



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 start at the top and welcome as our inaugural OGI host the Chair of the WUN, Ms. Carolyn Morris



What is your current role/position?
CEO Y Victoria, Australia - I've been on the job since 2018

What was your role prior to the YMCA?

I was a leader in commercial banking, childcare, and aged care for last 20 years. Prior, started as a personal worker in aged care and then worked in finance doing audit, mergers, and acquisitions.

Your post-secondary education?
Degree in Commerce, Chartered Accountancy and Master of Business Administration

How many people served by your Y?
6,000 staff and volunteers, serving 17 million annually, in over 150 locations

What is your idea of a perfect day?
Reading the paper, exercising, time with my family and friends, eating well, and focussing on people and strategy at work

Do you have a role model?
My mother. She is retired now but was an entrepreneur and looked after so many elderly people.

ONE GREAT IDEA – October 2023

YMCA of Victoria, Australia

1. **What is your idea?**

Y Victoria has developed a **framework for measuring and reporting on our social impact at an organisation-wide level.**

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

Like many others, Y Victoria was constrained to measuring only our outputs. Whilst some of our programs were measuring progress against expected outcomes, this wasn't being done consistently and we had no way of measuring our collective impact.

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

We wanted a way to demonstrate the change we're having on our customers across everything we do. We also wanted a way to make decisions about our programs and funding based on evidence.

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

It started by engaging experienced social impact evaluators (from an external consultancy) to help us develop the framework with common measures and indicators. It was a consultative process, involving representatives from Y Victoria's Service Lines, local and state government partners, as well as our Executives and Board members. It also required a dedicated internal team with monitoring and evaluation skills and knowledge to oversee and implement the work. We have undertaken a phased rollout of this project to keep it feasible and to undertake 'pilots' before we increase the scope and breadth of our social impact measurement. We have just completed our 2nd year of social impact reporting, and each year are continuing to increase the number of service lines we report against.

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

This social impact measurement work requires resources - both funding as well as internal staff's time. The funding has come from internal Y Victoria investment.

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

By involving people along the way and demonstrating the value of having good evidence and data against our expected outcomes. It also helps to provide training to key staff in monitoring, evaluation, and learning so they understand why this work is important. We tailor our communication approach to engage the different service lines, communicate the findings, and plan what changes are needed. This framework is appealing because it makes social impact data accessible and meaningful to our staff so they can engage with it and make informed, data-driven decisions.

What's the trait you most dislike in others?

People who say they are one thing and then their actions are the complete opposite (just be honest).

Who would be your dream companion over lunch?

My Nana. I miss her conversation.

What's your best quality?

I always treat people with respect. I am a bit naive and invariably get hurt by people who don't do the same in return - but I have decided to never change and always forgive.

Your most treasured possession?

A broach I received from my Auntie Silvie. She was my godmother and one of the most joyous and loving people.

What is your greatest success?

Being a mother to 2 gorgeous girls. Learning how to sail. Helping people wherever and whenever I can. Achieving my goals I set myself each year. And saving Y Victoria from the plethora of threats challenging its existence since Covid.

What are you currently reading?

The Essentialism by Greg McKeown

What would someone be surprised to learn about you?

I danced on a table at my wedding to a Rolling Stones cover band. What fun.

How would you describe the impact of WUN on your career?

It is life changing to be part of such an inspirational group.

What is your personal motto?

Keep doing your very best.

7. How does the idea work?

The framework is purposefully 'lean' and focuses on 5 key, social impact outcomes (each have 1-3 indicators):

1. Physical wellbeing
2. Mental wellbeing
3. Connection and belonging
4. Future-ready skills
5. Youth voice and empowerment

We have national and state baselines to allow comparison with our data. We created surveys to be sent to customers that ask them about how they are tracking against each of the outcomes and the extent to which the Y has contributed. We then strengthen this organisation-wide data with more detailed evaluations and research at a program level.

This data also allows us to measure how our different service lines and centres are tracking against our 5 key, social impact outcomes. Throughout 2022 and 2023 we have received over 5,600 responses to our social impact survey. To assist with usability of this data we have also developed a PowerBI dashboard that allows key internal stakeholders to become more familiar with the data and analyse it in ways that are meaningful to them. We communicate the findings to the different internal and external audiences through tailored reports, presentations, social impact cards, and workshops. To make sure we are using the findings, the Social Impact Team also run 'Learning and reflection workshops' with internal staff to discuss the findings and create clear actions of what we are going to do differently.

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

We measure our effectiveness by asking key stakeholders: How useful is this information? How can we improve? A big focus of our social impact measurement approach is 'don't shy away from where things aren't going well' – we want to know where we're going well, but we also want to understand where we're not going well and what we can do to improve.

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

Start small. Most organisations have hundreds of indicators. This is too difficult to synthesise into a cohesive story of change. Determine what are your priority outcomes you want to measure against and focus on these (less is more). Also, keep evolving and updating your indicators to ensure they are meaningful, relevant, and appropriate for your customers/programs (we are currently doing that process).

10. Where can YMCA colleagues get more information?

Mr. Ian Boorman – Executive General Manager, Impact & Evaluation
YMCA Victoria, Australia

Email: ian.boorman@ymca.org.au

<https://victoria.ymca.org.au/>



Bonus Idea of the Month:

Check out former WUN CEO Bob Gilbertson's thoughtful review of an article that appeared in the Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION Review: *Board Leadership for Better Governance* which focuses on "Purpose before Organization." Here's the link: [Click Here](#)