

Minutes of YMCA Europe General Assembly 9. - 12. May 2013

- Place: Manchester, England
- Theme: Roots and Leaves II - Healthy Living
- Participants: 140 participants - 93 delegates General Assembly (GA) and 47 participants YMCA Europe Spectrum (YES) from 25 Member Movements and 2 Cooperating Movements were present. From YMCA Europe 6 staff members were present. List of participants is attached to the minutes.
- Guests:
- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| YMCA of Canada | Shannon Doram and Helen Weir |
| Y's Men International | Poul-Henrik Hove Jakobsen, Danish Y's Men
Poul V. Thomsen, Danish Y's Men |
| World Alliance of YMCA | Romulo Dantas |
| YWCA | Anna Magnusson |
| CEO YMCA Manchester | Graham Hobbs |
| Key note speaker | Ken Livingston |
- Special guests Terry Ratcliffe, former YE President
Peter Posner, former YE President
Egon Slopianka, former YE Secretary General
- Apologies: Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, WAY (former YE Secretary General)
Selma Zaidi WAY
Jan Nissen, former YE President
Doelf Weder, former YE Secretary General
Birgir Asgeirsson, YE executive committee
- Devotions: The Devotions during the General Assembly were conducted by the Christian Orientation Group (COG) chaired by Marloes Meijer, assisted by delegates from Germany, Switzerland, Hungary and the Netherlands.

1 Opening

Evert (Ed) Eggink, President of YE and Chairperson of the General Assembly welcomed those present to the General Assembly. He gave a short introduction to this year's theme "Roots and leaves II - Healthy living" which follows the concept of YE strategy signature programmes. He gave a short overview over the General Assembly programme.

Graham Hobbs, CEO of YMCA Manchester welcomed the delegates of the GA.

Ed Eggink stated that the Assembly had been called according to §12 of the constitution. He also stated that, since 25 out of 37 Member Movements were present in person, the Assembly was in quorum according to §14 of the Constitution.

Delegates from two cooperating movement were present: YMCA in Kosovo and Montenegro.

Not present members were: Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Moldova, Poland.

Not present cooperating movements were: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, YMCA in Nagorno-Karabakh.

2 Introduction of Delegates, Guests, Staff and Apologies

Ed Eggink introduced all the Guests and Delegates in accordance with the list of participants and Staff. Apologies were as listed above.

3 Presidents message and introduction to the procedures

Ed Eggink reviewed his first year as president and working with the new executive committee and a very committed staff team under the leadership of Juan Simoes Iglesias. It has been challenging, but also very encouraging year. He had the chance to represent YE on various occasions. Very encouraging was and still is the development of the YES group and its initiatives within YE. We can be proud of so many dedicated, highly motivated leaders and volunteers on the various levels in the national movements.

YE this year celebrates its 40th birthday. A special celebration act will take place during the YE Festival in Prague this summer.

Ed Eggink gave a short introduction to the procedures of this assembly. Points raised were:

- formal/informal procedures
- keep the voting card ready
- there is a proposal for amendments of the election rules
- how to place proposals in the plenary
- working language: English
- wear your name badges
- be aware of times
- aim of market place (advertise YMCA events)
- every day try to speak with 6 people you did not know before
- read through the working documents
- hosts for GA (announcements) are Sara Martinez (Spain) and Andreas Axelson (Sweden)

4 Adoption of the Agenda

Decision: The proposed agenda was adopted.

5 Adoption of the General Assembly 2012 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the General Assembly from 16.-20.05.2012 in Prague, Czech Republic were approved as a true record of the meeting.

6 Greetings

The following delegates gave greetings to the General Assembly:

Helene Weir, YMCA Canada
 Romulo Dantas, World Alliance of YMCA, Geneva
 Anna Magnusson, YWCA Europe
 Poul-Henrik Hove Jakobsen, Danish Y's Men
 Poul V. Thomsen, Danish Y's Men
 Peter Jeffrey, Chair YMCA England Trustees
 Kerry Reilly, YMCA Scotland and Chair of the Festival Steering Group

For their outstanding strong support and long-term commitment for YMCA Europe the Y's Men Poul-Henrik Hove Jakobsen and Poul V. Thomson were honored by Ed Eggink and Juan Simoes Iglesias with the YMCA Europe Award.

7 Secretary General's Speech

Juan Simoes Iglesias, secretary general of YMCA Europe presented his speech "Message in a Bottle". A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. Remarks from the plenary were shared.

8 Reports

8.1 Secretary General's Report 2012 and work plan 2013

The annual reports 2012 of Secretary General and the work plan (implementation plan) have been presented.

Silvio Kraus, Switzerland remarked that it was good to receive such an implementation plan, but some important facts were missing, like budget lines, responsibilities (who shall do what, volunteers or staff)

Juan Simoes Iglesias responded that this information so far indeed is missing, as well as information about the impact assessment. For the future also the working plan for the next year should be included.

Decision: The report and work plan were received.

8.2 Movement Strengthening (MS)

Ed Eggink presented the report about MS activities and the 2nd MS conference in March 2013 in Litomyšl, Czech Republic. Participants of this MS conference have been representatives of Programme Groups, Field Groups, YE executive committee, YE staff. The main focus has been to continue working on YE strategy aims and to ensure that the work and programmes carried out are connected with the strategy.

Ed Eggink also invited delegates to make use of YE YERT expert group.

Then the president presented the reports of YE programme groups:

- European Sport YMCA (ESY)
- European Ten Sing (ETS)
Tobias Nägeli (Switzerland) invited delegates to meet the ETS executive committee during the GA and contact them for example if they want to start Ten Sing
- Christian Orientation Group (COG)
- Volunteers for Europe Group (VfE)
Silke Leitenberger (Germany) invited delegates to a meeting during the GA for newcomers
- Representation and Youth Polity Group (YPG)
Gerard Tosserams (The Netherlands) pointed out that a YPG newsletter is now available, it can be sent to interested persons
- YMCA European Spectrum (YES)
- European Jungschar and Scout Group (ESG)
Alena Schmassmann (Switzerland) gave few information about their involvement at the YE festival in Prague.

Decision: The reports were received.

8.3 World Alliance of YMCAs (WAY) and Global Cooperation

Nadine Jording, Germany, member of the executive committee of the World Alliance of YMCA (WAY) gave a short overview from the GA Interest Group:

- One million voices survey 2014
- World Council 2014 in the USA.

Ed Eggink referred to the GA 2012 when it has been discussed who could replace him in the executive committee of the World Alliance as an elected member for the rest of governance period. Olga Lukina, Belarus had been proposed by the GA 2012 and on YE's recommendation she became appointed member of the WAY executive committee.

At the WAY World Council 2014 elections for the new executive committee will take place. From the area group "Europe" a maximum of 5 candidates can be elected.

Taking the experiences from past years and to strengthen our European appearance at WAY level and also to strengthen our networking, it could be worthwhile to present some kind of mutual proposal with European candidates.

Therefore Ed Eggink encouraged the delegations to communicate with each other in terms of making nominations for the elections next year. It is important to nominate candidates who are also linked with YE and its activities and platforms.

Juan Simoes Iglesias reported from the Global Staff Team (GST) of the WAY. As secretary general of YE he is part of this team, coordinated by the secretary general of WAY Johan V. Eltvik. Points of discussion have been:

- The "youth empowerment" action of the WAY, now summed up in the Change Agents project. For YE this is a challenge, as our YES platform has to be linked with this worldwide programme. Some seminars and trainings need to be adjusted. It is an important global approach.
- The planning of the next World Council.

Further Juan Simoes Iglesias reported from some European approaches:

- World Urban YMCA network meeting in Madrid.
- WAY was invited to YE seminars: Fundraising Conference, Madrid ; no one from WAY was present); Catch the Vision, Istanbul (Johan V. Eltvik)

YE is definitely connected with the worldwide YMCA family. On behalf of YE GS has sent out various solidarity messages.

Decision: The report was received.

8.4 Finances

8.4.1 Report 2012

Mike Will as treasurer of YE gave the report. He pointed out the priorities of the ex com for the next years.

- Priority 1: YMCA Europe Festival 2013
- Priority 2: Clarifying core and field budgets
- Priority 3: Reinstating reserves
- Priority 4: Training Centre debts
- Priority 5: National movement contributions
- Priority 6: National movement's debts
- Priority 7: Friends of YE
- Priority 8: Develop Fundraising strategy

The treasurer explained that the overall budget is divided into "Core budget" (65 %) and "Field budget" (35 %). The annual membership contributions at the moment cover about 55 % of the operational costs (core budget).

Luckily the last remaining debts of YE regarding the YE Training Center in Litomyšl could be paid in 2012. Some money could be forwarded into the George-Williams Endowment Fund and YE's general reserves.

The actual result for 2012 has been concluded with a surplus of 25,00 Euros.

Kirsten Lund Larsen (Denmark) thanked for open transparent reporting.

Ken Montgomery (England) asked for more information about the relationship of YE and YE Training Centre and further involvement.

8.4.2 Auditors' Report and Discharge of Executive Committee Responsibility

The external Auditors' Report was presented by Ed Eggink.

Decision: The Auditors Report was unanimously approved.

Decision: The General Assembly unanimously approved the accounts of 2012.

Decision: The Discharge of the Executive Committee was unanimously approved.

8.4.3 National Contributions 2014

The national contributions for 2014 were presented by the treasurer Mike Will.

At the GA 2012 it has been decided to compose a working group to review the national contribution system of YE. A concrete working plan has been developed by that group since then, first exchanges took place. During this General Assembly a well attended workshop about this issue took place. At the GA 2014 the working group plan to present a draft proposal on the future national contribution system.

For 2014 the executive committee proposes that national contributions will be frozen. No increase is proposed compared to the national contribution of 2013.

The treasurer responded to questions from the plenary.

Ken Montgomery (England) explicitly thanked for listening carefully to previous discussions on national contributions, installing the working group to review the system and now to freeze national contributions until the review process will be finished.

Decision: The proposed national contributions 2014 were approved.

Voting: 19 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions

8.4.3 Budget 2014

The budget for 2014 was explained by the treasurer Mike Will.

The budget item "hoped for fundraising" has been reduced. Also the budget item "travel costs" has been reduced. Due to many technical opportunities it is possible to work efficiently even without travelling.

Following the treasurer responded to various questions from the plenary.

Cees Bremmer (Netherlands) raised the question to look at the possibility to develop the budget for several years. The treasurer responded that this should be considered in correspondence with the YE strategic plan.

Decision: The proposed budget for 2014 was unanimously approved.

9. Amendments to the election procedures

Ed Eggink explained the proposed changes (see attachment) and explained the voting procedure. Election rules are not part of the Constitution, but a By-Law.

EAY Election procedures (for members of the Executive Committee)

The proposal has been seconded. No discussion followed.

The voting result was:

Voting members in total: 19 (= 100 %)

In favour: 18 (= 95 %)

Against: 0

Abstention: 1

Decision: The proposal was adopted with one abstention.

The approved document will be put on the YE website as part of the By-Laws.

Eliana Graf, Switzerland, presented an additional proposal:

“As you might know, we already discussed two years ago a suggestion to eliminate the proposal of the Nomination committee for candidates on the ExCom we have to elect. As National Movement we believe that the procedure of election could be evolved better. We think that the GA is completely capable to select between different candidates and we think that an election proposal is not needed. The NC does not have more information on candidates than the GA, so we would like to call on the Executive Committee to put forward a proposal for a constitutional amendment to be voted on the next General Assembly.”

Ed Eggink responded that a similar proposal has been forwarded and discussed a few years before. At that time it has not been adopted by the General Assembly. Proposals like this need to be presented according to the procedure mentioned in our Constitution. Any member movement has the full right to put forward a new proposal on changes in our constitution. The YE executive committee will consider all proposals for the GA 2014. He encouraged the Swiss movement to put forward their proposal if possible together with other national movements following the procedure as mentioned in the Constitution.

10. YMCA Europe Festival 2013

From the Festival Steering Group (SG) Kerry Reilly (Scotland), chair and Maria Verwoerd (Netherlands) presented the actual planning status for the festival and again invited everyone to register to participate.

Vladislava Hudeczkova (Czech Republic) as line manager “Y’s best talent show” and Tobias Nägeli (Switzerland) as team leader for the “festival tower programme” added recent information.

11. YMCA European Spectrum (YES)

On behalf of YES network chair Andre Kpodonu, (England) addressed the delegates of the GA. YES is a network of empowered young people, young leaders. This year’s YES seminar started on Monday May 7th with 47 participants and leaders and continues during this GA. A new board member (substitution) has been elected: Adela Lakatos from Romania.

Andreas Axelson, (Sweden) presented a statement worked out during the YES seminar.

Andre Kpodonu stated that the YES seminar was very successful. They spent an intensive time together, worked hardly. He pointed out that there are still many spaces where the “giant need to be waked up”.

Ed Eggink encouraged all YES delegates to stay active and confident, and to act wherever they are involved already.

Peter Crory, (Scotland) also encourages the YES group. It may help to define very clearly the different roles of our European YES network and of the WAY Change Agents programme, to avoid misunderstandings through mixing up various aims and expectations.

12. General Assemblies 2014 and 2015

The next General Assembly will take place from 29 May to 1 June 2014 in the YE Training Centre in Litomysl, Czech Republic (if constructions will have been finished, otherwise other location in Czech Republic).

For 2015 invitations from National Movements are welcome.

13 Any Other Business

- Theme of the GA 2013 “Roots and Leaves II - Healthy living”

Key note speech “ONE”

Presented by Ken Livingston, Manchester

He opened his speech with a short you tube video “one love” from U2, referring to the mission of the worldwide YMCA: that they all may be one (the bible, John 17,21).

The YMCA triangle signifies the three elements: body, mind and spirit. All three elements belong together. It is a wonderful combination of dust of the earth and the breath of God. John 17, 21 - I pray... that you have send me.

Challenge yourself:

- Spend 20 minutes a day in silence, that will definitely change your life! “Silence is the gateway to the soul and the souls is the gateway to God.
- Spend some time regularly to think back, who are you? (Indian proverb: “Life can be divided into 4 rooms, mainly we are just living in one room.”)

Let’s share our stories to unite people. In stories we find a shared identity. An opportunity can be the 2nd Unify conference 2014 of YE “uniting across Europe”.

How to live in this world? YMCA is doing a lot good work, very practically. Keep on doing this. Make sure that we are living in a healthy way.

Key note speech “Physical well-being (body)”

Presented by Shannon Doram, Canada

Realistic goals are important. What can I reach?

Learn from people before you. Assess how much it will cost. Develop the blueprint (keep it simple). Awareness, motivation.

Take the time to test it. Evaluate (plan this already in your roadmap)

Key note speech “Mental Health & Well Being (mind)”

Presented by Peter Crory (Scotland)

Five paths to good health and well-being:

- Build relationships
- Be physically active
- Be thankful
- Take up new activites
- Volunteer

Key note speech “Spiritual well-being (spirit)”

Presented by Csaba Veres, Romania

What do people on Sunday mornings when they do not go to church?

What about christian traditions within “christian affected Europe”?

What are the needs of young people in our world today, in your environment?

Four domains of spiritual well-being:

- Personal
- Environment
- Transcendental
- Communal

Being connected with God. Living a healthy spiritual life.

We are created as the image of God.

How do we get these elements included in our daily lives?

All key note speeches and results of discussion groups will be presented in a separate document after the General Assembly.

- Nomination committee

Silvia Lazaridis (Germany), chair of nomination committee, presented the committee.

At the GA 2014 five new assessors need to be elected. The nomination committee will contact all member movements by the end of this year to nominate candidates. All present assessors would be eligible for a second period, but of course new candidates can be proposed.

- “One million voices” research initiative (WAY)

Romulo Dantas (WAY) presented the research initiative “one million voices”.

200.000 young people shall be asked to special topics (interviews). This will only be possible by the support of many national YMCA movements.

In 2013 the pilot activity (questionnaire) shall be worked out, in 2014 the collection of information shall take place.

- YMCA International conference 2015, Calgary

Helene Weir, CEO YMCA Calgary invited to the next YMCA international conference in fall (Sep/Oct) 2015 in Calgary, Canada. The conference is organised by the YMCA of the USA, YMCA Canada and YMCA Mexico.

- 2nd YE Youth policy Seminar 2013, Berlin

Stefan Leier (Germany), member of YPG invited to the seminar in June 2013 in Berlin.

It will be a great opportunity to get to know a lot of youth policy facts and people, as well as to explore the German capital. The exact dates and the programme can be looked up at the YE website. Due to a European grant only 30 % of travel costs have to be covered by participants.

- Y’s Men Sweden

Camilla Bohm Coleman, incoming Chairperson of Y’s Men Sweden thanked YE for 40 years of successful and encouraging work.

- Y’s Men Denmark

Poul V. Thomsen thanked for long and outstanding good cooperation.

- “Stop Poverty-campaign”

Caroline Rostrup and Ingrid Anderson, YMCA/YWCA Norway presented the Campaign “Stop poverty” of YMCA/YWCA Norway.

The delegates of the General Assembly 2013 of YMCA Europe endorse the principles of the Stop Poverty-campaign, and encourage national movements to support and work with the campaign on national and local level.

For reference:

Principles of “Stop Poverty-campaign”:

- The world has enough resource for everybody’s needs to be fulfilled.
- Poverty is man-made and can be overcome by human beings.
- Global policies need to work coherently to eradicate absolute poverty.
- World community must set a goal of poverty eradication within 2030.
- Stop Poverty campaign is promoted by civil society and targets policy makers.
- Volunteers can make a difference on global agenda-setting.

- COG statement

Marloes Meijer, chair of Christian Orientation Group presented a statement:

We as YMCA's in Europe and YMCA Europe need to know our Christian values in order to:

- *define our aims,*
- *be relevant,*
- *stay on the same track.*

Europe is more diverse than you might think.

Did you know that your participants can be: evangelical, secularized, catholic, eastern-orthodox, Russian-orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, or allergic to religion? How do you (want to) deal with that in your programs and how do we deal with it on European level?

That's why you have the Christian Orientation Group: to help you ('re YMCA/YMCA Europe) to make the Christian aspect relevant in different times, events and contexts:

- *We would like to inspire you*
- *We challenge you to think about the C in your YMCA and how you live it. What do participants, volunteers and/or employees experience and think/ believe / feel...?*
- *We can offer you consultation (we can share relevant network, knowledge and experience)*
- *We can give you an overview of best practices on the area of 'C in your YMCA'.*
- *We cooperate in preparations of: Unify, General Assembly, Prague Festival, Catch the Vision...*
- *We ask relevant questions.*

Did you know we have a Dropbox? It contains all kinds of information, tools and newsletters that might be relevant for you. And you are free to add your best practices, tools and ideas. If you want to have a look: e-mail Meijer.marloes@gmail.com

14 Thanks and Closing Remarks

Tinna Rós Steinsdottir (Iceland) thanked all delegates, volunteers and staff for their contributions; especially she thanked the English YMCA and all volunteers and staff being great hosts. Furthermore she thanked the GA planning team and executive committee, the key note speakers, the table talk facilitators, the interest group leaders.

Also she thanked the YES planning team and all YES seminar participants with all their enthusiasm and visions for the future.

Juan Simoes Iglesias made some concluding remarks and asked every delegate to respond in the evaluation form.

The General Assembly was closed by Ed Eggink.

Manchester, England
May 2013

Evert Eggink
(President)

Beate Turck
(Recording Secretary)