

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

20 – 29 NOVEMBER 2006

CYP ASIA CENTRE

Chandigarh, INDIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7th December 2006

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1. BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

The primary mission of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) is to empower young people aged 15-29 in the Commonwealth. CYP believes that young people who are empowered by their societies can be a force of great contribution and advancement both for themselves and their countries. We also believe that young people who are marginalised and disempowered can quickly become disillusioned and may try to empower themselves through extreme measures such as civil disobedience and terrorism. Consequently, we develop strategic programmes that allow young people to promote their own development and be the architects and agents of their own empowerment through peaceful and progressive means.

Whilst there are many other agencies working in the youth development field, CYP is the only youth development agency focusing on young people within a systematic, participatory and decentralised youth governance structure.

All CYP's programmes and initiatives are premised upon a rights-based approach to development and within the framework espoused by the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE). CYP is funded through voluntary pledges by Ministers responsible for Youth Affairs and managed through an independent and dedicated Fund.

Since its establishment by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1973, CYP has refined its efforts in the youth development sector through the use of its intellectual capital and experience in youth development to help alleviate the growing and complex social, economic, political and ideological tensions facing young people in Commonwealth countries. By establishing structures such as the Pan-Commonwealth and Regional Youth Caucuses, we have been able to engage young people as full partners in development and democracy, and not simply as bystanders or token beneficiaries. As a result of the valuable contributions of our Youth Caucuses, we have been able to construct effective programmes, and thereby realise our goals in youth development.

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING

CYP's Strategic Planning processes has been shaped within the overarching ambit of Commonwealth principles and values. We have been further guided by our framework, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE),

approved by the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) in 1998 and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 1999.

During the planning period between 1998 and 2006, CYP has consulted with and incorporated the views of staff and young people throughout, from the conceptualisation stage through to various implementation stages. During this period, CYP has been advised by and reported to four sets of CYMMs and RABS (1998, 2000, 2003, 2006). The next CYMM will be held in May 2008.

The first official Strategic Planning Meeting and Workshop for the CYP was held in 1999, in Lusaka, Zambia. The second was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands in May 2000; the third in Chandigarh, India in December 2002 and the fourth in Bromley, London 2005. Over the past seven years, these planning meetings not only incorporated the views of programme staff from CYP Regional Centres in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean; the South Pacific, the Pan-Commonwealth Office and representatives of the regional and pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus, but also from key personnel from the Commonwealth Secretariat including the Human Resources, Finance, IT, LCAD and Human Rights divisions.

3. 5th STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

The 5th CYP strategic planning meeting for 2006-2008 was held at the CYP Asia Centre in Chandigarh, India, from 20th – 29th November 2006.

The programme, list of participants and full report is attached separately.

4. THE PLANNING APPROACH

Right from the outset, the planning process encapsulated a participatory approach. A draft programme was circulated to all staff in October 2006, and they were invited to add their contribution for sessions or issues which they wished to have included in the programme, as well as to identify which sessions they wished to spearhead.

The Director and Head of Youth Affairs engaged staff in the ethos that was to pervade the planning process, viz. the building of ownership through sharing. The involvement of all staff imbued this sense of ownership of both the planning process and its outcomes.

The sessions were managed through a series of participatory techniques, which included small group work, brainstorming buzz groups, presentations and discussions. Furthermore, participants worked collectively in various groups to produce all the materials, tools and outputs of the sessions.

In order to benefit from and build upon past experience, each session highlighted the progress that had been made and what challenges and opportunities existed to refine our niche. At the same time, CYP reminded itself of the realities of its context by examining the threats and weaknesses in its environment.

5. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

- To interrogate CYP's current 2006-2008 Strategic and Operational Plan and refine its core business within the light of the changing environment
- To re-align the revised strategic plan to CYP's core business
- To translate the re-aligned Strategic Plan into an operational plan
- To develop quantified goals and objectives through the use of logframe tools
- To re-examine our human resources and financial plan
- To re-examine our partnerships and extra budgetary resourcing strategies
- To examine our roles and responsibility
- To examine our communication and marketing strategy/plan

6. INTERROGATING THE DRAFT 2006-2008 STRATEGIC PLAN AND PROGRAMME GOALS

Global, regional and national imperatives have served to radically alter the way that the world operates today. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS, advances in technology, the role of the media, rising literacy, changing power relations, a lack of respect and understanding, issues surrounding security, non-acknowledgement of diversity, conflict, intolerance, extremism et al have impacted upon the present and future world. These and other elements have presented unprecedented opportunities to reduce poverty and accelerate growth. But they have also presented an environment which further alienates and marginalises young people.

In order to succeed in the turbulent environment of today, young people must be equipped with skills and competencies that advance beyond literacy and be provided with opportunities beyond the norm. As a critical stakeholder in the youth development arena, CYP has to constantly re-valuate its programmes and operations, to ensure that it remains on the cutting edge and that it continues to provide an environment conducive to working with young people as they negotiate optimum life transitions

It is in the light of the above that the CYP reviewed its 2006 – 2008 strategies and operations.

7. MOVING TOWARDS QUANTIFIED OBJECTIVES AND QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

One of the gaps identified in the 2006-2008 plans and operations was the absence of quantified goals and objectives. If CYP is working towards advocating for the setting of benchmarks for youth development, then it has to develop its own internal standards and benchmarks.

8. REVISED VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

The overall scope and purpose of CYP was assessed through the use of the SWOT analyses. These aided CYP in identifying its niche areas, better understand internal and external competition, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Participants explored strategies for adding value to the products and services provided by CYP. The meeting also assessed CYP's operational processes, both at Regional Centres and pan-Commonwealth levels, and agreed on a range of strategies to assist CYP maintain its competitive advantage.

In order for CYP to transform itself into a *learning organisation which will advocate for an evidenced based approach to youth development*, CYP will translate its learning organization paradigm through a process of piloting and demonstration of innovative strategies and developing models of best practice.

A new mission, vision, strategies and the necessary cultural changes were agreed as a means of CYP evolving into a knowledge/learning organisation, to achieve its strategic goals for the next programming period, 2006-2008.

The revised vision, mission and goals are reflected in the following diagram.

Commonwealth Youth Programme Revised Framework for 2006–8

VISION

A Commonwealth where young women and men have realised their potential individually and collectively and are effectively integrated as agents of change for development and transformation. CYP is the leader and innovator in driving this process.

MISSION

CYP works to engage and empower young people to enhance their contribution to development. We do this in partnership with young people, governments and other key stakeholders.

Our mission is grounded within a rights-based approach, guided by the realities facing young people in the Commonwealth, and anchored in the belief that young people are:

- A force for democracy, equality and good governance
- A catalyst for global consensus building
- An essential resource for poverty eradication and sustainable development

GOAL 1

To empower young people to ensure that they are provided with opportunities to achieve sustainable livelihoods, and for them to participate in, contribute to and benefit from good governance and development processes at national, regional and international levels

GOAL 2

To work with governments, young people and other key stakeholders to mainstream a youth perspective into development planning

GOAL 3*

To promote the use of applied participatory research in youth development in order to contribute to the creation of a body of knowledge

* Currently being revised

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CYP advocates the effective participation of young women and men in the development process and for social transformation. We value the full engagement of young people at all levels of decision-making. Within this framework, our work is guided by the following principles

- Respect for diversity and human dignity and opposition to all forms of discrimination whether based on age, political affiliation, social status, marital status, race, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender;
- Adherence to democracy, the rule of law, good governance, freedom of expression and the protection of human rights;
- Supporting the elimination of poverty and the promotion of people-centred development, and the progressive removal of disparities in living standards and equity;
- Upholding international agreements of peace and security, the rule of international law and opposing terrorism and all forms of extremism;
- Strengthening, enhancing and supporting the role of young people in conflict management and the promotion of a Commonwealth culture of peace enshrined in mutual respect and understanding;
- Promoting a supportive environment including family, kinship and community networks as core contributors to youth well being and development;
- *Advocating for the development of indigenous capital, research and technology and the promotion of cultural heritage and values as enablers of youth development. * Currently being revised

STRATEGIES

Youth Mainstreaming, Youth participation, Rights and evidence based approach to youth development, Partnerships and Collaboration, Access and Opportunities, Capacity-Building, Advocacy, Catalytic and Brokerage, Technology, Building the Body of Knowledge and Establishing Standards, Gender Equality and Equity, Communications and Marketing, Connections to family, community, youth organisations and other networks

9 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR OUR MAJOR STAKEHOLDER – THE REGIONAL YOUTH CAUCUS (RYC)

The planning meeting focused substantially on the need for RYCs to be more effectively mainstreamed into CYP programming in support of programme conceptualization, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. The presence of the pan-Commonwealth Chair ensured that that we translated the vision, mission and goals into tangible activities which reflected young people as the centre of our work.

The RYC capacity development and resource requirements in support of the above cited goals were fully explored. Several training of trainers (ToT) programmes for RYCs are being proposed to meet the RYC capacity enhancement objectives, and this will be further detailed in YAD's workplan.

Because there will be new and enhanced focus on expanding the range of youth that access and benefit from CYP through RYC action, we are considering beginning our TOT programme by enhancing their capacity to conduct and manage *participatory research*.

This gels very strongly with the RYC requests from the 2005 RABs for CYP to support them, and other youth networks, to manage projects that allow young people to work more closely and effectively in their communities to bring about small but meaningful changes to people with whom they relate. The training will provide the RYC with enhanced know-how to enable them to work at local level with their peers, collecting data, analyzing and processing the information to input specific matters to bring about positive change in their communities. Overall the RYC will also be contributing towards creating a credible body of knowledge on national/ regional youth issues.

The Director of CYP has pioneered a programme of training in *participatory research* in her work with the UN, and accredited by UWI, and will ensure that RYC training sessions on research conforms to the highest possible standard.

10. YOUTH MAINSTREAMING

In respect of youth mainstreaming, CYP recognised the imperative to lead the way in youth mainstreaming within the Commonwealth structures and organs at national, regional and international levels and to adopt a more strategic approach in promoting youth mainstreaming on national policy making agendas and within programmes and polices of other development organisations.

In tandem with this approach, CYP's communications and marketing strategy would be used to focus on key constituencies such as young people and their networks and promote wholesome positive images of the young men and women who make valued contributions to themselves, their families and communities. Overall, it will be the crucial vehicle that is used to raise global awareness of the work and value of the CYP.

11. KEY OUTPUTS

- Revised Vision and Mission Statement, Guiding Principles and Strategies;
- Revised 2006 – 2008 Strategic Plan with quantified Goals and Objectives;
- Common Logical Framework for operation;
- Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and standardised reporting formats;
- Agreed Rules and Regulations on Travel and Leave;
- List of Partners and opportunities for maximising EBRS and partnerships;
- Strategies for launching and implementation of the PAYE;
- Tools and opportunities for Youth Mainstreaming;
- Draft Communications Plan;
- Plan for finalising the RYC handbook.

12. CONCLUSION

Staff emerged with an enhanced awareness of CYP's niche areas and its strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for it to regain and sustain comparative advantage in the field of youth development. The CYP human resource plan and budget will be aligned to the revised vision, mission, goals and objectives.

7th December 2006

Dr. Fatiha Serour

Director and Head of Youth Affairs