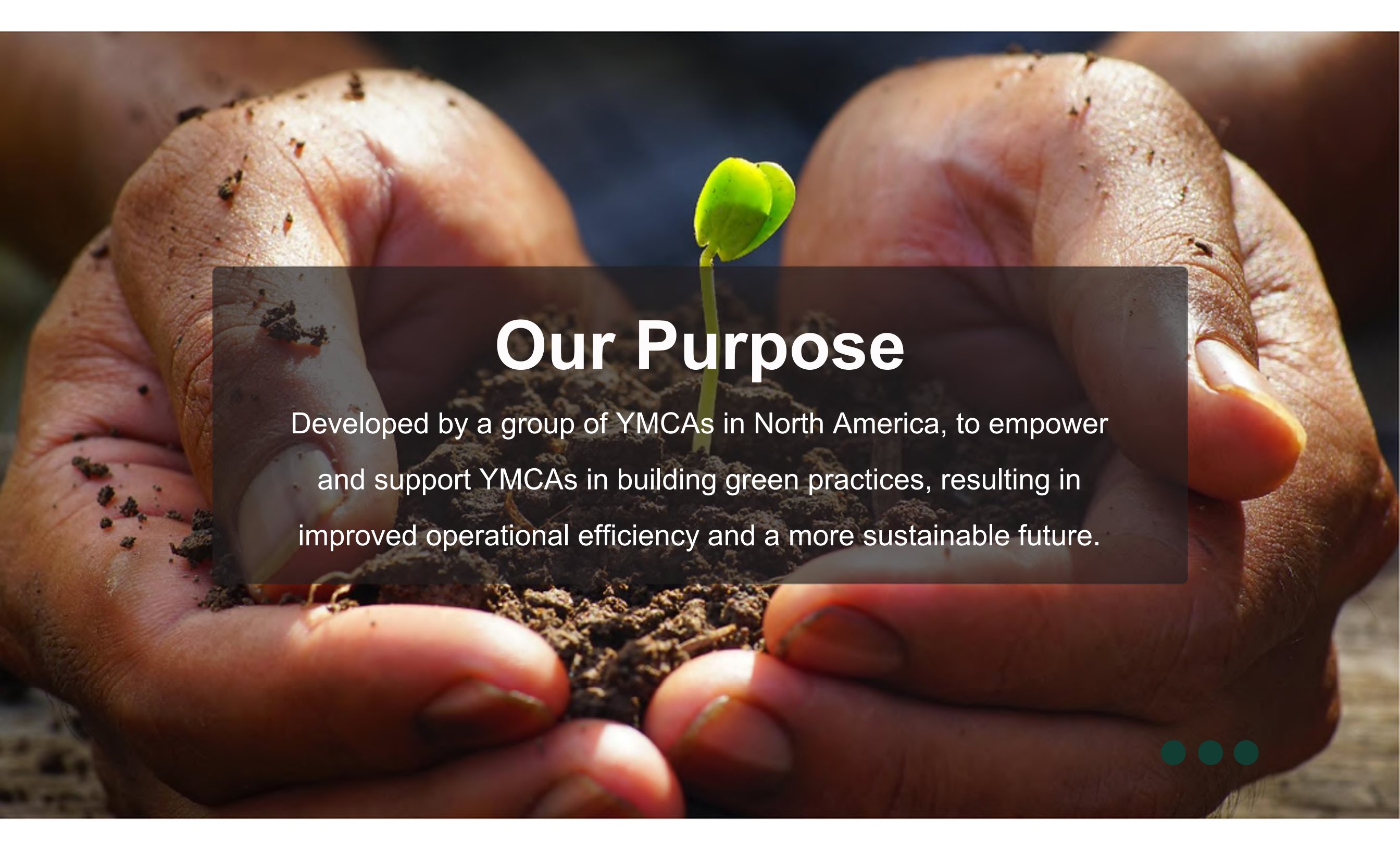




Helping Communities Through Crisis:

The YMCA's Role in Disaster Response and Recovery





Our Purpose

Developed by a group of YMCAs in North America, to empower and support YMCAs in building green practices, resulting in improved operational efficiency and a more sustainable future.



YMCA Green Ecosystem

COMMITMENT

Vision, Strategy & Alignment

ENGAGEMENT

Staff, Volunteers & Community Partners

PROGRAMS

YMCA Programs, Community Education & Events

PROPERTY

Buildings, Sites & Transportation

ADVANCEMENT

Financial & Government Supports



WHAT'S IN A YMCA?



WEST END YMCA

KEY ACTIVITY SPACES / PROGRAMS



Swimming



Gymnasium



Fitness



Childcare



Youth
Programming

WEST END YMCA

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE ACTIVITIES



Cooling
Centre



Family
Reunification
Centre



Vaccination
Centre



Food
Distribution
Centre



Reception
Centre

One Building...
...One Community...
...One **YMCA.**



THOUSANDS OF YMCA LOCATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.
Different sizes. Different countries. Different cultures.
WHAT CONNECTS THEM IS TRUST.

PRESENTATION TEAM

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YMCA OF GREATER TORONTO



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ACUTE SHOCKS



FIRES



FLOODS



EXTREME COLD



STORMS



DISEASE



EXTREME HEAT

WHY THE YMCA?



THE EVOLUTION

FROM: TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE



Programs



Fitness



Childcare



Youth
Development



Community
Services



TO: COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUB



Cooling &
Warming
Centres



Vaccination
& Health
Services



Reception &
Reunification
Centre



Food & Supply
Distribution



Emergency
Shelter



Volunteer
Mobilization



Community
Recovery

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



THE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE CYCLE



PREPARE TODAY. **RESPOND EFFECTIVELY.** RECOVER TOGETHER. ADAPT FOR TOMORROW.

PREPARE

STRONGER TODAY.

READY FOR TOMORROW.



PREPARING FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



1. GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Strong leadership, strategy and planning that put community resilience at the heart of our mission.



2. BUILDINGS & PEOPLE

Resilient buildings and prepared people—staff, volunteers and youth—ready to serve our communities.



3. RESPONSE NETWORK

Strong partnerships and coordination with emergency services, agencies and community organizations.



4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaged communities that are informed, connected and empowered to build resilience together.

1. GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Resilience starts with leadership.

Strong governance and strategic leadership ensure that community resilience is part of our mission, our decisions and our investments.



Strategic Commitment

Resilience embedded in our mission, vision and strategic plan.



Risk Management

Climate and hazard risk assessments informing decision-making.



Asset Management

Understanding our assets, their condition, criticality and long-term needs.



Capital Planning & Investment

Prioritized investments in resilience, sustainability and reliability.



Policies & Accountability

Clear roles, responsibilities and governance structures that drive action.



Stakeholder Oversight

Board and executive oversight with transparent reporting and continuous improvement.

2. BUILDINGS & PEOPLE

STRONGER INSIDE. READY TO SERVE.



BUILDINGS



Climate risk reviews & vulnerability assessments



Energy efficiency & low carbon solutions



Backup power & energy resilience



Flood protection & water resilience



Healthy air quality & ventilation



Safe, accessible & inclusive spaces



PEOPLE



Trained and empowered staff ready to lead



Engaged and prepared volunteers



Youth leadership & participation



Prepared through training & drills



Well-being and inclusion for all



A culture of care and service



3. RESPONSE NETWORK

STRONGER TOGETHER. READY TO RESPOND.



Trusted relationships.
Clear communication.
Coordinated action.
Better outcomes.



4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STRONGER COMMUNITIES. MORE RESILIENT TOGETHER.



LISTEN & CONNECT

Community conversations that build trust and deepen our understanding.



EDUCATE & PREPARE

Workshops and resources that help people and families get ready.



ENGAGE & EMPOWER

Volunteers and youth leading the way to strengthen our community.



SUPPORT & INCLUDE

Programs and outreach that support our most vulnerable neighbours.



BUILD TOGETHER

Events and initiatives that bring people together and strengthen our neighbourhoods.



RESPOND

WHEN PREPARATION BECOMES ACTION.



ONE BUILDING. THREE LEVELS OF SERVICE.

Right support. Right time. Right scale.

YMCAs respond at the scale the community needs—from everyday support to full community resilience hub activation.



LEVEL 3

FULL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUB

- Reception & Registration
- Sheltering & Food Services
- Family Reunification
- Information & Coordination
- Donations & Volunteer Management
- 24/7 Operations



LEVEL 2

PARTIAL FACILITY ACTIVATION

- Reception & Family Support
- Food, Beverages & Warmth
- Washrooms & Showers
- Charging & Connectivity
- Children's Activity Space
- Information & Referrals



LEVEL 1

INTEGRATED WITH DAILY OPERATIONS

- Cooling & Warming Centres
- Pop-Up Vaccination Clinics
- Wildfire Smoke Clean-Air Refuge
- Wellness & Education Programs
- Information & Community Outreach

LEVEL 3

REGIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Full Community Resilience Hub
- Major disruption • Multi-day activation
- Full IMS • Regional coordination

LEVEL 2

LOCAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT

- Partial Facility Activation
- Temporary disruption • Hours to days
- Partial activation • Municipal services engaged

LEVEL 1

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Integrated with Daily Operations
- Minimal disruption • Hours to days
- Uses existing staff and resources
- Supports everyday community needs



LEVEL 1 – COMMUNITY SUPPORT

EVERYDAY RESILIENCE. STRONGER COMMUNITIES, EVERY DAY.

YMCAs support community well-being by providing essential services during everyday challenges—while continuing to deliver our regular programs.



Minimal impact
on regular
programs



Short duration
(hours to
days)



Uses existing
staff and
resources



Addresses
localized
community needs



Builds trust
and well-being
every day



Heat Relief
Cooling Centre



Pop-Up
Vaccination Clinic



Clean Air Refuge
During Smoke Events



Charging Stations
during Power Outages



Health & Wellness
Education

LEVEL 2 – LOCAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT

HERE FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS WHEN LOCAL EMERGENCIES DISRUPT LIVES.

When local incidents occur, YMCAs provide a safe, welcoming place and immediate essential services—while keeping part of the facility open for our community.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS



Temporary disruption:
part of the facility
activated



Several hours
to several days



Municipal emergency
services engaged



Focus on immediate
needs and stabilization

EXAMPLE SERVICES

- ✓ Reception & Registration
- ✓ Family Support & Reunification
- ✓ Food & Beverages
- ✓ Warmth / Rest Areas
- ✓ Washrooms & Showers
- ✓ Charging & Connectivity
- ✓ Children's Activity Space
- ✓ Information & Referrals

EXAMPLE SCENARIO



APARTMENT FIRE

A winter apartment fire displaces 250 residents. The YMCA provides a safe place while the City arranges buses and temporary accommodation.



PARTIAL FACILITY ACTIVATION



Welcome & Registration



Rest & Warmth



Food & Beverages



Family Support

LEVEL 3 – REGIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, WE BECOME A COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUB.

In large-scale emergencies, YMCAs respond as full-service hubs—supporting shelter, information, coordination and connection for hundreds or thousands of people.



FULL FACILITY ACTIVATION

- Multi-day operations
- Full Incident Management System (IMS)
- Municipal / Provincial coordination
- Hundreds to thousands supported
- 24/7 operations

CORE SERVICES

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Reception Centre & Registration | Volunteer Coordination |
| Family Reunification Centre | Donations Management |
| Emergency Shelter | Mental Health & Wellness Support |
| Food Services | Children & Youth Programming |
| Information & Navigation | Staff & Responder Support |

EXAMPLE SCENARIOS

- Severe Storms & Ice Storms
Widespread power outages, transportation disruption
- Wildfires
Evacuations, smoke events, long-term displacement
- Floods
Community evacuations, infrastructure damage
- Hurricanes
Regional evacuations, critical infrastructure impact



Information & Registration



Shelter & Rest Areas



Food Services



Children & Youth Support



Family Reunification

RECOVER

Communities Heal Together



THE YMCA'S ROLE IN RECOVERY



Recovery begins the moment we reopen our doors.



RECONNECT



- Community meals
- Coffee gatherings
- Drop-in spaces
- Connection and belonging



RESTORE



- Fitness and recreation
- Childcare
- Swimming
- Youth programs
- Healthy routines



SUPPORT



- Mental health support
- Information & navigation
- Volunteer connections
- Referrals and resources
- Compassion and care



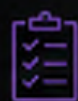
LEARN



- After action reviews
- Update plans & procedures
- Strengthen training
- Improve facilities
- Build a more resilient future

ADAPT

**STRONGER TODAY.
READY FOR TOMORROW.**



Updated emergency plans



New municipal partnerships



Generator installation



Better air filtration



Volunteer recruitment



Youth leadership



Climate adaptation projects



TRUSTED BEFORE THE CRISIS

PREPARED BEFORE THE CRISIS.
READY WHEN IT MATTERS.



COMMUNITIES REMEMBER WHO SHOWS UP.

We have a long history of doing the right thing, every day.



TRUST IS BUILT LONG BEFORE EMERGENCIES OCCUR.

Our programs, our people and our presence strengthen our communities every day.



PREPARED ORGANIZATIONS BECOME TRUSTED PARTNERS.

We take a proactive role in preparedness so we can respond when it matters most.



TRUSTED PARTNERS BECOME PART OF THE RESILIENCE SYSTEM.

Recognition as a reliable, prepared organization ensures we are included, supported and resourced to help communities thrive.



PREPAREDNESS BUILDS TRUST.

TRUST BUILDS RESILIENCE.

TOGETHER, WE BUILD **STRONGER COMMUNITIES.**

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ON THE GLOBAL LEVEL

Three global stories. One shared mission.
Building resilient communities for a better future.



NEXT: GLOBAL CASE STUDIES

1



MADAGASCAR

Community-led resilience

Local solutions. Lasting impact.

2



OSAKA, JAPAN

Preparedness in action

Innovation. Coordination. Compassion.

3



SIERRA LEONE

Strength through community

Hope. Recovery. Resilience.

PRESENTATION TEAM



Heriniaina Randriamalala
Programmes Executive Officer

YMCA Madagascar



Christian Kamara
National General Secretary

YMCA Sierra Leone



Kazuki Yamane
Vice General Secretary

Osaka YMCA



Youth-Led Emergency Preparedness & Disaster Recovery

Building Community Resilience in Madagascar • YMCA Madagascar



THE CHALLENGES FACING MADAGASCAR

One of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. Communities face multiple environmental threats that impact lives, livelihoods and the future.



DEFORESTATION

Rapid loss of forests for charcoal, agriculture and settlement reduces biodiversity and increases vulnerability to disasters.



CYCLONES

Madagascar is in the path of frequent and intense tropical cyclones that bring strong winds, heavy rain and storm surges.



SOIL DEGRADATION

Erosion and unsustainable land use deplete soil fertility, reduce agricultural productivity and threaten food security.



FLOODING

Heavy rainfall and poor drainage cause flooding that damages homes, infrastructure, crops and livelihoods.



PROLONGED DROUGHTS

Increasing droughts limit water availability, devastate crops and livestock and intensify hunger and poverty.



VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Many families live in fragile housing with limited access to services, making recovery difficult and slow after disasters strike.



THE IMPACT



Loss of lives
and displacement



Food insecurity
and malnutrition



Economic losses
and reduced
livelihoods



Pressure on water
and natural
resources



Children and youth
most affected

**TOGETHER, WE CAN
BUILD RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES.**

Prepared communities save lives.
Sustainable solutions protect the future.



Why Youth Leadership Matters

- Youth are leaders, not beneficiaries
- Trusted voices within communities
- Rapid mobilization during emergencies
- Long-term commitment to local resilience



Prepare → Respond → Recover

- Prepare: risk assessments, education, early warnings
- Respond: outreach, support, volunteer mobilization
- Recover: housing rehabilitation and rebuilding
- Resilience integrated across all activities



Community Preparedness in Action

- Awareness campaigns and training
- School and youth engagement



Emergency Response & Community Support

- Identify and support vulnerable families
- Coordinate volunteer deployment
- Provide community assistance
- Support recovery planning



Recovery – After the Storm



BEFORE



AFTER

HOUSE REHABILITATION

- Building Back Better



BEFORE



AFTER

YMCA MADAGASCAR

OUR IMPACT



Through youth leadership, community action and environmental stewardship, YMCA Madagascar is building stronger, more resilient communities.



OUR REACH (2018–2024)



10,000+

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS
REACHED**

through environmental
awareness and education



3,700+

TREES PLANTED

through community
reforestation efforts



GREEN CLUBS

Youth-led clubs established
in schools to promote
environmental responsibility,
leadership and local action



**SUSTAINABILITY
INTEGRATION**

Environmental sustainability
integrated into YMCA
programming to build
long-term community
capacity

**“ Young people are not just the leaders
of tomorrow. They are leading today. ”**

– YMCA Madagascar

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



**ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP**



Youth lead tree planting, waste
management and environmental
education to protect natural
resources and reduce disaster risk.



**COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE**



Communities are better prepared
for hazards through risk assessments,
early warning awareness and
volunteer mobilization.



**DISASTER RECOVERY
& RECONSTRUCTION**



We support families to recover and
rebuild safer, stronger homes that can
withstand future storms and heavy rain.



**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
& LEADERSHIP**



Young people develop leadership
skills, gain confidence and become
agents of positive change in their
communities.



**SUSTAINABLE
FUTURES**



By caring for the environment and
supporting communities, we are
building a more sustainable and
resilient Madagascar.

**TOGETHER, WE BUILD
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

Prepared communities save lives.
Sustainable solutions protect
the future.

♥ *Thank you*

to our partners, volunteers and
communities for creating
lasting impact.



Stronger Youth. Stronger Communities. Stronger Madagascar.

Empowering Young People • Strengthening Communities • Transforming Lives

Impact & Lessons Learned

- Prepared communities recover faster
- Youth leadership creates lasting change
- Recovery should reduce future risk
- Environmental stewardship supports resilience



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YMCA Sierra Leone Climate Change Interventions

YMCA World Council



Climate Change in Sierra Leone: Current Context

Sierra Leone is among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries.

Temperature has increased by approximately 0.8°C since 1960.

Flooding, coastal erosion, and extreme rainfall continue to increase.

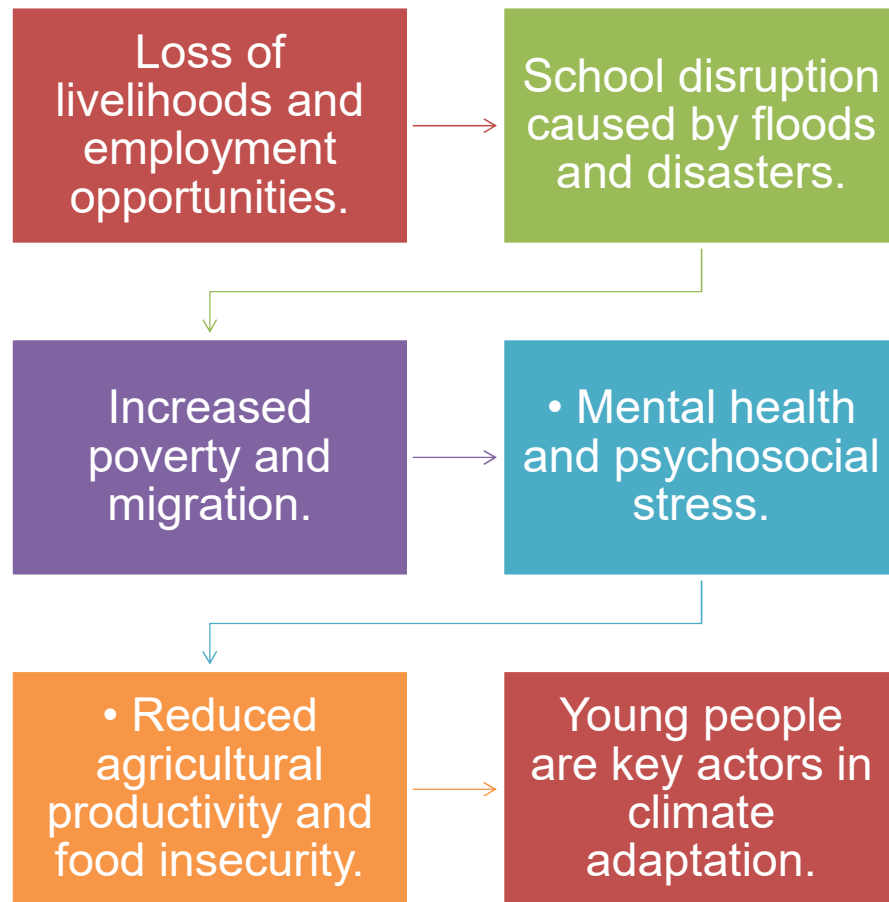
Flooding affected over 221,000 people between 1980–2020.

Coastal erosion reaches 4–6 meters annually in some areas.

Sources: World Bank, UNDP, Climate Policy Radar



Impact of Climate Change on Young People



YMCA Sierra Leone Climate Action Approach

Objective:

To complement Government's efforts in supporting young people and communities to build resilience and strengthen climate mitigation and coping strategies.

Operational Areas:

- Freetown
- Lungi
- Kenema
- Bo

Our Community Climate Action

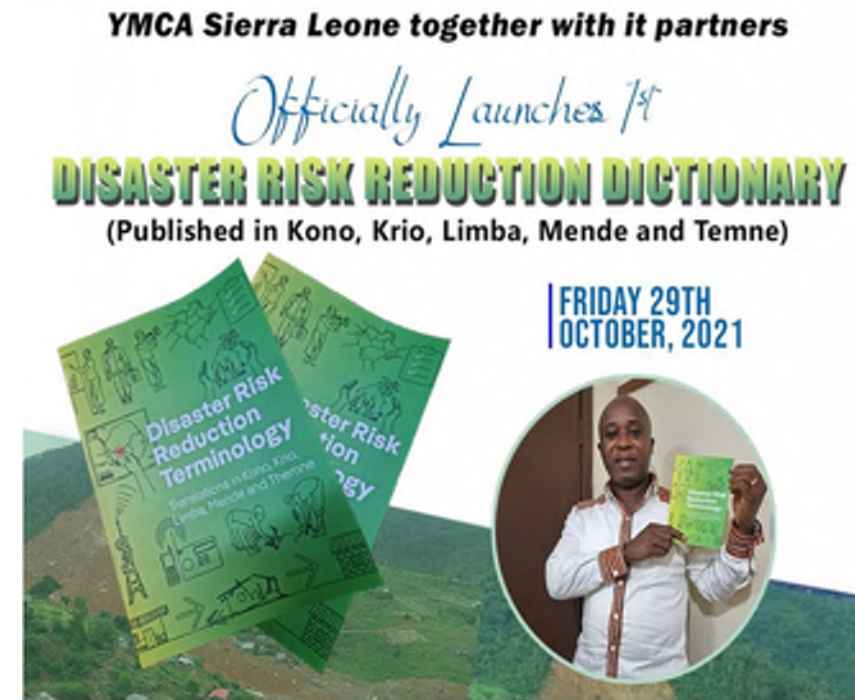
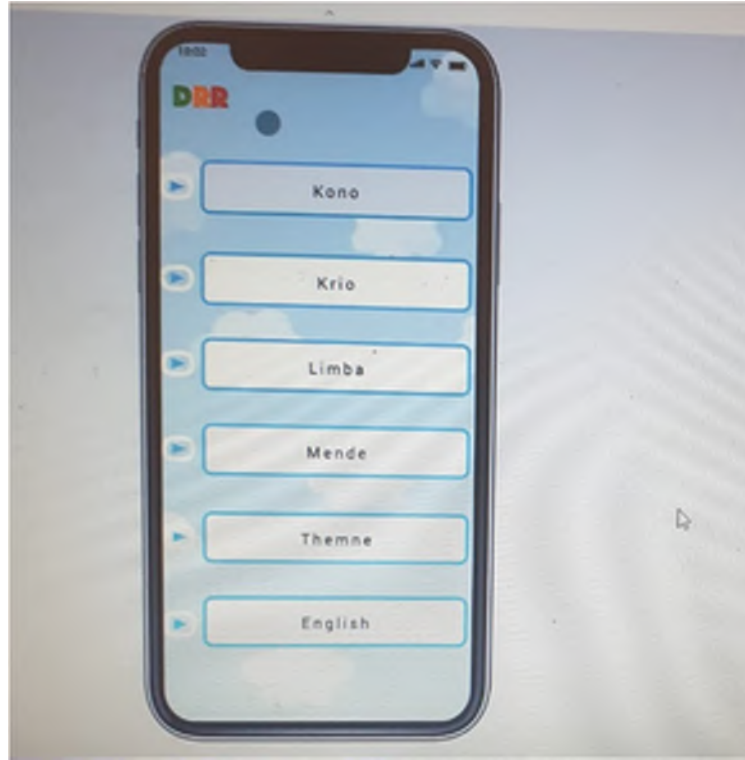
- ❑ Working through 20 established youth groups across the country.
- ❑ Conducts community climate sensitization and mobilization for over 100 young people.
- ❑ Youth leadership development.
- ❑ Community adaptation and resilience planning.
- ❑ Environmental restoration initiatives.





Mangrove Restoration and Environmental Protection

- ❑ Planted over 1,000 mangroves through our Youth-led mangrove restoration activities.
- ❑ Conduct community awareness on coastal protection.
- ❑ Teaching Ecosystem-based adaptation approaches.
- ❑ Protection against coastal erosion and flooding.
- ❑ Strengthening biodiversity and fisheries protection.



Climate Education and DRR Innovation

- Developed a DRR Terminology Book.
- Published in Krio, Kono, Limba, Mende, and Themne.
 - Distributed over 500 copies to schools, universities libraries and state institutions
- Developed a DRR Terminology Application.
- Conducted climate action training for youth groups and communities.

School Eco Clubs and Youth Environmental Leadership

- Established and supported 20 school eco clubs with 300 pupils.
- Planted over 1,500 trees through our Tree planting and waste management activities.
- Conducted Environmental awareness campaigns in over 60 communities.
- Youth climate leadership development.





Community Resilience and Livelihood Support

- Supported the planting of over 2,000 cash crops including; cashewnut, oil palm, and coconut.
- Rehabilitated community water systems affected by flooding.
- Supported water preservation initiatives.
- Provided psychosocial support to climate-affected youth.

Key Lessons and Call to Action

- Youth-led climate action is effective.
- Local language approaches improve inclusion.
- Nature-based solutions strengthen resilience.
- Climate adaptation must include livelihoods and psychosocial support.

Young people are leaders in climate resilience.



PRESENTATION TEAM



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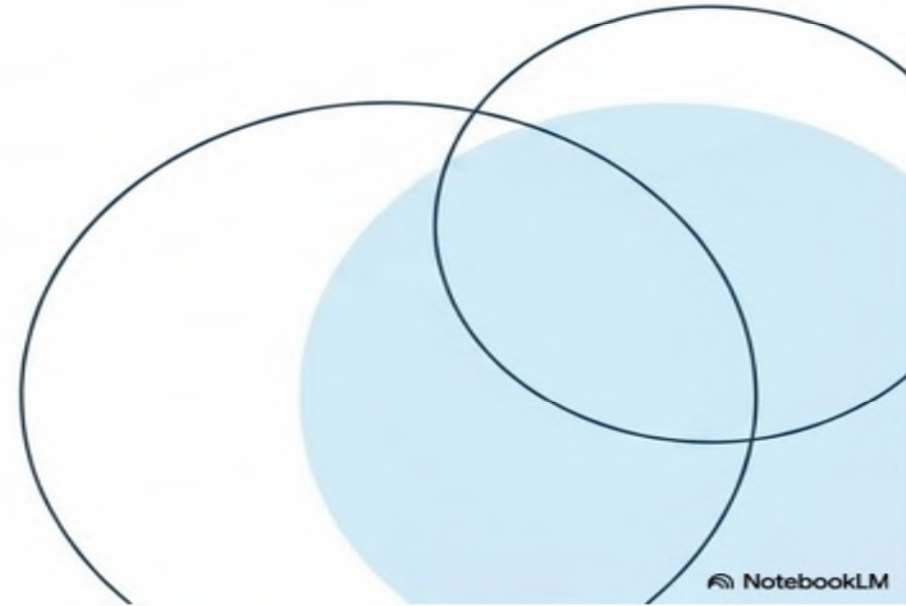
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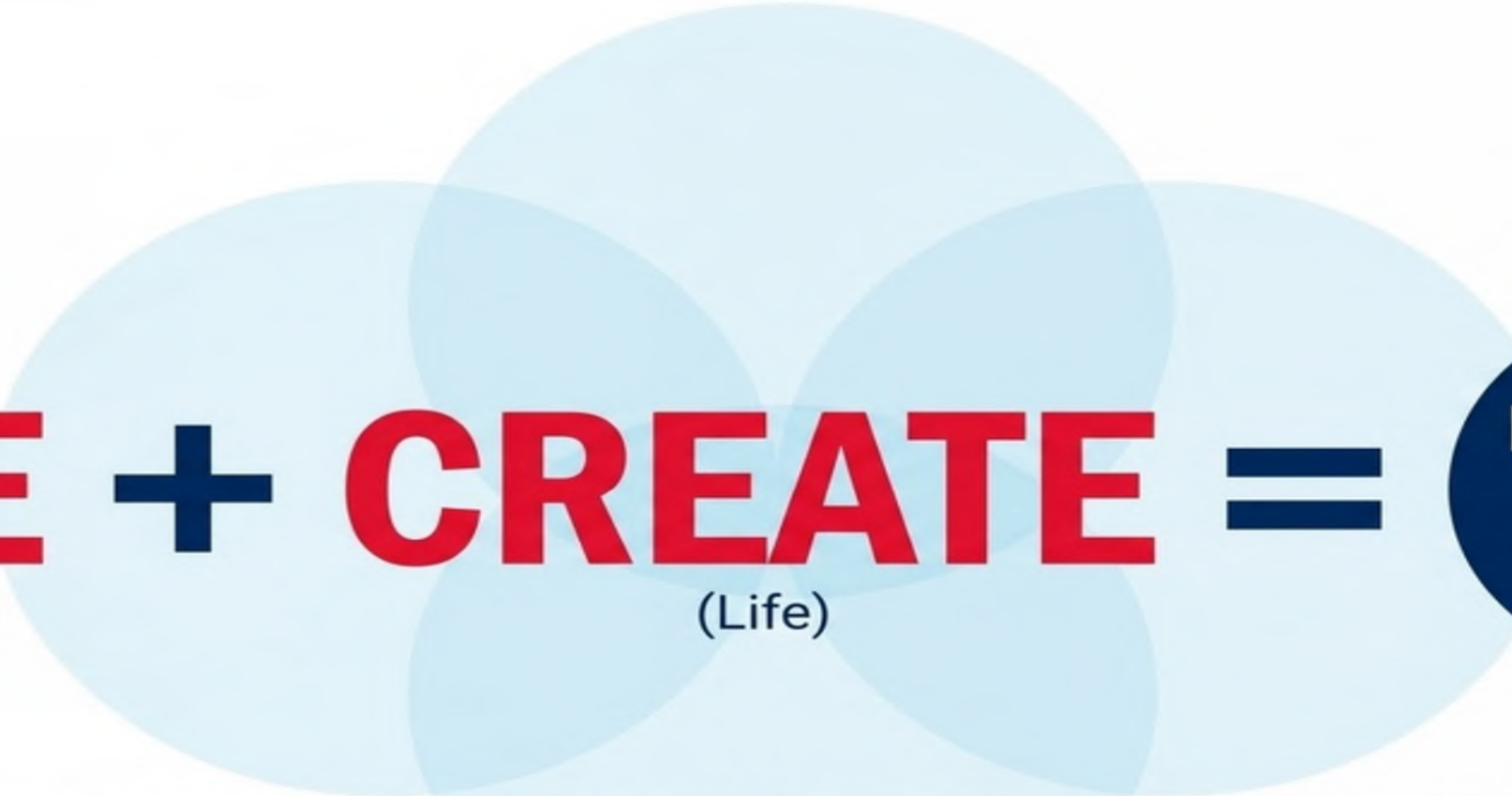


The Power of Recreation in Disaster Response

Insights from the Japan YMCA
Area Safety Guidelines



In disaster response, the most important thing is to protect life.



RE + **CREATE** = **Restoring Human Dignity**

(Again) (Life)

We traditionally associate recreation with leisure and play. In the crucible of a crisis, it takes on its literal meaning: Re-Creation. When everything else is lost, it is the deliberate act of re-creating life, protecting the spirit, and restoring dignity.

Paradigm Shift Matrix

Traditional Relief



Focus: Sustaining biological life

Metric: Calories, triage, and medicine

Vibe: Enduring the crisis

YMCA Relief



Focus: Re-creating human life

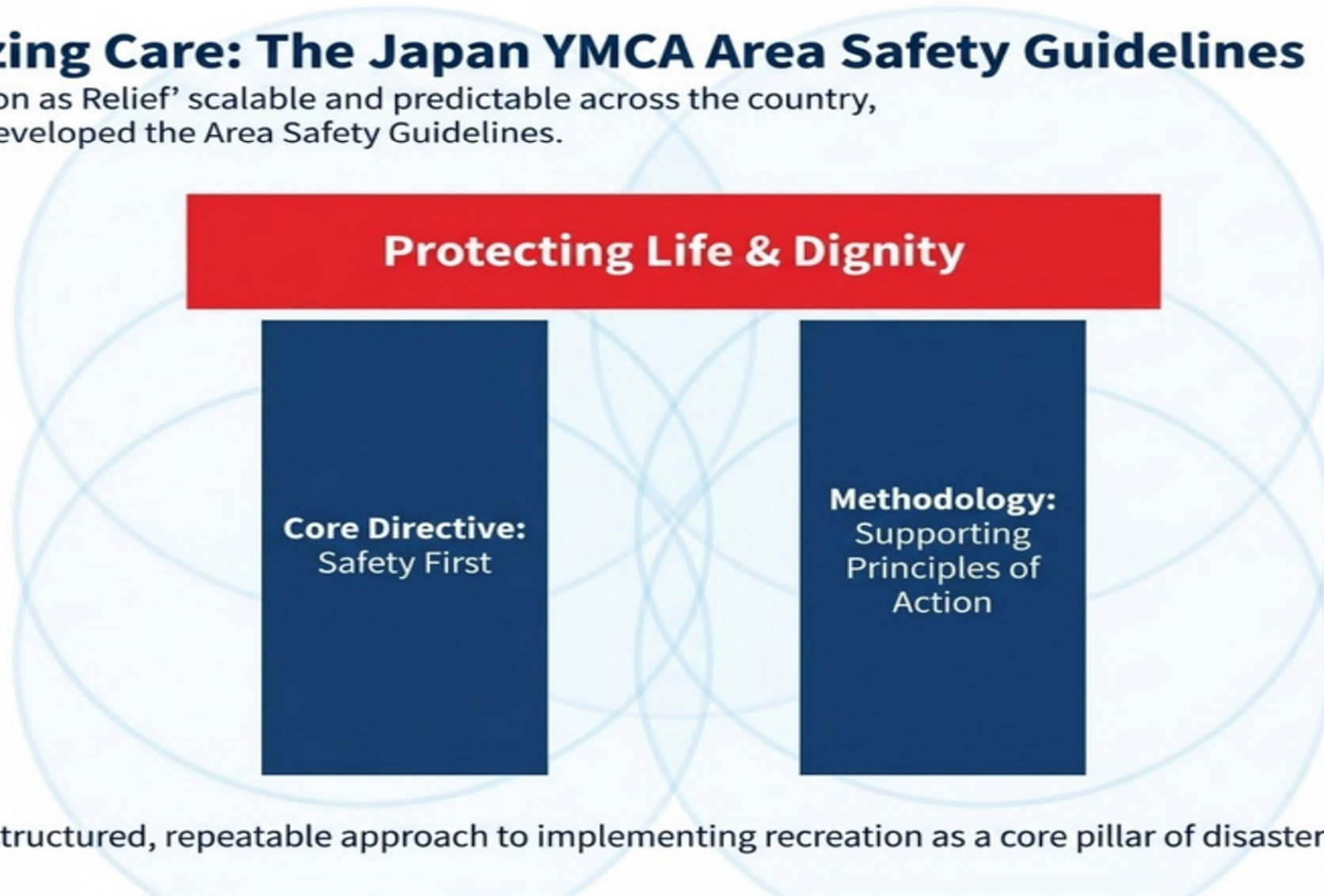
Metric: Smiles, psychological safety, and connection

Vibe: Living with dignity

The Catalyst (2005): Inside the Houston Astrodome following Hurricane Katrina. While others focused exclusively on physiological survival, the YMCA built a playground. Creating spaces for children's lives to shine is essential crisis support.

Systematizing Care: The Japan YMCA Area Safety Guidelines

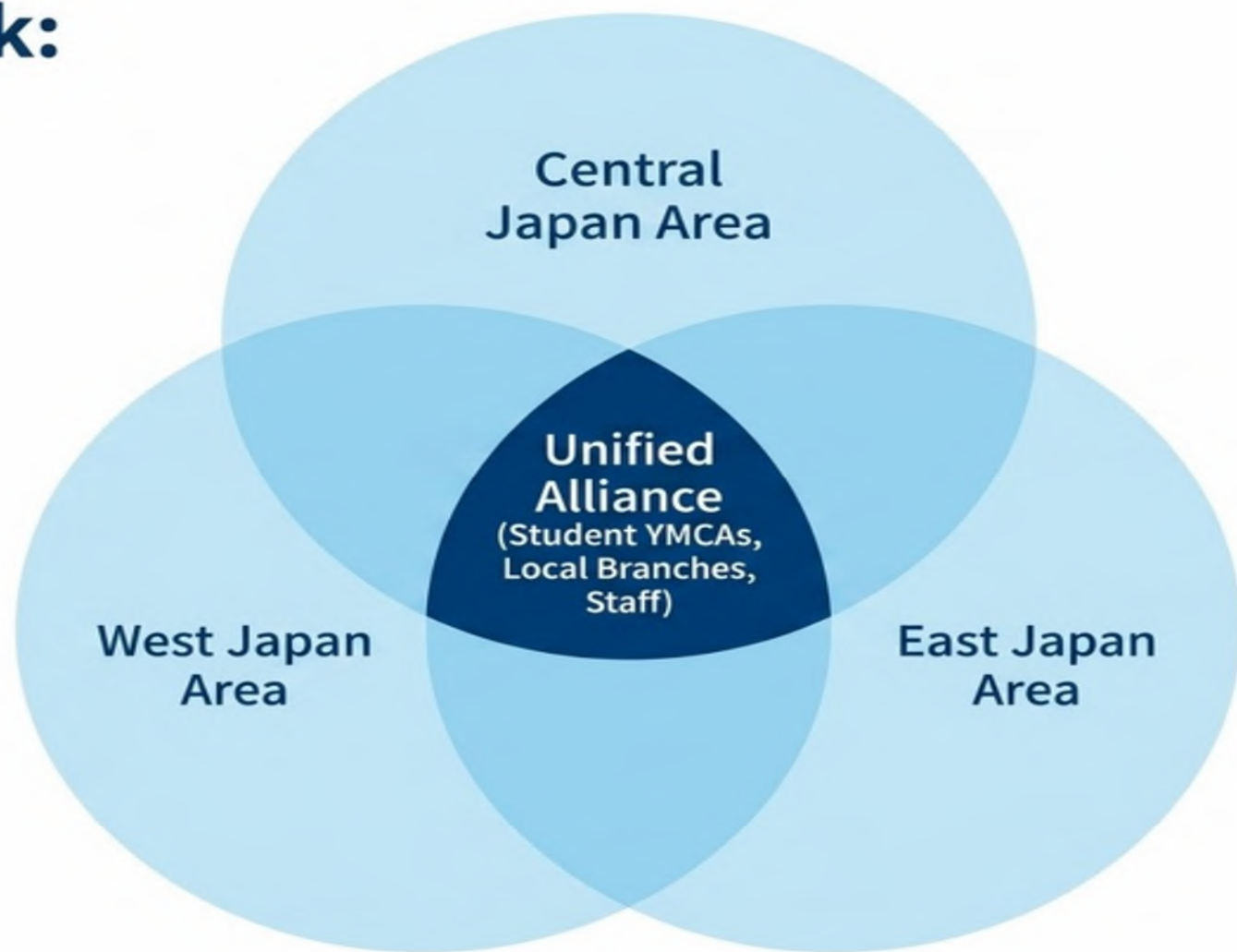
To make 'Recreation as Relief' scalable and predictable across the country, the Japan YMCA developed the Area Safety Guidelines.



Goal: A structured, repeatable approach to implementing recreation as a core pillar of disaster response.

The Area Safety Network: A Fail-Safe Alliance

No region is left isolated. If a disaster strikes one zone, the others seamlessly provide coordination, specialized staff, and student volunteers to maintain an unbroken safety net.



The Kumamoto Earthquake: Transforming the Shelter Experience

The Old Standard:
A place to suppress
yourself and endure.



The YMCA Standard:
A place where dignity
is protected, and you
can be yourself.

The application of the Area Safety Guidelines proved that the goal of an evacuation center must shift from mere survival to actual living.

The Four Sanctuaries of an Evacuation Center

1. For Children: Unrestricted Safe Zones.

Unstructured play and vital stress relief away from anxious adults.

3. For the Elderly: Salon Spaces.

Dedicated areas for conversation and light activity, actively preventing isolation and inactivity-related illnesses.



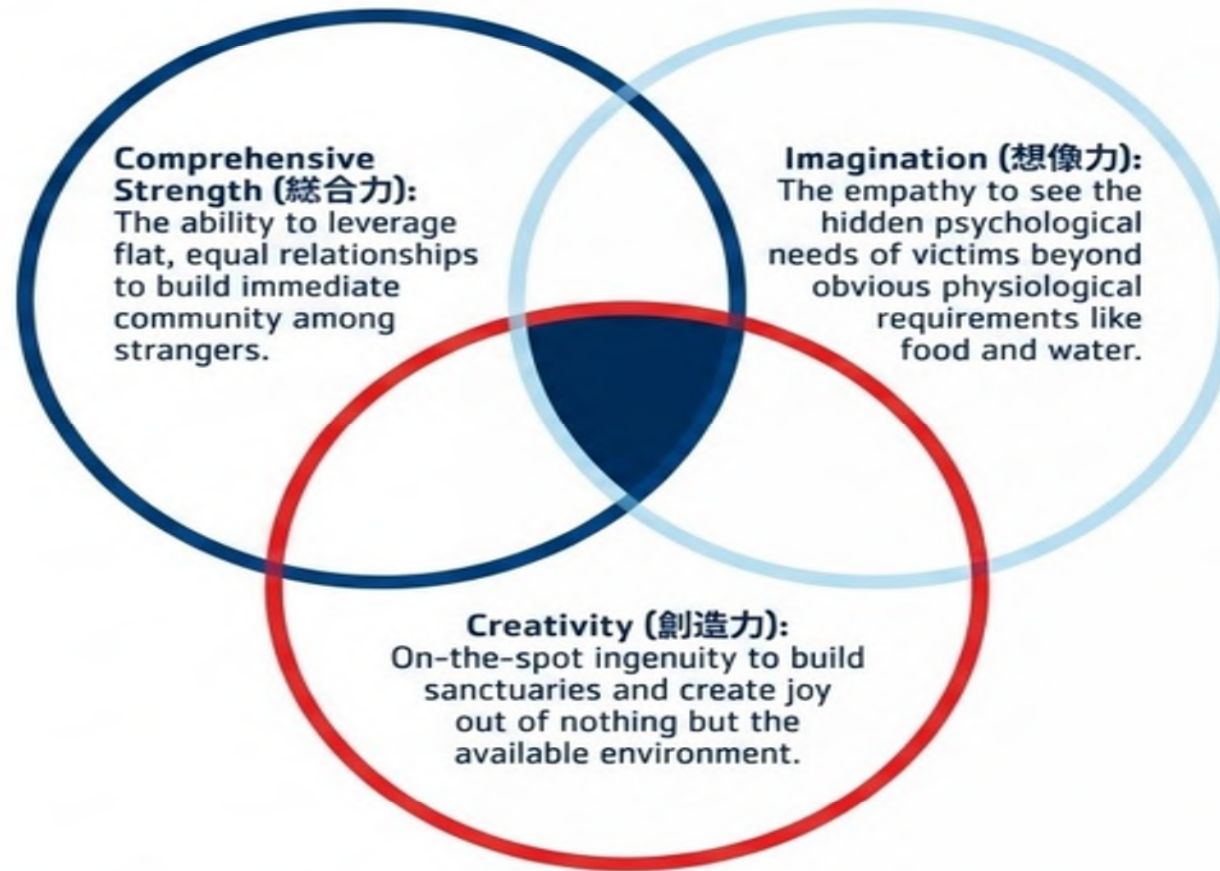
2. For Parents & Infants: Indoor Care Spaces.

Safe environments managed by local child-care professionals, providing temporary respite for exhausted parents.

4. For Everyone: Cafe & Relaxation Zones.

A shared space for coffee and rest, restoring a crucial slice of normalcy and healing.

The Core Competencies of Disaster Recreation



These competencies rely on recognizing the innate value in every individual, an instinct inherent in recreation leadership.

The Work Continues: The Noto Peninsula Response

“Recreation is not just immediate first aid; it is a vital tool for long-term psychological recovery.”

Immediate
Crisis

Long-Term
Recovery



Following the recent Noto Peninsula earthquake, national YMCA branches are coordinating ongoing “**Refresh Camps**” for children from Wajima City. Providing continuous spaces for joy and healing long after the initial tremors stop.

The Preparedness Mirror: Everyday Community is Emergency Infrastructure

Peacetime

Activity 1: Making curry
for a local community
festival.

Activity 2: Organizing a
neighborhood bazaar.

Disaster Time Reflection

Activity 1 Reflection:
Operating an emergency
soup kitchen.

Activity 2 Reflection:
Sorting and distributing
critical relief supplies.

Daily community building is not distinct from disaster preparedness. The recreation we practice in peace is the exact operational training we deploy in a crisis.



Trust is the Ultimate Safety Net

Disasters destroy infrastructure, but they cannot destroy connection. Strong daily community ties and the continuous practice of recreation build the trust necessary to survive—and truly live—through any crisis.

How will your YMCA adapt?





Thank you.



Toolkit and more...