



# YMIWORLD

"TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DUTY THAT ACCOMPANIES EVERY RIGHT"

Y'S MEN INTERNATIONAL

MARCH 2026



*Celebrating the environment and this month's focus on green projects  
YMCA Camp Centre in Aluva, Kerala has achieved carbon-neutral status, thanks  
to YMI's Environmental Protection Fund.*

# CONTENTS

Content in this publication is contributed by dedicated YMI club members and officers, to whom we extend our sincere thanks. From time to time, articles or messages from external sources may also be included and those contributors will be recognised accordingly.

	Page
<b>IP Message</b> <i>Mr Edward K.W. Ong - International President</i>	1
<b>IHQ News</b> <i>Mr Jose Varghese - International Secretary General</i>	2
<b>Community Service : Inspiring Action</b> <i>Mr Lee Yong-hwa - International Service Director for Community Service</i>	4
<b>Y's Men International : A Turning Point for Our Planet</b> <i>Dr Sandra Hamilton - Environmental Committee Chair</i>	6
<b>Powering Possibility:</b> <i>How YMCA Kosovo Brought Camp Pjetershan Fully Off-Grid</i>	8
<b>Green Projects in India</b>	10
<b>Week4waste : Simple Action, Visible Impact</b> <i>Mr Ulrik Lauridsen, Region Denmark, Area Europe</i>	12
<b>TOF Spotlight</b> <b>Nakuru YMCA Young Mothers and Girls' Empowerment Project</b>	13
<b>Area Africa News</b> <i>Ms Joan Mati - News Editor of Area Africa</i>	15
<b>Area Asia Pacific News</b> <i>Mrs Keiko Tonegawa - News Editor of Area Asia Pacific</i>	16
<b>Area Europe News</b> <i>Mrs Birgit Jakobsen - News Editor of Area Europe</i>	17
<b>Area India News</b> <i>Mr Joseph Varghese - News Editor of Area India</i>	18
<b>Area Korea News</b> <i>Ms Chung Kyung-ju - News Editor of Area Korea</i>	21
<b>Area Latin America News</b> <i>Mr Christian Greenn - News Editor of Area Latin America</i>	23
<b>Area USA News</b> <i>Ms Melanie Kaaihue-Yoshida - News Editor of Area United States</i>	24
<b>iGo Opportunity with YMCA Chiangmai</b>	24
<b>UN Days</b> <i>Prof. Roys Mallassery - UN Projects Committee Member</i>	25
<b>Christian Emphasis: The Queen's Message</b> <i>Mr Villy Mølgaard - International Service Director for Christian Emphasis</i>	26

## Editor's note

Please contact the editor to share your thoughts and ideas for *YMI World*.

April Emphasis will be on  
**Week4Waste**  
& **Roll Back Malaria**

Click to submit your  
impact story before  
15 March 2026

Contact Editor



# IP Message

*Edward K.W. Ong*

*International President/Chief Editor*

**Dear Leaders and Members,**

As we approach the final quarter of our YMI term, it's crucial to assess our progress and reaffirm our commitment to our goals.

## ***Membership & Growth***

During the Mid-Year meeting, we acknowledged a decline in membership, an ongoing concern for the organisation. Challenges such as ageing populations and declining birth rates continue to impact service clubs globally, and YMI is no exception. However, the recent chartering of new clubs, accompanied by encouraging membership recruitment is a positive development. We are confident that collaborative efforts—driven by passion and dedication—will enable us to regain lost ground.

***Together Stronger***” remains our guiding principle.

## ***Strategic Planning & Innovation***

The upcoming RDE Summit in Bali will be instrumental in shaping our strategies for 2026/27. The Executive Officers will collaborate with the incoming Area Presidents and Regional Directors to develop fresh proposals and concrete solutions to current challenges. All participants are encouraged to bring innovative ideas and to engage actively throughout the summit.

## ***Environmental Sustainability***

We remain committed to Focus 2.4 and the “Kumamoto Declaration,” aligning with Strategy 2032 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will continue to prioritise environmental awareness, responsible practices, renewable energy support, and effective waste management to build a cleaner, greener world.

## ***International Programme Contributions***

Coordinated effort is essential to setting and achieving ambitious yet achievable targets for the coming year. Each Area has been tasked with establishing minimum expected contribution targets per Region for YMI's international programmes, reflecting the generous support of club members. Remember that these programmes may become resources for your local initiatives, such as through TOF project support.

## ***Key Initiatives: TOF & RBM***

While all international programmes are important, the focus for the coming year will be on Time of Fast (TOF) and Roll Back Malaria (RBM). These initiatives have brought significant benefits to numerous countries, and your continued support is vital. Special efforts to raise funds for TOF and RBM are strongly encouraged, and awards will be presented to leaders who meet their allocated targets or demonstrate a marked increase in contributions compared to previous years.

## ***Theme: Faith – Love – Action***

Guided by our theme “*Faith – Love – Action*,” let us continue to serve with love and compassion, grounded in our beliefs and the teachings of our respective faiths. Thank you for your unwavering dedication. Let's work together to make this final quarter a resounding success.



As Geneva prepares to welcome the spring season, International Headquarters is equally entering a season of renewed energy, reflection, and forward planning. The past month has been both productive and inspiring, marked by important meetings, global visits, leadership development, and continued expansion of our movement.

**The International Mid-Year Meeting** was held 20–21 February under the chairmanship of International President Edward Ong. All LARs, Committee Chairs, and ISDs attended, with a few noted regrets. The meeting provided an important opportunity to review the activities of the first half of the year and to strategically plan for the months ahead. ISG Jose Varghese presented a summary of YMI's activities and outcomes over the first six months, highlighting key achievements while also noting several challenges that require attention. International Treasurer Svend Erik Nielsen presented an overview of the accounts, giving a clear picture of our financial standing. Committee Chairs and ISDs also shared updates from their respective portfolios. A highlight of the meeting was the presentation by International President Elect Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, who shared his inspiring vision for 2026/27 under the **theme “Waking the Sleeping Giant with Blue Music,”** setting a thoughtful and forward-looking tone for the future with the **Slogan “YMI— Empowering Life”**.

Preparations are well underway for the **International RDE Summit** to be held from 9–13 March in Bali, Indonesia. Around 70 leaders and invited guests will gather for this important global leadership event, which will strengthen alignment, strategy, and fellowship across our worldwide movement.

**Registration for the International Convention** in Dubai continues, with Early Bird registration currently open. Clubs are reminded to actively encourage members to participate in what promises to be a historic convention and a memorable global gathering.

February also witnessed a significant official visit to India. **IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, IPIP Shanavaskhan and ISG Jose Varghese attended a series of YMI and YMCA events across Kerala.** The visit included the chartering of new clubs and the commissioning of the YMI Solar Project at the YMCA Camp Centre in Aluva and YMCA Special School in Kottayam. The delegation also participated in the 75th Anniversary celebration of the Y's Men's Club of Ernakulam, and toured the TOF Vocational Training Centre at Mavelikara, the Y's Men Village at Karthikapally, and the Y's Men Geriatric Care and Hospice at Chavara. A moving moment during the visit was the presentation of 50-Year Long Service Awards to PAP Ipe Jacob, PAP C.K. Thomas, and PAP K.I. Abraham, recognising their extraordinary commitment to Y's Men International. It is especially gratifying that the Government of Kerala honoured IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik as a Guest of the State and extended official guest protocol services throughout his visit.

Another important development was the **DGE/RDE Training for YMI India Area**, hosted by the Chennai YMCA. Over two days, 70 leaders participated in this essential leadership development programme. It is commendable that Chennai YMCA has extended its support to this training initiative for two consecutive years.

**March is the Emphasis Month for Community Service**, which lies at the very heart of the Y's Men purpose. It is also a key month for environmental initiatives. All clubs are encouraged to actively undertake meaningful community service projects and to submit their outstanding efforts for consideration for the Community Service Award by 15 June using the dedicated online form. Clubs are also reminded to contribute to the Environmental Protection Fund as a visible commitment to environmental sustainability.

We are delighted to report that **83 new clubs have been chartered during the year**. Furthermore, the extension of our movement into Spain, Ireland, France, and Armenia has increased **our global presence to 86 countries**. This steady growth reflects the vitality and relevance of our mission across cultures and communities.

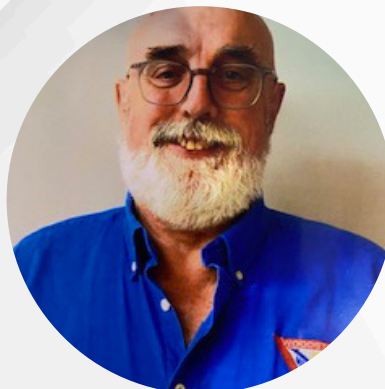
As spring unfolds in Geneva, we are reminded that renewal is not only seasonal but also spiritual and organisational. With clear vision, dedicated leadership, and committed members worldwide, Y's Men International continues to grow in service, fellowship, and global impact.



## Legislative Assembly Representatives Elect from 1 July 2026



**Mr Huan Ching (Frank) TSAI**  
Taiwan, Taiwan Region  
Area Asia Pacific



**Mr Ivan TOMPKINS**  
Canada, Maritimes Region  
Area Canada and Caribbean



**Mr Erling BIRKBAK**  
Denmark, Denmark Region  
Area Europe



**Mr Ayyamuthu MARIMUTHU**  
India, South India Region  
Area India



**Dr Shrihari A. K.**  
India, South West India Region  
Area India



**Mr Daniel EBERLY**  
United States,  
Pacific Southwest Region  
Area United States



# Inspiring Action

*A Call to Share Your Club's Community Achievements*  
*ISD Community Service - Mr Lee Yong-hwa*

Contributing to and serving the community is one of the primary purposes of a YMI club, and March is Emphasis Month for Community Service.

Through regular and sincere volunteer work and purposeful fundraising activities, we have been committed to creating positive and sustainable change, locally and beyond.

Community service is not limited to material support or projects for the underprivileged; it also encompasses our mindset and way of life. Through community service, we enhance public welfare in a multitude of ways, whether by supplying poverty relief, environmental protection, disaster prevention and recovery, closing educational gaps, or caring for the elderly and vulnerable.

## **Some recent examples of impactful and caring engagement within our communities include:**

- Tree planting in Cameroon in response to climate change.
- A walking programme in the United States (in cooperation with hospitals, donating to a cancer association).
- Donating dialysis machines in India.



*Contributing to food banks in Canada.*



*Participating in recycling and repurposing of household items in Denmark.*



*Executing emergency disaster relief and environmental improvement programmes in Korea*



However, perhaps the time has come to modernise our service model and redefine our club goals. By fostering greater enthusiasm for action, the joy of sharing with others, and active participation in meaningful service, we can extend our positive impact even further within our communities.

Serving and contributing to the community remains one of the fundamental purposes of a YMI club, and by sharing their good works, clubs inspire others through their example. To support and encourage this spirit of service, YMI presents the “Community Service Award” each year to clubs that demonstrate outstanding achievement in community service.

I am pleased to share the following information about the Community Service Award and warmly encourage you to consider applying, bringing your club’s valuable activities to the forefront and gaining the recognition they deserve.

## Community Service Award

The Community Service Award was first introduced at the International Council Meeting in 2019 and has been presented annually since then to recognise outstanding achievements in community service and to encourage the continued growth and impact of such initiatives.



**Community Service Award  
Plaque**

## Categories

Two categories are available:

- 1. Independent Category** – Community service activities carried out by a single club
- 2. Joint Category** – Community service activities conducted at the District, Regional or Area level.

## Application Process and Deadline

Applications must be completed and submitted online through the Community Service page on the YMI website no later than 15 June each year.

## Selection Criteria

Each community service project is evaluated based on factors such as the frequency of activities, number of participants, financial contribution, monitoring and evaluation processes, sustainability, overall community impact, partnerships, and publicity efforts.

For more detailed information, please visit the Community Service page on the YMI website: [Community Service | Y's Men International](#).

To encourage active community service, highlight best practices, and facilitate sharing among clubs, please submit your materials to: [koret062@hanmail.net](mailto:koret062@hanmail.net) (ISD CS)



*Y's Men International*  
*A Turning Point for Our Planet*  
By Dr Sandra R. Hamilton, Environmental Committee Chair

The world stands at a defining moment in the fight against climate change. Scientists are now urging governments to prepare for the possibility of a 4°C warmer world. An outcome that would have a tremendous negative effect on ecosystems, economies, and vulnerable communities. The past three years have been the hottest on record, and we are dangerously close to breaching the 1.5°C threshold established under the Paris Agreement.

The environmental crisis is no longer a theoretical debate. It is an immediate and present reality. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, coastal erosion, and growing food insecurity are already reshaping lives and livelihoods across continents. The question before us is no longer whether change is needed, but whether we recognise the urgency of this moment, whether we are willing to step beyond our comfort zones, unite in purpose, and take the necessary actions to help heal a planet in distress.

Yet even as the warnings grow louder, there are genuine reasons for hope. More than 80 countries are now developing concrete roadmaps to phase out coal, oil, and gas. And right here within Y's Men International, the second half of 2025 brought a season of real, measurable action.

### ***YMI's Commitment in Action***

For more than a decade, Y's Men International has recognised its responsibility to care for the planet. The Yokohama Declaration of 2010 marked the beginning of a structured environmental journey, followed by the adoption of a formal Environmental Policy. These commitments were strengthened in 2025 through the Kumamoto Declaration, which renewed our pledge with a focus on measurable and practical action aligned with Strategy 2032 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Across the globe, YMI is making tangible contributions, and the July–December 2025 period gave us much to report.

### ***The Green Team Convenes***

The Environmental Committee met in September 2025, bringing together members from across our Areas to review progress and sharpen our collective focus. It was an energising gathering — and it was given a boost by a generous community donation of USD 1,000 earmarked specifically for tree planting. Alongside ongoing reforestation work in Cameroon, Kenya, Thailand, and India, these efforts are turning environmental action into something visible and lasting.

### ***Solar Energy: From Kosovo to Kerala***

Over the past five years, YMI has supported solar installations in Kosovo, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, and the Caribbean, helping YMCA facilities move toward energy independence while achieving significant cost savings. This season brought fresh milestones.

In Kosovo, a report from YMCA Kosovo confirmed that Camp Pjetershan is now fully off-grid, following green funding secured in 2024. The camp runs entirely on solar power, has measurably reduced its carbon footprint, and is already benefiting the surrounding community and proves that what begins as an environmental decision quickly becomes a community asset. Among our most recent successes, supported in part through YMI's carbon offset initiatives, a YMCA school and a YMCA camp in India have also achieved full carbon neutrality.

In Kerala, India, the committee approved the release of the 50% balance to complete a solar installation project for the Y's Men's Club of Kottayam West in partnership with YMCA. YMCA Mavelikara has also submitted a new request for an 8.55 KW solar power system. This project will generate clean, reliable electricity for YMCA operations and community programmes for years to come.

### ***Caribbean Engagement***

From my corner of the world, I am proud to share that through collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), our clubs are actively working to strengthen coastal protection, accelerate the transition to renewable energy, and promote community education on sustainable practices.

Equally important is our focus on the generation that will inherit the decisions we make today. In Jamaica, we are developing curricula that intentionally engage law students in climate change legislation — because the lawyers and policymakers of tomorrow need to understand the science, the stakes, and the legal tools available to them. Environmental education is not an optional extra; it is central to what we do.

### ***Beyond Carbon Offsets: Action at Every Level***

YMI's environmental impact extends well beyond traditional carbon offset grants. Launched in 2020, the Week4Waste project united clubs worldwide in community clean-up and recycling efforts. Today it remains one of YMI's most visible global-impact initiatives. This a demonstration that meaningful environmental action begins at the local level and resonates across the globe.

The 2024 introduction of a USD 10 minimum green levy on International Convention registration fees, with funds directed to YMI's Environmental Protection Fund, was another signal of our growing commitment to sustainability. These examples prove that our engagement is real. Yet the scale of global climate challenges demands that we do more.

### ***The Urgent Need for Support***

Despite our policies, declarations, and growing momentum, translating vision into consistent action remains a challenge. Funding for carbon offset and renewable energy projects continues to decline, limiting the scale and reach of our initiatives. Meaningful action requires reliable funding. As clubs determine their contributions to YMI's international programmes, it is essential that the Environmental Protection Fund be included. Without adequate resourcing, even the strongest declarations risk remaining aspirations.

We are at a turning point. The climate crisis calls for courage, commitment, and coordinated effort. Let us ensure that our giving reflects not only compassion for today's needs but responsibility for tomorrow's world. Let us turn promises into measurable action and help build a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future for all.



## *Powering Possibility:* *How YMCA Kosovo Brought Camp Pjetershan Fully Off-Grid*

For years, **Camp Pjetershan** in Kosovo faced the persistent and debilitating challenge of unstable and insufficient power. Although the camp was connected to low-tension electricity, it urgently needed a high-tension supply to operate fully, especially during peak seasons when hundreds of young people, volunteers, and community members relied on the facility.

Despite multiple meetings between the municipality, the Turkish-operated national grid company KETS, and YMCA Kosovo, a permanent solution remained out of reach. No stakeholder could take full responsibility for upgrading the line—an upgrade that carried an estimated cost of EUR 50,000 and required 3 kilometres of high-tension installation.

Yet, this challenge became the catalyst for innovation.

### *A Strategic Shift Toward Sustainability*

As part of its new strategic plan, YMCA Kosovo had already identified solar power as both a viable solution for the camp and the right long-term direction for environmental responsibility. Engineers drafted a proposal for a hybrid system—combining the camp’s existing low-tension connection with a robust solar installation. When representatives from Y USA and the YMCA Europe leadership visited Camp Pjetershan, they recognised the urgency and potential of the project. Commitments were made—on one condition: YMCA Kosovo had to raise the remaining funds.



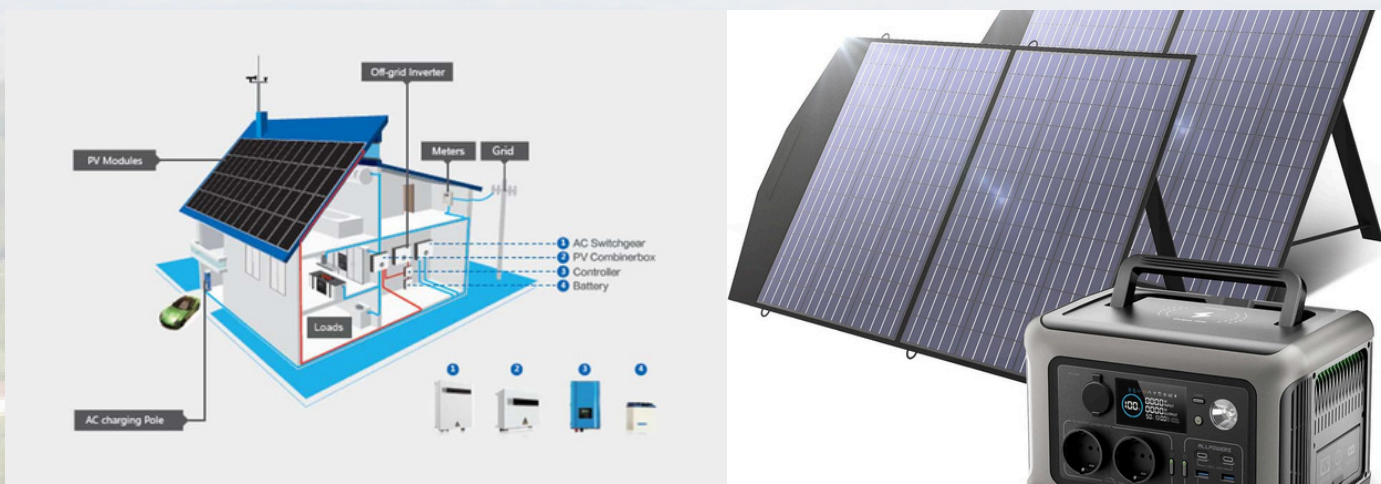
## Uniting International Partners for a Shared Vision

YMCA Kosovo swiftly mobilised its long-term partners, securing support from the Y's Men Region Denmark, who helped expand the project to include a diesel generator as a backup source—ensuring reliability even in extreme conditions.

*Additional co-financing followed:*

- Gjakova Municipality
- Y's Men International's Environmental Protection Fund
- Income from YMCA Kosovo's day-camp programmes

This blended funding model demonstrated the strength of international cooperation and the shared commitment to both youth development and climate-conscious programming.

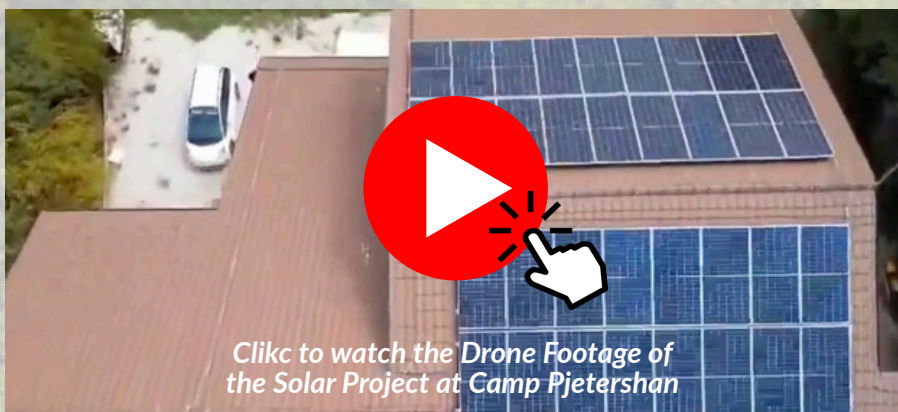


## From Blueprint to Reality

Construction began, bringing three months of intense technical problem-solving and physical labour. What began as a 50/50 hybrid model evolved during the engineering phase. Given the rural location and instability of the local grid, specialists determined that the camp would be far better served by going 100% off-grid. The transformation was completed by September 2025, when the system became fully operational.

## A New Chapter for Camp Pjetershan

Since the installation, YMCA Kosovo has hosted multiple major events relying exclusively on its new energy system including the 2024 General Assembly, which successfully ran on clean, independent, renewable power. Camp Pjetershan now stands as a model for sustainable youth development infrastructure across the Balkans and the wider YMCA movement. What began as a frustrating power issue has become an inspiring story of innovation, partnership, and resilience.



# Green Projects In India

## Celebrating Success: YMCA India *Achieves Carbon Neutrality*

The “*Suraya Kiran – Oorja Tharan*” Solar Energy Project of the *YMCA Always Project*, an initiative of the National Council of YMCAs of India, was approved for carbon offset funding in 2023. The project was developed to address the high electricity consumption of the YMCA Camp Centre in Aluva, Kerala, which operates conference halls, dormitories, hostel facilities, and training spaces that require substantial power usage throughout the year.

The approved plan included the installation of a 25KW solar power system to reduce dependence on grid electricity, lower operational costs, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. Work commenced in March 2024 following the completion of funding arrangements and technical preparations. The total project cost was shared between YMCA Aluva Project and CHF 8000 received through YMI.

The solar system is now fully installed and operational, substantially reducing the centre’s monthly electricity costs while strengthening its long-term energy sustainability. The project was officially inaugurated in early February 2026 during the India visit of Johan V. Eltvik, International President Elect, who was joined by YMCA National President Vincent George, IPIP A Shanavaskhan, ISG Jose Varghese, Project Chair Gigi Vendarappally, and Justice J.B. Koshy in a ceremony celebrating the camp’s transition to carbon neutrality.

The successful completion of the Always Camp project highlights YMI’s commitment to environmental stewardship and serves as a tangible example of how renewable energy initiatives can deliver both ecological and operational benefits.



*Solar Panels at YMCA Camp Centre in Aluva, Kerala, India*



## Vellavum Velichavum: *Lighting the Way for Sustainability*

In other “green” news in India, the **Y’s Men’s Club of Kottayam West** has provided an update on its “**Vellavum Velichavum (Water & Light)**” project, a solar and water purification plant at Bodhinilayam, a school for children with disabilities run by the Kottayam YMCA. This year the project received funding of CHF 6,500 through YMI’s carbon offset programme.

Preparatory work began following receipt of the first instalment in October 2025. This included discussions with the YMCA and the engagement of a qualified solar consultant. Quotations for the solar plant were invited and assessed under the consultant’s guidance. Following careful review, the project committee selected the vendor and finalised the terms and conditions.

Site preparation was completed with the permanent electricity connection and transformer upgrade arranged through the Kerala State Electricity Board, in consultation with the vendor and YMCA officials. A formal agreement between the donor, beneficiary, and vendor, which includes five years of free maintenance, was signed on 10 January 2026.



# Week4Waste

*Simple Action, Visible Impact*  
PIP Ulrik Lauridsen, Region Denmark, Area Europe



Making a positive difference does not always require a complex project. Sometimes the most effective service is the kind that is visible, practical, and easy for anyone to join. That is exactly what **Week4Waste (W4W)** is about.

The idea is straightforward. Clubs head out into their local area and collect litter. Roadsides, parks, riverbanks, walking paths and public green spaces all benefit from a little care, and the results are immediate.

When members take part together, especially wearing the YMI-branded, high-visibility vests or other club identification, the impact goes beyond cleaning up rubbish. People notice. The public sees club members who are active in the community and willing to lead by example. W4W clean-up projects also provide a gentle and healthy activity, combining walking, movement and time outdoors, with a clear purpose.

In Vejle, Denmark, club members annually participate in an April clean-up campaign organised by the municipality. The feedback has been very positive, and the visibility has been significant. It is hard to overstate how much goodwill and recognition this kind of activity can create for our movement when done consistently and in public spaces.

Organising a W4W activity does not need to be difficult. Choose a route, arrange a meeting point, bring gloves and bags, and cover the area in small groups. Parks, neighbourhood streets, riverbanks, and school routes are often ideal places to start.

Clubs are encouraged to share photos of their activities to inspire others and to help show the wider impact of our collective service. You can also find ideas and examples on the Facebook group [Week4Waste](#).

*Let's keep our local communities cleaner, greener, and better cared for, and let's do it in a way that people can see.*



share your local Week4Waste activity with us on our Facebook page: [Week4Waste](#)



Taiwan



Denmark



UK



Japan



## *TOF Project Spotlight*

### *Nakuru YMCA Young Mothers and Girls' Empowerment Project*

As highlighted in the February edition of YMI World, the newly introduced TOF campaign showcases top qualifying projects for 2026/27—initiatives that are unique, actionable, and designed to deliver measurable impact. These spotlights are not fundraising appeals, but demonstrations of how TOF resources bring YMI's values of service and global fellowship to life.

The next project being spotlighted is the Nakuru YMCA Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Training Programme in Kenya. Launched by the Nakuru YMCA Resource and Vocational Training Centre, the programme addresses the urgent challenges facing young mothers and vulnerable girls in informal settlements such as Bondeni, Kivumbini, Machanga, Shauri Yako, Ojuka, Kaloleni, and Manyani. Rising unemployment, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, and crime have left many young women trapped in cycles of poverty and dependency. Nakuru YMCA created a pathway to empowerment—offering professional hairdressing and beauty therapy training, life skills, mentorship, and emotional support to restore dignity and open doors to sustainable livelihoods.

Since its inception, the programme has transformed participants' lives, equipping them with marketable skills, boosting self-esteem, and fostering resilience. Holistic support—including counselling, recreation-based wellness activities, and entrepreneurship training—ensures that beneficiaries are skilled, confident, and ready to contribute to their communities. The initiative now aims to reach at least 100 young mothers annually, with early successes showing tangible improvements in employment, income, and social reintegration.

Presented in recognition of International Women's Day on 8 March, this project demonstrates how strategic investment in the dignity, skills, and potential of women and girls delivers enduring benefits for families, communities, and society at large.



### *Impact Snapshot*

- 100 young mothers trained annually in hairdressing and beauty therapy
- Increased employability and income for participants
- Holistic support through counselling, life skills, and wellness activities
- Empowered, self-reliant young women contributing positively to their communities

**TOF Project Spotlight :**  
**Nakuru YMCA Young Mothers and Girls' Empowerment Project**

<b>Applicant</b>	YMCA Kenya – Nakuru Branch
<b>Co-Partners</b>	None
<b>Project Name</b>	Nakuru YMCA Young Mothers and Girls' Empowerment Project
<b>Project Location</b>	Nakuru, Kenya
<b>Previous TOF Grants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kenya National YMCA has successfully implemented multiple projects over the years with last grant received in 2013.</li> <li>Nakuru branch has not previously received TOF funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Quick Overview</b>	TOF funds will be used to purchase essential salon equipment and training materials, including chairs, workstations, hairdressing tools, and practice dummies, as well as to provide tuition support.
<b>Project Background</b>	The Nakuru YMCA Resource and Vocational Training Centre was established to address the social and economic challenges facing young mothers and girls in Nakuru's informal settlements, including unemployment, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, and crime. The YMCA's Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Training Programme equips vulnerable young mothers with vocational skills, life skills, and emotional support, combining technical training with mentorship, counselling, and wellness activities to build resilience and confidence. Celebrating measurable gains in employability and social reintegration, the YMCA is now looking to expand the programme and train at least 100 young mothers annually.
<b>Project Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide tuition, learning materials, and access to fully equipped training facilities,</li> <li>Deliver hands-on hairdressing and beauty therapy training with experienced instructors,</li> <li>Integrate counselling, life skills, and wellness activities to build resilience and confidence.</li> <li>Offer entrepreneurship support to promote self-employment and income generation.</li> <li>Monitor and evaluate progress, outcomes, and overall psychosocial improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>No. Direct Beneficiaries</b>	75
<b>No. Indirect Beneficiaries</b>	30
<b>Project Duration</b>	6-12 months
<b>Project Sustainability</b>	Long-term impact and sustainability is assured by equipping young mothers with vocational skills, life skills, and entrepreneurship training which fosters self-reliance and reduces dependency. Partnerships with local businesses and ongoing mentorship create pathways for employment and income generation, while regular monitoring, evaluation, and reinvestment of resources ensure the programme continues to expand its reach and maintain quality outcomes. Its integrated approach supports both economic and psychosocial sustainability for participants and the wider community.
<b>Focus SDG</b>	1. No Poverty
<b>Project Volunteers</b>	Yes -Entrepreneurs, Vocational Experts, Salon Managers
<b>TOF Request</b>	CHF 7,447
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	CHF 11,992
<b>Funds Already Secured</b>	CHF 4,545

## Training, Team Building and Walk of Love

On 24 January 2026, members of the **Y Service Club of Nairobi Metro** gathered at Afro Sayari Theme Park for a day of training and team-building activities. Facilitated by club leaders including PRD Sparrow Malaba, IPCP Peter Malaba, CT Caroline Magina, and CP Martha Wangunyuu, the sessions highlighted service as God's work and emphasised the four T's—Time, Treasure, Talent, and Tolerance—as pillars of the movement. Team-building exercises led by Y's youth IPCP Mary Siminyu and a devotion conducted by Dr Evelyne Samita fostered learning, camaraderie, and active participation among members. Following this, the club marked Valentine's Day on 14 February 2026 with a 15-kilometre Charity Walk, aptly dubbed the "Walk of Love." Club members and the wider community came together to raise funds for Gracious Steps Special School, which supports children with mental illnesses and autism. The money collected will support the construction of a new kitchen at the school and programmes focused on personalised education and therapy.



## Empowering Young Minds

On 24 January in western Kenya, the **Y's Youth Club of Kakamega** hosted a fellowship event at Mukoko Village, led by IPCP Elisha Ongoya. Members explored goal setting, time management, and fresh perspectives on career and life, while considering advice they'd give their younger selves. The session concluded with a lively discussion, encouraging youth to apply the insights in their daily lives, while periodically assessing their personal progress.

## Empowering the Elderly

Members of the **Y's Men Club of Arusha** together with the **Y's Youth Club of Arusha** visited Sunshine Elderly Home on 8 February in a mission aimed at empowering and uplifting the elderly. During the visit, the team spent time with the residents, shared prayers, and offered words of encouragement while delivering donated household supplies and food items.



## Kenya District Conference



The 2026 **Kenya District Conference and Youth Convocation** took place in the lakeside city of Kisumu, 20–21 February. District Governor Esther Mbaabu led YMI club members, Y's Youth, and guests in celebrating service, friendship, and fellowship. Alongside conducting the formal business of the District Conference, delegates enjoyed opportunities to reconnect, rejuvenate, and create lasting memories. The relaxed programme allowed participants to explore Kisumu, take boat rides on Lake Victoria, and visit Impala National Park. The Conference resolved to enhance the visibility of the movement in Kenya, foster the creation of new clubs, strengthen compliance, and implement initiatives aligned with Strategy 2032. Club member Jenifer Kimuli was installed as District Governor Elect, and several new members were inducted. The next District Conference will be held in the coastal city of Mombasa in February 2027.

## India Experience and Exchange Programme



The **Japan East Region** Cross-Cultural Programme offers young people the chance to experience a different country, broaden their horizons, and engage with global diversity.

Thanks to the generous support of the **Y's Men's Club of Hyderabad** in India, seven students and IPBF delegate Terutada Tamegai departed from Narita Airport for India on 19 February, with a team of **Kawagoe Club** members seeing them off.

Yoshihiro Ohno, member of the **Y's Men's Club of Kyoto Palace** and honorary consul of Laos, launched a project to establish a YMCA in Laos, one of the few Asian countries without one. Financial support of JPY 10 million was raised through the club's 50th-anniversary project, and the "YMCA in Laos!! Volunteers Association" was established to manage the initiative. A debriefing session in Kyoto on 16 January attracted over 70 participants, with plans to support a future Y's Men's Club in Laos.



## YMCA in Laos Project

Supported by Takao Nishimura, former YMI International Secretary General living in Chiang Mai, and Takahiro Obata, principal of Tokyo YMCA International Hotel College, a plan was developed to start a hotel vocational school as a branch of Tokyo YMCA International College, as country regulations make it difficult for the YMCA to establish directly. The Lao government, impressed by the concept, also approved a branch within the University of Laos, describing it as a meaningful project for developing a tourism-oriented country.

## Y's Men's Club Celebrates 95th Anniversary



*Ms Sylvia Perera*

On 10 January 2026, the **Y's Men's Club of Colombo** celebrated its 95th anniversary. The first club in Sri Lanka, its charter led to the formation of the India-Sri Lanka Region. It is now the third oldest functioning club in Asia. In 1973, Colombo became the first Asian club to admit women, with Ms Sylvia Perera the first female member.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Mae Kha Canal Flower Festival 2026

The **Y's Men's Club of Chiangmai**, together with **YMCA Chiangmai**, and other local organisations in Chiang Mai will organise the 8<sup>th</sup> Mae Kha canal Flower Festival 2026. The festival will be held from 27 February to 1 March 2026. All YMI club members around the world are welcome to join!



# AREA EUROPE

Mrs Birgit Jakobsen - News Editor of Area Europe



## TOF Evening & Auction

The **Y's Men's Club of Gudenåen-Tørring-Uldum** recently held a TOF evening featuring open-faced sandwiches followed by an auction of homemade cakes. Bidding was lively, with members enjoying the friendly competition. Approximately DKK 4,000 was raised and will be forwarded to the Region in support of its TOF projects.

## Commitment to National Litter Collection Campaign



Continuing its commitment to environmental stewardship and responsibility, **Region Denmark** has called upon its clubs to take an active role in the 2026 national litter collection campaign organised by the Danish Nature Conservation Society during the third week of April. While supporting a highly worthwhile cause, participation also offers a valuable opportunity to showcase YMI and engage potential new members. Clubs are encouraged to borrow equipment from municipalities, wear vests for visibility (ideally those with the YMI logo), and involve partners such as schools, Scouts, or YMCA/YWCA to maximise impact.

## New IBC Club Relationship

The **Y's Men and Women's Club of "Eagle", Albania** chartered last year, has established a friendship link with the **Y's Men's Club of Aalborg-Budolfi**. An International Brother Club certificate was signed on 15 January, with an exchange programme agreed: three members from Tirana will visit Aalborg in even years, and three from Aalborg will visit Tirana in odd years. The partnership marks a new chapter in international collaboration for both clubs.



# AREA INDIA

Mr Joseph Varghese - News Editor of Area India



The **RDE & DGE Training** of Y's Men International India Area was held at YMCA Madras, Chennai. Regional Directors Elect and District Governors Elect were equipped and oriented for the upcoming year of leadership and service. YMCA Madras hosted the two-day event .

## Central Travancore Region



The **Y's Men's Club of Mavelikara Royals'** 2024 TOF project, establishing a Tailoring Unit and Vocational Training Centre to promote women's empowerment and livelihood development, was visited and commended by IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik and other leaders.

## Middle East Region

The **'Home for the Homeless - Y's Men's Village'** initiative in the **Middle East Region** provides housing and hope to families in need. Originally planned as five homes, the project has expanded to seven fully equipped houses and a community building for widows, supported by the Time of Fast (TOF) programme. Construction is progressing steadily, and the project has been adopted as the 2025/26 Regional Project, offering security and a renewed future to deserving families.



## Mid West India Region



**The YMCA Always Camp Centre** reached a major milestone on 6 February 2026 with the inauguration of its solar power project, marking the campus's achievement of carbon neutrality. The ceremony was led by IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik and Dr Vincent George, in the presence of ISG Jose Varghese, IPIP A. Shanavaskhan, AP Babu George, and other leaders. Another recipient of carbon offset funding, the project sets a benchmark for eco-friendly initiatives within the YMCA and YMI movements.

The *Y's Men's Club of Hill Palace, Tripunithura*, has constructed a home for a financially struggling family as part of its service commitment, thanks to the strong leadership of Club President Reji Simon and the dedication of club members that brought this meaningful initiative to fruition. The keys were handed over by District Governor Varghese Oommen.



*75th Anniversary of Y's Men's Club of Ernakulam*, the celebration was inaugurated by IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, alongside the Honourable Judge of the Kerala High Court, Mr Devan Ramachandran, recognising one of the Area's oldest clubs.

As part of its Platinum Jubilee celebrations, the *Y's Men's Club of Ernakulam* donated two dialysis machines to PS Mission Hospital, Maradu. The machines were formally handed over to Dr Kunjumon Sebastian by District Governor Miju Jose Nettikadan, in the presence of Dr Vincent George, National President of YMCA, and Santhosh Thomas Kanadan, President of the club.



### South India Region



*The Y's Women's Club of Sathyamangalam Sheroes* sponsored a meal for 84 students at Panchayat Union Middle School, Komarapalayam, with support from the Headmistress, teachers, Rotary Club members, and SHEROES members.

### South Central India Region

Under the leadership of Rajesh Nair, President of the *Y's Men's Club of Bangalore-Cantonment*, extended its support to Air Humanitarian House, Gubbi, by donating rice for the residents.





The Region welcomed the *Y's Service Club of Bangalore Cosmopolitan Youth*, under the leadership of President Ms Aleena Alex and her cabinet.

## South West India Region

The *Y's Men's Club of Chavara* inaugurated the TOF Project 25-09 "Geriatric & Hospice Care", in the presence of IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, IPIP A. Shanavaskhan and ISG Jose Varghese. The project will distribute palliative care for elderly and bedridden patients across 100 wards in five panchayats under the coordination of Panmana Sundaresan and Albert F. D'Cruz.



The "*Home for the Homeless*" project *by the Y's Men's Club of Kottiyam* celebrated the completion of new house, handing the keys over to the beneficiary during the ceremony attended by IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, ISG Jose Varghese, IPIP A. Shanavaskhan, Area Secretary Joseph Varghese, District Governor Shibu Manohar, and other leaders.

## West India Region

IPE Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, accompanied by IPEE V.S. Radhakrishnan and ISG Jose Varghese, met with *YMI and YMCA leaders, reinforcing the historic partnership* between the two organisations and their shared commitment to service and community development. During his visit, IPE Johan also observed the vibrant activities of the newly formed *Y's Men's Club of Guruvayur* and met with members of the Region's oldest club, the *Y's Men's Club of Kunnumkulam*.



## CPE Training of Trainers (TOT) Conducted



Under the leadership of AP Park Cha-sang, the Korea Area held its first CPE Institute Training of Trainers (TOT) at the Kang Geum-won Memorial Bongha Training Centre, Gimhae, 23 – 24 January. The two-day programme, attended by 53 participants, included lectures, Zoom sessions with IHQ, and a TOT forum. Following welcome addresses by Kim Moon-sik, Director of the Korea Area Training Centre, and PAP Han Il-wook, Area Treasurer Jung Deok-yoon led interactive practical sessions that nurtured leadership, democratic decision-making, and a global outlook through discussion and problem-solving.

Certificates were presented to the attendees, signed by IP Edward Ong, CPE Institute Training Director PIP Jacob Kristensen, ISG Jose Varghese and AP Park Cha-sang.

## KOREA BUL-IL-GYEONG REGION

### Hands-on Financial Education for Youth

**Busan Youth Club** members enjoyed a valuable session with Korea Investment & Securities, gaining hands-on experience and practical financial knowledge essential for everyday life.



## KOREA CHONBUK REGION

### Volunteers Support Distribution of Essential Items

Since the start of the year, eight clubs in the **Chunbuk Jeonju District** (DG Choi Yong-sung) have been actively volunteering with Beautiful Store, which supports domestic and international aid projects through resource recycling and cultural initiatives. Club members, alongside Deokjin-gu 119 student volunteers, braved -7°C weather to deliver goods to needy families across the city.



Jeonju Poong Nyeon & Jeonju Haengbok Club



Jeonju Solnae Club

### Jeonju Clubs Share with Senior Citizens

In January, Jeonju clubs brought warmth and community spirit to local seniors with traditional Jjajangmyeon lunches. On 20 January, **Poong Nyeon Club** (CP Kim Gyeong-Mo) kicked off its first volunteer service of 2026, serving around 400 seniors despite the bitter -9°C weather—surpassing the turnout of previous years. Members of **Jeonju Haengbok Club**, chartered by Poong Nyeon, also joined, helping make the event a truly heartwarming start to the year. The following day, **Jeonju Solnae Club** hosted a lunch in Songcheon 1-dong, where over 100 guests attended, exceeding expectations despite the unusually cold weather, creating a lively and joyful community gathering.

## Local Support for Youth

On 24 January, **Jeonju Royal Club** donated supplies to Jin-an Bodeum Centre, a daycare for young people with developmental disabilities in Jin-an.



## KOREA DAEGU GYEONGBUK REGION

### Opening New Worlds for Hearing-Impaired Student

From 1 to 5 February, 24 members of **Taegu Omega Club** (CP Cho O-hyung) visited the Bible Institute for the Deaf (BID) in the Philippines, donating around USD 14,000 in hearing aids, laptops, tablets, a TV, and a washing machine, and setting up an IT training room. Sincerely moved by seeing students hear for the first time and the joy brought to their families, CP Cho pledged to continue providing practical support and volunteer services both at home and abroad.



## KOREA JEJU REGION

### Shared Rice Cake Soup & a Step Forward Together

On 31 January, **Jeju Dong Haeng Club** (CP Park Yong-deok) held a heartwarming New Year's event at Yeongrak Social Welfare Centre in Jeju City. Club members and their spouses began preparations early, serving traditional rice cake soup and pork to around 200 local senior citizens. The RD and other Regional officials joined in the kitchen, helping with distribution. The occasion was made even more special when a 26-year-old volunteer took the step to become a new member of the club.



## KOREA SEOUL REGION

### Hitting the Right Note

**Seoul Y's Choir Club**, led by CP Lim Chang-bae, a musician and dedicated Y's Men volunteer, brings together members who share a passion for singing and playing instruments. For several years, CP Lim has been conducting music classes for North Korean youth, combining community service with the joy of music. The club recently welcomed four visually impaired professional musicians and four non-visual members, and now holds monthly meetings centred on musical activities for all members.



### Recognising the TOF Emphasis Month

In February, **Seoul Region** (RD Choi In-Seoung) held its annual TOF meeting to mark the TOF Emphasis Month. The meeting, conducted at the Regional level, focused on fostering Y's Men's world spirit, encouraging members to empathise with the suffering of others, share in their challenges, and participate in international relief efforts.

**Y's Men International Korea Seoul Region**  
Time of Fast 국제금식기금  
**TOF Monthly Meeting**

- Feb. 21, 2025 (Fri) 12 p.m. / Seoul YMCA Annex 1st fl.
- Participation by club, applications until Feb. 19th
- TOF International Fasting Fund is a program where Y's Men around the world fast for one meal each February. The money saved through this fast is used primarily to support international refugees and the TOF project. Through TOF activities, we empathize with the suffering of our neighbors, share their pain, and participate in international relief efforts, fostering a "global spirit" that transcends national and ethnic boundaries.
- Program: Introduction to TOF Project, Fellowship

Strategy 2032 <Peace Project> 2025 GLOBAL Y'S MEN

# AREA LATIN AMERICA

Mr Christian Greenn - News Editor of Area Latin America



A *hybrid meeting commemorating the 90th anniversary* of the first men's club founded in South America, the *Y's Men Club Valparaíso*, established in 1935 by Agustin Turner was held. The club remains active today with a strong commitment to its work, especially in the development of young leaders, and close collaboration with the YMCA of Valparaíso, with which they carry out joint activities in the community and support the Jorge Williams School.



*Harvesting Well-being Programme* for older adults, focusing on mental health and healthy food.



*Delivery of Bibles* to students of the Jorge Williams school



*Delivery of goods* to representatives of Jorge Williams School



*Training meeting* led by District Governor Chile Christian Greenn, strengthening membership and governance of clubs in the District, participation of clubs from Antofagasta, Iquique, Santiago, Viña del Mar and Valparaíso.



In November 2025, BF Ambassador, Martin Vosjan from the Netherlands visited the Area, touring Brazil and Chile. In Chile, clubs in Santiago, Viña del Mar, and Valparaíso warmly welcomed him, as he spent time with members, volunteers, and young leaders.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity to share the philosophies and initiatives, to learn about local realities, strengthen partnerships, foster relationships, and empower young people in club leadership.



# AREA USA

*Ms Melanie Kaaihue-Yoshida - News Editor of Area United States*



## Club Celebrates 100 Years

The **Y Service Club of Muskegon** in Michigan marked its centennial on 21 January 2026, commemorating 100 years since its charter in 1926. The club was sponsored by the Y Service Club of Grand Rapids, itself established by the Toledo Central Club, founded by Judge Paul William Alexander. USA AP Joseph Kanjamala visited Muskegon in December 2025 to present a plaque to Co-Presidents Sharon Long and Barbara McFadden at the Centennial Celebration Dinner held at the Mona Shores Boating Club.

The event honoured Golden Book members, including Charter Member Francis Beedon and 101-year-old Burrill Colburn, a member for 67 years. Certificates of Recognition were presented to all attending Past Presidents, with Michigan map pins marking the club's founding year. A Continuing Celebration luncheon took place on 22 January 2026, featuring historical presentations and interviews, with Zoom access for US Area leaders unable to attend. The club proudly marked a century of service in line with Paul William Alexander's mission.



## iGo Opportunity with YMCA Chiangmai

*Applications are now open!*

**Gain hands-on experience in community service, youth programmes, and international collaboration.**

[Click to apply here](#)



Chiang Mai, Thailand

Seize the chance to grow while making a difference  
— serve others and empower yourself

*Applicants aged 18 -29 from YMCAs, YMI clubs (including Youth and Y's Menettes) are invited to apply **until 31 March 2026***

### Why join?

- **Engage:** Experience new cultures and languages, broaden your horizons, and become an informed, active global citizen.
- **Connect:** Meet new people, cultivate life-long friendships, and strengthen your professional and social networks.
- **Build:** Gain work and life skills to enhance your CV and become a more attractive candidate to employers worldwide.
- **Empower:** Develop confidence, leadership skills, and the ability to take action for a better world.



# UN DAYS

Key UN Observance Days in March as identified and summarised by Prof Dr Roys Mallassery, UN Projects Committee Member



Prof. Dr Roys Mallassery  
UN Projects  
Committee Member

## Zero Discrimination Day

Promotes the right of everyone to live a full and productive life with dignity—no matter what they look like, where they come from, or whom they love

1  
March

## World Wildlife Day

Celebrates the world's wild fauna and flora while raising awareness of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime.

3  
March

## International Women's Day

Celebrates the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women while calling for gender parity

8  
March

## International Day of Happiness

Recognises the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world.

20  
March

## International Day of Forests

Raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests and trees outside forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

21  
March

## World Down Syndrome Day

Aims to raise public awareness of Down Syndrome and advocate for the rights, inclusion, and well-being of people with the condition.

21  
March

## World Water Day

Raises awareness of the importance of freshwater and advocates for the sustainable management of water resources

22  
March

## International Day of Zero Waste

Promotes sustainable consumption and production patterns and supports the societal shift towards circularity.

30  
March

This section highlights a selection of key United Nations observance days that most clearly resonate with YMI's values and mission. For a full list of UN Days and more information about them, readers are encouraged to visit the [UN's official calendar](#).



# The Queen's Message

by Mr Villy Mølgaard, ISD Christian Emphasis



When Queen Margrethe II of Denmark turned 50 in 1990, she reflected in interviews on her evolving relationship with faith. She expressed, among other things, that religion had become a living reality for her in a completely new way, and that believing in God now carried a depth beyond the theoretical faith of earlier years. She spoke of connecting religion with personal belief and gaining an understanding of what a true life of faith entails. She described belief in God as being as real and natural to her as rain and sunshine.

Regarding her relationship with Jesus, the Queen noted that Jesus represents God's way of showing mankind that He is with us and in our midst. She explained that through God coming into the world in Jesus, people have received the assurance that they are not alone.

She expressed her conviction that Jesus was not merely a good person, but God Himself who became one with us. Through Jesus, she reflected, God understands what life is and what it means to be human. She concluded that this belief gave her the confidence to place her trust in Jesus — both as a pardoned sinner and as a queen.

When my father died in 1972, I realised the heavy responsibility that had been placed on my shoulders. Where could I turn for help? I found none from any human source. In my time of need, I turned to God, reaching out to Him with fervent prayers, trusting in the promises Jesus had made when He walked this earth. Suddenly, something started to happen. I felt part of something new. I was surprised, because, to tell the truth, I had only ever believed in the existence of God in theory, as a matter of convention and common practice. Now, it was as if I had been shaken awake. A revolution in my inner world had taken place. God had become a reality for me.

In this way, the Queen's reflections and my own experience resonate — faith transforming from tradition and theory into a living, personal reality. I hope that YMI club members, too, may find the same peace and fulfilment by embracing a life of faith that flows as naturally as the sun and rain.