



Caribbean YOUTH

Highlighting the projects and programmes of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre



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About us

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre is located in Georgetown, Guyana and is one of four Centres established to serve the member countries of the Commonwealth, spread across the globe. The Caribbean Centre serves the Commonwealth Caribbean and Canada. These 18 countries together have a total population of 33.6 million people and a youth population of approximately 5.4 million.

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CYP and CARICOM to strengthen relations *see page 3*

CYPCC Management Team calls on Guyana's new Minister of Youth



CYPCC's Regional Director, Mr Henry Charles (second from left) stands beside Minister of Youth, Dr. Frank Anthony. They are flanked by Programme Managers, Ms Glynys James, at left and Ms Dwynette Eversley.

A team from the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC), led by Regional Director Mr Henry Charles, paid an official visit to Guyana's new Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, the Honourable Dr Frank Anthony at his Georgetown office in October.

Mr Charles was accompanied by Programme Managers, Ms Glynys James and Dwynette Eversley who are responsible for Youth Work Education and Training (YWET) and Youth Enterprise and Sustainable

Livelihoods (YESL) respectively.

Minister Anthony, who was sworn in as a Minister of Government following Guyana's National and Regional Elections on August 28, 2006 is also a former Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Youth Exchange delegate.

Mr. Charles extended congratulations on behalf of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, the Hon. Don McKinnon and Director of Youth

Affairs, Dr Fatiha Serour to the Honourable Minister on his recent appointment as Minister with responsibility for Culture, Youth and Sports.

Minister Anthony welcomed the opportunity to strengthen the existing bonds of cooperation between the Government of Guyana and CYPCC recognizing its significance to the further advancement of Guyana's Youth Development landscape.

The Minister revealed several plans to help strengthen Guyana's Youth Development Strategy including the formulation of a Strategic Youth Development Plan in addition to a review of the National Youth Policy.

During the said meeting the parties agreed to some specific areas of cooperation including: CYPCC support for a capacity building initiative targeting Youth Division employees; Introduction of the Commonwealth Youth For Positive Living (CYPL) programme to participants of the President's Youth Awards Programme; Consideration will be given to utilizing the Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (CYCI) concept to help accomplish the National Objective of training over 22,000 young

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Editorial

Open and Distance Learning: A major tool for Youth Empowerment & Development



**Mr. Henry Charles,
Regional Director, CYPCC**

Open and Distance Learning can become a major tool for youth empowerment and sustainable development.

The success of our countries sustainable development strategies depend to a large extent on their ability to:

- Increase access to higher education for young people.
- Enhance the employability of young people thru the provision of cost effective high quality skills training.
- Provide increased opportunities for young people to develop their leadership skills as well as their social and political consciousness.

Pursuant to these objectives, various governments have over the years relied on the traditional approach of building new schools and increasing the pool of trained teachers in a race against time. Though important these maybe, the emerging challenges of globalization and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy project compels us to urgently consider new and more cost effective strategies

to enhance our human resource capital.

It is in this context Open and Distance learning strategies assume greater importance and must be considered as a significant value added factor in the overall human resource development strategy.

The supported distance learning approach practice by the University of the West Indies Distance Education Centres, Commonwealth Youth Programme and others have accentuated the significance of distance learning. However, given increasing demands for higher education and capacity building for the citizenry, especially the youth, no time must be wasted in further developing the Open and Distance Learning strategies.

Unprecedented developments in Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have provided an ideal foundation and framework upon which to build and further advance our Open and Distance learning strategies.

We must therefore spare no effort in exploiting these opportunities for the sustainable development of our countries.

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Belize revises National Youth Development Policy



Dr. Maria Isabel Tun

Dr. Maria Isabel Tun, PhD, Consultant/Researcher has recently completed the revision of the National Youth Development Policy for Belize after 11 months of intensive country wide consultations on behalf of the Youth For the Future (YFF).

She however cautioned that the success of the Policy, when approved by the House of Representatives, depends on the systematic implementation of its goals and objectives guided by the strategies set out in the Policy. Dr Tun added that it is also contingent on the full support of the government, community,

international agencies and the private and public sectors.

She identified a number of other critical inputs for its success such as Governmental recognition of the Policy as a driving mechanism to be used as the blueprint to meet the development needs of youth; active participation and interaction involving the multi-sectoral community of stakeholders; and realistic budgets.

The establishment of bodies with the responsibility to monitor the Policy goals implementation; the development of a national plan of action derived from the Policy; systematic implementation and monitoring of the various activities related to the overall goals and objectives of the Policy were also highlighted.

According to Dr Tun, efficient communication channels that serve as conduits to youth who can use these to gain a voice in youth governance and as an advocacy tool for addressing their various social, political, educational and economic needs, responsibilities and rights must also be a key priority.

Bahamians brainstorm Competency Standards



Director of Youth, Ms Autherine Turnquest (at left) with other members of the core group.

competency standards for Youth Development Work

The consultations, held in October, were attended by representatives of the Community College, the Girl Guides Association and Faith-Based organisations.

Bahamas' CARICOM Youth Ambassador, two Diploma graduates, representatives of the Human Resource Department and Youth Department of the Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture formed the core group.

The Bahamas has joined other Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) member countries that have completed national consultations on the draft

There was also positive feedback by participants on the competency standards and the working groups submitted a number of recommendations.

Commonwealth Youth Programme and CARICOM to strengthen relations



Mr Henry Charles in discussion with President Ronald Venetiaan during his official visit to Suriname in October.

Regional Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC), Mr. Henry Charles, recently met with His Excellency Ronald Venetiaan, President of Suriname and CARICOM's lead spokesperson on youth to discuss closer collaboration between the two agencies.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre has again lauded the decision of the Heads of Government of CARICOM at their 27th Regular Meeting in St Kitts and Nevis last July to establish a Regional Commission on Youth Development.

The Commission on Youth Development was set up by the CARICOM Heads of Government to investigate and address the challenges facing young people within the region.

At a meeting on Monday October 16 Mr Henry Charles, expressed support for the initiative and confirmed CYPCC's willingness to participate in the process.

The Regional Director's visit was prompted by a need to formalize CYPCC's support for the youth commission initiative and to become more acquainted with some of the best practices being undertaken by the Government of Suriname as part

of what has been described as a very progressive youth development strategy.

During the meeting in Parimaribo, Suriname, the parties discussed the need for further strengthening of bonds between CYPCC and CARICOM in furthering the regional youth development agenda.

President Venetiaan expressed



President Ronald Venetiaan and Mr Henry Charles reviewing one of CYPCC's publications.

gratitude to CYPCC for its support in youth development in the region and pledged to convey to the Heads of Government and the CARICOM Secretariat CYPCC's desire and willingness to strengthen existing bonds of cooperation as well as its commitment to forging a more progressive regional youth development agenda.

Commenting on the meeting, Mr Charles said, "The visit was very fruitful. It is part of CYPCC's outreach strategy aimed at deepening the awareness of the quality of work we have been doing with regard to the regional youth development agenda over the last 30 years."

"The meeting with the President was historic because whereas there are existing bonds of cooperation between the CARICOM Secretariat and CYPCC, it was the first time that CYPCC was meeting formally with the Head of Government with lead responsibility for youth to discuss strategies to strengthening bonds of cooperation."

The meeting has also laid the foundation for the building and strengthening of strategic alliances between CYPCC, the United Nations

agencies operating in the Caribbean and other regional development agencies such as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), to help build a more progressive regional youth development agenda.

The parties also agreed to continue exchanging ideas on the professionalisation of youth work and on best practices on youth enterprise and sustainable livelihoods.

During the discussions, officials from the Ministry of Youth mooted the idea of hosting a collaborative youth festival/exchange which will help promote youth creativity and facilitate the strengthening of the regional integration process.

The meeting was also attended by Suriname's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Education, Youth and Community Development, Director of Youth Affairs and the CARICOM Youth Ambassador.

Young People!!!

Contribute to National Development.

Join a youth club or group.

"To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act."

Anatole France

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entrepreneurs; Customized training programmes for youth officers within the Ministry and youth leaders across the country; CYPCC will submit a formal proposal soliciting Government's support to establish a Youth Information Centre at its Georgetown Office.

The parties agreed to maintain regular communication on matters related to Youth Development in general but more specifically on strengthening the strategic partnership between the Government of Guyana and CYPCC.

Barbadian youth making head way with Media venture



Ms Marsha Branch
Managing Director,
Avant-Garde Media

Managing Director of Avant-Garde Media, Ms Marsha Branch, was the proud recipient of a Barbados National Youth Award at the National Youth Awards ceremony held at the Dove Conference Centre on October 1, 2006 for her business venture.

The National Youth Awards which is an annual celebration of the effort, talent, commitment and industry of young people of Barbados was held under the theme *'Youth: Community, Society and Service'*.

Caribbean Youth Vibes interviewed Marsha to find out more about her business venture.

Natalie: Tell me a bit about Avant-Garde Media?

Marsha: The word Avant-Garde is of French origin which means bold, pioneering, forward thinking and progressive. Avant-Garde Media is a small business founded in November 2005 with the intention of bringing new and interesting programmes to Barbadian viewers. It also disseminates news items and information about the Caribbean to media houses around the world. Presently, my focus is on producing programmes to meet the demand of local, regional and international media stations because there is a growing market for programmes with local and regional content.

Natalie: What motivated you to become a media professional?

Marsha: From the age of six, my academic reports from school always read "Marsha is a good student, but she is too talkative!" Always one to take a hint, I decided to make good on these comments, and talk for a living.

Natalie: How did you embark on

your career?

Marsha: I first began working in the media at the age of 17 after completing an internship at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation's, then Liberty FM where I was asked to stay on as an announcer. I hosted an hourly programme called 'Melody Moods' which played mellow music from 6 to 7 pm. I progressed gradually from the newsroom as a reporter then presenter and co-producer of Business Show, which is now called 'Business Beat', and finally as news anchor at the age of 21. I know if I wanted to succeed in the business I needed to further my studies. I had my eyes set on a Masters Degree in Journalism. After completing a double major in Sociology and Psychology at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, I moved to London where I graduated a year later with my Masters in Television Journalism from the University of London Goldstone College. After working for a couple of years in England I had a strong desire to return home and did so in October 2005. I knew I would start a media company in Barbados because the experience I gained from working with an international and regional media house prepared me for such a move.

Natalie: What are some of your accomplishments to date? What are you most proud of?

Marsha: While working at the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) in 2002, I interviewed Muslim fundamentalist, Sheikh Omar Bakri just after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. Omar Bakri was alleged to have been recruiting young Muslims in London to train for Al-Qaeda. I was the only person allowed access into his organisation (Al-Muhajiroun) meetings to film. I also presented the BBC World Service and hosted and produced my own show, BBC Caribbean Magazine.

When I returned to Barbados in 2005 I started a programme called 'House Proud', a *Home Make-over* show where we give a mother of three children (all disabled) a new home with new furniture and appliances for Christmas 2006.

In Barbados, I offer services in television and radio programmes

production, producing articles and talent scouting. The House Proud Show and the Marsha Branch Shows are both produced and hosted by me.

Natalie: What is unique about Avant-Garde?

Marsha: Avant-Garde Media places special thought to the programmes chosen. In addition to that, part of the proceeds of all shows produced is donated to charity or produced entirely for charity.

Natalie: Where do you see Avant-Garde in the next 5 to 10 years?

Marsha: I want Avant-Garde Media to be a recognised name around the Caribbean and among the North American diaspora in 5 years and within the British Caribbean diaspora in 10 years.

Natalie: What are some challenges you encounter?

Marsha: With every business there are some challenges. My biggest disadvantage at times has to do with limited man power. There are limits on how much I can produce everyday, without a permanent staff it can be

"Good TV moves people to tears, whether they be tears of joy or sorrow.

Great TV makes people get up and do something about what they just saw.

I want to make great TV."

Marsha Branch

difficult balancing deadlines and field work. However, I enjoy the challenge of developing the new concepts, tapping into my creativity and being able to focus on projects that I believe will be of value to my target population.

Natalie: What is your advice to young people?

Marsha: To those interested in taking the entrepreneurship journey. I suggest you start a business based on a passion for your field and surround yourself with positive people who can offer encouragement and constructive criticism. It should always be for love, not for money or fame. *As a media practitioner, you hold the power to help change the world, this should be used wisely.*

RYC receives United Nations appointments



Mr Chad Blackman

The Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Youth Caucus (RYC) representative of Barbados, Mr Chad Blackman received two United Nations appointments at the Global Youth Leadership Summit held at the UN Headquarters in New York on October 29 to 31.

Chad is now a Youth Spokesperson for Barbados on the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Deputy Chairman for the Caribbean region to the United Nations youth forum.

According to Chad, the mandate of the youth spokesperson for the MDGs is to articulate the opportunities and challenges of the MDGs to the youth of his country.

Held under the theme "Young Voices Against Poverty; Accelerating the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals", the summit examined youth entrepreneurship, wealth creation and the attainment of the MDGs.

The spokesperson is also mandated to champion the views of the youth to the UN system in order to influence policies on their behalf.

The Deputy Regional Chairperson is expected to articulate the views of the Caribbean youth, enlighten them on issues relating to the MDGs and coordinate awareness campaigns.

Commenting on his appointments, Chad said "the opportunity to speak at the level of the United Nations will ensure that challenges and concerns facing young people are highlighted at the world's largest decision making forum. I envision that lobbying the relevant stakeholders during my two year tenure will eventually bring about necessary changes that young people so desire."

Dominican Youth benefit from HIV/AIDS Self Development Workshop

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs of Dominica and the Dominica Youth Environment Organisation Inc (DYEO) hosted a two-day "Self-Development Workshop on HIV/AIDS and Behaviour Change," on October 5th and 6th in Dominica.

The two-day Training of Trainers workshop was organized as part of the Commonwealth Youth for Positive Living Programme and outlined as its' goal 'to increase participants' capacity to develop themselves.' It brought together young people from across the island to equip them with the necessary skills needed to become effective peer leaders in their respective community peer groups.

The sessions sought to deepen participants' understanding of themselves and others through main elements of positive living, Emotional Intelligence, Values, Behaviour Change, Discipline and Developing a Life Plan.



Young people in discussion during a group session.

Commenting on the workshop, President of the Dominica Youth Environment Organisation Incorporated (DYEO), Daren Esprit, said that originally DYEO's function was to advocate for the preservation of the natural environment, but that

function in recent years has been expanded to include the cultural and social environment. In this regard, we have been exploring ways to tackle the problems young people are facing. One such problem is HIV/AIDS, which he said needs to be addressed

urgently and he welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with CYPCC through the CYPL programme to empower young people to adopt the behaviour changes necessary for helping to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS on the island.

At the end of the training, participants were expected to have a greater awareness of themselves and others; a firm grasp of the main elements of emotional intelligence; a greater understanding of the behaviour change process; and would have developed a life plan for the next ten years of their lives.

Follow up training are planned for later this year and 2007. These will examine, among other issues, stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Since the CYPL programme was launched in Guyana in 2003, the group has trained young people and facilitated sessions in The Bahamas and The British Virgin Islands. These workshops were held in collaboration with local partner agencies.

Director upbeat about draft National Youth Policy



Mr Linsford Castillo
Director, Youth For the Future

Director of Youth for the Future (YFF) of Belize, Mr. Linsford Castillo, is extremely happy with the draft National Youth Policy which has been submitted to the Chief

Executive Officer and the Minister of Youth for their perusal.

Mr Castillo in a brief interview with Caribbean Youth Vibes said he is looking forward to the speedy approval by cabinet and the House of Representatives to facilitate the implementation of this critical component of Belize's youth development strategy.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) also wishes to commend Belize for this important step and expresses its continued support youth development initiatives in that member country.

Young Caymanians benefiting from Youth Ambassador Programme

The Department of Youth and Sports of the Cayman Islands recently launched a Youth Ambassadors Programme aimed at preparing young Caymanians to represent their country at local, regional and international fora.

Each week a group of young Caymanians between the ages of 15 and 29 meet at the VIP Lounge of the Truman Bodden Sports Complex where they are taught public speaking skills, report writing, protocol and diplomacy among other things.

According to James Myles, Youth Services Coordinator at the Department of Youth and Sports "the young people have volunteered to be

part of the programme so as to benefit from the training which they said has boosted their confidence and improved their communication skills."

During the week of October 3, the group examined a number of topics including 'informative speeches' after which they were required to make presentations in front of the group.

Ms Katherine Whittaker, Deputy Director of the Department of Youth and Sports and Coordinator of the Youth Ambassadors Programme commended the participants for their inputs in making the programme a success so far.

RYC reports progress on draft BVI National Youth Policy



**Mr Jason Rubaine,
Regional Youth Caucus,
BVI**

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) has reported considerable progress in the development of a new National Youth Policy which will be used as a strategic tool in addressing youth development issues in the territory in a coherent and structured way.

Regional Youth Caucus (RYC) representative and Youth Officer in the Department of Youth of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Jason Rubaine, in a recent interview with

Caribbean Youth Vibes explained that a core group is currently making amendments to the draft BVI National Youth Policy which was formulated about a decade ago.

According to him, Director of Youth Affairs, Mr. Robert Chalwell is playing an integral role in ensuring that the final document is dynamic and responsive to the needs of the young stakeholders who are the main beneficiaries.

The RYC rep who is also part of the core group said that the National Youth Policy will address issues such as redress for exploited youth; educational opportunities and facilities for young people; and assistance for youth with special needs, among other things.

It is hoped that the final document will be supported by relevant legislation to be considered and approved by the government of the BVI.

“The young people have been very vocal about issues affecting them. Their responses are encouraging and are assisting us

greatly as we seek to ensure that their needs are addressed in the new National Youth Policy,” Jason said.

During the initial stage, young people between the ages of 14 to 35 were given an opportunity to make suggestions and raise concerns they felt should be highlighted in the Youth Policy.

He noted that one of the main

concerns highlighted by young people in the BVI was the need for more opportunities and support to develop skills, talent and interests in sports and other activities.

Youth-based and youth-affiliated organisations and groups along with the public and private sectors were also involved in the National Youth Policy consultations.

Belize Diploma students to graduate soon



Some of the prospective graduates pose with Mr. Linsford Castillo.

success of 9 students who successfully completed the Commonwealth Youth Programme/University of the West Indies (CYP/UWI) Diploma in Youth in Development Work during 2004-2006.

The students were drawn from Youth For the Future (YFF), Community Rehabilitation Department and the Belize

Belize is planning to celebrate the

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Carol Bodden reflects on CYP Diploma Programme



Ms Carol Bodden

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

My diploma experience has made this Scripture come alive in me and I have found it of great value both in my personal life and my work with young people. No longer is it business as usual for me; as this learning will be demonstrated in my work. The experience has also taught me that

what good work God (Our heavenly Father) has begun in our lives, He will see it to completion.

At the beginning of the course I thought I would never see the end as there was so many obstacles in my way. Almost losing my father who is diagnosed with cancer, to the visit of hurricane Ivan in which my parents lost their house, my husband having to face court charges for a dispute with a young man and the departure of our Country Co-ordinator (Ms. Dorian Lennon) our pillar of strength who was always there encouraging us to press on. The thought of being left alone was difficult to handle Thanks be to God I stuck in there and so I can say that I can do all things through Christ who gives us the strength. Although Miss Lennon returned to Jamaica, she continued to offer support via telephone and the Internet.

This Diploma is very useful to anyone in any setting working with young people as it brings meaning to

your work. I can and will recommend it to all youth workers. You begin to see what you are really supposed to be doing for young people in this age of development. I also believe anyone working with young people should grasp the opportunity to better equip themselves through courses such as this as our young people today are being exposed to more issues than we had to go through. As facilitators we need to be equipped to help them or they will lose their great potential and society will have more problems to handle.

The problems I faced were in researching information in my country. It was like pulling teeth, not many people in the respective positions wanted to share with you. Another problem was at the beginning of the course, trying to come to grips with writing a Learning Journal and being told that we had to do all activities. However I soon got the hang of it and the activities, the minimum of which was done, were of

great value as they helped to reinforce what we had learnt. After the departure of our Country Co-ordinator the tutors that we got were not trained in the process of what was required of them as they kept relying on us to tell them what to do. I must state however, that **all** tutors knew their subject area well and worked with us in a professional manner.

My recommendation to the Commonwealth Youth Programme, is to make sure that the Governments of all Commonwealth countries understand the usefulness of this Diploma for the betterment of youth in their countries. I recommend that students who have done this Diploma course strongly support the Commonwealth Youth Programme since it is through them that we have gotten where we are today. There is lot to be done, so off to work I go..... Thanks again CYP for the opportunity to do this course. Continue to let your light shine in the darkness.

Competency standards consultations move to Belize



CYPCC's Programme Manager responsible for Youth Work Education & Training (YWET) Ms Glenyss James, at left, with participants at the Consultations. Fourth from left is Mr Linsford Castillo, Director of Youth for the Future.

Following national consultations in Belize from October 4 to 6 on the draft competency standards for Youth Development Work, officials there have commended the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) for its efforts in forging ahead with the professionalisation of Youth Development Work.

The consultations, which are being held across the Commonwealth Caribbean, were spearheaded by the Youth For the Future (YFF). This two-day consultation provided an opportunity for CYPCC to obtain valuable feedback from youth development work stakeholders and to promote the necessity for and benefits of interagency collaboration in youth development work. A wide cross-section of stakeholders from the private sector, public service, government ministries, tertiary training institutions, churches, youth groups, NGOs, health and education departments and youth workers of the YFF participated in the process. Four working groups submitted their recommendations for amendments to the standards but no additional units were recommended.

Participants said they would like to see youth development training programmes offered by their local tertiary institutions as early as next year.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme has been providing specialised training for youth development workers across the Commonwealth since 1974 in the form of the Diploma and Certificate Course programmes, managed in partnership with member governments, the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana.

Over the years many graduates of the Certificate and Diploma in Youth in Development Work in the Caribbean, but more so the Diploma programme, expressed the concern that their youth development work qualifications were not recognized by their respective Public Service Commissions. Consequently, these qualifications were not deemed marketable nor a guaranteed measurement of upward mobility in the Public Service.

Recognising that the youth development workers must be allowed to craft a career governed by acceptable occupational standards and competencies that promote professionalism in youth development work, CYPCC requested the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), Jamaica, to design Competency Standards for youth development work in the Caribbean region.

Up coming Events

- Training of New Commonwealth Youth for Positive Living (CYPLs), Guyana November
- International Testing Day - November 14
- Regional Workshop on Enterprise Education and Enterprise Awareness Culture, Dominica, November 12 to 15
- International Student's Day - November 17
- CYP Strategic Planning Meeting, India, November 19 to 29
- Strategic Visioning Retreat, Government of the BVI, December 4 and 5, 2006.

With the assistance of a lead group and technical team comprising youth workers, directors of youth and representatives of CYP and CARICOM a draft comprising 59 units of competency has been developed. In January 2005 a consultation was held with

representatives of the public service ministries and directors of youth across the Caribbean. This draft was subsequently amended and circulated to member Governments in July 2005 requesting that they hold national consultations according to guidelines agreed on at the January meeting.

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Immigration Department, she added.

Mrs. Sandra Diaz-Cadle, Country Cooriginator explained that the programme commenced with 22 students in June 2004 but due to a number of factors including termination of services, resignations, inability to balance full time employment, family life and the challenges of the programme, involvement in other training programmes and lack of commitment contributed to the attrition rate.

According to Ms Diaz-Cadle, prior to withdrawal from the programme by students, several intervention strategies were employed to encourage them to complete the Diploma.

With support from the YFF, the

National Advisory Board and UWI, she engaged the services of additional tutors to help students cope with the challenges of the programme by providing individual counseling with respect to career choice discussions. Mrs Diaz-Cadle also secured mentors to provide moral and technical support to students and lobbied employers to grant needed time-off to students to complete outstanding assignments.

The Country Coordinator thanked Youth for the Future for its support in providing partial and full scholarships to 15 of its employees and the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre for playing a lead role in ensuring that youth work is recognized as a profession in the region.

P o e t r y C o r n e r

I am not a Vessel, are you?

by Simone Smith

Youth empowerment, scuffed upon like the stench of society
Handed to us like unmerited favour
And trampled on by those who see nothing but another waste of time

Am I just looking at on e side of the picture or is it all that really exists?

While we ride the bus of social mobility beside whom do you sit?

Have you stopped to pick up someone one your way?

Have you ever lent a listening hear to the voices of those who cry for help, listen to what they say?

We refused to be labeled as a porcelain treasure e

When we are just clay pots being used as vessels

When last have you stopped to see how durable we are our value or worth?

Yet you continue to embrace new ideas, new things, and new birth

I refuse to be just a container; I want to be a conduit

Words of inspiration, self worth and motivation must flow through me for I am it

Everything I stand for, the reason for my existence

Must in the tap of every household become my evidence

Are we being given a chance for youth empowerment or have we been tricked again?

Are the loans we should receive for small businesses being pocketed?

So on “the powers that be” we must depend?”

Or do we begin to see the positive when the sun does not shine and we have to face the rain

Of what do I speak? Are you that shallow?

How does someone smell the coffee until our kettles start to whistle?

My future will not be guided by someone else’s agenda

Serve God! Zethur Henry, CYEX Delegate – St. Kitts & Nevis

Serve God!...Why Not?

Having integrity when others oppose,
Knowing it is right with all heart, with all soul,
No live you say cause old habit is disowned
Serve God!...Why Not?

Living a life, not know the course,
Feeling alone with your friends in a car,
No matter the riches, God's love pays it all,
Serve God!...Why Not?

You might say you don't need this right here, right now,
Cause CYEX 2006 is a blizz every day any how,
But look here one life, one chance, use it wise,
Serve God!...Why Not?

Our Countries need leaders so step up to the plate,
Cause we all know what is at stake,
But not accepting the facts that the Lord we must fear,
I'll tell the truth, we will not go anywhere.

**Any poems
or short stories?
Publish them here!
You can e-mail them to
nyearwood@cypcaribbean.org**

**Give us the Vibes!
Let us know about youth
activities and developments
in your country.**