

New online magazine for youth

Youth Fit Africa (YFA) is new online magazine featuring information about and for young people on the move, encouraging fitness and health. Launching on 12 May 2012, youth and student journalists will write most of the contributions.



[click to enlarge](#)

Youth athletes, fitness fans, trainers and coaches, will find useful training and fitness tips, nutrition information, profiles of youth involved in sports and fitness, stories about what's happening and opportunities, such as events, try-outs, and programmes.

It will launch with a two-day basketball tournament and fitness event in Johannesburg 12-13 May. The winning boys and girls basketball teams will receive medals and a full team kit, sponsored by Swoosh. Along with the basketball tournament, there will be fitness contests

and prizes for players and spectators, including NBA Africa gear, PVM energy products and YFA T-shirts.

Expansion

Starting with the website, it will expand to include a monthly newspaper, training on reporting sports, multi-media programmes and events.



Onyebuchi Onyejike

"We realised that young people were missing out because they did not have good information about fitness and sport," says project coordinator Onyebuchi Onyejike.

"The online magazine has practical information and is also a chance for youth to get media coverage they don't get in the mainstream, so they can motivate each other."

While 12 May marks the official launch, it has been running since the beginning of the year, developing and testing the online site and gathering content. It already features youth voices from South Africa, Lesotho, Zambia, Nigeria and other countries across the continent. Many of the stories tell of how youth have persevered to pursue the sports they love.

Noteworthy competitors

For example, 22-year old Tshepo Serumula is a runner from Orange Farm, 21-year old Thembinkosi Nxumalo is a cyclist from Diepsloot and 20-year-old Abongile Mvuniswa is a swimmer from Alexandra. It is a surprising trio from some of South Africa's most disadvantaged townships.

Individually they are noteworthy competitors in their sport and leaders in their community. Together, they are also a triathlon team who leapt onto the world stage to travel to Las Vegas to compete. "It is out of most people in Orange Farm's thoughts that a young person like me from the township could go overseas," said Serumula.

While girls are often left out of media reporting on sports, they feature prominently on *YFA*. One of the goals of the site is to highlight girls in sport and challenge gender stereotypes.

Liz Mills's profile tells of her experience coaching a men's national level basketball team in Zambia. "In coaching men, I consider myself a role model to female coaches," she says. "Gender should never be an issue in sport, where coaching positions should be based on skills, knowledge and experience."

No more couch potatoes

Several studies reportedly point to the need to get young people off the couch and away from video games, for mental and physical health. Conducted annually since 2007, South Africa has consistently scored low on the Healthy Active Kids Report Card. The report cites low levels of physical activity and poor nutrition habits as worrying trends.

Also, a study of 4346 learners from grades 8 to 12 released by the Youth Research Unit (YRU) of the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) in April 2012, found that almost three in every 10 learners (26.9%) said they use illicit drugs, while 79.4% regularly consume alcohol. The majority (66.6%) have been drunk and almost half (44.8%) had engaged in "binge drinking." The study also showed that cigarette smoking and hubbly bubbly are becoming more popular among secondary school learners, especially among girls.

Despite a high level of awareness of the risks and consequences associated with drug and alcohol abuse, the study found that learners continue using substances for "stress relief" and recreational purposes. Researchers found it alarming that many learners who participated in the study attributed substance use to stress; suggesting further information is required to provide young people with adequate support to deal with stress effectively. Sports and recreation is an obvious remedy.

YFA is an initiative of CMFD (Community Media for Development) Productions, Johannesburg-based development communications company specialising in media for social change, and helping people to tell the stories that are important to them.

For more, go to www.youthfitafrica.com or the [Facebook page](#).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>