

## Greetings

### YMCA family and friends

Those of us at the Africa YMCA Partnership Summit and Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) were fascinated by the performance of the YMCA Tema Acapela group. This team of five young people harmonise beautifully. Their talent was put to use to illustrate the alignment process of Africa Alliance and its members – they each sang a different song individually and the sounds were powerful, but then they sang these different songs together with disastrous results.

Are we jazzing together? Are we “synching” (for synchronizing) or sinking? These are some of the questions raised and addressed at the Partnership Summit. This Summit provided the opportunity to harmonise our shared vision and related imperatives with our partners. As a group of people committed to the same vision we have identified areas where we will “jazz together”. These are development of human resources, management, board effectiveness membership development, leadership, communications (internal and external), resource mobilisation and partnership relations.

Principles and key objectives related to each of these areas were discussed and agreed upon. In general it was accepted that the key function of partnership relations is to strengthen the YMCA at all levels. Furthermore, it was accepted that partnership relations should:

- have a clear purpose and negotiated agreement with shared objectives;
- be focused on mutual learning and commit time and effort to intercultural learning and understanding;
- aspire to a mature relationship – dynamic, growth focused, changing as needed; and
- actively involve young people in partnership processes and activities.

At the end of the Summit and the OGM the overall feeling was that we were equipped for some great institutional Acapela music. As much work needs to be done to be better synchronized, specific milestones were fixed. This issue of *Siyahamba* relates the stories and outcomes of the meeting, reflecting another important step of our “marching” together.

Thanks to all... *Siyahamba!*

**Carlos Sanvee**  
General Secretary

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# Renewed partnership for the *African Renaissance*

*Held from 4-6 May, the Partnership Summit drew together 120 participants, with a focus on renewing and strengthening relationships between Africa and international partners to ensure the vision and mission of African YMCAs is deepened and enhanced. Participants gathered to share their experiences and good practices and define guiding principles for future collaboration. Topics involved programme development and effectiveness, leadership, human resources, governance, communications, membership development and resource mobilisation.*



## International Perspective

Simon Pluess, Executive Secretary, World Alliance of YMCAs

Bringing some of the most important African YMCA leaders and international partners together in one place, is like a long-awaited dream come true!

### How it all began

The experience of the last couple of years, in particular the multilateral partner groups for movement strengthening in Africa, encouraged both the African YMCAs and international partners to engage in a process aimed at finding ways to enhance mutual cooperation and learning at all levels. Also, African YMCAs, under the leadership of the African Alliance of YMCAs, have committed to a shared vision and strategy, built on a common core identity. This process also requires alignment with the key stakeholders of the African YMCAs: its international partners. 2010 was chosen as the year where this process could be taken to the next higher level.

### Preparing together for shared ownership:

The Africa Partnership Summit was organised as a joint initiative between the African YMCAs and their international YMCA partners. For the first time, a Steering Group of partners and African leaders worked together over several months preceding the Summit to ensure the event produced the expected outcomes. In order for the participants to arrive with a high level of preparation, a pre-summit survey was launched in February 2010, which then identified key trends and issues to be included in the Summit

programme.

### Participation and Sharing as the key drivers of the Summit

The objectives of the summit were defined as follows:

- Assess progress and challenges in African YMCAs (including impact of partnership relations on movement strengthening);
- Assess progress and challenges in international partnership relations with African YMCAs;
- Agree on future guiding principles and values; and
- Identify and agree on good practices.

After having been welcomed by his Excellency the Mayor of Accra, and some inspirational speeches by some of the leaders present, the Summit started off by giving the participants the choice of 15 key topics for group discussions. From this, 11 themes were then taken to specific workgroups, where participants analysed the present situation, both in terms of challenges and strengths. The group results were then presented by the group leaders in a huge marketplace style of setting, where summit participants could move freely from stand to stand, ask questions to the group presenters and give input with additional ideas.

Groups then moved into a second phase, where they had to define together future directions, principles and good practices for each of the themes.

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A renewed marketplace session allowed for everybody to contribute to the different group results.

The group results were then consolidated by a writing team into a final document, which then was further discussed in plenary and adopted by summit participants.

### A solid report, highlighting future directions

To mention a few of the most striking resolutions taken at the Summit:

- Commitment to share good practices across African YMCAs, in particular through meetings and a virtual platform provided by Africa Alliance, as well as peer to peer mechanism and mentoring
- Commitment to increased, effective, open and regular communication within and between YMCA movements, as well as with external stakeholders, such as media.
- Commitment to socially relevant programmes, with focus on youth: the Subject to Citizen programme was widely applauded and should serve as a key driver in this regard.
- Commitment to strategic and annual plans to prioritise resource mobilisation, so as to allow for diversification of income and long-term sustainability of African movements.
- Partnerships should take a holistic and long-term view, and always ensure that the YMCAs in question are strengthened and become sustainable.
- Partners should align to the African YMCA shared vision: Empowering young people for the Africa Renaissance.

### Speaking together at the same level

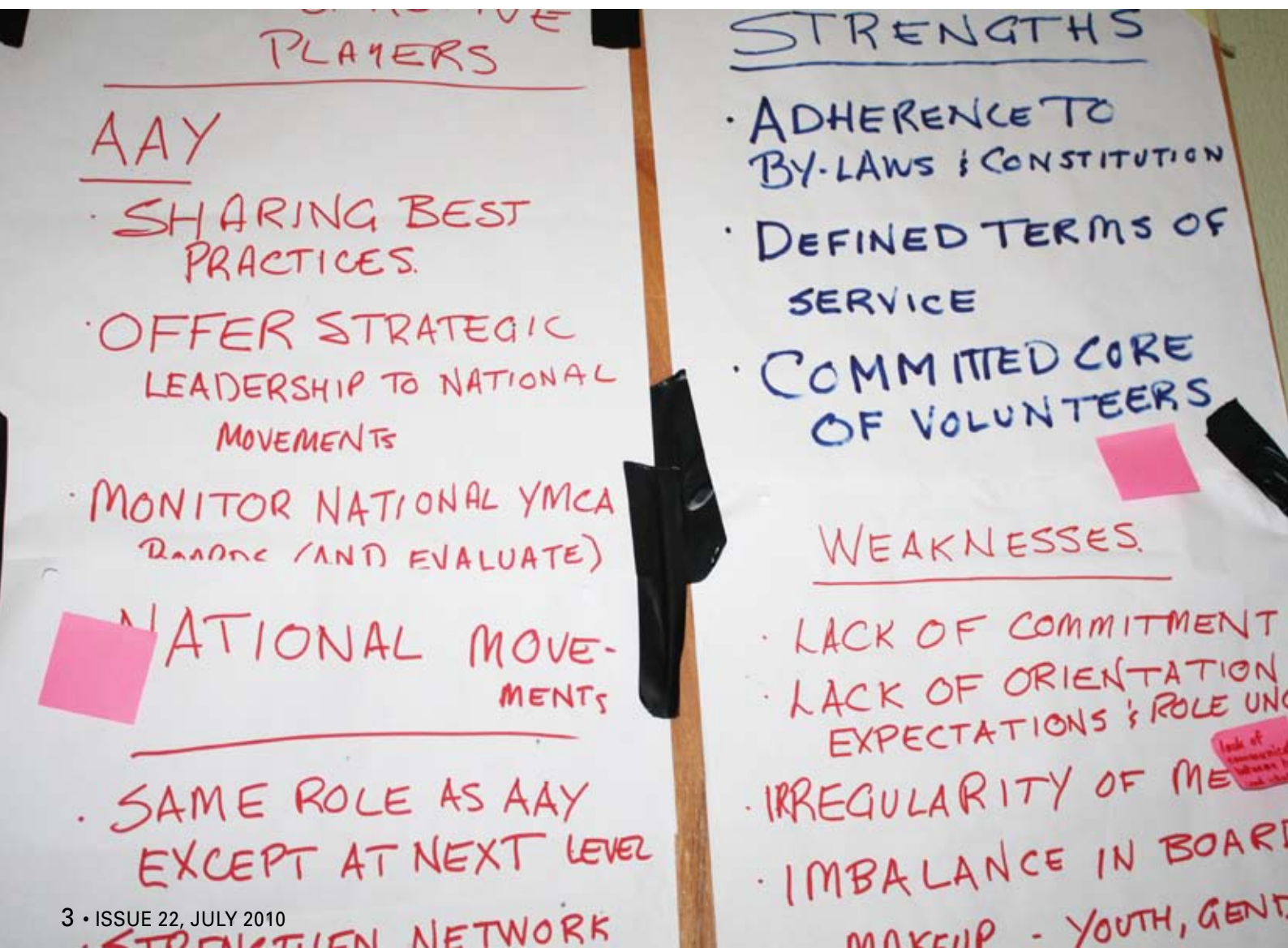
"Many participants came to me and said that this was truly the first time they had the chance to talk together with their partners at the same level, undisturbed from the classical question, whether funding will be made available or not," said James Ekhow Rule, the newly elected president of the AAYMCAs.

### Young people becoming the driving force for a new vision

A significant contribution to the summit results came from young African YMCA leaders. "Usually, with this type of meeting, the majority of participants are the elders. This time it was different, and for me it is a sign that a new class of brilliant young African leaders start speaking up and advocate for a vision and an agenda in line with the realities of the African youth," commented Mutale Chande, newly elected Youth Representative of the AAYMCAs. "This is not about a rebellion, but about a constructive collaboration with the older, more experience leaders, so that the YMCAs in Africa can see a new day and become a mouthpiece for the voiceless African youth," she concluded.

### Not just a good feeling

When asking Carlos Sanvee, the General Secretary of the AAYCMAs, about his evaluation of the event, he said, "Accomplishing such a Summit with a good feeling is a great. But, making sure that joint commitments translate into tangible results for the better of the African people is even more important. I appeal upon all African leaders and international partners to use the outcomes of the Summit as roadmap that will guide new vision, policies, workplans and partnership relations in the years to come." Let's make it happen!





## African perspective

Rev Jacob Maforo, Acting General Secretary, Zimbabwe YMCA

The Partnership Summit was a rare opportunity for introspection. Such was long overdue, following many years of cooperation in bilateral relationships, and also more recently in the GOP process<sup>(1)</sup>. The Summit was set to assess different levels of cooperation, and to identify new ways to evaluate these relationships. This was particularly important for the Zimbabwe YMCA in re-establishing lost ties, connections and trust.

The Bible reaffirms the values of partnership by suggesting that no two people can walk together if they are not in agreement. A partnership relationship is an agreement which is built upon trust, respect and mutuality. It takes effort, commitment and time to build a partnership. The efforts to revive the Zimbabwe YMCA are happening in the context of the revival of the nation of Zimbabwe. In recent years the country has gone through turmoil in every sector. It is a sad part of history that in the last decade in particular, the country has attracted international attention for the wrong reasons, including human rights abuses, youth militia, bad governance, highest inflation in the world, empty supermarket shelves and the closure of NGOs.

The YMCA was also caught up in the problems of bad governance. As if issues of governance were contagious, leadership crises developed one after another resulting in a high turnover of staff and volunteers. The political crisis in the country was also a factor – migration of many skilled personnel to other countries in search of greener pastures added to the problems of high turnover of key leaders in the Zimbabwe YMCA.

Most partners followed the trend in the country, where international donors, partners, and investors withdrew their services from Zimbabwe. Major airliners, multinational companies and the international media organisations left Zimbabwe.

However, Zimbabwe YMCA's traditional partners were not forced to leave because of the said circumstances but because of governance issues in the YMCA. The Zimbabwe YMCA's international partners suspended relationships after problems emerged in managing the relationship. The partnership values had been breached. Terms of agreement had been broken. The departure of partners in most cases was abrupt.

The gap that was left was not easy to manage. In some cases, community projects were left midway. This impacted negatively on local relationships with the communities. Local communities, who are usually the beneficiaries, bear the brunt when partnership relationships end that way. The same principle of trust applies exists when dealing with programme beneficiaries and local stakeholders as does in international partnership relationships.

It is however not a hopeless situation as the Zimbabwe YMCA did not close shop, thanks to the Africa Alliance of YMCAs (AAYMCA). In 2007 the AAYMCA took a radical decision that led to the dissolution of the then Board. This was only the first step towards restoring sanity and saving the movement from imminent collapse. In 2008 a process to re-dynamise the Zimbabwe YMCA was instituted, which led to the present efforts and the implementation of the Future Search Process. The AAYMCA should be commended for its continued faith in the Zimbabwe YMCA's

potential. Also special mention goes to the Baden YMCA and Y Care International for supporting the Future Search Process. It is heartening to report that during the same period of the Future Search, Zimbabwe YMCA secured funding from Y-Global through AAYMCA to implement the Subject to Citizen (S2C) and Transformative Masculinity programmes.

While it is an enormous task to restore trust in communities, it is possible. The Partnership Summit was also proof that it is possible to restore lost trust with partnerships as many opportunities for dialogue and future cooperation began.

An important feature that was applied in the Summit was that of recognising success stories, where African YMCAs were given the opportunity to share best practices. This was carried through to the Ordinary General Meeting (OGM), held after the Summit. Successful YMCAs were given the opportunity to tell their own stories. Much of the success was attributed to the GOP process that has seen some YMCAs strengthen their movements at various levels, through the support of the multilateral approach.

Sierra Leone Y, Liberia Y Tanzania Y, South Africa Y and Kenya Y shared success stories, both in work groups and in panel discussions. Ghana YMCA also shared their plan for using property development as a vehicle for turning around their financial sustainability. Tanzania and Kenya YMCA shared their success stories in the area of resource mobilisation. Tanzania YMCA was applauded for being a movement in Africa that is not dependent on donor support, managing an USD 8 million budget annually from locally raised funds. Sierra Leone YMCA's success story was also commended, on a holistic level, from programme development to financial and leadership development.

It is encouraging to note the impact of bilateral partnerships and the GOP process. It is also encouraging that the discussion on partnership was taken beyond the 'donor' concept. YMCAs were motivated to add value to their partnership relationships. A key development discussed during the Summit is the establishment of a Leadership Academy for Africa. There is great hope that this will address several critical issues to ensure African YMCAs flourish to make maximum impact for youth empowerment in our continent.

The Zimbabwe YMCA left Ghana with much hope for the future. Just as the nation of Zimbabwe is fighting to win back lost friends, the Zimbabwe YMCA is also doing the same. Issues of governance and democracy in the Zimbabwe YMCA have been amicably resolved. The organisation is now stable. The new challenge is to ensure sustainability. And this shall be done through renewed partnerships with a focus on our shared vision.

### Note

1. As part of the YMCA's Global Operating Plan (GOP) for movement strengthening, several Africa Alliance movements are engaged in Country Focus Strategies with partners. These strategies and Road Map plans are aimed at strengthening the YMCA from the bottom up, enabling sustainability and self-determination in the areas of Mission Clarity, Programme Relevance and Institutional Viability.



## S2C now a reality

David Ngosa, S2C Ambassador, Zambia YMCA

*From Subject to Citizen (S2C) is now a reality and will stay with us. When we met in Accra, Ghana, on 2-3 May for our second phase of training as S2C Ambassadors, it was clear that we have done a lot of work in our different countries since our first training in Ethiopia last October.*

Reports given by the different national movements represented in Accra indicated that all the YMCAs in Africa adopted the S2C concept. My heart is rejoicing and is filled with passion and commitment to contribute to the development of the youth in Africa.

Our achievements in Accra were immense. A key moment was when we put a resolution to the Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) that the Africa Alliance (AAYMCA) and hence all African YMCAs formally adopt S2C as the blueprint for developing and empowering the young people both in the movement and through our programmes. The other main resolution put forward was that the representation of young people at all initiatives of the AAYMCA be drawn from the network of S2C ambassadors from 2013. These two resolutions will be put to the newly elected Executive Committee, the highest policymaker at AAYMCA level, for final approval.

The song we did with famous Ghanaian musician, Chemphe, was great. Not only did we put it on YouTube as a video but we also did a studio audio version – see <http://www.youtube.com/user/4rmsubject2citizen>. Chemphe has taken it one step further and done a professional song version which he will release in due course. Through this, we have used the creativity of our youth to reach out to both youth and the adults with our S2C message in a clear, simple and catchy way.

While at the youth training in Accra, I thought about what a limitless God we serve and that we need to think on a 'God scale'. The training and support that we as S2C Ambassadors have had so far is forcing us to revolutionise our thinking patterns. We have decided not to be subjects and to work to transform other youth to become citizens as we are doing ourselves. We also realise that people may not tell us that we are special and worthy. But we will tell that to ourselves.

Every day I talk about S2C and people ask me, "What animal is this S2C you talk about, David?" This means to me that we are already creating an impact and I believe this is happening everywhere. We do have the mandate to do the right thing and move the African continent to another level. Now this needs resources. We already have the energy and commitment and are on a programme for skills development. If we really believe in what we are doing and what has been invested in us, it is up to us as youth to begin to mobilise resources. For me, this was another highlight as the youth, ourselves, made a commitment to fundraising and we have already begun to put a strategy in place.

One of the most important and invigorating things in life is to find a dream worth chasing. Pursuit changes everything. It captivates your heart, increases your momentum, unleashes focus, and brings astonishing results. I have found my dream in S2C which is becoming reality, and as I live this dream, I will find it evolving or find a bigger one within the context of youth civic empowerment and chase that.





## AAYMCA Executive Committee President, James Ekow Rhule, seeks to *reinvigorate* youth development work in Africa

Christine Davis, AAYMCA Communications Volunteer

*From Subject to Citizen (S2C) is now a reality and will stay with us. When we met in Accra, Ghana, on 2-3 May for our second phase of training as S2C Ambassadors, it was clear that we have done a lot of work in our different countries since our first training in Ethiopia last October.*

Newly elected Executive Committee President of the Africa Alliance of YMCAs (AAYMCA), James Ekow Rhule, brings with him almost three-decades of experience in the YMCA and an enthusiastic passion for cultivating youth leadership in Africa. It is ultimately Rhule's absolute belief in the youth that drives his involvement with the YMCA and guides his future intentions as the Executive Committee President. As Rhule explains, "I believe that one neglects the youth at one's own peril. The development of the youth is a survival issue. Anything short of that would amount to curtailing our future."

Rhule has been a member of the Ghana YMCA since 1982 and, has amongst others, served as the National Youth President for the Ghana YMCA (1984-1991), the Western Zone Coordinator for the AAYMCAs (1995-2001), Chair of the AAYMCA Youth Committee (1998-2002) and most recently, Vice President of the AAYMCA Executive Committee (2006-2010).

With a Post-Graduate Diploma in Communications (1992) and a Master of Arts (1999) from the University of Ghana, Rhule comes from a strong background in communications, international affairs and public relations. Currently employed as the Head of Public Affairs for the Cocoa Processing Company in Ghana, Rhule intends to incorporate his unique understanding of communications and corporate profiling into the position of Executive Committee President of the AAYMCA. Rhule looks to the past AAYMCA communication successes of the Siyahamba and WebAlerts as areas which would further benefit from the facilitation and coordination of communications strategies that will project the Alliance as "the most authentic and result-orientated youth-focused Pan-African Christian body". He perceives his new role as promoting the vision, mission and core values of the Africa YMCAs while stepping in as the spokesperson for the AAYMCA and its members at an international level. A core priority for Rhule, is the exploration of partnership opportunities between the Alliance and National Movements and viable corporate resource mobilisation strategies. In addition, Rhule intends to help "coordinate efforts to implement the decisions and recommendations made at the last OGM," and "in consultation with members of the Executive Committee, monitor and evaluate technical and governance issues and ensure excellent relations with all stakeholders as well as national movements."

Rhule presents his history within the youth movement as a good example for young people in Africa today. "My commitment to youth work is derived from the fact that my entry into the YMCA was through the youth sector. I joined the YMCA as a member of the Hi-Y, and grew in the YMCA as a youth leader at the national level, then Africa Alliance and the World Alliance levels. I was virtually involved in almost all the past recommendations on youth and youth development. I am probably the first President of the Alliance who has not been a President/Chairman of a National Movement. My exposure in the YMCA was through youth leadership, and this should be an inspiration to our young people."

Rhule believes the experiences youth leaders gain through practice is vital for their proactive engagement in Africa's development. "We should not be afraid to put the youth in leadership positions with the excuse that they will make mistakes. Mistakes are a necessary part of any learning process. Mistakes create opportunities for correction and the adoption of new strategies for achieving positive results."

In fact, Rhule was struck by the youthfulness of the new Executive Committee leadership and their level of commitment to goal-orientated youth development. This he believes "fairly reflects all categories of our movement – youth, gender and zonal representation."

Rhule's ultimate goal for his tenure is to see a stronger and more financially viable Africa Alliance which is strengthened by active and "highly-resourced" national movements. He believes that the strength of the Alliance is determined by the strength of the national movements and primary Alliance strategy should be directed at improving national movements capacity and improving their overall quality of operation.

In this respect, developing the civic competence of youth with the "From Subject 2 Citizen" model is of primary importance. His intention in this regard is that Africa YMCAs become resource centres for continent-wide youth civic competence development and training that can be utilised by both governments and civil society organisations continent-wide.

Rhule looks to the future with hope but understands that great changes come not from faith alone but from the energy and dedication of the youth. Rhule says in this regard, "I strongly believe that the Renaissance of Africa will come about on the shoulders of hard working and educated youth who are confident and have strong belief in themselves and in Africa as a continent."





*“Let’s walk the talk  
and use our time”*

**Profile:** Mutale Chanda,  
Youth Representative,  
AAYMCA Executive  
Committee

Christine Davis, AAYMCA Communications Volunteer

At the 2010 Ordinary General Meeting held in May in Accra, Ghana, Zambia YMCA’s self professed “enemy of procrastination”, Mutale Chanda was elected as the Youth Representative for the Africa Alliance of YMCAs (AAYMCA) Executive Committee. With the nomination, the energetic 31-year-old believes she will bring a commitment to upholding the integrity of the youth she represents and a strong desire to provide strategic direction to the implementation of youth policy and guidelines.

Mutale’s passion for youth work is embodied in the positive and hopeful energy she brings to her responsibilities and is borne out of a realisation that the youth themselves are best placed to shape their own futures. This realisation comes at a time when, according to Mutale, the “young people on the continent are greatly disadvantaged because they are not aware of their rights and obligations as youth, and they do not have the voice or authority to engage the duty bearers.”

For Mutale, youth leadership presents the world with innovative and resourceful new dimensions to address the problems affecting youth and Africa. She says, “The youth make up the majority of the population on the continent, therefore they’re at the core of every challenge and success. They bear the brunt of HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, unemployment and corruption, so who better to address the problems than those who’ve had first-hand experience and are affected by these ills than the youth?”

Mutale’s intention for growth in the African YMCA’s programmatic area indicate a realistic understanding of the on-the-ground realities, within the framing of her characteristic optimism and desire for proactive solutions. Supported by an Advanced Certificate in Counseling (University of Zambia), a Diploma in Accounting (Association of Accounting Technicians) and a current enrollment in the study of Economics, Mutale’s youth priorities are inclined towards youth economic empowerment and the inculcation of strong and meaningful character development and values. These values and experiences have influence her intended direction for the AAYMCA programmatic areas.

Of the Economic Renaissance youth employment and entrepreneurship programme, Mutale says, “It is a fact that not everybody can be employed and as such we should move to a scenario where we’re thinking more like ‘let’s be the employers!’” In addition,

Mutale intends to see the escalation of peer education activities in HIV/AIDS and reproductive health programme areas to redress the lack of knowledge many youth still have on sexuality and sexual health. Her support of improved civic competence is clear when she explains that the, “From Subject to Citizen Concept (S2C) couldn’t have come at a better time than now, because it addresses the many issues affecting young people. Therefore it is incumbent on all YMCA National Movements to embrace it and include it as part of their Strategic Plans. As the Youth Representative I endorse my commitment to ensuring that this is achieved by providing strategic leadership in the areas that I am able to, for as long as it takes.”

With past interests ranging from an active involvement in growing and diversify her family’s business, nationally representing her country in swimming and volleyball, representing Zambia as the National Youth Chairperson and a lifelong dream to set up an orphanage, Mutale optimises not only a sense of purpose, dedication and accomplishment in her own life, but also a drive towards achieving great social change for the youth she represents.

Mutale’s message to the youth is simple and clear, “What needed to be said has been said. It is time to put the mistakes of our forefathers behind us, and focus on our current situation and find solutions for the future. With God nothing is impossible. We have the S2C initiative at hand and a cadre of vibrant visionary young people, so let’s walk the talk and use our time to change the face of this continent, our continent, OUR AFRICA!”

## Engaging and empowering Christian mission

Lantonirina Rakotomalala, National General Secretary, Madagascar YMCA

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave [it] again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. " – **Luke 4: 16 – 21 ( King James Version)**

Jesus announces his mission – an ambitious and hazardous mission. A mission He declares accomplished today. Amazingly, Jesus declares it openly and courageously in the middle of the assembly, in front of the synagogue's leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees and other authoritarian people.

By doing that, He presents himself as a person having social responsibilities. He announces the good news for the poor and afflicted people, which is to restore their hope and dignity, to give a hand for them to be able to stand up and do their best to improve their situation. He proclaims release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, for them to have full potential for life.

Jesus has responsibilities to PROCLAIM and ACT. He says, "to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord". Then, he confirmed: "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

When George William established the first YMCA, he also set a mission for him: social responsibilities towards young people in his time, who were exhausted by hard labour conditions in the mines or by the demanding textile firms. Just like our young people today. They have social responsibilities towards their peers who are vulnerable to a deep poverty of spirit, soul and body. They are imprisoned by political circumstances or economic crises, about which they feel they cannot do anything except submit. In these situations, youth serve a cause which is not theirs, but they still serve as they just hope to gain a little to eat, because they are starving; or to have a minimum of comfort.

We have chosen to have a clear and engaging vision: Empowering young people for the African Renaissance. This gives us the responsibilities to PROCLAIM and ACT, just like Jesus has done. PROCLAIM that we do not agree with the precarious situation which infringes our youth's development and ACT to effectively transform our youth to be good citizens. We are working to give space and voice to our youth, like Jesus could access the front space of the synagogue. We are sending them to fulfil this liberating mission, and as Jesus equipped his disciples before sending them, equally we are empowering them so they believe in themselves and skilling them so they can act wisely. There will come a time when African YMCA youth will say: today it is fulfilled.