

EAY ROLE AND STRATEGY 2006-2011

PREAMBLE

In Kosovo the YMCA has a Blue Bus.

It is a YMCA vision with a diesel engine. It is the EAY Strategy with 10 wheels to make it roll and move and kick and work. The Blue Bus is real, and is doing a fantastic job.

There are plenty of conflicts around the world, inside and around most of those conflicts we have YMCAs and thousands of hands and arms and legs and heads of the YMCA. Can you imagine Blue Busses with YMCA peace makers moving on all continents on missions for peace and reconciliation? It is happening in Kosovo.

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.

Organisations are alive, if the Blue Music can be heard. We believe that the Blue Music comes from the roots and go through the grey structures of our organisation and breaks through the roof and you can hear it in the laughter of children and you can see how smiles are born in old faces no longer afraid and you can smell it in the flowers on the apple tree or from the freshly made bread in the window of somebody’s kitchen. The Blue Music is God’s voice in a modern world. In Priztina the Blue Music sounds like a bus and smells a little of diesel.

The message to us is simple. At the roots of our YMCA and at the roots of our lives is Jesus Christ - let us collectively go through the mystery of kneeling at our roots, receiving forgiveness for our imperfection and let us get up and fly into new visions, free to change and inspired to serve. If we are afraid, we become conservatives, continuing to do what we did yesterday. If there is no fear, we are free to change, modernise and find new ways - a roadmap for the future.

Europe itself is modernising and is changing dramatically. The continent was divided and lots of efforts went into bringing East and West together, to create a new unity. This is reflected in our present EAY Role and Strategy. More and more we see unified efforts in Europe and that continent-wide solutions are the relevant solutions for the challenges of our time. We think it is wise and right to be in unity with these developments and see that as a YMCA-family in Europe more of the challenges are common challenges and more of the solutions will be common solutions. Respecting the independence of each National Movement of YMCA we think that in a few, but important areas we need a more unified and stronger common energy to approach the challenges of our time. Therefore we see the need to establish a Programme Staff for European Programmes, we see the need to strengthen our presence and voice in Brussels to approach the European Institutions and we see the need to include more of the local reality into this international context, including the Global Operating Plan of the World Movement. We think that the next strategic period for EAY will be a period of transformation where the area organisation will become more operational in certain Europe wide fields, as exemplified above. It will be like the change from an umbrella to a blue bus!

When we look out of the windows of the EAY today, we realise that the EAY is not a bus, Blue or Grey, EAY is an umbrella, just like the black ones you see in the London Tube! An umbrella is designed to be a shelter against rain, a meeting place where we can talk together while waiting for the rain to stop. When rain stops, we fold the umbrella and we continue to do what we planned to do before it started to rain.

The question we should consider, is if it has really stopped raining? Should we fold the umbrella and buy a Blue Bus? But having been an umbrella for 33 years now, a change will almost feel dramatic.

Under the umbrella we share information. Under the umbrella there is an information network.

In a Blue Bus we go places. It is a travelling fellowship, and if we go places to achieve important things together, it becomes a working fellowship.

This new working fellowship will bring Local, National and International levels closer together in selected areas of work, like representation in Brussels, preparing for a new YMCA Europe Festival, implementation of the Global Operating Plan, the new EAY Mentors scheme and the funding of an EAY Programme Secretary.

The Global Operating Plan (GOP) of the World YMCA has one theme only: "Strengthening the Movement". The plan has three pillars: Mission Awareness, Relevant Programmes and Institutional Development. For the strategic period 2006-2011 EAY wants to live this vision and therefore our new Strategic Plan has been structured around these three pillars of GOP.

1. MISSION AWARENESS

YMCA never stands still, it is either growing or it is decreasing. If we are going in the wrong direction, we should stop and analyse and find the right direction. This analysis or assessment should take place on all levels all the time. It will keep our mission clear and relevant.

EAY will ask others to assist in the assessment of EAY, and we will offer the same help to National Movements.

We believe that at the roots of our Movement we will find guidance and courage to follow a new Roadmap into the future. Therefore we highlight the need for deepening the Christian Faith, not separated from the rest of the YMCA-activities, but as an integral part of all what we do.

2. RELEVANT PROGRAMMES

The focus on programmes is much stronger in this strategic plan than ever before. The Programme Field is the place where we all shall meet, live together and create strong YMCAs. Therefore we will make the Programme Groups stronger and richer in resources and in creativity and courage, by adding a Programme Secretary to the EAY staff. This can only happen if all the National Movements are willing to make this a priority.

We see that the Movement Development Field in the next 3-5 years should be merged with the Programme Field, and a lot more responsibility will be left with the leaders of the Programme Groups. The YMCA Europe Festival in 2008 will equally demand a lot from the Programme Groups; therefore a Programme Secretary will be a fantastic resource for all of us as the Roadmap shows us big challenges ahead, but even bigger potential for growth and success. The Blue Music in the years to come will be strong and beautiful if we build the grey foundation for it.

3. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

On our way into this working fellowship, we need to assess ourselves, to go through an Institutional Diagnosis. The EAY itself needs it, so do all the National Movements. The Global Operating Plan was designed for this, that all Movements should be strengthened, and in order to achieve this, assessment from a neighbour is a good place to start.

We will further develop the EAY Training Centre in Litomyšl to become a real resource centre for Movement Development processes of the highest quality to touch the hearts of all our National and Local Movements.

We will recruit motivated YMCA professionals from all levels willing to give for free a share of their working time to help us to do Institutional Diagnosis and General Begleitung. We will call them EAY Mentors.

As we grow stronger together in a working fellowship, our representation in the general European context becomes more important than ever before.

Our involvement with World Alliance of YMCAs and the Global Operating Plan shall help us to open widely for the global realities and keep us away from an introvert European focus.

To share information with one another becomes vital to make a working fellowship function well. Interactive use of the Internet remains an important challenge.

As we enter a new strategic plan, let us find inspiration in this saying from a rather grey document from Strasbourg:

“There are only two lasting bequests we can give our offspring. One is roots, the other wings.”

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

“EAY is a working fellowship to strengthen movements where people grow in body, mind and spirit”

3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE EAY

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

* Affirm that the Paris Basis, the Kampala Principles and Challenge 21 are the ongoing foundation statements of the mission of the YMCA

- 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, three 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 1 : MISSION AWARENESS

The EAY has highlighted the need to encourage, support and co-ordinate a high quality process of self analysis leading to improved mission awareness in the EAY itself as well as in the National Movements.

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

Aim 1

IMPROVED MISSION AWARENESS ON ALL LEVELS

To include all groups and governance levels in a democratic process to analyse and continue to develop the mission of EAY to maintain the highest level of relevance, and to offer the same process for all other levels of YMCA in Europe to enhance the mission awareness on all levels.

Objectives

- A To include National Movements, the Executive Committee and the annual General Assemblies, Programme Groups, Field and Partner Groups, "Youth Council" as well as the World Alliance of YMCAs (WAY) in an ongoing, open and democratic process of analysing the understanding of and the relevance of the existing mission of the EAY.
- B To encourage National Movements to initiate similar processes to analyse their own mission awareness and take steps to improve both the understanding of as well as the relevance of their own mission.
- C To organise workshops, methods and tools for analysis and to organise visits of experienced YMCA-leaders from outside of the National Movement to assist in the process.

Aim 2

DEEPENING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

To bring all levels of EAY closer to the Christian roots of YMCA, 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 intensify the work to develop creative ways of expressing Christian Community and ecumenical approaches between Christian denominations during the EAY General Assemblies and all other events organised within the framework of the EAY.
- B To work with the Christian Orientation Group (COG) to focus more on permanent integration of this perspective in all different fields of work.
- C To organise events like pilgrimages or ecumenical conferences which encourage participants to discuss model programmes and issues related to the Christian dimension of the YMCA and therefore raise mission awareness amongst member movements in the EAY.
- D To develop increased understanding of and skills to engage in Inter Faith Dialogue with people of other Faiths active in our organisation.
- E To work with all levels of European YMCA to make sure that the Christian profile and content of the YMCA EUROPE 2008 - festival will be relevant, creative and inclusive for all people attending this event.
- F To participate in the ecumenical dialogue in Europe on different levels and especially within the Conference of European Churches, to contribute a young voice to the ecumenical agendas and to make the YMCA more known and respected among churches.

PRIORITY 2 : RELEVANT PROGRAMMES

The EAY has highlighted the need to strengthen the Programme Field (PF) and to increase the support for and the resources to the Programme Groups to enable the Programme Field to remain relevant and at the same time to prepare for the inclusion of the Movement Development Field within the next 3-5 years.

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

Aim 1

STRONGER PROGRAMME GROUPS

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 and to encourage an ongoing debate of important European issues related to the different Programme Groups and therefore relevant for the EAY.

Objectives

- A To organise annual meetings of all Programme Group leaders and the EAY Executive Committee to enhance the understanding of the needs of the PF and to discuss issues of common interest to ensure relevant programmes of high quality.
- B To organise joint training events for all Programme Groups every second year to increase the network of different programmes as well as to improve the understanding of belonging to one organisation.
- C To invite the existing organisations for professional secretaries to initiate a separate Programme Group for staff of YMCAs.
- D To urge the Programme Groups to focus on important issues related to their work, like Youth Culture, Refugees/Asylum Seekers, HIV-AIDS and World Wide Solidarity and to facilitate meeting places where the issues can be debated, web based or in real life, and in this way make the issues a part of an overall EAY agenda.
- E To work with the YMCA World Services to establish a Programme Group for Global Solidarity to ensure that this challenge becomes an integrated part of the EAY and all member Movements.
- F To use the YMCA EUROPE 2008 festival to strengthen the PF and to demonstrate model programmes and how the different programmes of the EAY are interrelated and support the common goals of the EAY.

Aim 2

INCREASED COOPERATION BETWEEN PROGRAMME GROUPS AND MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENT

To encourage and support a process of integration between the Movement Development and the Programme Field.

Objectives

- A To foster an active, dynamic exchange of reports and experiences, needs and offers between all the Programme Groups and all the Field and Partner Groups to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.
- B To invite the leaders of PF and MD to develop together with EAY staff a strategy for the merging of the two working fields and see the YMCA EUROPE 2008 festival as the time and place to demonstrate the unity of the two working fields.
- C To initiate discussions in all the related groups preparing for the merge and inviting their inputs and advice to the process.

Aim 3

EAY PROGRAMME STAFFING

To enable these ambitious aims, new staff resources will have to be added to the EAY in the form of a new position as EAY Programme Secretary to coordinate the programme work of the EAY and to serve the needs of the Programme Groups.

Objectives

- A To work with National Movements, local YMCAs and the Programme Groups to make sure that this aim is shared and supported by all levels of European YMCA in order to secure the financial resources for the needed staffing resources.

Aim 4

REGULAR YMCA EUROPE FESTIVALS

To organise YMCA EUROPE festivals in Central Europe every fifth year to offer regular manifestations of all YMCA in Europe and to offer an inspirational experience of Christian Community and to inspire one another for more creative and relevant programme development.

Objectives

- A To agree with all National Movements to share the financial responsibility for the festivals.
- B To work with the Steering Group for YMCA EUROPE 2008 to develop a solid economy to ensure a strong foundation for the concept of organising festivals on a regular basis in the future.
- C To work with all the Programme Groups in the planning for and implementation of the festivals so that they remain the key shareholders and owners of this concept.
- D To include the staff of the EAY stronger in the work preparing for the festivals to reflect that this is relevant work for the EAY.
- E To encourage and support participation from all the worldwide family of YMCA both in the preparation as well as in the implementation of the festivals so that there will be shared ownership of the vision.

PRIORITY 3 : INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The EAY has highlighted the need to focus on sustainability on all levels of YMCA and to foster strong Movements making progress on their way to more self sustainability all over Europe. Sustainability is understood in a holistic perspective where a Movement has mission awareness, relevant programmes and institutional viability. In order to ensure that this priority is maintained, the EAY has established eight Aims and supporting objectives as follows

Aim 1

INSTITUTIONAL DIAGNOSIS

To use the experiences from Movement Development and the Global Operating Plan (GOP) to develop a new tool to assist National Movements in analysing their own strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats to enable growth and increased self sustainability all over Europe.

Objectives

- A To train YMCA leaders, volunteers and staff from all National Movements to run institutional diagnosis for National Movements and to compose small international groups of trained leaders which can be invited to run such an analysis of National Movements and share the conclusions with that Movement. EAY Mentors will be an important part of these teams.
- B To develop an awareness among all National Movements of the importance of being assessed from outside, as well as increase the motivation to actively participate in the Global Operating Plan of the World Movement by offering resources to assess other Movements, also outside of Europe.

Aim 2

BEGLEITUNG

To encourage and support the growth of relevant, self sustaining and democratic National YMCA Movements all over Europe, by offering a realistically resourced accompaniment/Begleitung - scheme based on the outcome of an institutional diagnosis.

Objectives

- A To develop new National Movements and establish new Field Groups for those new Movements, according to actual needs.
- B To use EAY staff and EAY Mentors to offer Begleitung for movements in need.

Aim 3

EAY TRAINING CENTRE

To develop the EAY Training Centre in Litomyšl to be a resource centre for YMCA in Europe and outside of Europe to help deliver this strategy especially in motivating and training human resources.

Objectives

- A To develop new concepts for services offered by the TC, both to increase the quality of training courses for the YMCA as well as to offer interesting modules for outside customers to improve the financial foundation for the TC.
- B To motivate Local and National Movements to use the TC for their own purposes and thus help the TC to become self sustainable.
- C To develop co-operation between the TC and the YMCA Colleges around Europe and with training units of National Movements
- D To use EAY Mentors to resource training events.

Aim 4

EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION

To make the YMCA more visible and influential in the general European context by having a stronger voice on behalf of the National Movements in Europe.

Objectives

- A To recruit more young YMCA leaders to represent us in the different European networks especially by working closely with the newly established EAY Youth Council and to intensify the general training and preparation for this work to maintain a high level of stability.

- B To develop together with the National Movements a coordinated European Agenda for our relationship with European Union and Council of Europe in order to have a strong voice and more impact.
- C 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 5

WAY AND GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT

To see EAY as a constructive team player in the World Movement by offering increased coordination of all the European projects taking place around the world and by joining forces under the umbrella of the Global Operating Plan (GOP) to make the best use of the resources at hand.

Objectives

- A To play an active role in the further development of the GOP methodology and implementation worldwide.

Aim 6

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

To further develop the EAY fundraising and resource mobilisation capacity with European Institutions as well as through usage of internal YMCA structures.

Objectives

- A To investigate how an increased EAY presence in Brussels can be organised.
- B To establish and manage an EAY Mentors scheme by inviting Local and National YMCA staff to invest some of their working time in concrete EAY projects by travelling to other countries or by taking over limited tasks and doing them from their own base.
- C To see Local YMCAs with an engagement in international programmes as direct partners with the EAY in selected projects and working fields well coordinated with the National Movements and their World Services.

Aim 7

INFORMATION

To develop and facilitate inter-active sharing of information between the EAY and Member Movements and among Member Movements as well as to create relevant YMCA image in the general European context.

Objectives

- A To improve the "News from YMCA Europe" as an inter-active, electronic tool for sharing Information.
- B To improve the EAY web-site giving priority to the European working platforms, Member Movements and discussion forums
- C To allocate an appropriate level of staff time on regular sustaining and up-dating the Web-site
- D To use EAY mentors to resource the work with information and public relation
- E To create a system of National Correspondents for "News from YMCA Europe" and EAY Web-site.