



YMCA MIDDLE EAST
SOHEILA Y. HAYEK
YMCA Lebanon

BIOGRAPHY

Ms. Soheila Hayek has extensive experience with non-profit organizations, both as a volunteer and in management, including World YMCA (4 years), YMCA Lebanon (10 years), Director of The Goguikian Foundation, an NGO engaged in Youth Empowerment (12 years), and others. She has well-rounded competencies in Policymaking, Strategic Planning, Governance, Advocacy, Budgeting, Financial Management and Fundraising.

Soheila is confident that her years of leadership in senior management inspiring teams of volunteers as well as paid staff to achieve their very best, her ease with public speaking, advocacy and relationship-building, give her the confidence that she would be well suited to exercise the duties of President.

Motivation

Our world is changing rapidly. New parameters are emerging, which today's youth understand intuitively. They are best placed to build a better future and will be the ones who will live in it. Empowering them and providing them with all the needed physical, mental, ethical, scientific, social, and leadership-related means is a pressing necessity. I have made that my career priority; and I believe that World YMCA can play a leading role in this regard.

Though officially a citizen of four countries, I see myself as a citizen of the world. I am conversant with nine languages and familiar with more cultures. I have lived and worked in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. This experience has taught me that, no matter our differences, we all face the same challenges and harbor the same hopes and aspirations, the same reasons that WE ALL BE ONE.

As a member of the Executive Committee for the last four years, I have witnessed this unity-of-purpose in action and gained valuable exposure to YMCAs work across the globe. I have been honored to serve on the Solidarity Fund Committee, responding to the most urgent needs of YMCAs affected by COVID and evaluating projects from their young members using the WHO's GYM fund. I was touched by how sincere and achievable these plans were and appreciated how vital it is to have access to funding.

At the YMCA of Lebanon, where I have now served on the Board for over ten years, including currently as Vice President of the Board, we manage projects worth around US\$10 million and have a staff of 45. We no longer have gyms and swimming pools.

Instead, in response to the needs of our community, we deliver essential medications through more than 450 dispensaries to six million Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees. We provide financial literacy, vocational training, and peacebuilding classes, and we work with microfinance providers to obtain funding for the creative ideas of young entrepreneurs. I am most proud of having convinced our organization to make it mandatory to elect at least one young person to the Board.

For twelve years, I led The Goguikian Foundation, an NGO with ten staff members, focused on Youth Empowerment. I worked hard to provide young people from underprivileged communities with education, growth, and leadership opportunities. Through a TED Talk-like initiative, I put young innovators together with investors. I implemented a municipal youth-led recycling program and helped place many of our scholarship recipients in government jobs and community-serving NGOs. In prior years, I led fundraising efforts for Fundo Unido (Mexico's United Way affiliate), for the Chilterns Women's Club in the UK, and for my local church (St. Patrick's, in Chatham, NJ).

I graduated in Industrial Psychology from the University of Houston and have a Master's degree in Conference Management from the University of Westminster. My years in leadership positions have made me appreciate the dynamics of working in a volunteer environment and given me well-rounded competencies in policymaking, strategic planning, budgeting, and financial management. I aim to strive for greater collaboration among our member YMCAs and will give my full support to the Secretary-General to enhance our brand and our ability to fundraise.

I am a grandmother, a sailor, a swimmer, and a gardener. I love nature and want to safeguard the world I will be leaving behind for my grandchildren. I am a deeply spiritual woman who believes in the power and wisdom of God, and I trust that all my life's journey has prepared me to arrive at this point today, to run for the position of President.

