

YMCA Bitola Identity Manual

Building the strategic plan was an excellent opportunity to review our organization’s vision, mission, motto, and values. Through that process we re-examined the basis of YMCA Bitola’s identity. We have made some changes to our identity statement in order better position ourselves to answer the needs of the local community where we belong. We have stated our vision, simplified and enriched the mission, updated the motto, and defined our values in order to positively answer the current needs of our community and YMCA Bitola’s new strategic directions. In this part, first we state our VISION, MISSION, MOTTO and VALUES. Then we describe our PHILOSOPHY and PURPOSE - WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO, and the PRACTICAL ASPECTS of these concepts.

VISION

YMCA Bitola is a respected local organization that provides opportunities which empower young people to meet the ever-changing future with greater courage, wisdom and love.

MISSION

YMCA Bitola works with young people on their personal development of body, mind and spirit by providing opportunities that nurture their responsibility, stimulate their creativity and celebrate the diversity of all God's creations.

MOTTO

Empowering youth!

VALUES

Courage - Responsibility - Respect - Creativity - Care

COURAGE	Inspiring people to take initiative and get things done no matter what.
RESPONSIBILITY	Taking action based on proper judgment.
RESPECT	Learning from other people and honoring the Christian ideals.
CREATIVITY	Making something meaningful, even when starting from nothing.
CARE	Being in contact with and valuing life.



The YMCA's triangle symbol represents human nature, what man consists of: body, mind and spirit. Aspects included in our vision, mission, and values presented here correspond with these themes.

What YMCA does is connected with human life, and YMCA Bitola is following a noble path that all YMCAs walk. However, as other YMCAs have different circumstances in which they exist and work, YMCA Bitola has likewise responded to its surroundings and identified which values form the essence of our work. In the explanations that follow we explain our values and our concepts about what man is and should be, having in mind the YMCA triangle.

The values that YMCA Bitola focuses on are: COURAGE, RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT, CREATIVITY and CARE. These values relate to the present situation in the Bitola community, but are also intended to promote positive change in the community.

The three aspects of the YMCA triangle correspond to three qualities of a human being: namely the ethical, logical, and the aesthetic. Interconnected they form the basis of human nature.

- The ethical is the moral impulse in a person, that which drives a man to engage in certain actions (good or bad)
- The logical is reasoning, but also is the wisdom a person uses to get through life
- The aesthetics relate to liking or not liking something, taking into account human emotions.

These philosophical concepts mentioned here are only for the purpose of clarifying that the values we focus on fall within the patterns of basic human nature.

The first three values: COURAGE, RESPONSIBILITY and RESPECT - are clearly rooted in taking action.

COURAGE is an aspect of how man's will is conveyed in life, thus making it an action based value, meaning: it takes doing some action in order to administer your will. Insistence on doing the right thing, even in the face of certain defeat and without promise of reward or salvation, is the highest form of courage. However, the essence of courage is usually understood as a quality of spirit that enables you to face pain (physical or emotional) or danger without showing fear. This is important to stress especially when undertaking challenges with uncertain results.

RESPONSIBILITY ("response ability") happens when a person behaves in a manner of caring for himself and equally for others. Starting from the word itself, responsibility means "to be able to respond". This implies a certain set of qualities or beliefs in a person, in order to be able to respond in any given situation adequately, meaning our "response ability" is seen in every action that we make. This explains deeper the "Say what you do and do what you say" aspect of responsibility which relates to both personal and organizational integrity.

RESPECT is more emotional, showing sensitivity for others. This value is important to stress in an organization like YMCA Bitola where volunteerism and working in NGOs are generally regarded as a new concepts that are not always respected. Respect is one of the most important Christian values that we honor and promote. Showing respect is a powerful way of getting others to be respectful. "Do to others what you want them to do to you" (Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31).

COURAGE, RESPONSIBILITY and RESPECT are important as we promote the concept of people taking initiative and getting activities started. The idea is to connect these three aspects in one - INITIATIVE, linking it with the BODY aspect of the triangle. At the root of that is ACTION, which implies movement. Now, this is not to be considered lightly - taking proper care of the body is an important aspect of good health, but is only the one side of it, the physical. The psychological side is also to be

considered. Initiative is important to cultivate, especially where new approaches and concepts are being developed, which is the situation in the community where YMCA Bitola operates.

CREATIVITY is more connected with the MIND aspect of the triangle, stressing the importance of being imaginative in all aspects of life. Sustaining creativity means not falling into rigid patterns of behavior, but being open to change and seeking out the best solutions to challenges.

CARE is connected with the SPIRIT aspect, meaning to nurture something or even more, to cherish it and show good will to everybody that you are in contact with life. Through its activities YMCA Bitola strives to demonstrate such care and promote caring attitudes towards all people. This concept also relates to the love principles that are part of the basis of Christian beliefs.

THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS of this philosophy can be seen in many of the programs that YMCAs does. YMCA Bitola, in line with its current design and status in the local community, conducts the following programs and activities:

- ✓ Y-Training: non-formal education through seminars, trainings, camps, festivals.
- ✓ Healthy Lifestyle: organizing activities to promote and practice healthy lifestyles, like hiking, table tennis tournaments, campaigns etc.
- ✓ Art & Culture with its subprograms: Y-Movie, Y-Comics and Acid Triple.

Y-Training provides non-formal educational opportunities to learn something new, to improve in something, and/or to gain new insights. These trainings aim personal development, using “learning by doing” method to increase self-knowledge. The festivals and camps provide opportunities to experience other cultures and gain new understandings. These events promote development of all aspects of an individual’s being, not only the intellectual part. Creativity takes special place here, promoting the breaking of traditional patterns of behavior that sometimes undermine our good intentions.

Healthy Lifestyle is not just promoting, but also practicing, the healthy way of living mainly through developing habits of playing sports. Since we are privileged to live close to Pelister National Park, we do hiking and consider it as one of the best ways of keeping good health condition and staying fit.

Art & Culture also relates to developing creativity, but in a different way than the personal development programs. This program deals more with the aesthetical aspects of creativity, providing chances for self expression in an artistic way. This program also provides an opportunity to document events of importance. This program can also address the local community issues through its grassroots approach or be purely an artistic form.

Finally, we note the importance of cultivating Christian principles in whatever we do. Through showing care and stimulating more spiritual ways of addressing life’s difficulties, YMCA Bitola is continually making efforts to animate a deeper and more spiritual approach to life, such as with the spiritual oriented articles in our newsletter “NotifY”.