



## It Began with a Simple "Aha Moment"

I walked into a Y's Men meeting – familiar faces, warm smiles, and the quiet murmur of conversations. At first, nothing seemed extraordinary. But then something stirred – a feeling of happiness, a feeling of purpose, a connection that was deeper than mere presence. I felt that was the true Y's community.

It is not easy to define. It is not about positions or the size of our gatherings. It is the invisible bond that connects us across time and distance – a quiet trust that you belong. The security of knowing that someone, somewhere, stands with you in mission, in prayer, and in spirit. It is the essence of community in our Y's Men's movement.

As I experienced more, I began to understand its true nature. Y's Fellowship is not just camaraderie – it is a deep connection. It is service that does not seek any attention. It is faith that moves beyond words to action. It is love that reaches across boundaries and generations. It is action motivated by a deep well of compassion and purpose.

Our FOCUS 2.4 is built on three pillars: Faith. Love. Action. These are not abstract ideals – they are the very heart of our service. Faith anchors us. Love connects us. Action defines us. Together, they transform ordinary tasks into extraordinary missions. They manifest in disaster relief, in community programs, in moments of quiet support. They come alive when we choose selflessness and generosity over self-interest and the pursuit of personal honor, and when we stand united in both joy and challenges.

What makes YMI truly special is not just its structure or history – it is the soul that binds its people together. When someone meets a Y's Man or Y's Woman, they should feel sincerity, not formality; warmth, not distance; purpose, not pride. They should feel that we are part of something genuine. Something that is rooted in love.

Today, more than ever before, we are called to go deeper – and become stronger. In places where our members struggle, or our commitment has faded, we must not see weakness – we must see opportunities. An opportunity to rebuild, invite, welcome, encourage, and serve. An opportunity to revive Y's Fellowship in fresh, bold ways.



RS Jorgen Kallesen

# New sustainability statement

**The Yokohama Declaration of 2010 has been replaced by a new one.**

It was only natural that the International Council (IC) in 2010 addressed the environmental impact that the world was facing. At the Council meeting in August, this topic was discussed, and the discussions ended with the following statement:

***“We recognise the real threat to life posed by the changing environment and the limited availability of resources. All members are encouraged to contribute to minimising impact through their behaviour and actions. Y’s Men International will be carbon neutral from 2010-11.”***

## Yokohama Declaration, August 2010

The statement states that Y’s Men International will take responsibility for the greenhouse gas emissions created by our leaders’ travel.

Y’s Men International has set aside funds to invest in ‘carbon offset projects’ that will neutralise their emissions. Y’s Men clubs are encouraged to apply for these funds for projects in their club, in their YMCA or in their local communities that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Perhaps it was a bit optimistic when the IC in August 2010 decided that Y’s Men International should be CO2 neutral as early as 2011. It probably didn’t work out either, but it would be 15 years before the declaration was taken up for reconsideration. This happened at the international council meeting in July 2025 in Kumamoto, Japan.

“Our own” Mila Pavlova from Y’s Men’s Club of Sofia-East, Bulgaria was one of the proposers of a new sustainability statement. The following was unanimously adopted:

*“Y’s Men International is committed to reducing its environmental impact and making a meaningful contribution to global sustainability. In line with our Strategy 2032 vision and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we will raise environmental awareness, adopt innovative and responsible practices, support renewable energy, efficient waste management and sustainable environmental initiatives to help create a cleaner and greener world.”*

## Kumamoto Declaration, July 2025

Y’s Men International is committed to being an environmentally responsible organization. It accepts its responsibility to reduce its environmental footprint. This is a duty that comes with the right to participate in Y’s Men activities.

At the same council meeting, it was decided to allocate two portions from the current year’s available funds to CO2 compensation:

- CHF 6,500 (DKK 51,000) to the Y’s Men’s Club of Kottayam West in the Central Travancore region, India.
- and
- 4,474 CHF (36,000 DKK) to YMCA Kamam Folk High School in Sri Lanka.

On condition that each applicant secures the remaining necessary funding for their respective projects.

IP Edward KW Ong has established an environmental committee (Green Team), which consists of one member from each Area. The committee is tasked with:

- To encourage and recommend projects that will reduce or offset CO2 emissions from YMI
- To help promote and raise funds for the “Environmental Protection Fund” (EPF).



## Membership – Become a part of the community

Here you can read more about what it means to be a member and what opportunities and experiences the community offers.

*By Mr. Varghese Korason,  
Director of International Service and  
Membership Retention*

When a sudden gust of wind swept away the paper on the roof of the car, the photographer was horrified to see his carefully crafted program plan for that evening's Y's Men event disappear.

He had carefully detailed the evening's schedules, and his concern was palpable. We, the subjects of his photographs, stood in the sunshine, oblivious to his concerns.

Earlier, we had asked a passerby to take a picture of us as we were leaving the Sreemoolam Club in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, after lunch. Luckily, the photographer managed to find the paper and secure it before taking the pictures.

Before I parted ways, I asked about the Y's Men program, and his eyes lit up with enthusiasm as he shared details about their activities. When I revealed that I was also a Y's Man, serving as the regional manager for the North Atlantic region in the U.S. area, his expression turned from surprise to delight.

He introduced me to his friends and they invited me to attend their club president's installation ceremony as a guest speaker. I accepted without hesitation, recognizing the opportunity to fulfill my role as ISD for Extension & Membership Conservation.

This chance encounter reminded me that life is full of unexpected moments that can shape our journey in profound ways. The brotherhood of Y's Men is truly something special, transcending geographical boundaries and fostering meaningful connections.

As I reflected on this experience, I was struck by the realization that our movement has the potential to be a beacon of hope in turbulent times and inspire individuals to strive for positive change. By embracing our shared values and working together, we can create a brighter future for all.

As leaders, we must rely on the power of our community and brotherhood to drive change.

As ISD for Extension & Membership Conservation, I am committed to strengthening our community to become a force for good in the world.



Susanne Houmøller

## Time of Fasting 2026

**Thoughts on Time of fast – TOF 2025/2026 – should we do as we usually do or should we try something new?**

We all know it. It is in the spring, in the month of February, that we collect money for various projects under TOF. Maybe we'll have a light meal and give the rest of the money to TOF. Maybe we'll use the nice calendar on the Intranet, where there are suggestions for doing something every day to support the collection. A really nice calendar that we can perhaps pass on to the scouts, FDF and other associations that could possibly support the collection. Yes, that's how it seems to be in many clubs!

***TOF projects are an important example of how Y's Men International works to fulfill its mission. mission "to build a better world for all humanity."***

***TOF projects must help socially vulnerable people, those affected by natural disasters or wars, or other good purposes such as improving health, preventing disease or enabling people to become self-reliant. Normally, the support can be distributed between 1-3 years depending on the nature of the project.***

Maybe we can do something completely different to focus on TOF, the collections and the individual projects. This year we talk a lot about reaching out to others, so how about an EAT TOGETHER EVENT. Invite widely (possibly in the weekly newspaper) to an open club evening with a focus on one of the projects! Eat some food from the recipient country in question – get inspiration or similar from local citizens – tell a little about the country, the projects etc. Everyone pays a small amount for the meal – The club can possibly donate the food, so that the payment becomes pure profit directly to the TOF project that you have chosen to focus on.

I have lived in Africa, so I could suggest a starter of **Tomato Soup** – there were always onions and tomatoes at the local market! **Chicken Stew** – recipes can be easily found online today – **small, cooked cakes** for dessert, come in many varieties reminiscent of our little ones. In Nigeria they are called Chin – Chin.

If you choose to focus on an Eastern European country, I'm sure you can find inspiration for food that comes from there. The possibilities are many and maybe it's right now in this club year that we should do a little more with TOF than just send a sum of money!

*Check out more about TOF on the website.*

## International Convent (Conference) 2026, Dubai

Have you previously participated in the International Convent?

Have you not participated in the International Convent before?

On **September 10th - 13th, 2026**, there will be an International Convent in Dubai.

## SHARE YOUR DREAM

is the theme of this convention.

And why participate?

This is the meeting with Y'men internationally. Here we really get the feeling of being part of an international organization.

- Meeting across cultures, but all with the same goal/idea
- Exciting posts
- International entertainment
- Meeting new people

Yes, it will be in English.

Read more about the Convention at this [link](#).



The pictures are from the latest  
Convent in Chiang Mai, Thailand





RS Jorgen Kallesen

## With TOF, it will be a better world

### **Donations to the Time of Fast projects are helpful.**

The international Time of Fast program has been called the “flagship” of the Y's Men's movement. This may be due to the fact that the individual projects are typically linked to local YMCA or Y's Men's clubs and chapters. It is a unique fundraising program that has been running since 1972.

At the recent International Council (IC) meeting held in Japan, it was announced that a number of TOF projects had been completed and had submitted project implementation reports. Upon recommendation, the IC unanimously approved the following projects as successfully completed and closed:

- TOF 15-02, East Jerusalem, "Youth Potential", (DKK 233,980).
- TOF 17-06, Belarus, “Empowering Young People for their Employment through Educational Programs and Vocational Trainings,” (DKK 209,530).
- TOF 17-01, India (Kambalur), "Y's Menette's Food Processing Unit (KYFP)", (DKK 116,455).
- TOF 19-06, India (Trivandrum) "Care and Therapy Center for People with Multiple Disabilities", (DKK 173,090).
- TOF 19-09, “Korean Y's Men Medical Service (Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar)”, (DKK 239,570).
- TOF 20-02, Italy, "Play with No Limits - Sports & Physical Activity for Young People with Disabilities", (DKK 96,115).
- TOF 21-02, Rwanda, "Piggery Farm Project", (DKK 119,785).
- TOF 22-03, Haiti, “Espace Sûr (A safe place), (DKK 107,810).
- TOF 22-05, India (Panackapalam). "Women Empowerment Project (Tailoring and Computer Training)”, (DKK 79,860).
- TOF 22-09, global, “Accelerating Digital Equity of Underserved Young People Around the World” (DKK 95,830).
- TOF 23-03, Burundi, "Gatumba Community Support", (DKK 33,940).

- TOF 23-05, Myanmar, "Sunrise Farm" (DKK 59,895). • TOF 24-02, Zimbabwe, "Enhanced YMCA Educational Support and Wellness Programme", (DKK 79860).
- TOF 24-05, Korea (APAY), "YMCA Global Peace and Ecology Centre". (DKK 119,785).
- TOF 24-04, Sri Lanka, "Computer Studies for the Moratuwa Community", (DKK 39,930).

A previously approved project was withdrawn as it could not be implemented:

- TOF 23-04, Nepal, "Y's Center (Y's Kitakyushu-Lumbini Cultural School)" (CHF 13,500 returned to TOF General Fund).

Two projects were given special consideration. Both projects were applied for as TOF projects.

The project

- "Philippine San Joseph Smile" by YMI Doctors (coordinated by Korea Bu-Il-Gyeong Region) in Antipolo, Philippines, was granted CHF 5,000 (DKK 39,900) from the "*Heal the World*" program in addition to the TOF funding.

and the project

- "Despite the War" from YMCA Ukraine, which provides emergency aid to those affected by the war, was approved as eligible for funding of 5,000 CHF (39,900 DKK) from the "*Heal the World*" program.

The maximum support that can be obtained from the TOF program has so far been CHF 15,000 (DKK 120,000), but this maximum amount has now been reduced to CHF 12,000 (DKK 95,000).

Applications can be submitted between August 15 and November 15. The application form can be found at <https://www.ysmen.org/members/resource-library/grants-subsidies/time-of-fast-funding-application-form/>

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