



CLD Programmes Update

November 26 2020

1. Introduction

This report updates Board members on current service delivery and progress towards commitments made to funders.

In addition, the report provides information about service provision at the Makerspace, Dr Ozone and wider youth networks in which Paisley YMCA is involved.

Appendix A to this report provides details of progress towards targets which will be updated for future reports.

Appendix B provides the report on collaborative work by YMCA Scotland.

Recommendations to the Board are summarised at the end of the report.

The format of the report has been adjusted to provide greater accessibility through a larger typeface.

2. Current Service Delivery

Our current service delivery is summarised below and is delivered over five evenings and a Saturday afternoon online and four afternoons and one morning per week at the Makerspace.

Evening youth work services will be available for young people to attend face to face or online according to their preferences and circumstances.

Daytime services have begun in liaison with schools with a focus on supporting young people with additional support needs (ASN).

There are no current services delivered on Saturday or Sunday evenings online or offline.

Face to face services at the Makerspace have begun resumption.

From week beginning 16 November to the end of the Calendar year are:

Monday: Renfrew High School ASN - 2 hours 1-3pm

Monday Makers club - 2 hours 6-8pm

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Tuesday: Linwood High School ASN - 2 hours 1-3pm

Wednesday: St Benedict's High School ASN - 2 hours 1-3pm

STEM Girls Club - 2 hours - 6-8pm

Thursday: Castlehead High School - 9:30am till 1pm 3.5 hours

Friday: St Andrews High School ASN - 2 hours 1-3pm

(Total service time 15.5 hours)

Online Makerspace services continue and from the week beginning 16 November until the end of the year are:

Monday: Monday Makers - 2 hours 6-8pm

Tuesday: Advanced Code Club - 2 hours 6-8pm

Wednesday: STEM Girls Club - 2 hours 6-8pm

Thursday: Silly Coding - 1 hour 4-5pm

Coderdojo@Home - 1 hour 6-7pm

Friday: Friday Night Bytes Club - 2 hours 6-8pm

Saturday: Digital Arts Club - 2 hours 2-4pm

(Total service time 12 hours)

2.1. Back to the Makerspace

All outstanding risk assessment paperwork has now been completed and signed off by the Youth Programme Manager. Kevin Jose, the COSHH qualified representative from Excel Safety Training, has reviewed our risk assessment provision in relation to the Dr Ozone unit and is satisfied with all measures taken.

Kevin has issued out a letter for the purpose of satisfying our insurance requirements and has also offered a half day safety training for staff and volunteers at the Makerspace free of charge.

3. Data Capture

Staff have responded well and are keeping up to date timesheets, session recorders and undertaking weekly training opportunities.

For the purpose of evaluation, feedback from young people regarding sessions and developing co- production opportunities within sessions with young people. All staff are employing a number of online data capturing tools such as Padlet, Mentimeter, Kahoot and verbal communication as part of extended time added to online sessions.

4. Current Staff Deployment

Of 109 total paid staffing hours, 44 are directly delivery of services for young people, increasing the proportion to 48%

5. Recognising Young People's Learning

A young person recorded an interview about her experience of the Young STEM Leader Programme which was shown at the National Youth Work Conference.

Three STEM Girls interviewed a STEM VIP, Shrouk El-Attar¹. The girls researched Shrouk and their work, came up with questions and interviewed them via Zoom. Jamie Menzies² and Graeme Rough³ of SSERC said that the session was 'genuinely one of the best things they have been involved in' and that 'the questions from the girls were insightful, thoughtful and it was a privilege to be a part of the conversation'.

Advanced Code Club & Coderdojo progress - Update from Digital Youth Worker

"Over the last few months, it has been difficult with the way the world went. Forcing young people to stay at homes, however the commitment and eagerness to continue to be a part of the YMCA family has been unwavering. At ACC, we have noticed several young people who came in with no coding experience OR with little Scratch experience however, that has been met with the eagerness to learn and over the last 6 month they have went from learning the basics of what a variable is to using for loops and arrays.

¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/shrouk-el-attar-meng-miet-she-they-061b866b/>

² <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jamie-menzies/>

³ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/graeme-rough-65535a187/>

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This has been noticed in that, some of the young people constant needed reassurance as to "what line does this go on", "where is this" to them now knowing where things go. Project wise this has lead from basic weekly tutorials to fully fledged game creations like Snake and Pong, through trial and error we have managed to find a way to keep young people regularly attending while continuing to learn new coding aspects.

We now look at ourselves being able to go through multi-week projects like Snake and Pong where the code gets harder but the young people keep rising to [the challenge] and completely surprising the staff involved, in the future, who knows where this will lead to but I am deeply proud of the young people I cannot wait to see how it unfolds.”

6. Wider Collaboration

6.1. Renfrewshire Youth Work Network

The Youth Work Education recovery Fund will support our delivery of additional work based in some of the most deprived areas in Renfrewshire:

- Paisley North, West and Central;
- Paisley East;
- Gleniffer;
- Renfrew;
- Johnstone and Linwood; and
- Erskine, Inchinnan, Bishopton and Langbank

Paisley YMCA’s role will be to use £18k from a total of £100k awarded to the consortium in December 2020 for planning; and from January to August 2021 for delivery of digital skills based youth work, further developing its digital skills offer as the lead agency in Renfrewshire’s Digital Academy.

The programme will support extended Paisley YMCA collaboration with:

- Renfrew YMCA (leading on the Outdoor Academy);
- Create Paisley (leading on the Cultural Academy); and
- Renfrewshire Youth Services (leading on the Community Empowerment Academy).

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Paisley YMCA's collaboration with the Outdoor and Cultural Academies will be led by the Youth and Programme Development Manager and the Youth and Programme Coordinator, while collaboration with the Community Empowerment Academy will be led by the Chair of the CLD Programmes Committee.

A breakdown of the 18k split into two instalments to be invoiced from Renfrewshire Council Youth Services is provided below.

April-June

Display project – 15 weeks = £2,700

Design it – 15 weeks = £2,700

STEM in the Wild – 15 weeks = £1,125

STEM Leaders – 15 weeks = £900

Venue Cost =£945

YSL Materials = £250

Total - £8,620

Nov-March

Display project – 15 weeks = £2,700

Design it – 15 weeks = £2,700

STEM in the Wild – 15 weeks = £1,125

STEM Leaders – 15 weeks = £900

Venue Cost =£945

YSL Materials = £250

Epson Projectors X2 = £1,400

Total - £10,020

6.2. YMCA Scotland

A summary report of the regional collaborative sessions has been produced by YMCA Scotland and is attached as appendix B.

The potential for greater collaboration between YMCAs in Scotland goes further than supporting our CLD Programmes but the majority of its impact will be directly on or CLD

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programmes or indirectly on them, for example, through work to enhance staff wellbeing.

The Youth Programme and Development Manager and the Youth Programme Coordinator will both seek to contribute to this development.

6.3. National Youth Work Conference 2020

The National Youth Work Conference was attended by the Youth and Programmes Coordinator as a contributor, three youth workers and one member of the Board as delegates and by the Chair of the CLD Programmes Committee in an independent capacity. The Youth and Programmes Development Manager viewed recordings of sessions later on YouTube.

Staff attending the conference found that all-day Zoom interaction was wearing and that because much of the material was aimed at managers and was being recorded, at times they lacked confidence in making active contributions. However, this glimpse into issues facing youth work managers was useful developmental activity.

One of the contributors was Kevin Washington, YMCA, USA ('the Y') who illustrated the universal need to support young people in the challenges they face, which have been made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Also of interest was the contribution by Marie-Claire McAleer of the National Youth Council of Ireland, who reported that their experience that face to face youth work sessions supported wholly online during Covid-19 restrictions had lost on average 58% of their attendees, matching our own experience.

Some sessions have since provoked conversations about how Paisley YMCA performs and what some of our developmental priorities may be.

An inspirational contribution by the Stewart Kyasimire, Director, Black and Scottish (BBC) urged youth work services to seek out and listen to the voices of marginalised young people and emphasised the importance to young people of being able to see themselves reflected in the role models they encounter. This has led to further conversations about the balance of our own service staff.

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Paisley YMCA's youth work staff are all male, with the exception of the Youth and Programme Coordinator. Our staff gender balance has affected our ability to support female aspirations through positive role models and has meant that the STEM Girls sessions have been reliant on female volunteers to routinely provide all-female leadership of them.

All Paisley YMCA's staff are white.

We have a better balance of recruitment of volunteers and student placements. However, this makes the ethnic minority pay gap 100%, as is gender pay gap for those whose sole role is direct service delivery for young people.

A report from the Carnegie UK Trust: [Race Inequality in the Workforce](#) considers race inequality and the additional analysis: [Race Inequality in the Workforce: Analysing the state of play in the coronavirus economy](#) shows worsening equalities in the context of the Covid-19 crisis.

The first recommendation for employers is that "employers should work proactively to identify priorities for tackling race inequality in their organisation and report regularly on progress".

It is recommended that the HR Committee consider how best to identify priorities for tackling inequalities related to all protected characteristics.

In anticipation of this work it is also recommended that future staff recruitment should be enhanced by advertising targeted among female STEM groups and through work with local ethnic minority support agencies to advertise to ethnic minority audiences related to employment opportunities.

6.4. Digital Youth Work Forum - Paisley YMCA & Youth Scotland

Throughout lockdown, the Development Manager and the Programme Coordinator designed and facilitated training for youth workers across Scotland on the theme of Digital Youth Work. As a result of this, Paisley YMCA and Youth Scotland formed a Digital Youth Work Forum.

The forum meets monthly and is open to Youth Scotland member groups. We have held 4 meetings since July.

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The purpose of the forum is to provide a place for youth workers to share practice, learning and digital youth work resources and ideas.

6.5. West STEM Partnership Steering Group

Paisley YMCA is a key partner representing youth and community STEM provision and works collaboratively in the development of a West Region STEM strategy that encompasses all four Local Authorities; Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire.

The group's vision is for an interconnected network of partners that draws together educational practitioners and employer groups from across our region to support teachers in early years, primary and secondary education to develop STEM skills and knowledge through the coproduction and delivery of engaging learning activities that will in turn, inspire learners to pursue STEM subjects through to tertiary education and employment.

The Steering Group has collaborated in national funding applications, developed network and event opportunities for forum members as part of the national STEM strategy for Scotland. Engagement in the Steering Group provides Paisley YMCA national exposure of our digital and STEM youth work to the UK and Scottish Government.

7. LAC Fund

Renfrewshire Council's recent grant supports £3,680 for staffing costs and a £2,300 contribution to building costs, with the outcomes that:

- our Makerspace will be opened up to adult community groups cross Renfrewshire;
- we will connect with community groups and let them know about what activities we can offer and what types of workshops we can facilitate with their members;
- we will do this by promoting the project on social media and via our third sector interface Engage Renfrewshire and we will also go along to speak to the groups;
- we will host adult community groups from across Renfrewshire one afternoon per week;

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- we will offer to adults the following activities:
 - 3D Printing Workshop
 - Laser Design and Cutting
 - Digital Animation
 - Coding
 - Music Technology
 - T-shirt Design and Printing
 - Digital Media

This deployment of expertise in supporting young people to support adults' use of technology is the only one of its kind across Renfrewshire and the only current adult learning programme in which we are engaged as YMCA since last year's adult employability programme with Lowland and the year before that with our senior tea and tablet classes.

As with the Digital Academy programme, planning the service and contacting community groups, such as the Start Projects Men Sheds group, ROAR in the Community and Erskine Hospital veterans group, has begun, with the intention of offering the service from January 2021.

8. Healthy Relationship Project (Early Action System Change)

The purpose of this project is to prevent coercive and controlling behaviour in adolescent relationships. Through a series of training, workshops and discussions we will raise awareness of this important issue, understand young people's experiences and finally create a resource which can be used by practitioners, families and young people.

Work has begun with the delivery of '[Google Be Internet Citizens](#)' training

In the New Year, staff will take part in [Safe Lives](#) training. A bespoke session will be created for the purposes of this project and delivered to all partners involved in delivery.

30 young people from our secondary school activities at the Makerspace will take part in learning related to understanding coercive and controlling behaviour in relationships.

The project will also support young people with additional support needs, who have

been highlighted as the group of young people most vulnerable to online coercive relationships.

9. Personal Learning Planning

The good practice in which we engage young people in developing digital and broader social and core skills lacks in some aspects of provision, consistent means of demonstrating the difference we make to young people. Similarly, we lack in some areas the means to support young people to consider and evaluate their own progress.

The Chair of the CLD Programmes Committee has discussed with staff the principle of personal learning planning and an outline tool has been provided to staff for discussion.

This tool supports:

- goal setting;
- milestone agreements;
- end of programme evaluation; and
- consideration of progression opportunities.

Once feedback has been obtained from staff a version of the tool will be used for programmes which lack this approach. Some programmes, such as the STEM Leaders sessions, have such processes built into them.

The consequence of this change should be that in future we are able to report in terms of number of young people supported, of whom how many agreed personal learning targets and of which how many were achieved, as well as recognising significant (to the young people concerned) achievements.

10. Beyond Local Inclusion

Funding for youth work programmes tends, understandably, to be aimed at supporting young people within the communities they live in. Funding available for communities of interest rather than place tends to be focussed on wider geographical areas and while funding is available for national work, such work would be the interest of YMCA Scotland rather than any of its constituents. This situation is generally appropriate and suits the

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prioritisation of Paisley YMCA as a local youth work agency supporting young people in the Paisley area and its related localities.

However, while a limited geographical scope is not imposed by the constitution, our purpose is partly to 'work locally towards' 'a worldwide fellowship based on the equal value of all people'.

Delivery of online youth work has led to broader, if small scale demand for the services we provide. Interest has been shown from the Wallacewell area of north east Glasgow and we have been approached by a young person in Northern Ireland who wishes to join our online clubs.

Safeguarding can be supported within Scotland using the same approaches we use routinely. Should a safeguarding concern arise about someone outwith Scottish jurisdiction we would be able to refer the concern through adult contact details (or, in the case of concern for safety, through Police Scotland). On this basis and in the context of our aspirations towards worldwide fellowship, while the young person from outside our locality does not contribute to targets for projects funded to support young people, we should include them.

Inclusion of young people from geographically diverse areas supports diverse perspectives for local young people who rarely experience the opportunity to engage with others from beyond their locality.

There is also international demand through the broader YMCA fellowship for collaborative engagement with young people from different places. During the 175th year celebrations of YMCA as an international movement interest in joint youth work projects was shown by several YMCAs outside Scotland.

The CLD management team recognises the benefits of both local young people engaging with others from other places and the opportunities which the movement towards online delivery has brought. However, the external funding environment tends not to be supportive of aspirations for broader, collaborative international delivery.

Despite the British Council's focus on schools' international collaboration the Chair of the CLD Programmes Committee will approach them to seek advice on potential funding for such work.

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In addition, it is recommended that the Finance and Administration Committee consider, once accounts have been through their final audit processes, whether the Association could provide additional funds for the youth work operation to expand to have an international dimension in collaboration with other YMCAs.

11. Progress towards Targets

As previously reported, the Youth and Programme Manager has been in contact with funders to explain that we are unable to deliver as expected and that staff are at the moment engaged more in development activities than in active support for young people.

Details of obligations to funders and progress towards targets are provided as Appendix A which now includes details of the Makerspace: Connecting Communities, Douglas Wood Trust, Early Action System Change Initiative (Healthy Relationships), Foundation Scotland, and Children In Need projects.

12. Publication

Appendix A to this report contains information which has 'commercial' sensitivity and should be reserved from publication.

Appendix B contains no sensitive information and should not be reserved from publication.

This report contains no commercially sensitive details and should not be reserved from publication.

It is recommended that this report and its Appendix B be discussed with the staff team and published on Paisley YMCAs' website.

13. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

1. note the contents of this report and its appendices;
2. remit to the HR Committee their consideration about how best to identify priorities for tackling inequalities related to all protected characteristics;

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3. require that future staff recruitment should be enhanced by advertising targeted among female STEM groups and through work with local ethnic minority support agencies to advertise to ethnic minority audiences related to employment opportunities;
4. remit to the Finance and Administration Committee their consideration, once accounts have been through their final audit processes, whether the Association could afford additional funds to enable the youth work operation to expand to an international dimension in collaboration with other YMCAs; and
5. that this report and its Appendix B be discussed with the staff team and published on Paisley YMCAs' website.

14. Equalities

The recommendation to target recruitment advertising for staff among female groups engaged with STEM work and among minority ethnic groups should assist in improving in the future the gender and ethnic origin balance of staff, in turn improving the experience of youth club members who are girls and/or people of minority ethnic background.

Future reports will provide information on the gender balance and other equalities data available relating to Paisley YMCA's youth work services.

15. Further Information

Further information in respect of this report is available from:

- Darran Gillan, Youth and Programme Manager; or
- Claire McGinley, Youth and Programme Coordinator.



YMCA Scotland

National development sessions:

***Collaborating to increase our reach,
impact and sustainability***

October 2020

Report prepared by Jen Curran, Wren & Greyhound

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Introduction and background

YMCA Scotland's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 identifies the mission of the organisation *to transform the lives of children and young people, empowering them to create positive change in their lives and communities*. To help achieve this mission the organisation has three strategic aims, one of which is to *Work better together to increase the reach and impact of our mission*.

To support delivery of this strategic outcome, three national development sessions were held during September and October 2020 to discuss current collaborative working and identify new opportunities to work together across the YMCA network. The sessions involved 32 people representing 19 local YMCAs across North, Tayside & Fife, South, Central East and Central West Scotland.

Key elements of successful partnerships/collaborations

At the beginning of each session we discussed some well-known partnerships – and identified what it was that made these partnerships work well:

- **Sharing complimentary skills and talents.** Creating something neither could have done alone. And when they came together it was extraordinary.
- **Changing and evolving over time.** Adapting as the world changed.
- **Trust and respect** for each other's talents and skills.
- **Together a long time.** Knowing each other well and what works.
- **Each had their own strengths and weaknesses.** Supporting each other to make it work.
- **Shared aspirations and passion.** A common empathy to make people's lives better and working together through difficult times.
- **Determination to succeed.** Working hard to make it work.
- **Identifying a need and understanding what people want.** And working hard together to deliver it.
- **Collaborating despite their challenges.** Working together to overcome differences in approach.
- **Fun, creativity and innovation.** Working together to generate new ideas.
- **Being a good leader.** Identifying our own and others' skills and attributes and what we each 'bring to the table'.
- **Keeping each other on their toes!** Having honest and open debate.

Brilliant ideas – that are directly transferable to collaborative working across the YMCA network!

Jen Curran from Wren & Greyhound then gave a short input on sustainability paradoxes and the principles and practices of collaborative working. Visit [The Lasting Difference](#) website for more sustainability ideas and free resources, including the Lasting Difference toolkit and Lasting Leadership guide.

Working together the increase our reach and impact

We then considered existing collaborative working amongst local YMCAs, as well as the benefits and challenges for increased collaboration. The following areas of feedback were gathered in three key areas:

What we already do together...

Overall, it was identified that there is a mixed picture across the country. In some areas there is well-developed collaborative working between local YMCAs, however in other areas this is far more limited.

Some examples of collaborative working already underway included:

- Informal / peer support.
- Sharing knowledge, experience and resources (e.g. job descriptions).
- Sharing learning from international work.
- Linking around specific themes or areas of interest.
- Working together on specific projects.
- Working together to access different funding opportunities that one YMCA couldn't alone.
- Two local YMCA's noted that CV-19 had actually increased their collaborative working.

The benefits of working together...

A range of benefits to increased collaboration were identified as follows:

- **Improving our service delivery and our organisations** by:
 - Learning from each other's experiences.
 - Sharing information, knowledge, skills and resources.
 - Finding new ways to tackle any challenges we are facing – others might have faced these too and found ways to overcome them.
 - Getting peer support with common issues and concerns. It really helps to speak things through with supportive colleagues.
- **CV-19 has reduced the usual barriers to meeting together** (such as travel)– it has made getting together easier and more accessible.
- It makes us **more efficient by reducing duplication**.
- It helps represent the **uniqueness and diversity** of the whole YMCA network.
- It **builds our profile and credibility** as a national movement and helps us access new opportunities, such as with policy makers and funders.
- **Doors can open** for other YMCAs if one local organisation has already worked with a key stakeholder.
- There is **vast experience across the YMCA network** – a real longevity and diversity of knowledge and skills.
- **Many funders are now looking for collaborative bids**, so we really need to work together more to ensure we can respond.

Challenges - and what is needed to overcome these...

We then took some time to explore some of the challenges to working collaboratively and identified ways to overcome these challenges:

Challenge	What would help...
CV-19 means we can no longer meet face-to-face and we need to upskill in our use of technology.	<i>But technology has also broken down geographical barriers.</i>
Several local YMCA's noted that they have limited understanding of what each local organisation does.	<i>Could we update the YMCA Scotland portal to have information on what each organisation delivers; where they are based; what resources they have; what specific thematic work they do or have areas of expertise.</i>
We're all working hard just to keep our organisations going.	<i>But if funding reduces then there could be a real benefit to thinking about how we work together and share resources.</i>
We spend most of our time collaborating with our local partners.	<i>But there could be a real benefit in supporting each other on strategic issues e.g. how best to link with Community Planning Partnerships, etc.</i>
Different YMCAs do different things, so this makes collaboration difficult at times.	<i>Could we have more meetings like this on themed topics? Geography matters less now and it could be helpful to think more about linking up with local YMCAs that are working on similar themes/projects.</i>
Different YMCAs have different levels of capacity – some larger YMCAs have more resources and greater ability to respond.	<i>We need to keep this in mind for future collaborations – sometimes smaller organisations can't move as 'fast' as others.</i>
Collaboration can be challenging and messy – sometimes our roles and shared goals are unclear.	<i>It's really important to take time at the beginning of any collaborative piece of work to understand the shared values and aims for the piece of work, and to create a clear structure for how you will work together.</i>
Sometimes working together can reduce income generation opportunities, for example if working within the same local authority.	<i>Take time to think through how collaborating on local funding could benefit both organisations.</i>
Collaborative working is a job in itself!	<i>It takes time and resources and good coordination and management. It would help to have an identified – and neutral - person (possibly via YMCA Scotland) to facilitate and coordinate some of this.</i>

Building collaborative capacity

We then moved on to our second discussion groups to consider how best to build collaborative capacity across the network. Feedback was gathered in two key areas:

What areas of your work would benefit from increased collaboration?

All members agreed that it would be useful to develop thematic opportunities for future collaboration. This recognises that each YMCA operates differently and would allow organisations with similar approaches to learn from each other. It would also be beneficial for smaller YMCAs to learn from those who already have well-developed organisational systems or processes. Themes for future collaboration included:

National/strategic work:

- Increasing our profile as a national movement and being recognised as a key stakeholder.
- Ensuring we 'retain our place at the table' as we move from the immediate CV-19 crisis. Funding in future may well be more challenging and we need to be seen as a credible, trusted partner.
- Sharing ideas for strategic partnership working e.g. with Community Planning.

International work:

- Accessing opportunities at international level e.g. Erasmus programme/youth exchanges/joint funding applications. Or linking with twinned towns from across the world – either meeting up online or visiting (at some point in future).

People development

- Could we develop opportunities for more experienced / long standing staff to offer mentoring opportunities to newer/younger staff?
- Sharing costs of external training opportunities and offering places to people (staff/vols) across the network.
- Wellbeing. Staff and volunteer wellbeing are even more critical during this time – could we develop a wellbeing package across the network?
- Bringing people together from different roles/levels e.g. have sessions for trustees / CEOs / young people / youth workers / volunteers and so on.
- Sharing experience and resources in key areas such as recruitment.

Organisational development

- Impact measurement – possibly developing a network-wide monitoring framework to ensure consistency in the collation of data and reporting.
- Income generation – supporting each other to develop effective approaches to income generation and possibly collaborating on funding bids.
- Improving organisational structures and governance across all YMCAs, by ensuring every YMCA has the 'must-have' organisational policies and procedures in place.
- Greater consistency and streamlining systems and processes across the whole YMCA movement would make collaboration so much easier.
- Strategic / business planning – for the medium and long term - for individual YMCAs and the national movement.

Additional themed topics

- E-sports. Tournaments where young people represent their local YMCA. This could help future proof our organisations and attract new audiences.
- Youth work. Ensuring local authorities are providing youth work opportunities during lockdown.
- Digital. Sharing expertise and knowledge across the network e.g. Paisley/Tayside have a media suite and specific knowledge about digital.
- Sport and outdoor opportunities. These have reduced during lockdown and it would be useful to explore what could be done in future.
- Learning from CV-19. Reflecting together on what works / what doesn't.

What processes or systems would help you collaborate more?

- More opportunities for **formal and informal connections** to be made. E.g. have some structured sessions but also informal opportunities to chat and share experiences.
- Use a **range of approaches** to support collaboration including:
 - informal chats on the phone
 - What's App groups
 - Zoom
 - central online hub/platform (e.g. like Slack or Teams) for sharing key documents such as organisational policies and procedures.
- **Thematic groups** (as identified above) to come together around specific topics. We have limited time, so we need to ensure we spend it wisely.
- **Regional groups** to come together around common issues and themes relevant to specific geographical areas.
- **Peer support / mentoring for smaller YMCAs** possibly pairing up smaller organisations with those who have well-developed systems and processes.

Next steps

A range of suggestions were made for the next steps to increase and improve collaboration across the network:

- **Establish a small working group** to plan and coordinate what is best to do next, based on the report from these sessions. This will need focussed time and coordination from a group from across the network.
- **Identify one area of work to test out a new approach to collaborative working** e.g. bring people together to explore what could be offered in terms of staff wellbeing.
- **Identify what each YMCA does** – possibly using a map – this would make it so much easier to understand where there are opportunities for linking up, getting peer support, sharing knowledge and skills, etc.
- **Develop a programme of thematic topics** based on discussions in these sessions – so people could pick and choose which they would like to get involved in.
- **Each local YMCA being more proactive** – this is not just a list for YMCA Scotland to deliver. We need to work out **what we can offer and what we need** from increased collaboration.
- **Making time together to explore what the big priorities are for the YMCA network in the future.** What do we want to deliver – where can we make the biggest difference?

Comments and feedback on the development sessions...

Members who attended the sessions commented on the helpfulness of coming together to think through how collaboration could be improved. The opportunity to hear from others and share ideas was felt to be hugely beneficial and inspiring. Several members also commented on the benefit of seeing how the positive work of each organisation is impacting across the country. Importantly, a number of members reflected that this is a key time in the movement's future development, and that there is a need to link more to ensure the YMCA network can adapt and respond to the evolving environment.

“We have brilliant conversations at our events like the National Assembly and General Secretary meetings. Having opportunities to come together as a network are hugely beneficial.”

“I wasn't sure about coming along to this session – but I wanted to be part of the change ethos. We've got to link up more to be fit for the future.”

“I really appreciated being asked to come along to the session. It's only in the last year I feel more involved in the wider network. This feels really bottom-up and inclusive.”

“I have got so much inspiration from people in other YMCAs. Sometimes it's the little things you learn from others that are the most powerful.”