



OGI: One Great Idea

Ideas that Matter from the YMCA World Urban Network (WUN)

Every YMCA has them - ideas that matter. Practical and innovative ways in which YMCAs are making a difference in the lives of a young person, a community, a country. **One Great Idea** is a new initiative from the YMCA World Urban Network (WUN) designed to reveal great ideas with WUN members, who in turn are invited to share them widely within their networks. Our objective is simple: shine a light on solutions that work.

This month, we are pleased to spotlight Rocío Solís Vargas and the innovative work of YMCA Peru:



What is your current position?
I've held the position of National General Director of YMCA Peru since 2022.

What brought you to the YMCA?
Since 1986, I've had many volunteer and staff roles with Y. Prior to my current role, I was Director of Inclusion and Community Development, managing services for vulnerable populations.

Your post-secondary education?
I have a PhD in Public Health and also serve as a university professor.

How many people are served by your Y?
The YMCA is established in 6 cities in Peru. We directly serve 15,000 people in 3 educational centers, 4 wellness centers, 3 development centers, and 5 community bases.

What is your idea of a perfect day?
When 6 pm hits, you have the feeling of having fulfilled your duty, done good, have generous words, and smiled more than once.

ONE GREAT IDEA – February 2024

YMCA Peru

1. **What is your idea?**

Design and implementation of the YMCA professional training system

2. **What opportunity or problem does your idea address?**

The idea is important for two reasons. The first is because of the identity of the YMCA, that is, it is an organization that to empower young people requires a robust professional body; and the second for compliance, since it is a statutory mandate to guarantee the certification of professionals with the YMCA seal. The idea addresses the need to provide knowledge and tools that are effective, relevant, and results-oriented. The YMCA is responsible for this in that it has not provided key training opportunities for its professional staff, which today numbers around 320 workers, of which 90% are full-time.

3. **Why was this idea important to your Y?**

It is very important for the sustainability of the YMCA. As a service entity, it requires its professionals to be not only competent but also innovative and open to continuous improvement. It aligns perfectly with YMCA Peru's strategic plan for the period 2023-2025, under the umbrella of "Learning and Growth."

4. **How did you get started?**

- I collected testimonies from leaders from different corners of the national and global YMCA who have participated in diverse training spaces.
- I listened to the human resources team, who compiled a huge list of frustrations in implementing relevant training processes over the past 10 years.
- With the information gathered, I pushed for the National Board of Directors to approve the formation of a working commission that built the "YMCA Professional Training System."
- The National Board of Directors approved the system in August 2022.

5. **Where does funding come from?**

Given the importance of this initiative, 100% of the funding comes from the YMCA Peru. An annual budget of US\$50,000 is required.

6. **How did you get buy-in on the idea?**

Everyone quickly accepted the idea. First, the National Board of Directors welcomed the design and implementation. Then, the YMCA staff fully embraced the opportunity, many of whom had never had an opportunity to participate in this type of process previously.

Do you have a role model?

Micaela Bastidas, a hero of Spanish-American independence. She was brave, a fighter and a leader. That's how I identify myself: I am brave, a fighter, a leader, and also resilient.

What's the trait you most dislike in others?

Dishonesty. I have 2 mottos that I always use:

"It is not enough to be, you must also appear."

"Always tell the truth, even if it hurts."

Who would be your dream companion over lunch?

Any person who knows about topics that matter. In that sense, I miss my paternal grandfather.

What's your best quality?

Perseverance

Your most treasured possession?

A family photo with my husband and 2 children.

What is your greatest success?

Disrupting YMCA Peru by placing inclusion, equity, and diversity on its agenda starting in 2017.

What are you currently reading?

Economy of Happiness, by Josep M. Coll and Xavier Ferrás. Also *Every Man for Himself! The future of work in the era of automation* by Andrés Oppenheimer.

What would someone be surprised to learn about you?

That I draw in pencil.

What is your personal motto?

"It is not a crime to ask" (I am very inquisitive)

7. How does the idea work?

The idea must provoke the following results:

- 100 YMCA professionals certified by December 2023 after having successfully completed the 3 training levels of the system, organized into 3 cohorts.
- At least 80% of certified professionals are able to show their educational credentials (bachelor's degree) by the end of 2024.
- At least 30% of the professionals who participate in the process are people under 35 years of age.
- 90% of trained professionals are retained at the YMCA for at least 5 years of service.

8. How do you, or how do you plan to, measure effectiveness?

It is planned to be measured through the indicators provided in the system's structure. In addition, its complementary tools include the application of a user satisfaction survey, the collection of testimonies, and the dissemination of at least 10 life stories.

9. What have you learned from the process thus far?

The power of co-creation is an essential priority. As the workers themselves say, "everything with them, nothing without them." Their voice, ideas, opportunities, doubts, and discontents must be taken into account to improve the training spaces that the YMCA provides. Another substantial reason is that the pandemic has forced substantive changes in the ways in which processes take place. These changes require learning and, above all, "opening your mind" to new experiences.

10. Where can YMCA colleagues get more information?

Those responsible for its implementation are:

- a. Cinthia Saavedra Castillo, Director of Inclusion and Participation
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- b. María Becerra Shulla, Director of Education and Culture
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- c. Francis Díaz Cabrera, director of Comprehensive Wellbeing
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- d. Rocío Solís Vargas, National General Director
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All the advances of the system are documented in the institutional magazine that is published on the website www.ymca.pe

11. Anything else you want to share?

I feel very proud to be leading this process, because I know it will produce great results in the short, medium, and long term for YMCA Peru. But I also know that it is necessary to be patient.



SAVE THE DATE!

WUN 2024 Conference in Bogotá Colombia: Monday, November 4 – Saturday, November 9

Plan to join your YMCA colleagues from across the globe as the WUN gathers in Bogotá, Colombia, this coming November (4-9 November 2024). Our conference will be held at the Marriott Bogotá, and will focus on adaptation in response to the growing complexity associated with YMCA leadership. Our 2024 program will include Bogotá YMCA engagement, cultural opportunities, and a Spouse/Partners Program. Expect your registration package by this coming May.