

What We Want – Strategy of the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden for the Period of 2018-2025

We always try to meet the challenges that young people face and we will continue on this path as we are called the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden. We do a lot every day. But in order to do better and canalize power towards challenges facing young people, we need to make priorities. It's not about doing completely differently. Rather, it's about working more consciously and focused. It's about what's important now. It's about What We Want.

The What We Want strategy was approved at the General Assembly in Norrköping, Sweden in 2017. The strategy covers the period between 2018-2025. Below is a summary in English. The Swedish version its is available for download at: https://kfum.se/what_we_want/

I. ANALYSIS - STARTINGPOINT

The world around us:

- A polarised world where groups and individuals are drawn to extremes where differences are seen as dangerous and bad.
- An unequal society where young people have and are given different opportunities and possibilities depending on gender, gender expression and gender identity.
- Increasing social gaps and uneven distribution of power: despite increasing opportunities for young people, only some of them can improve their life to the better. It matters who you are, where you live and what your background is.
- We have a committed and conscious generation of young people. However, many of them are not engaged in civil society's organisations.

The YWCA-YMCA of Sweden:

- A 150 years young, resourceful youth- and women's rights movement
- A grassroots movement represented around the world
- A wide range of activities worldwide
- A strong value base
- We know how to create spaces for youth to grow

2. BASED ON THE ABOVE THE YWCA-YMCA OF SWEDEN FOCUS ON:

2.1 THREE THEMATIC AREAS

- **Inclusion**

The YWCA-YMCA of Sweden should be an inclusive movement where everyone is welcome – because differences are enriching and because our movement and our society should be built by many.

- **Identity and Power**

The YWCA-YMCA of Sweden should be a role model for the entire society when it comes to empowering young people so that they dare seek and stand up for their own and other people's right to express their identity. Your power to influence your life and the world around you should not be limited by destructive norms and discrimination.

- **Equality**

The YWCA-YMCA of Sweden should embrace equality. We should stand up for equality in local associations and all of our activities, as well as for an equal society at large.

2.2 THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- **The YWCA-YMCA of Sweden claims space**

We engage in active advocacy

We develop our skills in our focus areas: inclusion, equality, identity and power, and engage in advocacy in these three areas in order to improve young people's opportunities to develop. Together we shall create opportunities for and participate in advocacy at local and national level.

We develop ways to give people influence within our own movement

We want more people to claim their space in society but also within our own movement. We will work for increased power of members and their increased influence in the local organisation, at the regional level and in the national association. We want to be a movement of members who engage in and contribute to our movement locally, nationally and internationally.

We showcase our work

The YWCA-YMCA movement in Sweden is today a relatively unknown brand, especially if we take into consideration how many members and local associations that make up for our movement. By communicating more clearly on the common ground of our three focus areas, we as a movement, can become more defined both for ourselves and for others. This is a necessity for us to be able to survive in the long run, but above all, in order to reach our goals. Just as we develop

our work to be relevant and attractive, we need to constantly improve our ways of communication and interaction with each other as well as with others.

- **At the YWCA-YMCA we live our values**

We develop and strengthen our leaders and our value-based leadership

A large part of who we are and where we come from is about our basic values and how they are expressed in actions. The key to this is our movement's leaders. In order to strengthen young people, we thus need to constantly empower our leaders, for example by offering them good opportunities for development, inspiration and meetings, but also by working even more actively to embody the values that crosscut our leadership culture. What we focus on now within the movement must have an impact on the development of our leaders.

We develop *how* we operate with active method development

What makes us and our YWCA-YMCA movement different from other volleyball teams, scouts or community youth centres? An important cornerstone has to do with our basic values that in particular get reflected in *how* and *why* we do things, rather than in *what* we do exactly. In order to make it easier for our leaders to work with our basic values in everyday life, we need instruments and methods for how it can be done - at a match, around a campfire or at a climbing session. The starting point for this work lies in our three focus areas - inclusion, equality, identity and power.

We make sure we are a movement *of* the young, *for* the young

Self-empowerment means that young people themselves have tools, power and responsibility which enable them to develop and change their environment in accordance with their passions. We have good examples of young people who choose to start a new organisation because they think that equality issues have been neglected or start organising a festival in their residential area because the municipality and the city authorities do not offer enough meaningful recreational activities. Our starting point should always be that the young people themselves should have the power and the possibility to make dreams come true and to influence the world around them.

- **YWCA-YMCA of Sweden prioritizes partnerships and collaborations**

We conduct activities and projects across organisational, regional and national borders

To be able to create a Sweden based on diversity, a Sweden free from unhealthy social norms and unequal power structures, we need to help each other. One way of achieving this is to launch joint initiatives and projects through cooperation within our movement. In this way, we create common goals to strive towards together, and use even more of potential of our movement.

We develop our ways of cooperation across organisational, regional and national borders

Another key element of how to better Sweden and the world around us is finding a good way of working together. Amongst other things it is about how we organise ourselves at the regional and national level. How can we benefit even more from each other's experiences, knowledge and resources? How can we enable more people to engage in our movement? Here we need to look into formal structures, but also the way we treat each other.

We increase cooperation with other organisations

We as a movement will not be able to create the Sweden and the world we want on our own. Across Sweden and around the world there are many other organizations that are really good at what is needed to achieve our goals. Instead of thinking that, as a movement, we must provide all that is needed to create the Sweden and the world we want, we should rather be able to provide it in cooperation with other organizations.



3. THIS WILL CREATE A NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE...

...who believe in themselves and are confident about their values and in their identity

All individuals have the potential to *develop* and grow as human beings. By giving young people greater knowledge and increased responsibility, we make sure they can grow and develop into responsible, independent and confident individuals. An important part of this is to both dare to be yourself and to get to know yourself. If I'm aware of and confident about my identity and values, it is also easier for me to take in new impressions as well as others thoughts and opinions.

... who believe in and contribute to a dialogue and meetings between people and across borders

To a great extent, our core values are formed in our early teens, not least in terms of our trust and tolerance towards other people. By creating meetings and a dialogue between young people who might otherwise never have met, we at the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden contribute to foster young individuals who understand the value of, and stand up for a social dialogue and an inclusive society.

... who act as role models in terms of actively exposing and changing unequal power structures

Gender still matters in our society today. We want to create a generation of young people who are well aware of it, but who also knows what it is like to be part of an organization where, for example, your gender identity does not prevent you from growing to your full potential. However, if we want to change society, we also need to act together as role models in terms of actively changing the unequal structures - in the locker room and on a hiking trip.

... who actively take responsibility for, are involved in and have the power to influence our society

In todays Sweden a large number of young people stand a long way from any form of organised community life, as well as from society at large. We want to change that. If more people are involved in and are given the power to influence the society we live in, then more people will also be willing and able to take responsibility for it. By improving our ability to help more people grow to their full potential, the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden will also contribute to creating a generation and a society *for* and *of* more people.

4. AND THIS YOUNG GENERATION WILL CREATE A SOCIETY WHICH...

... will be characterised as a diverse community

A society in which we not only walk past each other but actually unleash our curiosity for each other, getting to know people with different backgrounds and experiences, a society where everyone's differences are seen as something enriching. Simply put - a diverse community.

... will be formed by people with different backgrounds and experiences

In this way, a society with a stable foundation can be created - rooted in and taking into account the needs of different people.

... will be based on young people's needs and opinions

Because young people are the present and the future, and a society that is truly based on young people's needs and opinions is a sustainable society.

... will be characterized by social justice and equality, where everyone will have the same opportunity to develop to their full potential

A society where your opportunity to develop to your full potential is not limited by your gender, gender identity or expression, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, functional ability or age. Because people who have had the opportunity to develop to their full potential are also people who take responsibility and later help others develop themselves.

We want to make sure that young people have faith in the future and in themselves. By doing so, we together will transform Sweden and the world into a more equitable, inclusive and equal society.