

INTERCOM

A Newsletter for students and others contributing to the Commonwealth Youth Programme
Diploma in Youth in Development Work

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November 2003

From the Editor

Here is our final **INTERCOM** for 2003. Much has been happening. CYMM has endorsed continued focus on professional training and pointed to a greater focus on youth participation in Commonwealth Affairs. This issue was also endorsed by the Education Ministers' conference. This issue is taken up by Janine Crocker in this issue and Mulako Mwanamalye gives a gender perspective to empowerment. The UPM team have been travelling again, this time to Australia. We have two graduate profiles and some student photos. The Caribbean is silent in this edition but I am sure we will hear from them next time.

Inside this issue:

- Youth Empowerment: A Gender Perspective** 2
By Mulako Mwanamalye
- Youth-hood—challenging our stereotypes** 5
By Janine Cocker
- Graduate Profiles: Dr Shailendra Gupta and Geoffrey Okiswa** 6
- News in Brief** 7
- Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference** 7
- Students in the Lime-light** 7

Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting: New Paradigm based on International Human Rights

Commonwealth Youth Ministers met in Gaborone, Botswana, from 27 May to 30 May 2003 under the theme 'Young people: Development Partners Against Poverty and HIV/AIDS'. Thirty-seven countries and territories, of which 23 were represented by Ministers, were in attendance. Of these, 29 included young people on their delegations.

The meeting was opened by HE Mr Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, and chaired by the Hon Thebe Mogami, Minister of Labour and Home Affairs. Representatives of the Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Games Federation, Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, Connect Youth – British



Hon. Hlonepho Ntsekhe Minister of Youth, Lesotho

Council, the Southern African Development Community, UNICEF, UN Youth Unit and the United States Peace Corps, participated as observers.

Ministers welcomed the occasion of the meeting as an opportunity to review the progress made

by the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) since their last meeting. They reaffirmed their commitment to youth develop-

ment in the Commonwealth, and noted the emergence of a new paradigm guiding the CYP in its work. This approach is based on international human rights standards, focusing on such criteria as participation, transparency and accountability in the development and promotion of policy and programmes.

The Meeting received reports from the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus and endorsed its recommendations to member governments, the CYP and youth representatives. These recommendations included, inter alia, the renaming of the Regional Youth Forum as the Regional Youth Caucus, professionalisation of the Caucus, strengthening of youth

(Continued on page 2)

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Delegation to RMIT and Charles Sturt Universities in Australia

By Zanariah Mohd Nor and Siti Raba'ah Hamzah

The interfacing programme with the school members of Department of Social Science and Planning Programme, RMIT Uni., on the 26th Sept 2003 was a very fruitful effort. The session was a combination of briefing and discussion on the curriculum;

practicum; the conduct of Diploma and Bachelor programmes of youth work, social work, and HRD. The outcomes, the demands and challenges faced by the department and their students were also shared and discussed. At the end of the

day we also had the opportunity to discuss possible bilateral researches in related fields for future undertakings between UPM and the department. Another beneficial input of the commencing of Diploma in

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 1)

governance and enhancement of active youth participation. Ministers also noted the importance of governments' incorporating into national policies the institutional frameworks that embrace youth participation, youth enterprise development and the provision of resources for strengthening youth governance and networks.

Ministers endorsed the report of the Committee of Management and commended the Committee's call for strategic and impact assessments necessary for advancing the work of the CYP.

Ministers acknowledged the progress made by the CYP in implementing the recommendations of the Ministerial Review Group adopted at the 2000 CYMM in Solomon Islands. In particular they recommended that project collaboration among divisions of the Commonwealth Secretariat be strengthened to enable CYP to draw on the technical expertise of other divisions.

The Meeting recognised the value of young people's participation in Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings. Ministers agreed that, with immediate effect, national youth representatives would be able to make direct interventions and fully participate in the meetings, at the discretion of the head

of their national delegation.

Ministers adopted the CYP Strategic and Operational Plan for 2003-2006, which sets the CYP's priorities under four broad strategic areas. The CYP will therefore focus on Youth Enterprise Development, Youth Networks and Governance, Youth Participation and Youth Work Education and Training. In so doing, relevant youth priorities, particularly the importance of efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, will be highlighted.

Ministers commended the progress on the implementation of the Youth For the Future Initiative (YFF) which was endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Coolum, Australia, in 2002. Ministers acknowledged that youth volunteering, mentoring, leadership education and enterprise development activities will facilitate the engagement of young people economically, politically and socially, contributing to the elimination of poverty and encouraging sustainable development.

Ministers recognised

the central role that programmes such as the Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative and the YFF Youth Enterprise Development play in promoting entrepreneurship and alleviating poverty. They encouraged CYP to pursue the expansion of youth enterprise initiatives across the Commonwealth. Ministers noted an invitation to attend a Youth Enterprise Development Forum in Australia in November 2003. They further noted a proposal to establish a special global fund to promote youth enterprise across the Commonwealth.

Ministers emphasised the importance of information and communications technologies (ICT) in breaking the cycle of poverty. They urged the CYP to expand its efforts in bridging the digital divide through the provision of ICT education and access.

Ministers considered the primary factors contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS among young women and men in the Commonwealth. They mandated CYP to continue expanding its work in raising awareness of the pandemic, with reference to specific recommendations: advocacy, peer education and support, promoting behaviour change, and forging partnerships with regional and global agencies. They noted the importance of political will, the involvement of young people in intervention strategies, resource mobilisation, supportive legal frameworks, and programmes to combat mother-to-child transmission and to increase the treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

Ministers commended the CYP Youth Ambassadors for Positive Living Programme as an innovative means of peer education and

(Continued on page 3)

**professionalisation
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Youth Empowerment: A Gender Perspective

By Mulako Mwanamalye Chair: Commonwealth Youth Caucus May 2000 – April 2003

Young people as a group are generally marginalized from mainstream economic and political activities throughout the world. They face various challenges ranging from unemployment, HIV/AIDS to inadequate or no participation in decision-making processes.

The need to 'empower' this group has been high on the agenda of development policy makers and practitioners at local, national and international levels in the last two decades. The United Nations launched a decade for Youth Empowerment from 1985 to 1995 and developed the World Plan of Action for Youth Empower-

ment. The 2001 World Youth Forum came up with the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy; a set of recommendations to enable youth participate in the decisions that affect their lives. The Commonwealth Secretariat has a five-year action plan for youth empowerment dubbed "Youth Empowerment into the New Millennium;" for the period 2000 to 2005. Thirty seven out of fifty four of the Commonwealth member countries have national youth policies; in some cases accompanied by national plans of action.

Increasingly, non-governmental organisations of varying size and purpose around the

Commonwealth are working for and with young people to empower them using varying approaches.

But what is youth empowerment?

Youth empowerment is about giving power to young people, enabling them to make decisions on what they regard to be key to their development and to take responsibility for those decisions. It is about affording young people equal access to resources, opportunities and powers at all levels. Sadly, society tends to categorise young

(Continued on page 5)



UPM in Australia (continued)

Youth in Development Work was also gained through a discussion with Mr. David McElgunn. He shared his experiences and challenges assisting and dealing with students that scattered all over Australia from a distance. On the 27th Sept 2003 we were introduced to Ms Rosemarie Iera, Project Coordinator of Young Refugees in the Picture at The Centre of Multi-cultural Youth Issues (CMYI). CMYI is another peak body in Victoria, represents a range of individuals and organizations from culturally and linguistically diverse background (CLD) communities, government and non-government organizations with a commitment to improving the

social and personal status of young people from CLD backgrounds. CMYI is a statewide community-based organization that aims to strengthen and build innovative partnership between young people, support services and the com-

munity to enhance life opportunities for young people from CLD living in Australia. The Centre has a priority focus on young people from refugee and newly arrived communities. Similar to YACVic, the centre is implementing programmes that aims to



The UPM delegation with school members of Department of Social Science and Planning Programme, RMIT University

empower the young immigrants and their communities through multisectoral approach with research and development components. Interestingly,

CMYI undertakes its action research in phases. Both CMYI and YACVic are found working together in several programmes and activities. The delegates left for Wagga-Wagga on the 28th Sept 2003. Margaret McLeod, who was the UPM International Student last year, was our liaison person at Charles Sturt University (CSU), Wagga Wagga. Through Margaret contact, we had an opportunity visiting Wagga Wagga Community Health Service Centre. The Director and a social worker officer of the Centre briefed us on the centre operation and shared their experiences in running programmes in various community settings. The Wagga Community Health Service delivers a comprehensive range of health care services to residents in the Wagga Area. Community Health Services promote healthy living within the community, thereby helping reduce the need for more acute health care treatments. The services are free of charge. The services are managed

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(Continued from page 2)

support for those living with the virus. They noted that the programme, initiated in the Africa region, had now been replicated in Asia and the Caribbean.

Ministers decided to rename the Commonwealth Youth Service Awards as the Commonwealth Youth Gold Award and the Commonwealth Youth Silver Award and to increase the number. At the Pan-Commonwealth level, four Commonwealth Youth Gold Awards will now be offered, one for each region. In each of the four regions, five Commonwealth Youth Silver Awards will be offered. Ministers commended the winners of three pan-Commonwealth awards, for innovative projects in the Cook Islands, Nigeria, and the United Re-

public of Tanzania, announced at the meeting.

Ministers noted a proposal to review the CYP governance arrangements and in particular to dissolve the Committee of Management. They dis-

(Ministers) noted the value of strong youth representation in CYP processes and recommended that the Commonwealth's young people actively participate and be involved in both the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors.

cussed the possibility of this being done in a phased manner. They noted the value of strong youth representation in CYP processes and recommended that the future governance structure should ensure that the Commonwealth's young people actively partici-

pate and be involved in both the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors. Ministers endorsed the proposal to move the CYP to a four-year planning cycle, in line with that of other Secretariat funds.

Ministers recommended that an internal audit process together with a benchmarking exercise for indirect costs be carried out in order to ensure effective financial controls of the CYP's resources. They agreed that the formula for calculating the pledges should be reviewed in order to preserve the integrity of the fund, and encouraged the early settlement of outstanding pledges.

Ministers noted the CYP's efforts to secure Extra-Budgetary Resources. They recommended that further efforts to harness these resources be encouraged, provided that such efforts remain consistent with the attainment of

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by qualified professionals. There are more than 20 areas of activities of community health services. Strategies, impacts, constraints and challenges in implementing the programmes, dealing with different sectors and pursuing networking were also shared.

Through interfacing programme with CSU we learnt that the University has established seven research centres. Two of the University Designated Research Centres that have potentials for future undertaking in researches and collaborative projects with JPPPL and PEKKA are Centre for Rural Social Research and Centre for Cultural Research into Risk. Centre for Rural Social Research was

established to research social issues affecting rural communities and to



Ms Rosemarie Iera, CMYI with the UPM delegate after briefing on how CMYI operationalises its mission to support CLD

bring to the notice of policy makers the results of the research. The Centre currently conducts research in various areas such as rural studies, community development studies; international social development, globalization and comparative studies; environment and sustainability; and media communications and technology. While the Centre for Cultural Research into Risk was established to address the socio-cultural dimensions of risk in contemporary societies. Research within the Centre is organized around six themes: childhood, crime and justice; cross-cultural; education; gender; health and environment; and risk theory.

Opportunities for UPM

1. **Hands-on Research Experiences with YACVic and CMYI in research projects and development programmes in the areas of youth studies. However, the researcher(s) need to seek potential funders to finance the Internships.**
2. **Potential collaborators for bilateral and multilateral projects related to youth (for comparative studies) and community development programmes and researches for different continent/race/culture etc.**
3. **Widening the UPM international networking in the areas of youth, community development and rural advancement whether with the Institutions of Higher Learning or Non-Government Organisations.**
4. **Learning and sharing experiences, impacts and strategies for young people issues. These initiatives could be in the forms of programmes development, projects and action and impact studies that could be translated into policy advocates. Ultimately these efforts provide several options of platforms for community development with youth participation as the main mover.**
5. **Sharing research based publications that are focusing on the issues of the young peoples of different background in community development, rural advancement and nation building.**
6. **Sharing publications in the areas of youth, community development and rural advancement.**
7. **Exploring mutual areas (such as youth and community development, rural advancement) for MOU between UPM with RMIT and CSU, Australia as a strategy to strengthen research and development. The outcome of these efforts will be beneficial in supporting the Malaysian and Australian policies for these target groups.**
8. **Replicating potential researches (action research and impact studies) in the areas that have major impacts on youth, community development and rural advancement in Malaysia.**

Youth-hood—challenging our stereotypes

By Janine Cocker, formerly Intern at CYP Africa Centre.

Traditionally, youth-hood has been categorised as an important and thrilling time in one's life. It is meant to be "the best time of your life!" It is a time when a boy becomes a man, a girl becomes a woman—a time for celebration. For centuries, we have celebrated this coming of age in diverse ways throughout many cultures: Tribal rituals, driving licenses and Bar Mitzvahs, all characterize this exciting and thrilling time in one's life. However, to many young people, youth-hood is a very scary time—a time of fear, angst and tremendous pressure. It is a time when we begin to truly understand the world as a threatening and competitive arena. It's a time when we fail our first exam, we discover our sexuality, and our bodies begin to change. We experience freedom, begin to make big decisions that will affect our life, and we develop as individuals. This is an incredible period of change and with it comes an enormous amount of anxiety. Youth can express this anxiety in a number of ways—both positively and negatively. It is the negative expressions of this angst which has generally been recognised. Rock music, alcoholism, teen pregnancies, theft are commonly associated with youth. Commonly held attitudes towards youth have generally been either of fear, disdain, frustration, anger or indifference. Youth are characterised as anarchic, delinquent

and dysfunctional. We don't often think of youth as a vulnerable group in need of attention. As such, they are often left out of the development cycle. In a number of societies, those who are most affected by HIV/AIDs, unwanted pregnancies, and

It is time that we as agents of development, truly recognise the enormous potential of our youth.

homicide are young—and these realities have been depicted as a function of youth hood—rather than a symptom of it. In this sense, we tend to blame the youth, rather than attempting to understand them and their environment. Has this deference perpetuated a vicious cycle whereby youth are forever vulnerable?

It is time that we as agents of development, truly recognise the enormous potential of our youth. We need to start addressing the youth *and* the environment in



which they are living. In this regard, we need to take a participatory approach in development—we need to ask young people about their lives—their fears, their anxieties, their needs and their wants. We need to attack the issues that are affecting our youth—and consider these issues as barriers to youth development rather than a function of youth-hood. We need to pay more attention to youth as a group—and sensitise ourselves to the specific issues unique only to youth. Gangs, protests, violent music, early deaths, tell us that something is wrong with our youth—they need help, and the more we engage them in discussions about their fears, anxieties and frustration, the more we can work with them to help.

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people as one homogeneous group with exact experiences and interests, yet we have rural and urban; educated and uneducated; organised and disorganised; and so on. More often than not, youth is perceived to be synonymous with a 'male' young person. This has serious implications for the development of empowerment strategies employed by institutions involved in youth development in as far as young females are concerned.

Whereas young men and women are a disadvantaged group collectively, the latter tends to suffer from gender-specific causes of disempowerment. Young women face unequal power relations, both generic to all women and specific to them, in almost all aspects of their daily lives; be it at school, at places of work, or in their families.

Understanding the sources of young women's lack of power is an important step towards the development of strategies to empower them. Religion and culture are among the factors contributing to young women's disempowerment.

Young women face unequal power relations... in almost all aspects of their daily lives; be it at school, at places of work, or in their families.

In patriarchal kinship systems, prevalent in many parts of the world, young women leave parental homes to join their husbands. They may not inherit property from these husbands and sometimes not even from their fathers.

At the household level, young women usually have limited power to bargain for their

rightful share of property whether in marriages or in their immediate families. If they inherit property from their husbands, they may only have use-rights as opposed to full ownership-rights.

In the economic world, young women tend to have limited employment opportunities, and face low wages as well as exploitation. As they rarely own property to offer as collateral, young women have limited access to loans from formal financial institutions. And even where micro-credit programmes have specifically targeted young women, do we know who ultimately controls the capital borrowed? There is no guarantee that they are the actual beneficiaries; it is common for them to be used as channels by their fathers, brothers, uncles or husbands.

In the public sphere, young women's ability to participate and interact effectively is affected by negative stereotype perceptions; that they are emotional, indecisive or just difficult to work with. It is not uncommon for

(Continued on page 7)

Graduate Profiles: Dr Shailendra Gupta, India



I completed the CYP Diploma from IGNOU, India in 1999 – 2001 during the pilot cycle of the programme. In addition to my teaching assignment, I am also working

as programme officer, N.S.S and I find my P.O service more relevant and also meaningful. As a P.O, I find that young people around me long for good leadership and I also update my knowledge and skills to serve them. These volunteers are trained as peer group leaders round the year to create awareness on various issues in the community. Every year, a special ten days training camp is also organised in the adopted village.

I am also contributing as project officer, youth services club (Regd.), youth NGO Hoshiapur for the underprivileged, the deprived youth in the community. The NGO's are as "allies of the poor". Due to their poor socio-economic status, they

seem to be more willing to participate in developmental programmes.

John F. Kennedy said "Leadership and Learning are indispensable to each other". Thus the learning is the most important factor that ensures successful developments, epitome of 'social desirability' and 'shaping up of human beings, groups, organisations and communities' Youth is not useless but it is used less. Youth feel sidelined in terms of development. If issues like unemployment, HIV/AIDS, education, poverty, drug abuse are addressed appropriately, the youth can contribute to development across the Commonwealth.

In other courses, we only study one major component but in this Diploma we are covering every aspect of life. As such, it opened my eyes to future aspirations. The Diploma really forms the foundation for a successful future in youth work. This is because the focus on youth gives us a wider idea of how to improve their outcomes. It has opened doors to many networks

The biggest thrill I learnt from the Diploma is that of building knowledge on top of knowledge learnt previously and being creative and innovative with

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ways for working with young people. Acquiring this Diploma has empowered me to do more in a skilled manner. It is an opportunity to experience the principles and values of the Commonwealth in a real setting.

I have found this CYP Diploma programme a worthy one for a person of enormous desire for selfless service to community and implications in youth work. This is a worthwhile Diploma which requires a lot of hard work. It gets more easier if you work with youth whilst you are doing it because you can easily relate to that.

Now I am well versed in self awareness, self regulation, motivation, social skills, envisioning the future, fostering collaboration, planning, encouraging and communicating with both students and non-students youth in identifying, resolving their problems and developing leadership skills among them.

As a youth in development worker I have miles to go and have many promises to keep in order to bring about desirable change in the community. My experience and journey has been exciting so far and I know that the best is yet to come. I would like to make friends working/doing youth work, so please feel free to write to me.

Graduate Profiles: Geoffrey Okiswa, Uganda

Adverts for CYP studies in Uganda, offered at Makerere University Kampala 2000, 2002, were received by the potential students with a lot of excitement and high expectations. At last the services have been brought nearer home rather than the rigorous process for overseas studies.

However, out of several applicants only 50 were enrolled for the program.

Like any other international, professional course CYP attracted high expectations from the students, namely - better careers~ better paying jobs, better skills and knowledge and opportunities to work anywhere in the world,

Whether the dreams are to come true are yet to be seen., but the already glaring achievement is the vast skills and knowledge gained from the training, thanks, for the rich modules and good tutors.

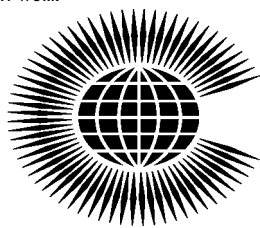
Speaking at least of my self, the training has enabled me design and successfully present papers on conflict management. FRV / AIDS, communication skills and the Art of Public Speaking to students and a Youth workshop, Currently we are presenting a workshop on capacity building to Education providers and Developers at District level.

My work, as Head of Mobilisation Department has greatly been enhanced by the course. I work with Uganda National Students Association UNSA a non - gov-

ernment umbrella organization -for students in post primary Institutions. The main objective of UNSA is to Mobilize students on issues of National concern and development. Student unrest and strikes is one of the issues of concern, now in the country, to all education stakeholders and it certainly requires the skills of professional Youth in development Worker, to handle, and this is when I became a "consultant"

CYP- Uganda is not yet *highly* publicised and I would best advise, our universities to mainstream the course, like other universities in other regions such as the university of West Indies or Guyana, to offer direct entry for students into second year or third year degree courses. This will be a great motivation,

In all I would like to most sincerely thank Commonwealth Secretariat for the scholarship and for bringing the training to Uganda and also thank the coordinators and tutors for enabling us get the skill and knowledge therein.



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News in Brief

- In April 2003, the CYP Asia Centre held a workshop on promoting Commonwealth values in Mumbai. IGNOU tutors attended as well as delegates/tutors from BOU, OUSL and UPM.
- *Commonwealth Youth Development* journal launched at CYMM and profiles at CCEM. If your institution has not told you about it ask them to get copies from the University of South Africa: CornwL@unisa.ac.za
- James Odit is the new SPO at the CYO Africa Centre responsible for the Diploma in Youth in Development Work.
- Rajan M. Welukar is the new SPO at the CYP Asia Centre, responsible for the Diploma in Youth in Development Work.
- The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will take place in Nigeria in December this year.

(Continued from page 5)

female politicians, artists or even volunteers to be labelled as prostitutes.

In the social arena, girls have lower access to education and health compared to their male counterparts. Girls' education, especially in developing countries, is affected by early marriages, teenage pregnancies and the general cultural practice that expects a girl to do most of the household chores. Statistics show that girls contract HIV/AIDS at an earlier age than boys. HIV/AIDS infection rates are higher among young women.

Without underrating the challenges faced by young men, it is clear that young women face a lot of barriers on their path to empowerment. The youth empowerment strategies therefore, need to be sensitive to the peculiar situation of young women and work on overcoming the gender-based constraints. Programmes should pay attention to the existing complex power relations. Young women themselves should challenge policies and programmes that are not addressing their gender interests. Documenting a cross-section of experiences of empowering young women must be encouraged. NGOs, governments, donors and other development agencies should take affirmative action to ensure young women's empowerment.

Send Us Your News

Intercom welcomes contribution from diploma students and others on any subject related to youth development. You might like to modify an assignment or just send us news about what is happening in your part of the world. Photographs are also welcome either electronic or normal prints. Articles should normally be between 500 and 1000 words. The editor reserves the right to shorten or modify contributions to fit into the space available. Letters to the editor are also welcome and should not exceed 250 words. **Our next deadline will be the end of March 2004..** Material should be sent by email, or post to the addresses on this page.

Reaching Our Readers

Intercom is produced in pdf format which means you will need Acrobat Reader to access it. This program is available on-line free of charge. Partner Institutions and CYP Regional Centres are asked to print copies for students unable to access the web. As colour photographs are included, a colour printer and copier are needed for best results.

Intercom is available from the CYP Diploma in Youth in Development Work website at

www.youthdevelopmentwork.org

The Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference, (CCEM) October 2003.

For the first time, there was a Youth Forum at the Education Ministers meeting, held in Edinburgh at the end of October. The key point made by delegates from the Youth Summit was that young people should be directly involved in developing education systems, including participation in Youth Councils, and involvement in the selection of teachers and in the design and evaluation of resource materials and the curriculum. Ministers agreed to meet with Youth Summit delegates from their own country to consider the outcomes of 15CCEM; and that every future CCEM will have a Youth Summit where Ministers inform delegates on progress and consult them on future actions. As the Youth Summit said, *We can't do it ourselves, but you can't do it without us*

Briefly in the limelight: Diploma students and tutors



Left: Reuben Aggor the coordinator for Ghana, and students at the University of Ghana.

Right: Gibson Gbla and students at Forah Bay College, Sierra Leone



Left: Hilda Kii and students from Solomon Islands College of Higher Education



SICHE student committee executive (right)

