground. Fear can be a healthy emotion if you are brave enough to face it. We believe that fear and change are travelling companions.

2. FOUR STATIONS

I. INTEGRATION

The first part of the journey we will focus on the inside of the bus.

Through participating in the Christian Community and in the European Programmes this process of integration will become visible, and efforts will be made to make equal participation from all parts of Europe possible. Movement Development and Exchange and Communication will be used as active tools to further develop National Movements in need and to increase the general networking and interaction between National Movements.

We will look critically at our own movements to see how well the gender balance is developed and the general situation for youth in our structures.

This process of integration has nothing to do with any ambitions to build some kind of a YMCA super-structure in Europe. The diversity of our Movements and the sovereignty of every one of them are values in themselves and will be respected and strengthened.

As one important Action Step we therefore have decided to organise a big EAY event in 2003. The 30th anniversary of the EAY will be used to create inspiration and a feeling of unity, and even the planning process will be beneficial for the process of integration, both for National Movements as well as for different Programme Groups. The EAY as one body will be behind this event and the hope is to see a manifestation of what the YMCA in Europe is just now.

II. SOLIDARITY

The journey is not organised for tourists. It is organised for people motivated to learn and participate and serve.

The second part of the journey will therefore focus on solidarity with and responsibility for the external world. Looking through the windows of the bus, we see the needs of our neighbours, the challenges inside Europe itself. We suggest to identify Spiritually Homeless Youth and Socially Excluded Youth as areas of priority for us as it was in the previous strategic period.

We are not only Europeans - we belong to the world and we have responsibility to work for a more sustainable development in all parts of the world. This holistic perspective on Development is well represented by our European YMCA World Services, (a number of European National YMCAs have such international departments especially focused on projects in the South and in Central/Eastern Europe), and we see the need to share this insight and knowledge about the global challenges with our National Movements. Therefore we suggest to facilitate an annual meeting place for the different European World Services during our General Assemblies. This will also enable us to facilitate a closer interaction between the National Movements and the World Services.

III. NETWORKING

The third part of the journey focuses on the need for the YMCA in Europe to become more visible and achieve more influence in formal and informal structures in Europe, like the European Union and Council of Europe. Our bus shall be painted in EAY-blue and big posters shall be attached. As one of the biggest youth movements in Europe, our influence and visibility should be more

significant. We suggest to add some limited staff time to this important area of our operations, and we do believe that this investment will pay dividend in a few years.

We need stronger co-operation with ecumenical movements like the World Council of Churches and The Conference of European Churches.

The Organisation Review process in the World Movement has resulted in a very exciting new structure for co-operation between the World Alliance and the Area Alliances and the National Movements. The EAY will participate in the development of a strategic plan for the World Movement, we will evaluate the implementation of this plan annually and the EAY Secretary General will be a member of the Global Co-ordinating Staff Team together with the leaders of the other Areas. This new structure demands certain adjustments on our side to become compatible with the new system.

IV. SUSTAINABILITY

The fourth part of the journey focuses on our resource base. The blue music leads our journey and gives us the visions. Through grey music we will find ways to organise it, work out the time table for the journey and pay for it. The journey has lasted for a long time, and to be able to continue this common journey, we will need to generate income as well as to include human resources for specific tasks. We suggest more creative ways of making the EAY sustainable. One of the suggestions is to ask both National and local YMCAs to offer staff time as well as volunteer time for shorter periods and specific tasks at European level. This will be a training opportunity for the persons involved, it will add new competence and expertise to the work we are doing together and it will save costs for the EAY.

3. ...GETTING ON BOARD!

“Blue Music” is beautiful to listen to and necessary to create inspiration. Inspiration must lead to implementation, otherwise it remains only a dream. Listening to the “Blue Music” has so far lead us to present the strategic plan in an unconventional way. “Grey Music” is necessary if the strategy is to be implemented practically. In the pages which follow, the strategic plan has been written in a more conventional, business format. This is the beauty of the “Grey Music”.

As we present this strategic plan for the EAY for 2001-2006, we are aware that this planning process is our common responsibility and privilege. It is our strong hope that this strategic plan will help us to be

“...both challenging and relevant for young people - a sign of God’s Reign and Love on earth.”

FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

1 VISION

We dream of a European YMCA Movement

- *inspired by its Christian ecumenical mission*
- *moved by an open and creative spirit, and actively involving young people*
- *playing an active and prophetic role in today's global and local realities*
- *uniting each other to realise the YMCA mission in the diversity of national contexts*

which is

- *challenging and relevant for young people both*

a sign of God's Reign and Love on earth.

2 MISSION STATEMENT

We affirm that the Paris Basis, the Kampala Principles and Challenge 21 are the ongoing foundation statements of the mission of the YMCA.

Respecting and valuing the independence and diversity of all Member Movements, the EAY actively facilitates a process of integration of all National YMCA's into a European YMCA network of Movements - which offers Christian community, exchange of ideas and mutual service among National Movements.

3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE EAY

In working towards the fulfilment of this Mission, the EAY will -

- Emphasise the Christian identity and mission of the YMCA as an ecumenical lay movement, working independent of, but in co-operation with the Churches and respecting confessional differences.
- Constantly analyse what our Christian identity and mission means in today's European and global realities and translate it into action in these contexts.
- Will recognize and endorse the pre-eminence of volunteers in the governance of the movement at every level
- Ensure the active participation of young people at every level
- Aim towards gender balanced representation.
- Emphasise the YMCA's wholeness concept of body, mind and spirit in community.
- Promote and work for sustainable development to strive for justice, peace and integrity of creation.
- Emphasise international thinking and solidarity within Europe and worldwide.
- Respect and support the multicultural nature of Europe and the European YMCAs.
- Respect the independence and self-determination of each National Movement, as well as its specific way of expressing the YMCA's mission in the given cultural, religious and socio-economic context.
- Strive for unity among the European YMCA family, including fostering processes of mutual learning, exchange and mutual critical reflection about positions in the spirit of "Begleitung".
- Be an inspiring, needs-orientated and effective organisation of high quality, applying the principles of subsidiarity and "Begleitung", and using innovative, participatory and process-orientated methods.

4 PRIORITIES, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In seeking to further the EAY Mission over the next five years, four areas of Priority have been highlighted. These priorities create the context in which the aims and objectives can be described (aims defined as goals and objectives as means). Operational plans, based on this strategy, will be updated annually.

PRIORITY I: INTEGRATION

The EAY has highlighted the need to encourage, support and co-ordinate a high quality process of integration of all National YMCA's into a European YMCA network of Movements where independent National YMCAs share experiences and assist one another.

In order to ensure that this priority is maintained, the EAY has established four Aims and supporting objectives as follows

Aim 1

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

To facilitate an expression of true Christian Community which in a variety of holistic ways expresses relevant forms of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Objectives

- A To further develop creative ways of expressing Christian Community and ecumenical approaches between Christian denominations during the EAY General Assemblies.
- B To organise annual Christian Orientation Group seminars focusing on Christian Community and ecumenical approaches.
- C To allocate an appropriate level of staff time on an annual basis to support the Christian Orientation Group.
- D To organise events every second year discussing model programmes and issues related to the Christian dimension of the YMCA, like "Catch the Vision" in 1999.
- E To organise an event to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the EAY called "EAY-2003" in Central Europe to create a manifestation of all YMCA in Europe and to offer an inspirational experience of Christian Community and to demonstrate model programmes and initiatives.

Aim 2

PROGRAMMES

To encourage, support and co-ordinate a variety of dynamic European programmes which reflect the Christian faith and values and the goals of the EAY.

Objectives

- A To organise joint training events for all programme groups every year.
- B To use "EAY 2003" to strengthen the Programme Field and to demonstrate model programmes and initiatives.
- C To allocate an appropriate level of staff time on an annual basis to support the European Programme Groups.

Aim 3

MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENT

To encourage and support the growth of relevant, self-sustaining and democratic National YMCA Movements all over Europe, by giving priority to Leadership Development and Gender Balance on all levels.

Objectives

- A To organise Training for Programme Developers (TPD) or Training the Trainers (TTT) starting every second year.
- B To organise a TTT/TPD Reunion every second year.
- C To develop new National Movements according to actual needs, and establish new Field Groups for these new Movements.
- D To develop the EAY Training Centre in Litomyšl.
- E To identify the main challenges and weaknesses in our Movements regarding Gender Issues and to increase the number of women in responsible positions.
- F To establish an EAY Group for Gender Issues to meet during the General Assemblies.
- G To establish a Group of Youth Representatives to meet during the General Assemblies.

Aim 4

EXCHANGE AND COMMUNICATION

To promote and facilitate dynamic Inter-Action among Member Movements.

Objectives

- A To improve interactive use of Information Technology in all working fields.
- B To develop and sustain the web-site regularly.
- C To evaluate and improve the Volunteer for Europe-programme.

PRIORITY II: SOLIDARITY

The EAY has highlighted the need to deepen the awareness of Christian solidarity with young people in need.

In order to ensure that this priority is maintained, the EAY has established three Aims and supporting objectives as follows

Aim 1

SPIRITUALLY HOMELESS

To inspire and support in all our programme provision relevant and inclusive communication of the Christian faith to young people in search of a more meaningful life.

Objectives

- A To include this issue in all our training provision.
- B To establish and maintain a discussion forum for this issue on our web-site.

Aim 2

SOCIAL INCLUSION

To inspire and support all European YMCAs to be more actively involved in the inclusion of young people in need.

Objectives

- A To include this issue in all our training provision.
- B To initiate and maintain a system of regular study-visits to the Movements most experienced in this field.
- C To allocate an appropriate level of staff time on an annual basis to supporting the Social Exclusion Group.

Aim 3

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

To increase the effectiveness of YMCA approaches to sustainable development in a global perspective.

Objectives

- A To establish and maintain a forum for YMCA World Services in Europe, to meet during the General Assemblies.
- B To improve the sharing of information about YMCA approaches to sustainable development with all National Movements through establishing and maintaining an appropriate system of communication.
- C To improve the co-operation with the World Alliance of YMCAs regarding emergency situations.

PRIORITY III: NETWORKING

The EAY has highlighted the need to make the YMCA more visible and influential in the general European context and to strengthen our global awareness.

In order to ensure that this priority is maintained, the EAY has established three Aims and supporting objectives as follows

Aim 1

EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

To further develop our relationships with YWCA, Y's Men International and other selected Christian and secular European bodies.

Objectives

- A To improve contacts with organisations and ecumenical institutions with whom we share history or common goals
- B To participate in the ecumenical dialogue in Europe within the Conference of European Churches, to make the YMCA known and respected among churches.
- C To prioritise concrete dialogue with specific churches, in order to ensure the best possible relationship between local YMCAs and local churches.
- D To strengthen our relationship with related European organisations, among others the European YWCA and the Y's men Region Europe, in order to pursue joint agendas.

Aim 2

EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION

To strengthen and support the possibilities for European YMCAs to maintain and develop their work in Europe

Objectives

- A To work actively in the Youth Forum Jeunesse(YFJ) to promote and make known the views of the YMCA, and to forward YFJ agenda in the European Union (EU) and Council of Europe (CoE)
- B To lobby selected parts of the EU on issues regarding Social inclusion.
- C To make the YMCA known in relevant parts of the EU administration, to gain funding for our programmes at national, European and global level.
- D To improve the communication channels between the Group of Representatives and National Movements and European Programmes.
- E To allocate an appropriate level of staff time on an annual basis to the Group of Representatives.

Aim 3

WORLD ALLIANCE OF YMCAs AND GLOBAL CO-OPERATION

To intensify the interaction with YMCAs worldwide.

Objectives

- A To create mechanisms and procedures to enable the EAY to participate in the strategic planning process of the World Alliance of YMCAs, as well as to evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Plan (Global Operating Plan) .
- B To further develop, strengthen and maintain the relationship with the YMCA of the USA and other geographical regions of the YMCA.

PRIORITY IV: SUSTAINABILITY

The EAY has highlighted the need to develop sustainability of the EAY.

In order to ensure that this priority is maintained, the EAY has established two Aims and supporting objectives as follows

Aim 1

HUMAN RESOURCES

To increase the involvement of National and Local YMCA professionals and volunteers for specific tasks at a European level.

Objectives

- A To develop a system which allows for a more creative and task oriented allocation of human resources within the European Movement.
- B To further develop the use of Internships for EAY operations.

Aim 2

FUND RAISING

To develop and sustain more creative ways of financing EAY operations.

Objectives

- A To examine ways in which existing fund raising expertise within National and local YMCAs might be used for the benefit of the EAY.
- B To use the 30th anniversary of the EAY in 2003 to establish a new fund for EAY operations.
- C To develop income generating projects, especially at the EAY Training Centre in Litomysl.
- D To allocate an appropriate level of staff time on an annual basis to deal with fundraising to support the activities of the EAY.