

Executive Summary

1. Membership

YWCA Ireland has been a volunteer member organisation for over 140 years and developing an active and vibrant membership base is vital to our future.

Therefore:

We want to support and equip our members to tell other people about us, and find out how they can get involved in our work

We will improve our communication so that our members are fully in touch with our activities and plans

We want our membership to grow and include women of all ages and from all walks of life, with new ideas, new networks and fresh enthusiasm

We want to provide women with intergenerational opportunities to develop their leadership skills and help them to become women of God in their local communities

We aim to foster unity across our association, as part of the body of Christ

2. Training

We want to develop and deliver a relevant and powerful leadership training programme that can be accessed and used by all YWCA Ireland local management committees.

3. Profile

We wish to increase our profile in order to attract more members, to involve younger women, to maximise use of our centres and our facilities, to further our involvement with communities and like-minded organisations, to create connections and partnerships, and to extend our outreach activities. Our main tool to raise our profile is by communicating our vision.

4. Communications

By sharing the story of our work we want to attract and engage new members, volunteers, staff, partners, clients and the media. We also want to promote understanding of our activities and achievements to our existing supporters. While promoting what is distinctive and effective about YWCA Ireland we want to build cohesion amongst YWCA centres, whilst recognising the value of local identities and contexts.

Within our communication development we must:

- Identify to whom we are talking (our audiences)
- Know what we want to say (our messages)

- Determine how we will say it (our channels of communication – web, social media, PR etc.)

Our first audience is our internal one and our goal is simple: we want to establish regular communication that builds knowledge, engagement and support. Our mission, vision and values need to be shared and owned by all staff and members. As different parts of one body we do recognise that our mission may be realised differently across our centres and activities in order to meet local needs. A sense of harmony in line with our core values should be evident in all these activities however. We want to devise means to share our expertise and experiences, our opportunities and challenges and our great ideas and triumphs.

The creation of a new visual identity and naming protocol for YWCA Ireland and our centres and activities is now well underway and will be fully implemented by the end of 2013. The naming protocol will build cohesion across our various centres and activities, whilst recognising the equity of local identities.

Centres will be supported in their communication activities through the creation of a marketing toolbox that offers identity guidelines, a suite of digital stationary and templates for press releases.

By 2017, we aim to:

Have implemented a three-year communications strategy that has raised the profile and reputation of YWCA Ireland, attracted and engaged new members and delivered consistent, compelling messaging throughout our association

Have established a regular programme of engagement for members, staff and volunteers to come together, to pray for the work and plans of our association and to review and refresh ideas and actions in pursuit of our vision, mission and values

Have established a powerful visual identity that builds cohesion across all our activities

Have a dynamic, engaging website with fully realised social media capabilities

Have implemented a hugely successful social media strategy, which has delivered 1000 likes on Facebook, 500 followers on Twitter and an engaged online audience worldwide

Have regularly engaged a Publicist to promote key association activities and have achieved features in local and national media

Actively represent YWCA Ireland on other national bodies and networks

Have forged strong connections with likeminded organisations and associations and have explored potential partnerships

Have an enhanced relationship with the international YWCA movement.

5. Resources

Having been blessed by people, time, properties and other assets, it is vital for YWCA Ireland to ensure we are good stewards of our God-given resources. Our members, staff and volunteers are our key resource and so we need to respect and value them and provide the supports they need to maximise their role and impact.

Our properties are valuable resources, which enable local services and programmes, and provide a vital point of contact with the wider community. We want to maintain high standards and demonstrate our core values in the way we use each centre and interact with our clients and visitors.

As we consider our legacy, and look to the future, we aim to:
Sustain and develop our association's membership

Provide and support Godly and effective leadership and management locally and nationally

Attend to our responsibilities as good stewards of our resources

By 2017, we will:
Value our members as a fundamental resource within our association

Consult with our members about our strategic plan and how we realise it at local level

Have reviewed the roles, functions and recruitment for our national board and management committees

Have recruited national board members who are diverse and representative of Christian women from all walks of life

Have recruited a national board member from each of our local management committees

Have mobilised more young women to join our management committees and national board

Have reviewed and updated YWCA Ireland policies and procedures

Have implemented a fundraising strategy which maintains relationships with our current donors as well as seeking out new funding opportunities, and which will have raised €25,000

Have created a pathway for centres to be self-financing within a sustainable, not-for-profit model

Have a transparent process of financial reporting and budgeting.