

ANNUAL
REPORT

20

23

YMCA EUROPE
www.ymcaeurope.com



Empowering young people, promoting community
development, and fostering social justice

ymca. 

 VISION
2030

Contents

Who we are:	2
• Worldwide YMCA Movement	
• YMCA in Europe	
Leadership Message	5
Where we are	7
What we do:	9
• 2023 Highlights	
• Our Impact	
Vision 2030	12
Y2Gether 50th Anniversary Event	13
Activities	14
• Ukraine Response	15
• Capacity Building	17
• Movement Strengthening	18
• Executive Professional Master	19
• 11th NGS Forum	20
• Work with Refugees & Migrants Conference	21
• Future of Digital Youth Work Conference	22
Programmes	23
• Digital Educational Centres in Moldova	24
• Digital Community Hubs in the West Balkans	25
• Refugee Skilling & Support Programme	26
• Planetary Health Event	27
• Roots for Peace	28
• Generation Next	29
• Leadership Academy	30
• Other Projects	31
Advocacy	32
Communications & Campaigns	34
Voices	37
Governance	38
Programme and Working Groups	41
Partnerships	43
Finances	45
World YMCA in 2023	48



WHO WE ARE

YMCA Europe is a leading organisation dedicated to empowering young people, promoting community development, and fostering social justice. With a rich history and a commitment to positive change, YMCA Europe plays a pivotal role in creating impactful initiatives for youth across the continent.



Our Worldwide YMCA Movement

The YMCA exists to create a better world – with and for young people. Founded in London in 1844, with nearly 180 years of experience, we are one of the largest youth organisations, deeply embedded in local communities across 120 countries worldwide.

Our mission is to empower young people and communities to build a just, sustainable, equitable and inclusive world, where every person can thrive in body, mind and spirit. Our four Pillars of Impact are: Community Wellbeing, Meaningful Work, a Sustainable Planet, and a Just World.

We provide platforms for youth-led solutions to ensure that young people's voices are heard, and they can make the change they want to see locally, nationally and globally.

We exist in 120 countries worldwide, in 12,000 communities with an extensive global network of 90,000 staff, 920,000 volunteers, providing diverse solutions to local community needs, and reaching over 60 million people each year.

At World YMCA, our aim is to be the global youth-led solutions organisation and partner of choice: empowering, inspiring and mobilising young people to implement their own solutions to the challenges they and their communities face.



YMCA in Europe

The European Alliance of YMCAs was created by several national YMCAs in 1973 with the purpose of representing, setting a collective direction for the European movement and strengthening the work of the YMCA across the continent.

YMCA Europe increased its strategic role, defined guiding principles under a clear mission, established new partnerships and contributed to the development of YMCAs in Southern Europe throughout the 80s.

After the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, many local and national YMCAs were re-founded in Eastern Europe, and their facilities were brought back to the Movement after decades. The role of our European umbrella organisation was fundamental in providing guidance, resources and capacity to the new members.

In 2016 a representation office was opened in Brussels, Belgium in order to strengthen the voice and profile of YMCA Europe among the key European institutions and other civil society organisations. In 2021 the seat of the organisation was officially established in Brussels.

YMCA Europe is a member-based organisation and each of the National Movements is an independent YMCA operating in a specific country or region.

YMCA Europe is an umbrella organisation that serves 36 national YMCAs throughout Europe. Collectively there are more than 3,200 local YMCAs, involving approximately 9,000 members of staff, more than 95,000 volunteers and impacting over 2,000,000 beneficiaries.

Message from our President and Secretary General

“ Together, we've made a difference, providing vital support, educational opportunities, and fostering a global movement aligned with Vision 2030. ”



We're thrilled to present the 2023 Annual Report, a glimpse into our collective journey as we marked the 50th anniversary of the European Alliance of YMCAs.

This milestone reinforced our dedication to the vital role and responsibilities of our Area Organisation—supporting and championing our member YMCAs while uniting our efforts to empower young people.

This year held special significance, especially in our response to the humanitarian crisis sparked by the war in Ukraine.

Together with our members and partners, YMCA Europe took a leading role, offering vital support to affected communities.

The steadfast commitment of our members, donors, volunteers, and staff produced unprecedented results, providing crucial assistance to those in need.

Our ongoing fundraising campaign, focused on the relief and integration of displaced persons and refugees, showcased our ability to attract partners and elevate the profile of our movement as a reliable grassroots network.

YMCA Hubs

YMCA hubs diligently addressed immediate needs, providing expertise in digital competencies, employability skills, legal advice, mental health support, and youth work, making a meaningful impact in communities affected by the war.



Beyond our humanitarian efforts, we continued to offer life-changing educational opportunities for young people through Generation Next. The Roots for Peace project successfully brought together young individuals from diverse backgrounds across the continent.

Strengthening our European movement

By introducing innovative formal and non-formal education initiatives, we expanded our toolbox, facilitating the extension of YMCA into new communities and fostering increased collaboration with major public institutions, thereby enhancing our collective mission.

Vision 2030

The World YMCA provided an unprecedented opportunity to unite the global movement under Vision 2030, identifying key areas of activity and setting collective goals.

Recognising our unique ability to address socially relevant issues at local, national, and international levels, YMCA Europe aligns its strategy with Vision 2030 to better serve our members and young people.

These achievements would not have been possible without the outstanding work and commitment of our Executive Committee, Staff Team and partners across Europe and globally.

We express deep gratitude for your unwavering support, hoping and praying for peace with justice across all our communities.

With heartfelt gratitude and appreciation,

Emma Osmundsen
President

Juan Simoes Iglesias
Secretary General




“ Determined to continue building safe spaces for youth with their genuine participation, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring they can reach their full potential. ”



▲
Emma Osmundsen
President



▲
Juan Simoes Iglesias
Secretary General

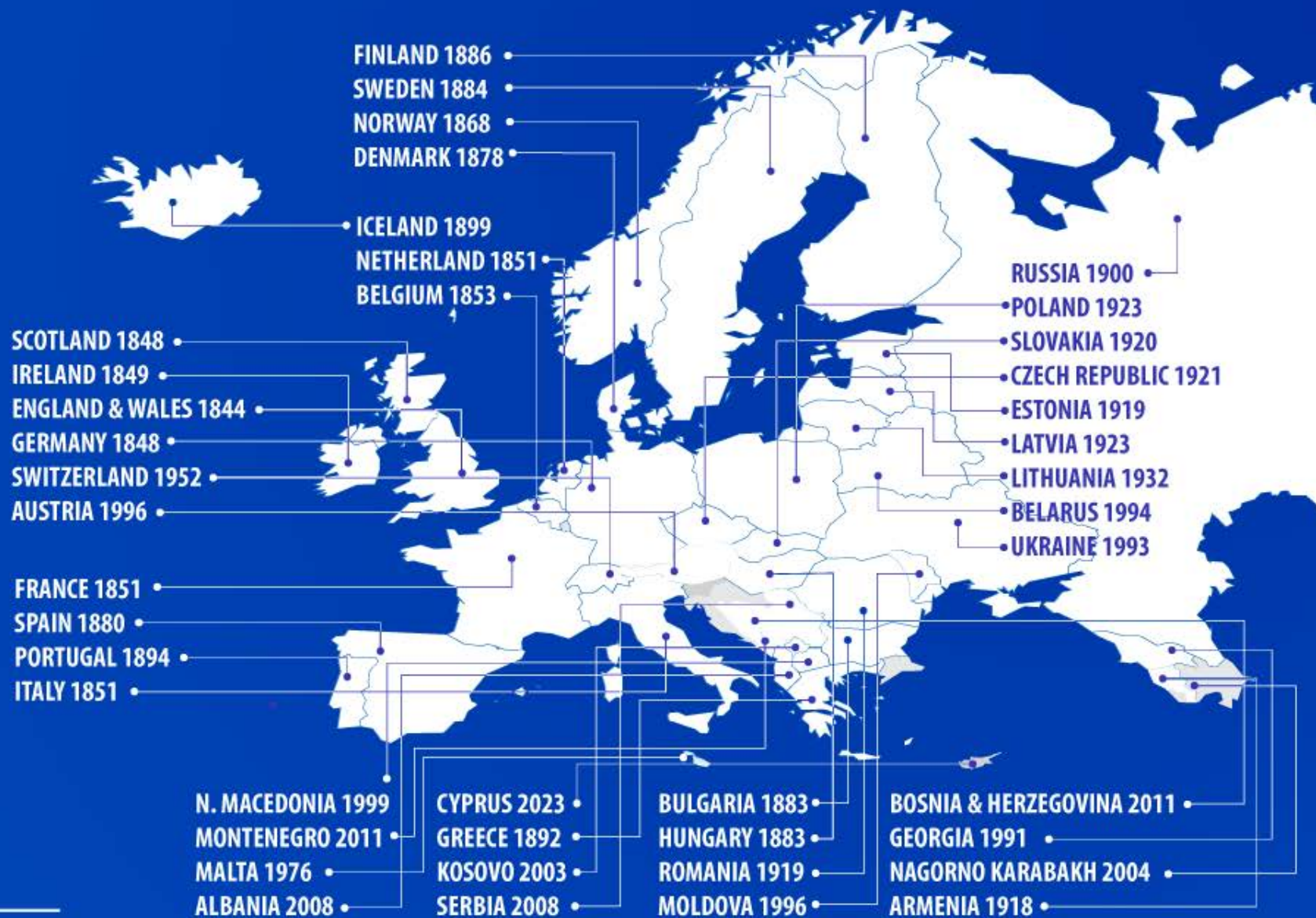
WHERE WE ARE

We are an umbrella organisation that serves 36 national YMCAs throughout Europe.

Collectively there are more than 3,200 local YMCAs, involving approximately 9,000 members of staff, more than 95,000 volunteers and impacting over 2,000,000 beneficiaries.



Our Presence



YMCA's & Estimated Starting Year

*some groups started before 1844 and later changed to YMCA

WHAT WE DO

Our central mission revolves around fostering the development and enhancing the collaborative spirit of YMCAs across the region, embodying a collective commitment to positive impact and community empowerment.



2023 Highlights

DIGITAL

More than 250 Educational Digital centres established in Moldova, in partnership with HP



JANUARY

CONFERENCE

European Refugees Conference in Gdynia, Poland



FEBRUARY

HUBS

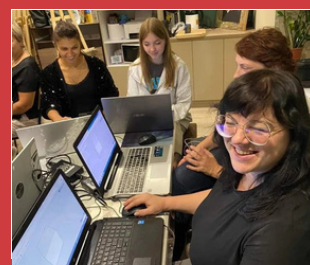
Seven Digital Community Hubs established in the West Balkans, powered by HP



MARCH

SKILLING

"Refugee Skilling and Support Project", granted by Accenture - extended 1 more year



APRIL

NETWORK

The Movement Strengthening Team is establishing YMCA Cyprus



MAY

ADVOCACY

"Know Your Say" training session in Berlin



JUNE

ANNIVERSARY

Y2Gether, our 50th YMCA Europe Anniversary, in Berlin



JULY

CAMPS

Camp Europe pilot initiative



AUGUST

PEACE

Peace Work Institute Reunion, in Palestine



SEPTEMBER

FORUM

11th NGS Forum in Den Dolder, Netherlands



OCTOBER

ACADEMY

YMCA Leadership Academy Session in Georgia



NOVEMBER

FIELD VISITS

Visiting the YMCA Centre and eDU Hubs in Ukraine



DECEMBER



Our Impact



36

National YMCAs



3,150

Local YMCA branches



95K

Volunteers



1,220

YMCA Centres



2M

Beneficiaries



8,200

Projects



74

Camps



782

Employment Projects



350K

Refugees & migrants supported



8,4K

Activities for Ukrainian communities, refugees & IDPs



350

Digital Hubs



300K

Beneficiaries on digital initiatives

 1,1M

Accenture grant on skilling & employability through eDU Hubs for the Ukrainian communities, refugees & IDPs

 5,9M

HP's grants in goods and cash to accelerate digital equity across Europe



LEARN MORE

Vision 2030



YMCA Europe Strategy Embracing Vision 2030

OUR VISION

As a working network to strengthen YMCAs in Europe, our Vision is a Europe where every person lives in harmony with self, with society and with creation.

OUR MISSION

Empowering young people and communities to build a just, sustainable and inclusive Europe, where every person can thrive in body, mind and spirit.

Our Strategy, embracing Vision 2030 is shaped to be responsive to the current context in Europe, reflective of our diversity and strengthening the capacity of the YMCA as a socially relevant organisation.



LEARN MORE



THEMATIC IMPACT PILLARS



COMMUNITY WELLBEING



MEANINGFUL WORK



SUSTAINABLE PLANET



JUST WORLD



Y2Gether

Our 50th anniversary event

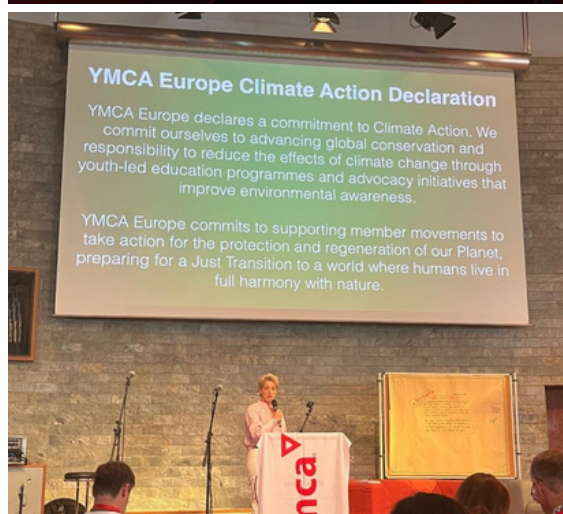
Explore. Connect. Unite. At #Y2Gether, our 50th anniversary event in Berlin gathered 360 YMCA participants through our shared history, and heritage - fostering connections, new plans and approaches for a more united movement, in close unity and alignment with YMCA Vision 2030 Global Strategy.

Hosted by CVJM (YMCA Germany) the event was held at the Schoeneberg Centre. The programme included workshops, panel sessions, keynote presentations, live performances, and the celebration of our heritage and contribution to movement development and youth empowerment.

The core concept was designed around the 4 pillars of Vision 2030, each day bringing forth events that connected or were centred around - Sustainable Planet, Community Wellbeing, Meaningful Work, and Just World.



LEARN MORE



OUR ACTIVITIES

We work all around Europe serving young people, often from undeserved backgrounds, like homeless, refugees and displaced youths. We provide activities like sports, arts, scouting, digital, skilling, employability, environmental and peace building, empowering young people to become independent, caring and inclusive.



Ukraine

With the outstanding support of our donors and partners, we have touched the lives of over 360,000 individuals, offering vital assistance to 21 local YMCAs in Ukraine and five neighbouring countries.

Together we care

In the wake of the Ukraine war in February 2022, YMCA swiftly called for solidarity, sparking a collective fundraising effort that has now exceeded 1.7 million euros.

This significant sum, with 1 million euros dedicated to immediate humanitarian aid and the integration of Ukrainian refugees across Europe, underscores our commitment to impactful assistance.

Our strategy goes beyond immediate relief, emphasising medium to long-term aid.

Collaborating with internal and external partners, we're providing essential services such as social integration support,

language assistance, legal aid, and skill-building programmes for Ukrainian displaced persons.

Beyond these figures, we have secured substantial support, including over 1.1 million euros in cash grants from external partnerships and more than 7.5 million euros in grants in kind and products.

Drawing on our extensive experience in peace-building and movement strengthening, YMCA Europe has demonstrated remarkable agility, ensuring a prompt and effective response to meet the evolving needs of young people and their communities.



Our approach: Projects with and for Ukraine

The YMCA remains committed to Ukrainian communities inside Ukraine and across the Continent. Full Database available [here](#).

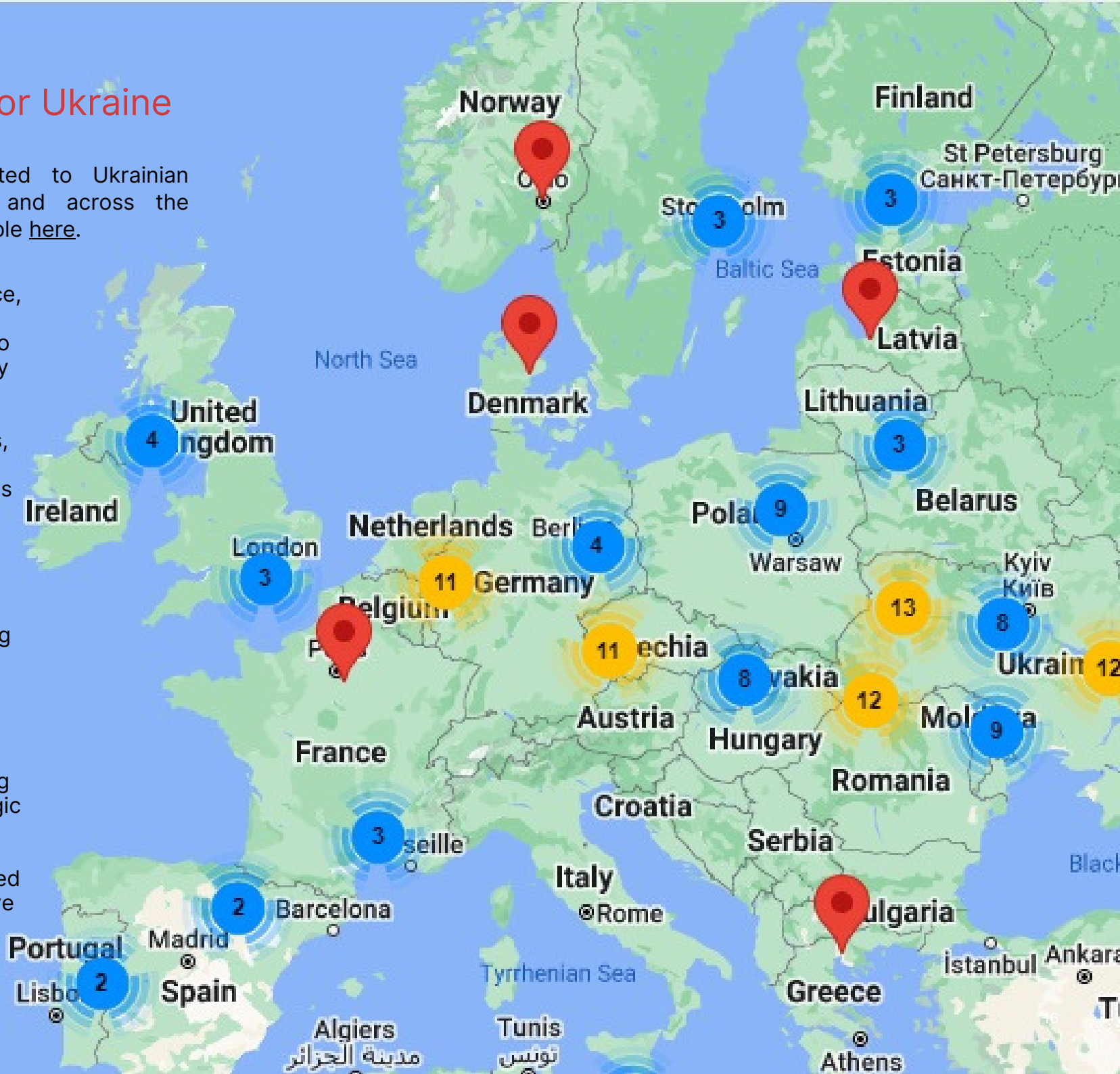
Through psychosocial assistance, integration services, and advocacy initiatives, we strive to address the challenges faced by civil society in impacted areas.

Collaborating with governments, NGOs, and educational institutions, we support refugees in acquiring skills and building networks.

As part of ongoing collective fundraising, YMCAs implement projects across Europe, focusing on both short and long-term solutions.

We are currently engaged in providing support to YMCA Ukraine as they work on shaping and implementing a new strategic plan.

This collaborative effort is geared towards enhancing our collective influence and effectiveness in addressing the evolving needs and challenges in the region.



Capacity building

In 2023, we managed to train, empower and support young people across the continent preparing them to take an active role in their development and communities.

We impacted the lives of over 445,000 beneficiaries through transformative international activities.

Over the year, young people and youth workers led and participated in 6 events and conferences, 11 training programmes, 20 camp projects and many online events.

In addition to those activities, young people took part in over 19 coordination meetings of various European networks and working groups as well as in 18 governance and management meetings of the organisation.

Moreover, over 150,000 young refugees and internally displaced persons gained access to support and training opportunities as part of various initiatives supported by YMCA Europe following our commitment to help those affected by the war in Ukraine.

The number of indirect beneficiaries over the year is over 1,000,000 people.



Movement Strengthening

Movement Strengthening is a key Strategic Priority of YMCA Europe. It's a process of assisting National YMCAs in understanding and achieving desired changes in prioritised spheres of their work for the benefit of the target groups through self-analysis, empowerment of people and external expertise.

The Movement Strengthening Committee

meeting took place at the end of September in Portugal. Terms of Reference and Movement Strengthening Strategy were reviewed and updated, as well as the toolbox was analysed and updated. Other bi-monthly meetings of the Committee were run online.

Y Consultants tool is under the process of revision. To inform this process, an in-depth study was conducted, focusing on the experience of the Scout Movement. The study included a visit to their headquarter`s where we examined this best practice, along with exploring other approaches aimed at strengthening movements.

The **Health Assessment** has been completed. 15 National Movements participated, they received feedback and invitations for further consultations.

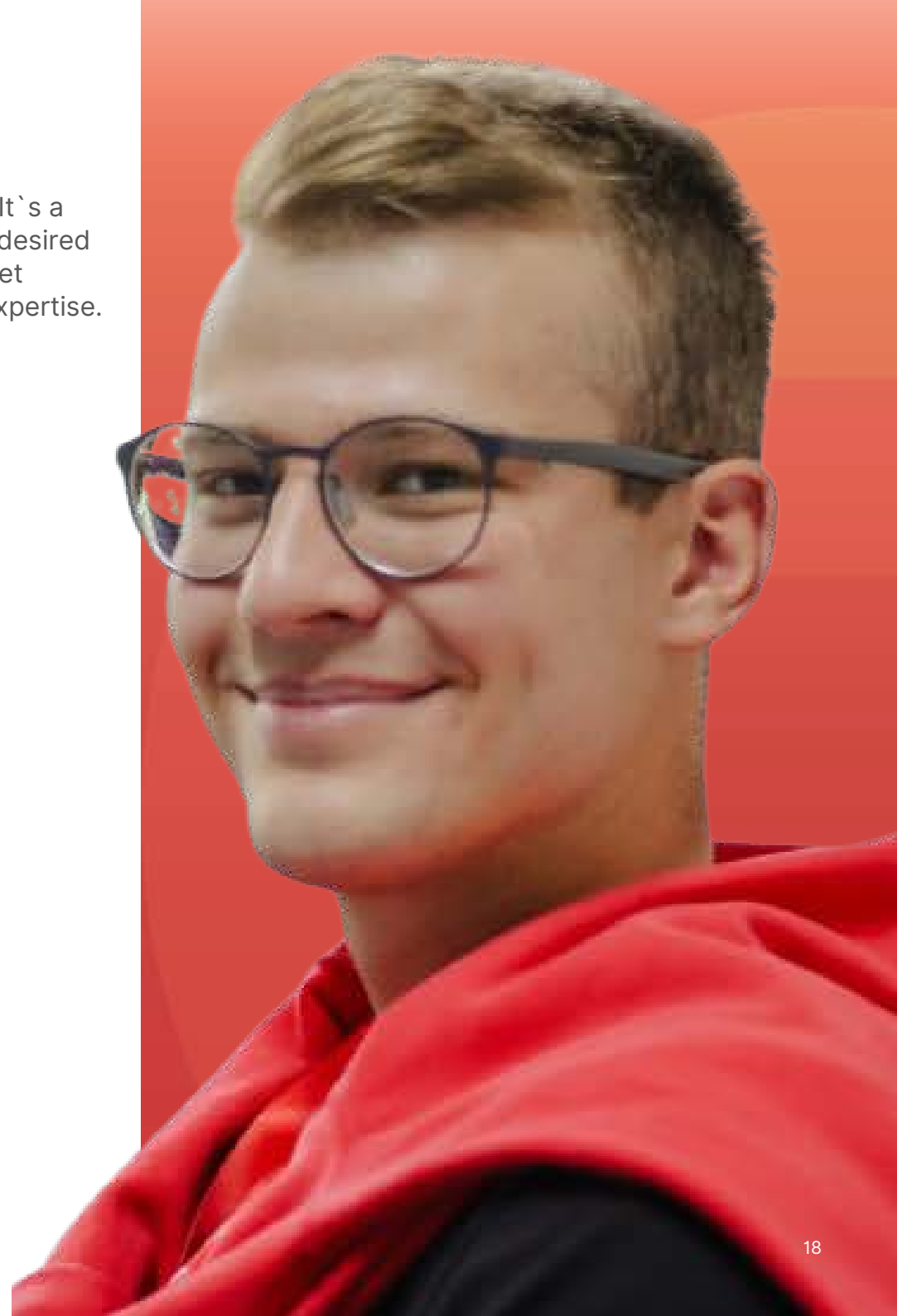
Membership Standards and Health Assessment

are reviewed by the International team, the work is facilitated by World YMCA. Four meetings took place in summer and autumn to work on the documents. YMCA Europe's Movement Strengthening Committee supports the idea of a joint approach and tools.

Field Groups of YMCAs Belarus and Ukraine met online every quarter. YMCA Europe participates in the SYRUS group (Support YMCA Russia) and facilitated the creation of the YMCA France Partners group.

Development of **new YMCAs** in Cyprus, Belgium and Poland are in progress. A Steering Committee for YMCA Cyprus has been established and the process of registration has commenced.

» [LEARN MORE](#)



YMCA Executive Professional Master: Management of Civil Society Organisations

As we continue to implement our strategy for strengthening the YMCA movement across Europe, we are committed to providing valuable learning and networking opportunities for volunteers and staff.

26 dedicated students representing diverse national and local YMCAs have successfully completed this rigorous master's program, a collaboration with ISCTE Executive Education in Lisbon, Portugal.

Over the past year, students were engaged in a programme of in-person and online learning sessions which provided the tools for effective management and leadership.

We extend our appreciation to all participants and the management team at ISCTE Executive Education in Lisbon for facilitating this prestigious educational experience, officially recognised by the Bologna process, culminating in the awarding of diplomas in social organisation management.



11th National General Secretaries Forum (NGS Forum)

The 11th NGS Forum in Den Dolder, hosted by YMCA Netherland from October 22-25, served as a profound experience, fostering connections among Secretary Generals and deepening our commitment to YMCA Vision 2030.

The forum's overarching theme celebrated our diversity, resilience, and reinforced our understanding of supporting YMCAs in conflict areas or those affected by ongoing wars. Solidarity resonated as we stood with families and communities affected by war, collectively shaping a framework aligned with the pillars of our joint YMCA Vision 2030.

Engaging with 25 National General Secretaries, connecting with YMCA Nederland's board, and commemorating 170 years of empowering youth and supporting communities in the Netherlands were highlights.

The forum, marked by insightful speeches, collective resolutions, and updates, included discussions on the pillars of YMCA Vision 2030, emphasizing unity, compassion, and fellowship.

This gathering exemplified the YMCA's commitment to unity, mission, and vision, showcasing our dedication to supporting communities and fostering collective strength.



YMCA Work with Refugees Conference

The event gathered in Gdynia, Poland, between February 9 to 12, representatives from YMCAs in 19 countries showcasing a powerful sign of solidarity in their collective efforts.

This conference focused on addressing the challenges faced by refugees and the hosting communities in Europe, highlighting the diverse initiatives, actions, events, and programmes developed by European YMCAs to support individuals displaced from their homes.

The participants, deeply engaged in refugee-related work, shared their practical experiences and solutions, covering areas such as housing, employment, childcare, education, community relationships, and mental health.

The event not only showcased successful stories but also acknowledged challenges and failures, emphasizing the importance of real-life experiences in shaping effective methods.

The conference provided a platform for fostering cooperation between YMCAs from different regions, paving the way for collaborative projects aimed at supporting refugees.



Launching the Future of Digital Youthwork in Brussels

The unveiling of the "European Digital Youth Work Toolkit: A Comprehensive Guide for Youth Workers and Educators" in Brussels was a pivotal moment for the "AlwaysON for Youth" Erasmus+ project.

This occasion served as a platform for the consortium to present critical findings, intellectual outputs, the MOOC course, and the gamification pack to professionals in youth work, advocacy, policy, and digital expertise from across Europe. Distinguished representatives from organisations such as the European Commission, European Parliament, and European Youth Forum actively participated, providing invaluable insights and feedback.

Dr. Howard Williamson (UK), a keynote speaker with extensive experience in youth work, contributed significantly to the event, delving into the opportunities and challenges posed by digital youth work.

The ensuing panel presentation and Q&A session, featuring experts from diverse fields, further enriched the discussion on digitalisation, inclusion, safety, and well-being.

The positive reception of the MOOC course and gamification packs underscored their relevance and practicality in real-world scenarios.



LEARN MORE

OUR PROGRAMMES

YMCA Europe's diverse range of programmes is designed to empower and uplift communities across the continent. With a focus on fostering positive youth development, we offer a spectrum of initiatives spanning from digital skilling, arts, and sports to environmental and peace-building activities. Our programmes are not just about providing essential skills but also creating inclusive spaces for personal growth, fostering resilience, and nurturing a sense of community.

From supporting refugees and marginalised youth to promoting intercultural dialogue, our programmes aim to address societal challenges and contribute to the holistic development of individuals. Rooted in a rich history of over 180 years, YMCA Europe continues to evolve, innovate, and adapt its programmes to meet the dynamic needs of young people and communities, working towards a more equitable and empowered future.



Digital Educational Centres in the Republic of Moldova

"Digital Education Centres in the Republic of Moldova," is a project implemented by YMCA, powered by HP Inc, with the purpose to accelerate digital equity among young people, refugees, and marginalised communities.

The centres are fulfilling a crucial need in Moldova by expanding on YMCA educational programmes and institutions, including schools, youth clubs, and refugee establishments.

This initiative benefits over 250,000 individuals, encompassing young people, Ukrainian refugees, and individuals from marginalised communities.

Through a generous donation from HP Inc, over 5,300 brand new devices were distributed by the YMCA in a major program focusing on accelerating digital equity among young people and marginalised communities and the promotion of novel technology for skills building and education.

Upon receiving the generous donation, YMCA was determined to make a meaningful impact on the lives of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova. At the time, 137 institutions in Moldova catered to Ukrainian refugee beneficiaries, including schools, high schools, and universities where Ukrainian students were/are registered.

YMCA also equipped institutions that Ukrainian refugees frequented including libraries, youth centres, houses of culture, schools, high schools, gymnasiums, colleges, and universities. By doing so, the organisation ensured that the laptops would continue to benefit the refugee population, even in dispersed living arrangements.

This outcome is in line with HP's goal to accelerate digital equity among 150 million people globally.

Part of the success of the initiative in Moldova is represented by the active partnership and collaboration of the team with the local authorities, municipalities and county local governments.

These outreach and digitalisation initiatives become a key pillar in our youth empowerment. Initiatives impossible to bring to life if it wasn't for the support of HP and the endless efforts of the team of young leaders of YMCA Moldova managing and carrying out the project implementation – and for this, we are forever grateful!

Community Wellbeing



» LEARN MORE

Digital Community Centres in the West Balkans

In collaboration with HP, the YMCA initiative in the West Balkans is bringing the digital education wave closer than ever before. With an extensive amount of digital skilling, training sessions and courses running locally in four YMCA organisation in the region.

Through the creation of Digital Community Hubs in Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, and North Macedonia, the project aims to promote digital equity and increase our outreach to vulnerable communities, minority groups, and marginalised families.

Additionally, the digital community hubs are a valuable resource for those residing in remote areas or on the outskirts of cities, who may have limited access to essential medical, psycho-social, and academic resources.

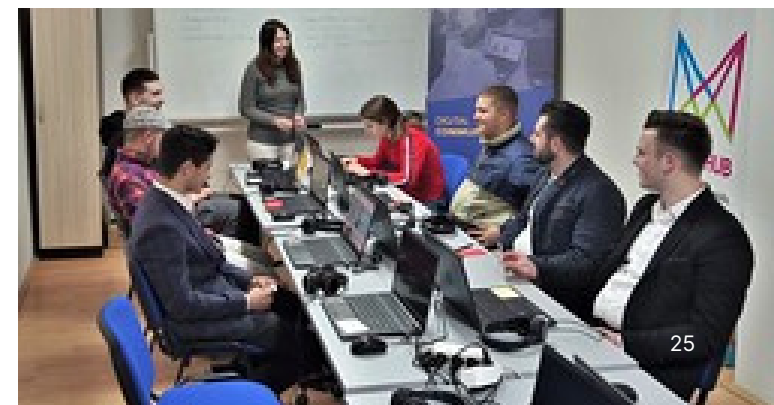
Among the main beneficiaries are young people, teachers, and youth workers from all walks of life, the teams are expanding their services every week strategising towards reaching out to young people from vulnerable backgrounds.

Each country involved in the project has distinct objectives.

For example, YMCA Kosovo seeks to boost its digital presence and engage youth in courses that enhance their CVs. Serbia prioritises daily accessibility of the Digital Hub to achieve digital equity. North Macedonia focuses on initiating a longer-term, locally rooted program. In Albania, the plan is to provide convenient access to the Digital Hub for schools and various categories of people in Tirana and Berat.

The YMCA's mission is to ensure that nobody is left behind when it comes to digitalisation, getting closer to a more digitally equitable society, and upskilling and preparing communities for a digitalised world.

Community Wellbeing



» [LEARN MORE](#)

Refugee Skilling and Support

This project, supported by Accenture, aims to address an immediate and clear need within the communities affected by the war in Ukraine.

The Project leverages YMCA's existing and significant pan-European presence to establish community hubs (fixed and mobile) in Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia and Moldova.

These hubs play a crucial role in facilitating skills development, connecting individuals to employment opportunities, and providing other wrap-around services.

Since October 2022, YMCA Hubs are helping over 30,000 Ukrainians beneficiaries connect with local communities and resources, including access to safe and secure skills development and support services.

On the European Year of Skills portal, the collaboration between civil society organisations and businesses stands out as a beacon for skill development. The "Refugee Skilling and Support Project" is showcased as a prime example within this initiative.

Key Features:

Tailored Skill Development: Recognising the importance of customised approaches, the project focuses on identifying specific skills needed in the local job market, ensuring refugees, IDPs, and community members receive targeted training for successful integration.

Strategic Collaboration: By aligning the efforts of civil society and businesses, the initiative promotes synergies, creating a more effective and sustainable model for skill development and employability.

Digital Literacy Integration: Understanding the contemporary demands of the job market, the project emphasises digital literacy, providing participants with comprehensive skill sets for today's workforce.

Meaningful Work



LEARN MORE



Planetary Health

YMCA Europe is committed to sustainable practices and has implemented various programmes that contribute to a healthier planet.

Through workshops, educational campaigns, and community engagement, YMCA Europe encourages individuals to adopt eco-friendly habits and reduce their ecological footprint.

To kick-off our work on sustainability this year, YMCA held a Conference on Planetary Health on 27 January. The event was initiated and moderated by two young YMCA volunteers from Switzerland, Jonas Baur and Lukas Reinhard, together with Richard Schweizer, member of the YMCA Europe Executive Committee.

Representatives from International and European YMCAs came together to learn and talk about this concept and its implementation in our movement.

Prof. Christian Abshagen, researcher at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland and head of the Certificate of Advanced Studies on Health and Environment presented the concept and its relevance to our movements and decision-makers.

The conference was an important first step into a more in-depth work on specific and current issues related to our Vision 2030 Pillars Sustainable Planet and Community Wellbeing, and builds a framework to move towards concrete actions in our own networks and advocacy to impact young people's futures.

»» [LEARN MORE](#)



Roots for Peace

YMCA Europe Roots for Peace Project stayed true to its pan-European dimension in 2023: from Netherlands to Armenia, Scotland to Georgia - hundreds of young people from all backgrounds were united for one cause: notwithstanding all the challenges promoting peace and coexistence on our continent.

Peace Work Institute

YMCA Europe Roots for Peace continued engaging the community of experts and Peace Work Institute alumni through a reunion on September 13 -19 in Bethlehem, with the aim of analysing the context of the YMCA peacework, going through force majors and challenges faced. The findings and recommendations from the analysis secured the Roots for Peace project continuation for the coming years.

Do No Harm Methodology

In Berlin, Roots team conducted an in-house Do No Harm workshop for Bread for the World staff on July 3-4.

The workshop showcased the application of the Do No Harm approach, with the Roots for Peace project being exemplar. The collaborative learning initiative empowered further action for peace and justice, facilitating knowledge sharing between YMCA Europe and Bread for the World, a key founding partner.

“Give Peace a Chance” Study Session

Implemented in cooperation with the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg on October 15 – 21. 31 YMCA and non-YMCA participants from 16 European countries had the opportunity to come together in a safe space and an environment full of experiential learning, best practice sharing, peer to peer networking and fun.

Camp Europe Initiative

Camp Europe pilot initiative, played a pivotal role in supporting hundreds of beneficiaries across Europe.

Involving 16 YMCA projects, this initiative primarily catered to Ukrainian children and young people who were either temporarily displaced or still residing in their places of origin, navigating through challenging circumstances.

The success of the pilot phase served as a foundation for the establishment of a new YMCA Europe signature long-term program (Camp Europe), with secured co-funding from Brot für die Welt Germany.

» [LEARN MORE](#)

Just World



The project aim is to offer educational scholarship opportunities to socially deprived students and to provide them access to extracurricular activities hosted by YMCA Resource Centres (camps) with thanks to YMCA Europe Roots for Peace project for establishing.

The Generation Next project, through YMCA Scholarships supported the academic education of 26 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Georgia, empowering them to become opinion leaders in social change.

All of them interned for YMCA service delivery either at Camp Orange in Georgia or through the Rootsmade online platform in Armenia. However, this internship component was just one aspect of the project. Additionally, we provided summer schools and ad hoc support measures as part of our response to the Artsakh Exodus.

Furthermore, we established strong partnerships with academic institutions, such as the American University of Armenia and the Sports Academy in Georgia.

The project Evaluation Workshop

The project Evaluation Workshop held on November 23 – 26 in Yerevan highly assessed the outcomes of the current phase, with the continuation conceptualised and funding secured for another period of 3-4 years.

Life-changing educational opportunities

Generation Next continued providing life-changing educational opportunities for young people in Armenia and Georgia: allocating scholarships and extra-curricular skills to selected students in exchange for contribution into YMCA work and community development.



» [LEARN MORE](#)

YMCA Leadership Academy

“Youth Impacts: Taking Action for Inclusive Communities and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Working with Refugees.”

The YMCA Europe Leadership Academy project, "Youth Impacts" co-funded by the European Youth Foundation, aimed to promote inclusiveness, peace, justice, and diversity in local communities by enhancing the impact of refugee services and governance processes in youth CSOs.

29 young leaders hailing from 17 countries have successfully completed their training, marking a significant milestone in our mission. Through their dedication and initiative, a total of 17 impactful projects have been launched, each contributing to the transformation of local communities.

These projects extend a helping hand to a wide array of vulnerable groups, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants, asylum seekers, individuals experiencing homelessness, NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth, as well as religious and ethnic minorities. By addressing diverse needs and challenges, these initiatives have touched the lives of approximately 727 individuals directly.

Moreover, the ripple effect of these efforts has reached far beyond, positively impacting an additional 13,850 individuals indirectly. This demonstrates the profound ripple effect that grassroots initiatives can have in fostering positive change and inclusivity within society.



» LEARN MORE



Youth Unify

The sixth YMCA Youth Unify camp, held near Budapest in August, brought together 62 participants from eight different nations, fostering a vibrant and diverse atmosphere.

The camp, organised and led by a dedicated team of young leaders, served as a unique space for young people to explore their Christian faith within the context of their local and national YMCAs.

The positive feedback received by the planning team, along with the evident engagement of young participants with their faith, showcased the camp's success in motivating attendees to share their experiences and plan future projects. [Learn more](#)

#AlwaysON for Youth

In 2022 YMCA Europe coordinated and published research about the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for young people and youth workers on matters related to digital

inclusion, safety and well-being. This was made possible within the “AlwaysON for Youth”, Erasmus+ project. During the process, 447 young people and youth workers from the European Union shared their insights and modelled the findings. The research results contributed to amending national pieces of legislation and influencing theme-related papers.

In 2023, the consortium finalised the work on the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and the gamification pack. The MOOC course aims to enhance digital skills and competencies for youth workers, while the gamification pack seeks to engage young people in activities related to digital safety and well-being. [Learn more](#)

ESG Leadership Training and Seminar 2023

The ESG (European YMCA Scouting and Jungschar Group) Leadership Training and Seminar 2023 took place in August in Hungary, where scouting leaders and enthusiasts gathered for a spectacular event. Participants from various parts of the movement spent a fabulous time reconnecting, staying updated on the latest

scouting technology, exploring the outdoors, attending seminars and sessions, and preparing for the upcoming international mobility sessions.



Versatile Action in Youth Work Sport Seminar by ESY

It's inspiring to witness the collaboration of young people through the ESY - European Sport YMCA initiative.

Participants from YMCAs of Siderno (Italy), Ukraine, Finland, North Macedonia, Sweden and Denmark, are actively engaging in a long-term, multi-staged project focused on Youth Leader's education and training.

This initiative aims to support local youth communities in embracing sports practice, fostering active and responsible lifestyles, and promoting inclusion for all. The first phase of the seminar was held July 2nd – July 8th in Denmark.



THEMATIC IMPACT PILLARS



Advocacy

YMCA Europe is committed to developing and promoting young voices speaking on issues identified by them as most pressing and important.



During 2023, we continued to establish the **European Youth Representatives Network (EYRN)** which is a cohort of talented, passionate, and insightful young individuals from all around Europe.

The Youth Representatives aim to work on joint approaches for youth participation and policies engaging with the pillars of Vision 2030.

Know your Say

In order to further develop the skills of EYRN young representatives and strengthen the connection between them YMCA Europe hosted a training session “Know Your Say” held from June 27 to July 2 for 32 youth representatives.

This training was the first meet-up of the group and was the official kick-off of the network! The training focused on helping the group acquire new key knowledge of democracies, activism, and practical skills for effective engagement. Real-life insights were gained through meetings with German MP Stefan Gelbhaar, European Youth Foundation representatives, and Markus Schwertel, Head of Policy & Advocacy at HP.

Since then, the EYRN has engaged in various plenary meetings to coordinate the network as well as numerous pillar group meetings where they discussed and planned specific initiatives around Vision 2030. In 2024, another in-person meeting of the group is planned after securing another round of funding from the European Youth Foundation.

European Youth Forum

Delegates from the EYRN were present in the Council of Members and General Assembly of the European Youth Forum in May and November 2023.

As Co-Chairs of the Coordination Network on Youth, Peace, and Security, YMCA delegates took the lead, in strengthening the Youth Forum's work in peacebuilding and sharing YMCA's expertise in this area.

Funding Coordination Network and Erasmus+ Coalition

We had the opportunity to participate in various meetings with the Funding Coordination Network and Erasmus+ Coalition. The groups offer a space to network and connect with other civil society organisation and discuss common challenges and lobby for solutions that improve the way the European Union interacts with youth and education civil society organisations.

European Events

Furthermore we participated in various events at European level to discuss initiatives, share best practices, and express our YMCA perspective.

Staff members of YMCA Europe attended a stakeholder collaboration event hosted by European Parliament

engaging and partnering with civil society, especially youth civil society organisations, to encourage young voter turnout in the upcoming European Elections (June 2024). During the participatory event we were able to share YMCAs best practices around youth participation and engagement as well as cultivate partnerships with other stakeholders.

Union of International Associations

We had the privilege of hosting a workshop at the Union of International Associations (UIA) 17TH Round Table Europe Conference. The conference was attended a variety of organisations such as international associations, professional societies, interest groups and non-governmental organisations with a common interest: raising the profile of civil society as a way for positive social transformation. During this workshop, we had the opportunity to share with others best practices on how they can make their associations more youth friendly.

Council of Europe

Our staff represented the organisation at the Council of Europe's Consultative Meeting on Internet Governance. We were able to discuss and share our thoughts on shaping the future of the internet covering topics from digital rights to youth participation online to digital wellbeing. YMCA Europe advocates for policies that nurture a safe, free, and constructive online environment where the youth can thrive.

6th Education Summit

Our Secretary General, represented the organisation at the 6th Education Summit by the European Commission. The summit brought together over 500 policymakers, representatives from EU institutions, governments, stakeholders, and civil society organisations with the collective aim of understanding how stakeholders can continue to contribute to the realisation of the European Education Area.

Communications & Campaigns

We are committed to fostering meaningful connections and amplifying impactful campaigns across the continent. Through strategic communications, we strive to engage our diverse audience, including YMCA members, partners, and the wider community, in our mission of youth empowerment and community development.



Campaigns

Our campaigns are designed to raise awareness, inspire action, and promote positive change on issues ranging from youth empowerment and mental health advocacy to social justice and environmental sustainability.

With a focus on inclusivity and innovation, YMCA Europe's communications efforts aim to ignite conversations, spark collaboration, and drive tangible results that benefit individuals and communities across Europe.

Volunteer Day

On December 5th, which is recognised as International Volunteer Day, the YMCA took the chance to show gratitude to its committed volunteers.

On this significant day, YMCA Europe honours the remarkable contributions of nearly 200 volunteers representing 12 national YMCA Movements.

Their collective commitment has amounted to an incredible 34,777 hours of dedicated service.

Nominated by individuals within their own organisations, each volunteer received a personalised certificate of recognition.

STEAM Day

In 2023, YMCA Europe showcased its impactful digital initiatives during a live session on Facebook as part of STEAM Day.

This virtual event featured leaders discussing the transformative work in Kosovo, Serbia, Albania, North Macedonia, and Moldova, highlighting key topics such as digital access, school collaborations, and local partnerships with HP.

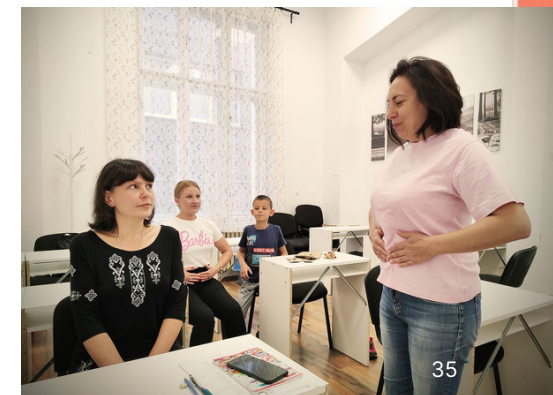
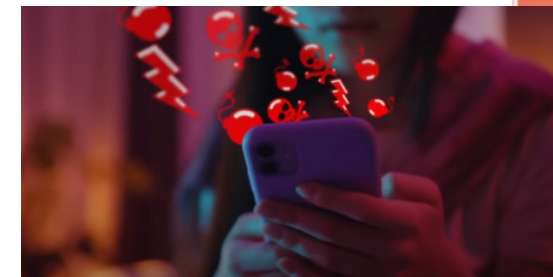
Representatives from World YMCA and HP joined the conversation, emphasising our commitment to digital equity, social justice, and inclusion.

No Hate Speech Campaign

In 2023, we joined YMCA Spain in promoting an impactful campaign against online hate speech.

Responding to a 250% increase in racial hate speech following George Floyd's tragic murder, the campaign highlighted a concerning trend across Europe.

Despite social media platforms' policies, hate speech persisted, emphasising the need for urgent action. Empowering young individuals, YMCA Spain's video encouraged everyone to use their power—a simple click—to combat online hate speech.



Online Presence



In 2023, YMCA Europe achieved remarkable progress in enhancing its online presence and communication strategies. With a deliberate focus on fostering organic growth through active engagement, the organisation achieved significant milestones across various digital platforms.

One notable achievement was the doubling of Facebook engagement, effectively reaching a staggering 679,694 people.

Additionally, video views experienced a remarkable surge, totaling 61,113 across the platform.

The YMCA Roots for Peace Project also demonstrated steady growth, engaging 7,362 individuals and accumulating 10,712 video views, showcasing the impact of our peace-building efforts.



679,694

People reached



853,073

Impressions

Furthermore, our Instagram audience experienced substantial growth, with the follower count reaching 3,371, accompanied by an impressive 853,073 impressions.

On our website, we welcomed 52,774 sessions and over 85,000 pageviews, indicating a strong online presence and engagement with our content.

Additionally, our newsletter achieved a commendable 33.9% open rate, indicating a high level of interest and engagement among our subscribers.

Our presence on other platforms including Flickr, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter also contributed significantly to our digital journey, further amplifying our reach and impact across diverse audiences.

These achievements underscore YMCA Europe's commitment to leveraging digital platforms effectively to connect with our audience, share our mission, and inspire positive change in communities across the continent.



180,521

Impressions



3 Million

Views

In a remarkable achievement for our digital outreach efforts, our Giphy GIFs garnered over 3 million views in 2023.

This milestone underscores the growing engagement and impact of our visual content in reaching diverse audiences across digital platforms.



Our Voices

Step into the world of impact with testimonials from individuals across Europe, reflecting the transformative power of YMCA initiatives. From Moldova to Georgia, Northern Ireland to Albania, and beyond, these stories illuminate the profound empowerment, resilience, and growth nurtured by our programmes.



Alejandra, Northern Ireland

Leadership Academy expanded my borders and opened my mind to a bigger and more diverse world. Connecting with people's stories allowed me to be more informed of different situations around Europe but also to remain sensitive to diversity. I am really grateful for having taken part in this amazing experience.



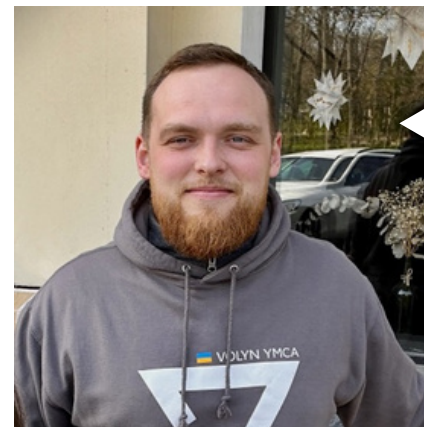
Klara, Albania

After completing the HP LIFE course last year, I'm excited to share how it transformed my confidence and skills. From marketing to finance and project management, the diverse topics enriched my knowledge. Most importantly, it empowered me to embrace the digital world, enhancing my job prospects and English proficiency.



Cornel, Moldova

I was thrilled and grateful for the donation from YMCA and HP. These computers offer superior functionality, making learning and working more efficient. They're a lifeline for many in Moldova, providing opportunities for personal growth and development in a country where resources are scarce. Thank you for empowering us.



Stas, Ukraine

The last year or two of my YMCA volunteer work in humanitarian aid revealed a brand new thing about life. When you don't stress too much, you get more strength to do your job. When you don't worry, you work well and you do it right. Whatever happens along the way, we have been doing the right thing. Don't give up and keep doing the right thing.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Berlin, 28.06.2023

GOVERNANCE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Berlin, 28.06.2023



Ordinary General Assembly

In 2023, our YMCA Europe movement celebrated the 50th Anniversary event, Y2Gether, in Berlin, Germany, which featured a pivotal moment during the General Assembly on June 28th.

At this historic gathering, the leadership of our movement received the 2022 reports, financial statements and officially adopted the impactful YMCA Vision 2030.

This very special occasion marked a significant step forward, demonstrating the alignment of YMCA Europe with the global vision.

Extraordinary General Assembly

Later in the year, on December 14th, we continued our governance requests by convening for an online Extraordinary General Assembly in which a new Nominations Committee was elected.

The entire YMCA Europe community came together with a focus on the 2023 achievements and the 2024 priorities.

Unanimously, the language encapsulating our ambitious vision in YMCA Vision 2030 was finalised, symbolising our collective commitment to shaping a positive and impactful future.

Executive Committee Members

President: Mrs. Emma Osmundsen, England & Wales
Vice President: Mrs. Jenni Enqvist, Finland
Treasurer: Mrs. Silvia Lazaridis, Germany
Recording Secretary: Ms. Diana Zarembiene, Lithuania
Mr. Eneko Lopez de Dicastillo, Spain
Ms. Janette Smit-van Kalker, the Netherlands (until December 2023)
Mr. Richard Schweizer, Switzerland
Ms. Marina Martynenko, Russia
Mr. Pascal Rosenthal, Germany

Secretary General (non-voting):
Mr. Juan Simoes Iglesias, Spain

Staff at 31 December 2023

Mr. Juan Simoes Iglesias, Spain
Secretary General

Mrs. Martina Hudcovska, Slovakia
Executive Secretary - Finance

Mr. Vardan Hambardzumyan, Armenia
Executive Secretary - Programmes

Ms. Olga Lukina, Belarus (Based in Brussels)
Executive Secretary - Movement
Strengthening

Mr. Marius Pop, Spain
Executive Secretary - Communications &
partnerships

Mrs. Sarka Cihakova, Czech Republic
Accountant

Mr. Andras Tomsa, Romania
Online Community Manager

Ms. Jessica Woitalla, USA (Based in Brussels)
Project Manager and Grant Proposal Writer

Mr. Revaz Shavladze, Georgia
Project Assistant

Ms. Hannah Sauer, Germany
Project Assistant - Youth & Advocacy

Past Presidents

Mr. Terry Ratcliffe, England
Mr. Jan Nissén, Sweden
Mr. Peter Posner, England
Mr. Ed Eggink, The Netherlands
Mr. Mike Will, Scotland

Past Secretary Generals

Mr. Egon Slopianka, Germany
Rev. Doelf Weder, Switzerland
Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, Norway

Ms. Lika Zakaryan, Armenia
Project Assistant

Ms. Robyn Chatterton, UK
Executive Assistant to the President &
Secretary General

Mr. Adam Rychlik, Poland
YMCA Europe mission in Poland

Ms. Samantha Christian Deo, Belgium
Intern

PROGRAMME GROUPS



Dedicated to fostering youth engagement and community empowerment, YMCA Europe boasts a diverse array of Programme & Working Groups, each tailored to address specific needs and interests.

From the **European Sports YMCA (ESY)**, offering dynamic camp programmes for non-formal youth engagement, to the **European Scouting and Jungschar Group (ESG)**, championing outdoor experiential education, our initiatives span a wide spectrum.

The **Working Group on Refugees** collaborates with national and local partners to provide vital support and resources for refugees and migrants, while the **European TenSing Group** and **Christian Orientation Group** offer unique platforms for artistic expression and spiritual exploration.

The **European Youth Representatives Network (EYRN)** drives advocacy efforts, ensuring youth voices are heard at policy level, fostering a sense of agency and leadership among young people.

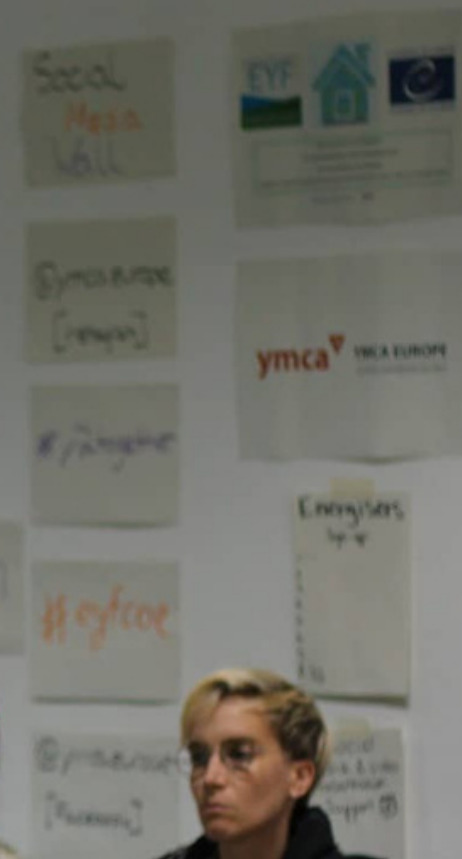
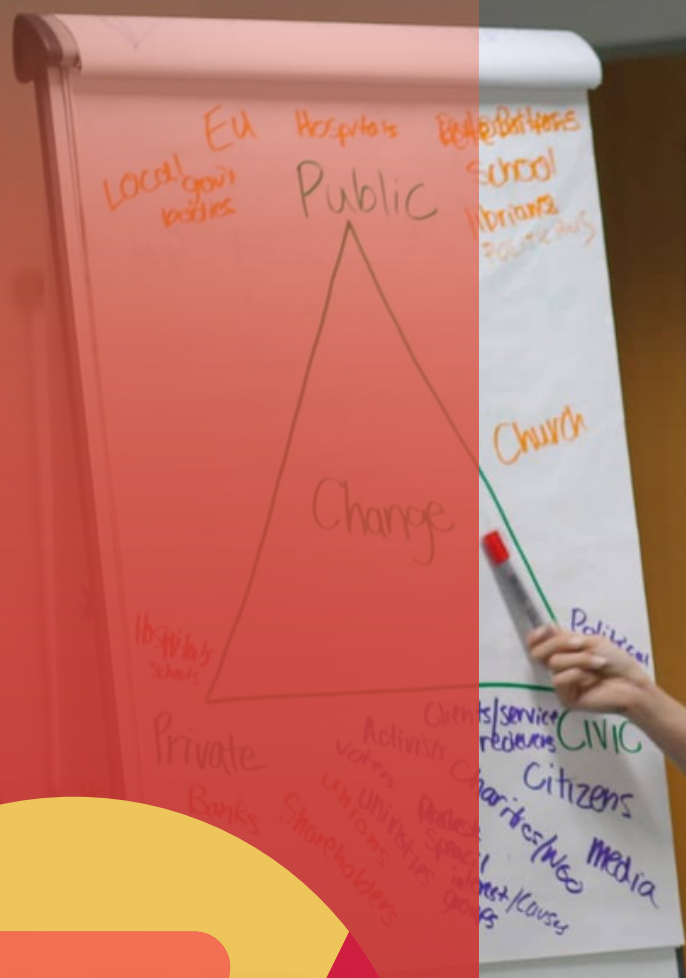
Furthermore, the YMCA Europe **Camping Program Group** orchestrates events to unite camping leaders from across the continent, reinforcing the importance of outdoor education and community building.

Together, the programme groups work tirelessly to update and expand databases, connecting YMCAs and partners across 28 countries, and amplifying the collective impact of our initiatives throughout Europe.





PARTNERSHIPS



Throughout 2023, we actively participated in a range of stakeholder meetings, which included topics of foresight to solving challenges, resourcing, and networking sessions at notable organisations.

We were present at the **International Civil Society Forum 2023: Shaping tomorrow's civil society landscape** through collaboration and anticipation. Our aim was to contribute to a meaningful discussion on shaping the trajectory of civil society in playing a key role to being a part of solutions to tomorrow's greatest challenges. The forum offered an opportunity to network and form new partnerships.

YMCA Europe also attended **ImpactFest 2023 and EVPA Business of Impact Conference**. Both events allowed us to discuss and learn from various stakeholders from different sectors on innovative funding and resource models that can be employed to address the challenges of tomorrow and help transform society.

We have cultivated impactful partnerships with key external stakeholders, fostering collaboration and shared objectives. Partnerships with global entities such as **Accenture** and **HP** showcase our commitment to leveraging technology and innovation for youth empowerment and digital equity. These collaborations go beyond traditional boundaries, creating opportunities for young people to access high-quality educational resources and digital skills training.

The engagement with the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** highlights our commitment to addressing global challenges, particularly those related to migration and displacement.

Collaborating with **Junior Achievement Europe** strengthens our focus on youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, providing young individuals with the tools and skills necessary for success in a rapidly evolving world.

WOSM (Scout Movement) is another strategic partner for the YMCA, and we jointly applied for an Erasmus project related to Impact Measurement Tools in social work, which has been approved already in 2022.

These diverse partnerships exemplify YMCA Europe's holistic approach to youth development, bringing together expertise and resources from various sectors to create a meaningful impact.

As a global movement, YMCA maintains a steadfast partnership with the **World YMCA**. We actively participated in the development of various global initiatives that have positively influenced social impact within the European region.

Our strategic trajectory and key pillars at YMCA Europe align harmoniously with the vision and strategy of the World YMCA.

This partnership is reflected in our representation across all forums and working spaces established by the World YMCA, encompassing the Global Staff Team, the Global Resource Mobilisation and Partnership Group, Global Communication and Advocacy Group, and other collective efforts.

YMCA of the USA holds a strategic and historical partnership with YMCA Europe, playing a pivotal role in extending and sustaining the European YMCA movement for over five decades. In 2023, we not only renewed but also expanded our collaborative efforts, particularly in response to the far-reaching impacts of the war in Ukraine.

Also, **YMCA Canada, Y's Men International**, and YMCAs affiliated with the Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, Latin American and Caribbean Alliance, and African Alliance have actively participated in our campaigns and programmes, contributing as stakeholders or involving participants in our collective initiatives.



FINANCIALS

Financials

Financials will follow after the Audit review of 2023 YMCA Europe`s accounts, May 2024.

YMCAs WORLDWIDE



For more information on national and local YMCAs, their programmes, status, history and memberships of different world, regional and national YMCA groupings, please consult our websites. YMCA is proud to serve young people and communities worldwide.

World YMCA in 2023

In 2023, the World YMCA continued its mission to empower young people and communities worldwide, focusing on building a just, sustainable, equitable, and inclusive world.

Through innovative Youth Led Solutions, the YMCA addressed key challenges in health, employment, environment, and community engagement and participation - guided by its four Pillars of Impact: Community Wellbeing, Meaningful Work, Sustainable Planet, Just World.

2023 was the year in which it brought about practical, Movement-wide alignment on work on the four Pillars of YMCA Vision 2030 and began to put in place the Movement Support functions to coordinate and strengthen that work.

Key highlights include:

Global Youth Mobilisation

The YMCA partners with the “Big Six” youth organisations to tackle global challenges aligned with the UN’s SDGs. Phase 1 of the Global Youth Mobilisation project engaged nearly 73,000 young people in 125+ countries, benefiting over 3.6 million community members. We are proud to say that the EU has announced its ongoing commitment, with an additional EUR 10 million funding for Phase 2.

HP partnership

YMCA, in partnership with HP Inc., continues to provide digital access and skills training to young people, primarily aged 15-26, in underserved communities. The programme reached more than 300,000

people in Moldova and across the Western Balkans. YMCA hubs in East Jerusalem, Scotland, Ethiopia, and Liberia also offered digital training courses, with three YMCAs selected as tech centres.

YMCA Australia & Deloitte Australia collaboration

YMCA Australia led the World YMCA’s Meaningful Work pillar team in collaboration with Deloitte Australia, conducting global youth research, which will result in the delivery of key reports on the state and opportunities with modern work for young people.

YMCA Europe and Accenture Development Partnership (ADP) collaboration

YMCA Hubs in Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, and Slovakia have been developed to address the need for digital competencies and employability skills, supported by the Accenture Foundation.

World Basketball Day

The United Nations General Assembly designated World Basketball Day on December 21st, acknowledging the sport’s origins at the YMCA. We’re proud of our history and the global sport which was founded by James Naismith

at a YMCA in Springfield, USA, with two peach nets and a soccer ball.

Global Change Agents

The 2023 YMCA Change Agent programme focused on empowering 115 young leaders from 56 countries, each with a unique mandate to create change in their local communities. Since 2014, 750 Change Agents have graduated, leading change in 67 countries worldwide.

COP28 Youth Delegates

In December, 16 YMCA youth delegates represented the organisation at COP28 in Dubai, with their focused advocacy goals on fossil fuels, just transition, and youth voice.

Strategic partnerships and collaborations

World YMCA worked with the Global Youth Mobilization, HP Inc., Accenture Development Partnership (ADP), World Health Organisation, United Nations Foundation, FIBA Foundation, Kofi Annan Foundation, and many others, aiming to empower young people through programmes, events, campaigns, workshops, and conferences.

Through all of these efforts, the World YMCA continued to make a positive impact, empowering young people to drive change and create a better world for all.



YMCA Europe

Rue de L`Industrie 10
1000, Brussels, Belgium
info@ymcaeurope.com
www.ymcaeurope.com



Co-funded by
the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.