YMCA Institutional Capacity Building

Building grassroots capacity

The YMCA movement has grown dramatically since it was founded in 1844 by a young adult, George Williams, in London.

His vision is now carried out by more than 45 million people around the world via 120 national movements, each made up of a network of local YMCAs. In the case of the YMCA of the USA, the network includes over 2,575 local branches.

The YMCA movement was able to reach this level of growth by maintaining a strategic focus on the strength and health of both local and national YMCAs. The World YMCA acts collectively to ensure that all YMCAs uphold clarity of mission, institutional competence and transformative programs. Through leadership development, internal and external relationship-building and resource mobilization, YMCAs have ensured that viable institutional structures support the development and implementation of sustainable, innovative and responsive youth programs. A 150-year history as a network of autonomous, locally-led associations demonstrates YMCAs' ability to grow through a grassroots movement.

Strengthening YMCA Movements

Institutional capacity building is a key component of the YMCA of the USA's collaborative work with YMCAs within the United States and abroad. By sharing best practices, lessons learned and impact research, the YMCA of the USA cooperates with partners to define goals and strategies for:

- ☑ Addressing youth and community needs
- ☑ Strengthening volunteer, board and staff leadership
- ☑ Mobilizing resources locally
- ☑ Nurturing positive relationships with community members, ranging from business leaders to government representatives

> YMCAs build local self-reliance through volunteer development, improved governance and innovative income generating activities linked to youth and the YMCA mission.

The YMCA of the USA emphasizes three core areas for sustaining strong and healthy YMCAs. A detailed and tested set of desired outcomes and indicators assist YMCAs in measuring and assessing program impact, institutional capacity and financial planning.

INSTITUTIONAL	PROGRAMMATIC	FINANCIAL
Organizational Assessments	Community / Youth Assessments	Business / Strategic Planning
Resource Management	Timely Response	Financial Management
Governance	Technical Competency	Financial Planning & Projections
Leadership & Management Skills	Interpersonal Quality	Diversified Sources of Income
Decision-Making	Monitoring and Evaluation	Marketing and Communications
Clear Mission and Vision		Performance Measurement

Global goals, local relevance

YMCAs are also vitalized by the global network that includes: YMCA-to-YMCA partnerships, the World Alliance of YMCAs, YMCA Regional Alliances and National YMCA Movements. The YMCA Global Operating Plan is the world YMCA strategic plan that coordinates YMCA Institutional Capacity Building efforts. YMCAs determine individually how they will contribute to the Global Operating Plan and select important areas for national action.

Ask us about...

- ☑ Assessment tools for measuring strong movements

The YMCA of the USA is not alone in promoting the sharing of best practices between movements. YMCA Regional Alliances in Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa work to strengthen the capacity of YMCAs and foster opportunities for collaboration and learning between YMCAs in developing countries.

Strategies for Local Resource Mobilization
▼ An example from Mexico ▼

Annual and capital campaigns are one of the most effective means of mobilizing local resources. The YMCA of **Mexico** is currently implementing several important local fundraising campaigns.

The YMCA of Mexico sees annual fundraising campaigns as a step towards continued self-reliance and an opportunity to:

- Mobilize resources for the extension of the YMCAs' outreach and work to impoverished areas throughout the country
- Promote the culture of philanthropy in Mexico
- Reach out to new members and individuals interested in the YMCA movement
- Inform the community about the work of YMCAs
- Provide the community an opportunity to support the YMCA movement
- Build a sense of ownership, purpose and teamwork among YMCA volunteers

The YMCA of Mexico has conducted fundraising campaigns for development programs over the past few years with goal of raising approximately $50,000 dollars per year. The first capital campaign has been launched to build a community development center in Atizapan, a poor neighborhood of Mexico City. A goal of $1.2 million has been set.

Changing behaviors towards philanthropy, understanding fiscal systems, ensuring transparency to donors and involving all levels of staff and volunteer leadership are some of the challenges faced by the YMCA of Mexico. Strategies are in place to document learning, build a donor base and educate the public.

Strong national movements, such as the YMCA of Senegal, play a regional leadership role in disseminating best practices in youth development.

Catalyzing change

YMCAs and YMCA leadership are strongly representative of the communities in which they work. YMCAs are driven by diverse volunteers and staff, leaders from the private sector and government, religious communities, and complementary community-based and non-governmental organizations. YMCAs stand out as highly unique organizations—catalyzing communities, families and youths to think above and beyond. Through grassroots outreach and pioneering approaches to development, YMCAs continue to expand the boundaries of youth and community programming.

To achieve our common goals in Institutional Capacity Building, the YMCA of the USA partners with national YMCA movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Middle East. YMCAs everywhere work jointly with local communities, local and national governments, faith-based organizations and NGOs, the private sector and the international donor community.

YMCAs have collaborated with:

Commercial Market Strategies ▪ Deloitte and Touche Emerging Markets ▪ Committee for Democratization of Information and Technology ▪ Search Institute ▪ United States Agency for International Development