



A Brief Introduction to
Y'S MEN INTERNATIONAL



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By Way of a Foreword....

Dear Reader,

The intention of this booklet is to introduce you to the International Association of Y's Men's Clubs, more simply known as Y's Men International (YMI), perhaps the only international service organisation where all members of a family can be involved in one club.

Our main objective is to “encourage and provide leadership to build a better world for all humankind.” While our vision is global, our actions are local. We are currently present in more than 65 countries and hope to reach 100 by our centenary year, 2022.

We invite you to join us in our endeavours. This document attempts to inform and inspire you to take that decision. Through the simple method of Q&A, this booklet touches upon almost all aspects of the YMI movement, taking special care to project its true mission - service to communities in need.

**International Officers
Y's Men International**

What is Y's Men International (YMI)?

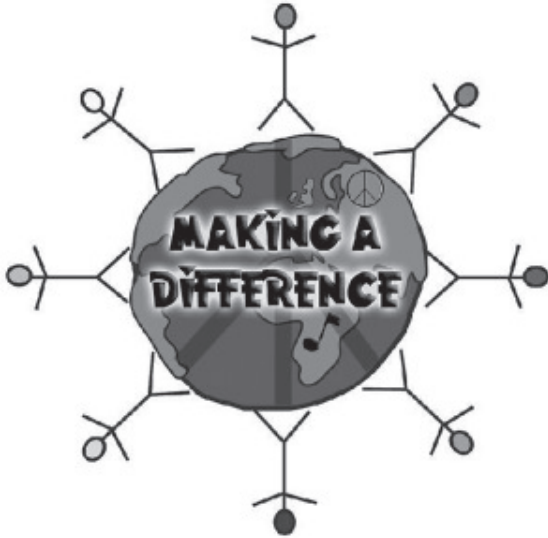


Y's Men International is a global service organisation consisting of affiliated clubs promoting personal development and unified for enduring and positive change in the communities where they are located and around the world.

YMI clubs:

- Function primarily in service to the YMCA.
- Engage with other worthy organisations.
- Encourage justice in civic and international affairs, while abstaining always from party politics.
- Keep members informed and actively involved as global citizens.
- Cultivate good fellowship.
- Support International, Area and Regional projects of the Association.

What is a service organisation?



A service organisation is a voluntary non-profit structure where members meet regularly to perform charitable works by direct, hands-on efforts and/or fundraising.

A service organisation is defined firstly by its mission and secondly its membership benefits, such as occasions for networking and personal growth that encourage involvement. Historically, most service organisations consist of community-based groups (clubs) that share the same name, goals, membership requirements, and meeting structure. Service clubs operate directly to improve lives in their communities through volunteer activities, while also collecting money to support specific global programmes or campaigns.

The world's first service club, the Rotary Club of Chicago, was formed in 1905 by Paul P. Harris, an attorney who wanted to create a club for professional with the same friendly spirit he had felt in the small towns of his youth.

What is the history of YMI?



YMI had a humble start. Beginning in 1920 as the Tolymca luncheon club, a group of 15 United States business and YMCA professionals in Toledo, Ohio, led by a young attorney named Paul William Alexander, began to explore ways to raise funds for and otherwise support the local YMCA. The concept spread through YMCAs across the United States, and additional clubs rapidly formed over the next two years. In 1922, these clubs unified to become the International Association of Y's Men's Clubs, electing Paul William Alexander as the first president.

It was Alexander's thinking that the YMCA could better serve the needs of society if it became more inclusive, and he saw YMI as increasing the impact of the YMCA by providing new avenues for engagement. For him, YMI was a service organisation of and for the YMCA.



The first club outside the USA was in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada. It was formed in late 1922 and officially chartered in early 1923. Other countries soon followed: China (1924), Australia (1926), Japan, Estonia, Mexico (1928), Czechoslovakia (1929), Puerto Rico (1930), Sri Lanka (1930).

Today, an independently recognised non-governmental organisation (NGO) with special consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) and its own programmes, the primary objective of YMI remains service to the YMCA.

Who was Paul William Alexander?



Besides being the founder and first President Emeritus of Y's Men International, Paul William Alexander was a respected figure in the United States judicial system.

He was born on 8 December 1888 in Toledo, Ohio, USA. He graduated from Dennison University and Harvard Law School. After several years in private practice, he became an assistant prosecuting attorney and later judge of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts of Lucas County, Ohio, where he served until his retirement. He was considered a pioneer in juvenile justice reform, introducing evaluation, therapy and mentorship programmes to troubled youth instead of simply meeting out punishment for their transgressions. His novel approach saw a reduction of 30% in repeat offenders, and he was often asked to speak about his philosophy and methods.

Judge Alexander remained an active YMI leader, steadfastly steering the organisation from his first involvement in 1920 until his death on 29 June 1967.

In 1962, the International Board adopted 8 December, the day of Paul William Alexander's birth, as the Founder's Day.

What is the main purpose of a YMI club?

The main purpose of a YMI club is “to serve the local community.”

All over the world:

- Members, called Y’s Men and Y’s Women, are a human and financial resource to a society in need.
- Y’s Men and Women provide hundreds of thousands of hours of voluntary service annually and give generously, not just to the programmes of YMI but also to the YMCA and other places where a need has been identified.



What is our current relationship with the YMCA?



YMI remains a collaborative partner of the World YMCA and encourages Y's Men at all levels to explore and/or complement this special relationship.

The Principles of Partnership, periodically signed by successive Secretaries General of both organisations since 1981, reaffirms the commitment of both to strengthen their connection and develop together new ways to support the YMCA and the communities in which it is present throughout the world.

What is the guiding principle of YMI?



The guiding principle of YMI is expressed in the motto: ***“To acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right”*** which serves as a reminder that with every privilege comes responsibility – a green light on one street must have a corresponding red light to warn traffic on the cross-street of its duty to stop. YMI members are challenged to pay more attention to the discovery and discharge of the duties associated with their rights than to their entitlement.

What is the YMI heritage?



Developing from the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in midwestern United States in the early 1900s, Christianity is a fundamental part of our heritage. Our Constitution defines us as "a worldwide fellowship of persons of all faiths working together in mutual respect and affection, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ."

By teachings of Jesus Christ, however, we refer simply to the broad, widely known values (such as humility, compassion and altruism) expressed within His lessons, by which our members may set their moral compass and guide their decision making.

YMI is an inclusive organisation, which takes pride in the historical Christian-based ethics and integrity that continue to define it today.

Who can become a member?

YMI welcomes all persons, men and women, respectful of our heritage, sharing our vision and ready to work towards the realisation of our mission, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, race, religion, culture, nationality, etc.

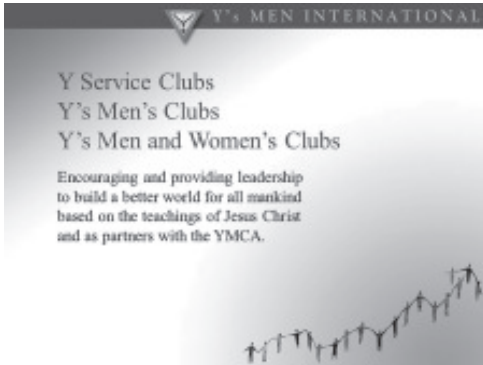


Our members are:

- Idealists: As people concerned about others, members must be ready to ally themselves with other active idealists to increase their own effectiveness in serving fellow humans.
- Dedicated to the community: It is the desire to alleviate human crises, which makes the Y's Men's movement a great community servant.
- World-minded: Since clubs provide greater international understanding through links with other clubs around the world, members should cherish international justice and peace.

Special consideration is given to women and young adults, who may alternatively or additionally join the movement through our partner organisations, Y's Menettes International (for women) and Y's Youth (for 16 -25-year olds). More information about these partners can be found on our website: <https://www.ysmen.org/partners/ys-menettes/> and <https://www.ysmen.org/partners/ys-youth/>

Why do we sometimes go by a different name?



The term “Y’s Men” was first used by a YMCA volunteer, in a series of articles written for the YMCA newsletter. When Paul William Alexander adopted it into the name of our organisation, “men” was still commonly accepted to refer to humankind in general, both male and female members of the human species. This still holds true in many of the locations where YMI is active today. As such, there has been no overwhelming urgency to change our name. In fact, it has been determined that doing so at this time would be more damaging than beneficial, causing confusion and loss of visibility where Y’s Men International is already a recognised brand.

To limit negative association with the Y’s Men name where gender neutrality is imperative, members may choose to refer to the organisation by the acronym YMI. In addition, local affiliated clubs can call themselves “Y’s Women’s Clubs”, “Y’s Men and Women’s Clubs” or “Y Service Clubs”.

What are the benefits of membership?

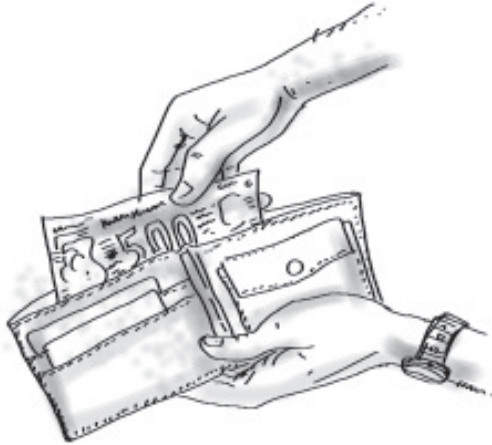


As a service organisation engaged in community service and promoting cultural awareness leading to global fellowship and world peace, members can look forward to:

- Opportunities to give back to the community.
- Involvement in global initiatives and programmes.
- Constructive use of free time.
- Opportunities for self-development.

These advantages are further enhanced when the club is linked to a YMCA.

What are the obligations of membership?



We make few demands but our ability to make a real and lasting difference relies on the enthusiasm, commitment and action of our members. Therefore, we maintain certain expectations of those who join our movement.

We hope that each club member will:

- Contribute both time and money to local service projects
- Donate to our international programmes
- Support, encourage and inspire other members
- Share skills and talents to the benefit of his/her club and realisation of the YMI mission
- Be consistently positive, open-minded and engaged

YMI imposes only one duty upon its members, payment of international dues, currently CHF 35 per annum. Area, Regional and Club fees may also apply and are determined in each place at each respective level.

What are the international programmes of YMI?



The following are the key international programmes of YMI:

Alexander Scholarship Fund (ASF) – provides educational grants to existing YMCA professionals, those seeking to join its staff or in support of its collective training initiatives, such as the Change Agent programme.

Brotherhood Fund (BF) – provides a variety of grants in the interest of promoting cultural exchange and fellowship; as well as money for supporting newly chartered clubs in remote locations, for leadership development and youth activity.

Endowment Fund – provides financial stability for YMI's present and future purposes, objectives, programmes and expansion through a personalised, medium-risk investment portfolio.

Time of Fast – provides funds annually for YMI, YMCA or YMCA affiliate development projects, primarily in lesser-developed nations, which align with at least one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

How else does YMI engage?



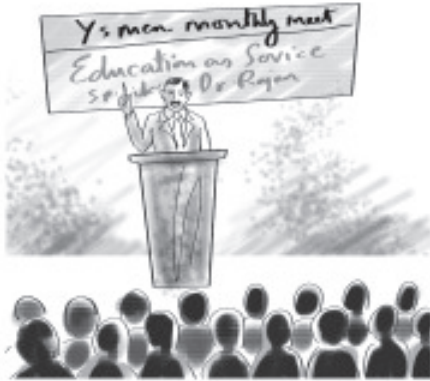
Roll Back Malaria - Since 2010 the YMI has been participating in the global fight against malaria through the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership and is now continuing its commitment by working with The Global Fund and the World YMCA to further our engagement, expand our impact and manner of advocacy.

Being Green - Y's Men International is committed to becoming an environmentally responsible organisation. Since 2010, we have acknowledged and accepted the need to reduce our environmental footprint. It is our policy to act in such a way that protects, sustains and restores our natural environment. We advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; the sustainable use of land and water - including the adoption and promotion of water-efficient strategies; and seek environmentally responsible community leadership. Every year we commit to supporting YMI, YMCA or YMCA affiliate projects aimed at bringing about enduring reductions in carbon emissions.



For more detailed information on our programmes and activities see the separate booklet, The International Programmes of Y's Men International or visit our website: <https://www.ysmen.org/our-work/>

How do YMI clubs function?



While all YMI clubs are connected by a shared ideology and commitment to the same mission, each is as unique as the community it serves. Every club will - and is encouraged to - create its own method of function, programmes and manner of fellowship and to outline these within a constitution that is not only distinctive but, by obligation, also in harmony with the international statutes.

YMI clubs are expected to convene regularly, and many choose to gather over a meal inviting both spouses and children. Meetings may involve guest speakers, discussion on service projects, new community activities, etc. Emphasis months (example: Time of Fast in February) suggested by the international leadership may also serve to guide an agenda.

However, there is no need for club members to wait for a formal meeting to get together. Members in a neighbourhood enjoy often informal fellowship and execute local community service projects outside the regularly scheduled, official administrative gatherings.

Who decides the policies and practices?



The highest decision-making body of the movement is the International Council comprising 15 members. Each Area has at least one representative on the Council. The remaining seats are allocated based on the proportion of each Area's paid membership to the total paid membership of the Association. Two seats are reserved for young members below the age of 40 who are also elected by rotation from each of the eight Areas.

Although the International President presides over all meetings of the International Council, he or she does not have a vote, except in the event of a tie.

The International Council, among other matters, reviews policies relating to membership, manages funds, determines officer and employee responsibilities, and nominates candidates for the offices of International President-Elect and International Treasurer-Elect, from among names submitted by clubs.

Every club is expected to respect the decisions of the International Council, and function in complete harmony with the international directive.

Who are the international leaders?



The key international leaders who plan for and direct the organisation worldwide are:

- International President (IP)
- International President-Elect (IPE)
- Immediate Past International President (IPIP)
- International Treasurer (IT)
- Area Presidents (APs)
- International Council Members (ICMs)

A full-time administrative team, headed by the International Secretary General, administers the affairs of the organisation from the headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and the Satellite Office in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

How can I join?



The most common way to join Y' s Men International is to become a member in an existing club. Most people learn about our organisation through personal introduction – by knowing someone who is already a member or through involvement with an associated YMCA.

If there is no active YMI club in your neighbourhood, start one! Just five persons are needed to charter. With a few friends, associates, family members you can become part of our global fellowship and the important work we do.

Information on starting clubs and becoming a member can be found on the international website <https://www.ysmen.org/join-us/> or by writing directly to ihq@ysmen.org.

How do I get involved?



Once you are inducted into the worldwide fellowship through a local club, there are several avenues for you to get involved, the strongest and most important of them being community service.

Community service could be something as simple as helping a student buy a school uniform or as intensive as getting involved in our sustained campaign against the spread of malaria. Both are done with a view to improving the welfare of those in need in both the short and long term.

Abundant opportunities exist for an inspired and informed member to grow in the movement and take on leadership responsibilities.

All it takes is:

- Idealism and devotion to the organisation.
- Interest in its work.
- Initiative in formulating ideas and executing plans.
- Industry - untiring effort to reach the goals during the term of office.

A line from the Inaugural Charge sums up our view on becoming a leader: "... the office should seek the candidate rather than the candidate the office."





"To acknowledge the duty
that accompanies every right"

Y's Men International

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