

Stimulating Excellence in Youth Work

Commonwealth Youth Work Education and Training



COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME
COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Acknowledgments – Youth Work Education and Training (YWET)

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1. Introduction: What is a Youth Worker?



In order to work optimally with young people, the intensive, complex and demanding nature of youth work requires youth workers to possess and demonstrate a high level of knowledge, skill and self-development. The demographic imperative – the vast and growing youth population – ensures that we pay attention to young people, not always for the right reasons, and sometimes for our own very selfish ends, but we pay attention no less. In our plans then, we develop *programmes* that engage young people. So, we have young people, and we have programmes, but how often do we focus on those who deliver these programmes?

Often, youth workers are perceived as those whose role it is to keep young people out of the way, provide recreation and fun for them and generally keep young people off the streets.

There is little understanding and even less appreciation that

Youth work is a distinctive field of practice and a highly demanding professional skill which carries with it considerable responsibilities and pressures.

“For what are youth workers if they are not facilitators of human rights and development?”

Chandu Christian, CYP Diploma Evaluator and Consultant

In many countries the occupational category does not even exist, or where it does, is not yet clearly defined or conceptualized by the majority of stakeholders, including policy makers. Therefore, Youth work is not widely recognized as a formal career as yet, those who practice the profession are limited, and this limitation is further exacerbated by lack of funding and other resources. The major weakness of youth work in many countries is the absence of any direct funding and availing of resources by government to the youth work service. Neither is there provision of funds for the documentation and highlighting of effective youth work programmes or good youth work practice. This means that the

services of youth organisations are limited and they cannot provide adequately for the needs of young people.¹

“The course has made me one of the reputable youth workers in Malawi. I am now a good planner, manager, advocate, implementer, organizer, facilitator, full of confidence and determination”

Doreen Mbendera, Youth Officer for Lilongwe District

Since 1974 the Commonwealth Youth Programme has been tackling these related challenges through provision of the best possible Youth work training and learning

experiences. And since 1998 it has vastly increased the reach of its courses by transition to supported distance education.

¹ From a 2001 presentation to Diploma Partners by Helen Jones and Cristal de Saldanha

The Commonwealth Youth Programme

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) works as a trusted partner to empower, engage and create value so that young women and men can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their families, communities and countries.

As a Commonwealth agency, CYP is driven by the following fundamental values:

- respect for diversity and human dignity and opposition to all forms of discrimination whether rooted in race, ethnicity, creed 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 progressive removal of wide disparities in living standards among members; and
- upholding international peace and security, the rule of international law and opposition to terrorism.

2. Poverty and the Participation Agenda

The Human Rights Approach to development acknowledges that under-18s have:

“the right to express...views freely in all matters affecting [them], the views...being given due weight in accordance with [their] age and maturity...”

(Convention on the rights of the Child, Article 12)

Meanwhile, with over half the world's population aged under 24 (closer to three-quarters in many developing countries) youth issues in development are more urgent than ever. Between 2000 and 2010 some 700 million young women and men will enter the labour force. And currently there are not 700 million new jobs available. The policy questions are therefore:

- Is there a clear relationship between development planning and demography in policy and practice?
- Are positive interventions planned to reflect these demographic trends, in education, training, employment and education activities?
- What should be the positive measurable outcomes of successfully engaging even a fraction of these young people in economic activity?
- What is the worst possible scenario if the labour market entrants – the 700 million – remain marginalised, powerless and excluded?





Youth Work and the Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Today's livelihoods programmes must take account of adolescent-headed households, out-of-school youth, economic migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees. In this more fluid social landscape youth workers are needed to help resolve resource conflict issues, build consensus between the generations and promote skills transfer where traditional pathways have broken down. They are also needed to ensure cross-sector collaboration on youth livelihoods interventions.

2. Achieve universal primary education

Although youth workers usually educate in the non-formal setting, they play a role in encouraging out-of-school youth to go back to education, and also in making sure the parent community understands the value of education.

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

A "youth-worked" community is one in which young women have a voice. Raising young women's expectations and building their self-esteem is at the heart of informal education.

4. Reduce child mortality;

5. Improve maternal health

"Youth-worked" health services are ones which are approachable and non-judgemental toward young mothers, with information campaigns that connect with youth cultures.

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

As agencies look to peer-education as part of combating HIV/AIDS and encouraging healthy lifestyles, the ability to communicate with young people becomes a life-saving issue. Self-esteem issues are central to young people's negotiating and sustaining behaviour change. HIV/AIDS is overwhelmingly a disease of young adults.

7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Youth workers have a role to play in mitigating unsustainable urbanisation: by helping young people toward a more realistic understanding of life in today's cities, and by building recreation and livelihoods in rural areas. Youth workers are also vital to conservation and public health efforts, the sustainability of which depends on new generations.

8. Develop a global partnership for development

"Young people are part of the effort or the effort fails," Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon has said. By extension those who are able to engage young people, the youth workers, are also essential: "Many adults are used to exercising authority and keeping authority through authoritarian practices. People who have tried to promote participation with good intentions have become frustrated, demoralised or cynical when it hasn't worked well, and are left wondering what might have been done better." (CYP/UNICEF2005: 21)

3. Youth Work Education and Training: Rationale and Guiding Principles

A role for young people in development is therefore both a right and an imperative. What does the youth work profession have to say about realising that right and that imperative? These are more than theoretical issues. They go to the heart of articulating the niche of youth work and realising the value of investments in it.

- Too often, [the youth education] debate has been dominated by those who are already qualified and well-established in their chosen field, rather than the new generation of workers who have the right to influence future developments...
 - Clearly, there is a debate to be had about how best to equip people with the skills, knowledge, recognition and status to acquire the necessary professional expertise and continue to be rooted in their own communities. However, it is also very important to consider how these people can be given transferable skills and knowledge, recognition and accreditation so that they have the freedom and ability to practice in other areas or countries.
- Martin Notley for CYP: 1997
- Reflective practice is more than an examination of personal experience; it is located in the political and social structures which are increasingly hemming professionals in. ... (Professional practitioners) are being reduced to technicians, their skills to mere technical competencies ... In order to retain political and social awareness and activity, professional development work needs to be rooted in the public and the political as well as the private and the personal.

- Bolton: 2001:3²

The above quotes establish that in defining the profession of youth work, intellectually and in practice, it is antithetical to exclude the policy sphere and the recruitment of youth workers into that policy sphere. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the youth worker emerges as an agent of change able to continually ask themselves certain questions – whether that is in the field or on a policy level.

The underpinning themes of Youth Work education and Training are kept “alive and kicking” by the youth and development worker constantly asking themselves four questions:

- i) What do I mean by personal and social education?
- ii) What is the social, economic and political context in which I live and work?
- iii) What do I do which encourages or prevents change?
- iv) How does the work setting and/or other structures affect what I do?

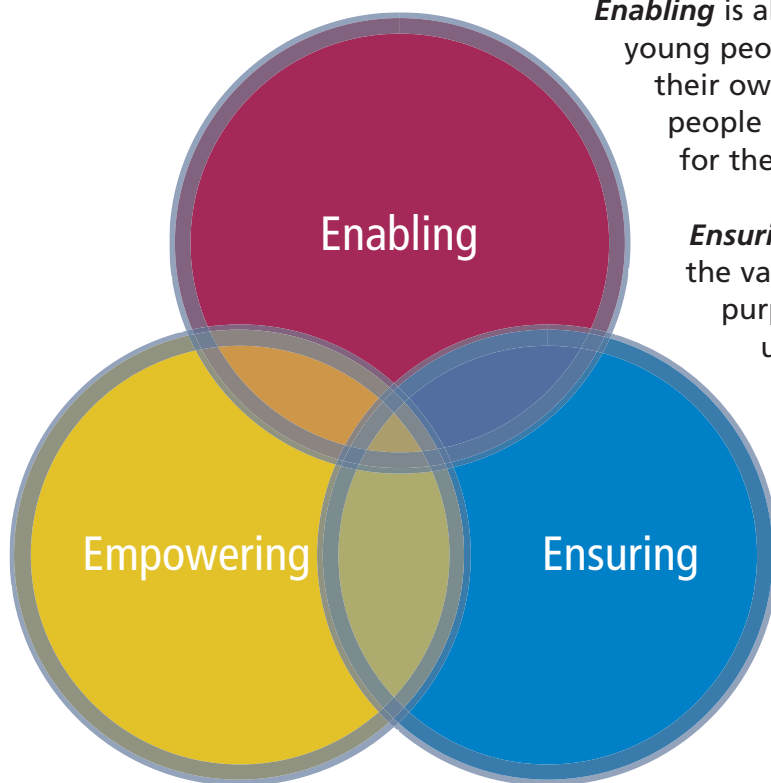
“...In Freirian terms we want to challenge ‘banking education’ and engage students in ‘transformatory education’...people learn best by doing, and by reflecting on and analysing their experience. In this way, future action becomes more purposeful and effective. The learning process starts from experience and experimentation leading to interrogation of theory and then critical reflexivity. This rethinking and reshaping of ideas, concepts and theory is a dynamic process which enables students as practitioners to acknowledge and respect cultures, values and traditions but also pushes at the boundaries of social reform.”

(Martin Notley for CYP, 1997)

2 Quoted in “Youth Work Education and Training: From Training to Professional Education,” Chandu Christian for Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting 2003

4. From Guiding Principles to Core Competencies: The Diploma in Youth Development Work

Since 1974 the Commonwealth Youth Programme has been offering a Diploma in Youth Development Work, based on this foundation of action-research. In this course the generic core competencies of youth workers are organised under three main functions. These are enabling, ensuring and empowering.



Enabling is about creating the conditions in which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than relying on other people and especially professionals to do things for them.

Ensuring is about operating in accordance with the value systems which give a sense of purpose and meaning to how young people use their skills and knowledge.

Empowering is about putting democratic principles into action in the fullest sense, so that young people can play an assertive and constructive part in the decision-making that affects them at different levels of society.

These functions are not value free. They are rooted in the Commonwealth values and principles set out in the 1971 Singapore

Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and the 1991 Harare Commonwealth Declaration. Specifically, these are *democracy, liberty, justice and equity*.

“Heads of Government affirmed the importance of promoting tolerance, respect, enlightened moderation and friendship among people of different races, faiths and cultures. In this regard they commended various initiatives at the national, regional and international level and encouraged the Commonwealth Secretariat to strengthen its interaction with other bodies that seek to build a common platform of unity against extremism and intolerance.”

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2005

In many parts of the world the CYP has been the only provider of youth development work education and training. As a result, CYP has gained substantial experience of the field of youth development work.

Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, 1995, mandated the feasibility study for developing the Diploma by supported distance education, with the aims of:

- Allowing larger numbers of students to participate
- Allowing students to study nearer to home
- Allowing in-service students to study whilst continuing in professional roles

The implementation of the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Diploma in Youth Development Work is a unique endeavour by 27 universities to deliver a supported distance learning programme across the Commonwealth's Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Pacific regions. It has involved a wide range of stakeholders, including government departments, non-governmental organisations and community groups. The outcomes are many and include learning not only for the Diploma's hundreds of students but also for tutors, universities, government agencies, CYP and those involved in the provision of Quality Assurance (QA).

In addition to building structures for the delivery of education and training for youth development workers, the Diploma has provided the catalyst for the conscious development of a body of practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding on which future youth in development initiatives may draw. The Diploma and relevant publications combine to provide a strong foundation on which the professionalisation of the sector can be constructed and extended.

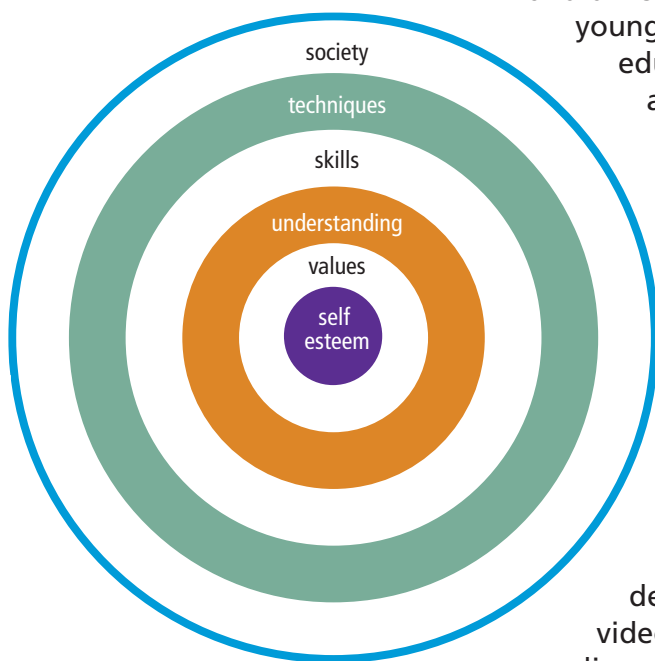
Evaluations (Irvine 2002; Musandu-Nyamayaro 2002) show that the development of a positive, dynamic partnership which brings together the university, government departments and employers and CYP helps to promote the success of the Diploma. This partnership has potential to ensure the recruitment and selection of the most motivated and promising students and to build in mechanisms to encourage access for under-represented groups. Data indicate, for example, that women are under-represented on the Diploma in some regions and areas within regions but also show that women are the most likely to complete the course.

“The emerging context of the rights approach to development is forcing more and more states to commit themselves to providing equal opportunities for education to their citizenry, irrespective of age, sex and levels of readiness. No wonder then that the learner profile is changing—constrained by their family, financial and work related situations, learners look for and take courses/degrees when they are already in a job; they prefer taking courses/degrees over longer periods of time, breaking their studies in between; they look for education/training that satisfies their immediate needs or fits into their long-term developmental strategies; and they prefer end-to-end user-friendly educational products and services—their behaviour is more like customers than the traditional fresh-from-the-school obedient students. To them, education/training must return the value of money spent on it...”

Badri N. Koul in “Towards a Culture of Quality”, Commonwealth of Learning 2006

5. How the Diploma Works

Inside a good youth worker...



The Diploma in Youth Development Work is designed to provide workers with an underpinning knowledge on which to base work with young people, an understanding of the values and ethics of the profession, grounded in the values and principles of the Commonwealth, and the practical skills to undertake the work. The work is concerned with young people's personal and social development in its broadest sense and uses informal educational methods. Workers not only plan initiatives but also have the interpersonal skills to work spontaneously, creating learning opportunities. As such, youth development work is distinctive and different from other professions which engage with young people such as welfare or social work, formal education or teaching and sports coaching, although all such professions are likely to draw on informal educational approaches when appropriate.

Diploma students agree a **learning contract** with their tutor in order to:

- Ensure clarity for the student about what they need to do and how to achieve this
- Allow negotiation about appropriate pieces of work to be submitted for assessment
- Expose the student to producing assessed work in a variety of forms appropriate to youth development work, e.g. reports, seminar papers, videos, critical recordings and reflections, essays, policy papers etc.

The course is modular in structure. The modules (listed below) each have a set of learning outcomes that the student is required to demonstrate they have adequately met. The outcomes are defined

“we do not wish the student to discuss behavioural psychology one week and feminist political theory the next week without realising that one in a sense is a critique of the other, and that dialogue, discussion and debate is called for between competing perspectives. As individuals they need to be confident enough about ideas to use them to clarify their own values... theoretical perspectives are mainly useful in so far as they illuminate, challenge and extend practice.”

Human Resource Development for the New Millennium, Martin Notley for CYP, 1997

as cognitive (knowledge and understanding) and competence (the skills required). Across the modules, care has been taken to ensure that all the requirements for effective practice have been patterned into the module. Learning outcomes are not narrow tick-off of individual skills or knowledge. They are more holistic in that they cluster a range of skills and knowledge in a way that makes sense.

Each module carries either five or ten credits and to reach Diploma level the student must accrue 120 credits, the

equivalent of the foundation level of a degree. One of the major advantages of this approach is that different students or groups of students can progress at differing paces, taking between a year and eighteen months to complete the course.

The other advantage of the modular credit scheme is that it allows for the possibility of accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL): if a student can demonstrate through previous courses or work that they have met the module outcomes, then they can be awarded the credits without undertaking the module. It is also possible to deliver the modules as stand-alone courses to other groups of students or workers.

Learning and Assessment

The Diploma's approach involves tutors taking on a facilitative role in working alongside groups of students to explore ideas and theories, linking them with local contexts. For some tutors, this is a new experience. In order to address these new demands, tutor training has been provided and has been shown to be an important way to promote students' learning and enhance the Diploma. CYP Regional Centres and External Regional Moderators have played major roles in the design and delivery of tutor training.

For students, the provision of intensive induction and orientation programmes has been found to be important. As well as providing an introduction to the Diploma itself, induction programmes introduce students to the demands which the supported distance model will place on them and provide the opportunity for students to build supportive networks for themselves. In order to enhance their studies further, students also need not only full access to universities' facilities including information and communications technology (ICT) resources and libraries but also support in terms of working in practice in the field. Study skills and pastoral guidance are also important.

The production of the *Asia Question Bank* (2001) added a major asset to the resources available across the Commonwealth. The first edition of *Intercom*, the Student Newsletter, in 2003, has added a further resource and the launch of the refereed journal, *Commonwealth Youth and Development* has an impact which extends beyond the countries of the Commonwealth. These initiatives will also add to the body of knowledge concerning youth work and help to address the need to develop a strong theoretical foundation for future developments.

“The noble, relentless efforts taken in preparing the modules deserve my special appreciation. Kudos to all the Module Writers for having given us the most updated information in a student-friendly language.”

Diploma Graduate Kalanithi Balaji, India, interviewed in Intercom, the Diploma Newsletter

“The modules are obviously compiled by people who are directly involved in youth work. The material provided can also be used in the workplace for referencing and running of workshops. It is different from other courses because of its flexibility.”

Diploma Graduate Kgomotso Mabusela, South Africa

“Once enrolled in the course, I learnt everything I wanted to know about working with youth...I am now studying a Masters Degree and have just completed my first year. I would not have been able to do this without the foundation provided by the Diploma. It has a lot of depth...it has opened doors to many networks.”

Diploma Graduate Edward Clarke, New Zealand

Core Modules of the Diploma in Youth Development Work

Module 1: Learning Processes

Centring on the youth development worker as an educator, this module explores philosophies of education and shows how people learn and can be helped to learn. It includes face-to-face work with young people in training situations.

Module 2: Young People and Society

Enables practitioners to relate the theory and practice of youth development work to the social context. It explores how young people, and the transition from childhood to adulthood, is seen by different societies.

Module 3: Principles and Practice of Youth in Development Work

Focuses on the professional role of the practitioner, and the process of informal education. Analysing contemporary approaches: crisis intervention; crisis prevention; centralised and outreach work; youth empowerment. This module includes project work in a youth organisation.

Module 4: Working with People in their Communities

Builds knowledge and skills for working successfully with young individuals and groups. Youth development is presented as a planned development process which requires forward planning and critical reflection to achieve its objectives. Study includes the theory and practice of community development.

Module 5: Gender and Development

Explores ways to ensure quality of outcomes for young women and men, covering the range of theoretical perspectives and their implications. It develops techniques of encouraging participation among women and promotes skills in gender-sensitive project planning, implementation and evaluation.

Module 6: Commonwealth Values in youth and development

Covers democracy and human rights principles. Provides training in democratic styles of leadership; consensual decision-making; adapting to different cultures and religious belief; ensuring access for women and disabled people. It includes a general introduction to the Commonwealth as an institution, its decision-making structures and its key areas of work.

Module 7: Management Skills

Focusing on the youth development worker as a leader, this module covers self-management; managing staff; organisational development; needs assessment and analysis; budgeting; scheduling and evaluation.

Module 8: Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Covers all the processes involved in designing and delivering a successful project, from identifying the needs, to bidding for funds, to bringing the project to “self-sustainability” – the capacity to keep going without the youth worker.

Module 9: Policy Planning and Implementation

Develops skills in influencing policy-making processes, including a focus on action research. It centres on the study of national youth policy - analysing existing policies and seeking ways to improve or replace them.

Module 10: Conflict Resolution Strategies and Skills

Explores conflict, mediation and negotiation, studying competing views among youth, and between youth and established society. Looks at strategies to express differences positively and work towards consensus or accommodation.

Module 11: Promoting Enterprise and Economic Development

Covers the links between economic development and youth development work; skills for promoting self-employment and micro-enterprise.

Module 12: Youth and Health

Covers reproductive and sexual health; nutrition and diet; drugs; exercise and healthy living. Develops skills in building relationships with health agencies and NGOs (non-governmental organisations). This module especially focuses on a holistic approach to health promotion.

Module 13: Sustainable Development and Environmental Issues

Shows how the youth worker can stimulate awareness of environmental issues among young people and help them make an active contribution to sustainable development. It looks at building environmental protection into economic and social development.

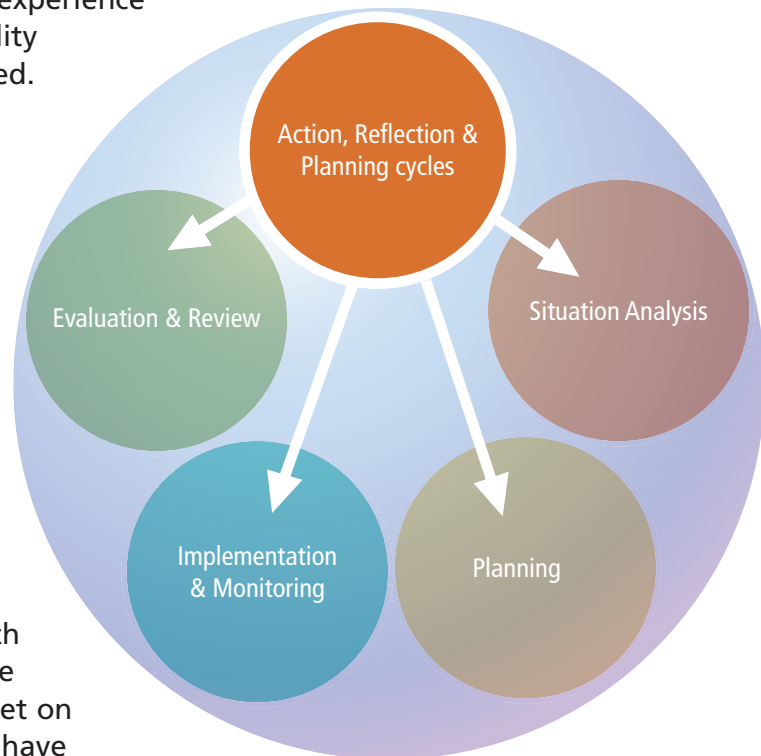
Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

In order to nurture, and to work towards, comparability of standards and to foster parity of student experience across the Commonwealth, a unique Quality Assurance (QA) infrastructure was designed. Clearly identified as complementing University partners' existing rigorous QA processes and valuing their autonomy, it was intended to be developmental in nature. Documentation emphasizes that Pan-Commonwealth Quality Assurance is intended to share good practice and offer a Pan-Commonwealth perspective. It is emphatically not inspectorial. During the pilot phase, the approach and remit has developed and evolved through the pioneering work of the team of nine External Regional Moderators (ERMs), working together with the Pan-Commonwealth Quality Assurance Agency's representatives. The team has met on an annual basis and the resultant reports have provided guidance on issues including tutor training, the design of questions for time-constrained examinations, marking consistently and the provision of constructive, evaluative feedback on students' work.

The aims of Pan-Commonwealth Quality Assurance were identified as:

- To build robust and genuine partnerships, based on equality and equity and based on open and honest dialogue;
- To have a shared vision and build consensus on the aims and objectives of the Diploma;
- To delineate the different roles and responsibilities of each key stakeholder, have a clear focus on the tasks of each partner, and ensure that each partner delivers to agreed standards what they say they will;
- To promote a youth empowerment paradigm and contribute to the highest level of service that young people deserve (PCQAA 2001b)

Inside a good youth project...



“Quality is a product of planning, monitoring, control and coordination’ (Robinson 1993: 77) – it ‘depends on products, processes, systems and people’...Quality assurance does not merely mean a set of procedures to be followed – it is also an attitude or ethos which influences every aspect in an organisation’s activity’ (ibid: 79). In other words, commitment to quality ought to be a part of an organisation’s culture.”

Koul and Kanwar, “Towards a Culture of Quality”, Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) 2006

Stimulating Excellence in Youth Work

The values underpinning Pan-Commonwealth Quality Assurance mechanisms were identified as:

Quality	<p>High quality teaching and learning</p> <p>Strong student support systems</p> <p>Ongoing staff development activity</p> <p>Review of management and organisation</p> <p>Curriculum delivery and development</p>
Equality	<p>Opening up access to learners</p> <p>Parity of standards</p> <p>Parity of student experience</p> <p>International recognition</p> <p>Equal partnerships</p>
Democracy	<p>Transparency and accountability</p> <p>Acknowledging regional contexts</p> <p>Capacity building (PCQAA 2001b)</p>

“The readiness of students, the qualifications of tutors and their experience in distance education and in youth work, the access of students to tutors and learning resources, the contribution of mentors, use of technology, etc., are all areas to be carefully monitored in ensuring quality of the Diploma. Of particular importance is assessing whether there are internal quality control mechanisms in place and working.”

Caribbean Evaluation

The implementation of external QA procedures, which are required in order to ensure the Pan-Commonwealth dimension of the Diploma, has highlighted different expectations and approaches across the PIs. For example, whilst some universities are accustomed to working with external examiners, others have QA processes which

are wholly internal. For all concerned, the involvement of the ERMs has been a positive collaboration and a learning experience, and their developmental brief has been increasingly welcomed.

The seven dimensions of Quality Assurance for the Diploma have been identified as:

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3. Student Progression and Achievement
4. Student Support and Guidance
5. Learning Resources
6. Quality Management and Enhancement
7. Aspects specific to Pan-Commonwealth operation

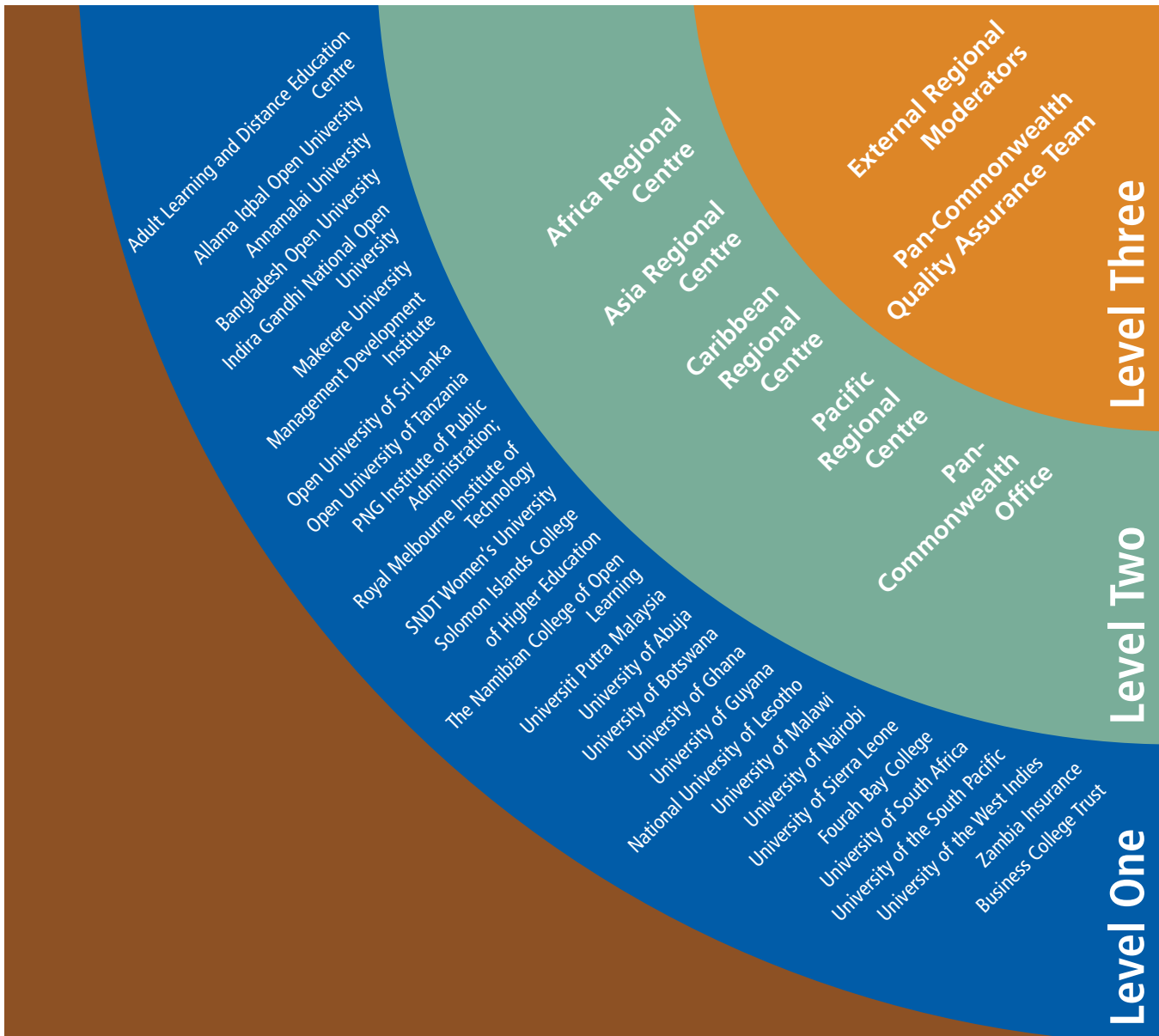
For each of these dimensions there is an agreed division of responsibilities among the following stakeholders:

- The CYP Pan-Commonwealth Office
- The CYP Regional Centres
- The Universities
- The Pan-Commonwealth Quality Assurance Agency
- The External Moderators

Since its inception, the Diploma has highlighted differences in approaches to ensuring quality in higher education across the Commonwealth. In some nations, External Examiners, from other universities of the country, are the norm although their responsibilities vary considerably. In other countries, quality is essentially an internal responsibility of each university with ultimate responsibility lying at governmental level. As one of the team of ERMs observed in materials provided for the Africa Regional Evaluation:

“The vision of Pan Commonwealth Quality Assurance is emphatically not inspectorial but is designed to move toward pan-Commonwealth parity. During the pilot phase, Pls have valued the ERMs’ involvement increasingly and have involved them in activities including staff development and training and the induction and orientation of new students. The ERMs and PCQAA representatives have evolved into a significant and supportive academic network for the sharing of professional discourse. It has been suggested that the QA role played by ERMs, in terms of the provision of advice to universities, parallels the role played by professional associations (in areas such as law and accountancy). CYP thus has the potential to play a role of an international quasi-professional organisation.”

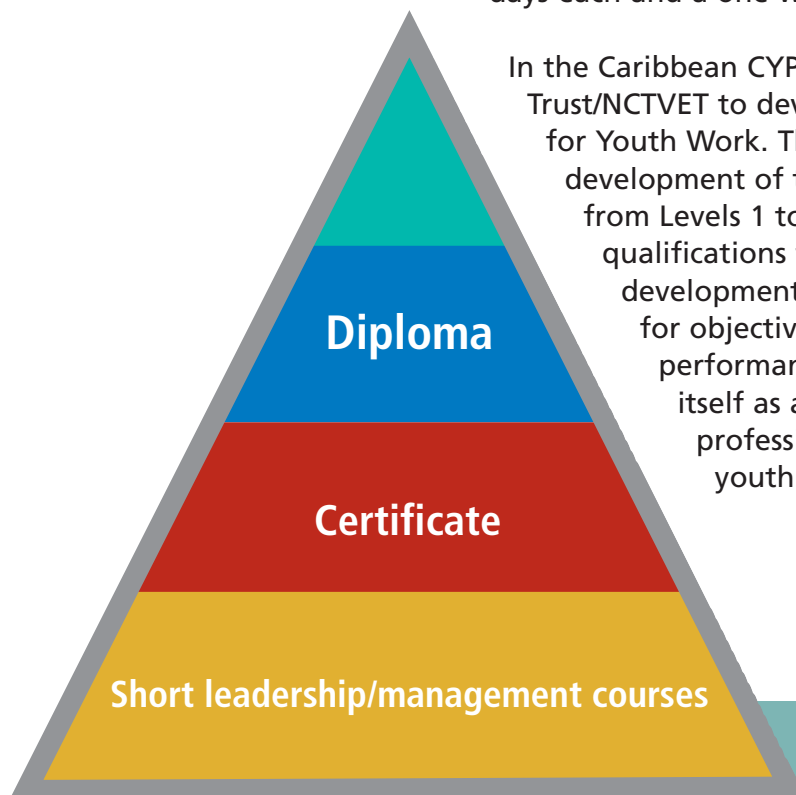
Quality Assurance Operations:



6. Certificate, Access and Short Courses

Not everyone wants to commit themselves to a year or eighteen months of study. Some may already possess a degree or field experience in a closely related area and have interest in just some of the modules, such as youth policy development for example. Others may be active in grassroots youth work or peer education without having completed secondary education.

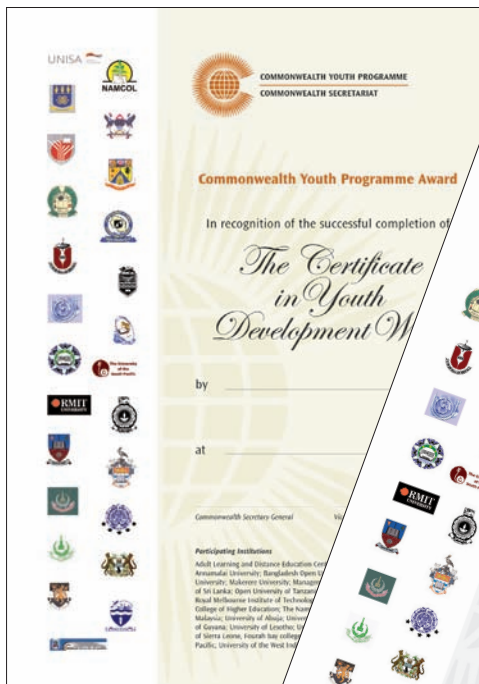
With this in mind CYP has been offering a Certificate-level course in Youth Development since 1978. In the Caribbean it is delivered by supported distance education over a period of nine months, including two residential components of three days each and a one week practical placement.



In the Caribbean CYP has partnered with HEART Trust/NCTVET to develop Regional Competency Standards for Youth Work. This will provide guidance for the development of training programmes and articulation from Levels 1 to 5 of the CARICOM-endorsed qualifications framework, clearly show youth development work requirements and provide a basis for objective assessment of youth workers performance. This is all part of CYP positioning itself as an agency specialising in the professionalisation and institutionalisation of youth work.

“Dominica would very much like to see a broadening of the catchment for students of the Diploma to include sports personnel especially, as well as teachers... The [Anguillan] Minister and Permanent Secretary both expressed the desire to see the definition of youth worker expanded to include other areas e.g. sports development, probation work, health, etc. where personnel were constantly in contact with young people.”

Caribbean Evaluation



Module 12 (Youth and Health) in action: The Young Ambassadors of Positive Living (YAPL)

The YAPL programme began in the Africa region and has since been replicated in Asia and the Caribbean. The Young Ambassadors are HIV-positive young people who have volunteered their time to educate others about the epidemic, as well as to press for appropriate policy responses and treatment regimes in civil society and government. Young Ambassadors have spread their message of hope and de-stigmatization to people in church groups, the media, the military, youth clubs and others. Their activities are living testimony to the fact that people living with HIV can nevertheless contribute actively in society and play leadership roles.

Many students in the Caribbean and Pacific have used the Certificate as an access course to the Diploma itself. Organised in short courses, Diploma material has also been used as part of other kinds of development intervention by CYP:

- Leadership training for youth representatives and other young people
- Training for young people as peer educators on HIV/AIDS
- Integrated micro-credit, entrepreneurship training and business mentorship for young people
- Refresher courses for government youth officers
- Capacity-building work with National Youth Councils and youth NGOs

In this way, the Certificate and the Diploma are part of a continuum of interventions for Human Resource Development in civil society and government.

“You know the ABC prevention strategy: Abstinence, Be faithful or use a Condom. Well, we are not selective, we just promote every aspect of prevention and people must choose which is appropriate for them. You will find that there are these youth groups promoting abstinence and condemning condom use. But, you know, the messages they preach are often contrary to their own behaviour. There is this gulf between behaviour and knowledge. Today, everyone knows about HIV, but it’s just as if they can’t connect what they know to their behaviour. It’s like this medical doctor who is a secret smoker... So our stories are there to bridge that gulf; our stories are the solution.”

Chama Musoka (Zambia), Vice-President of YAPL

7. Newsletter and Journal

Youth workers are studying for the Diploma in 45 Commonwealth countries. Since 2003 they have been able to share experiences through "Intercom", the Diploma programme's newsletter.

A more formal and academic exchange of news and views is to be found in the Diploma's refereed Journal, "Commonwealth Youth and Development." Hosted by the University of South Africa, "Commonwealth Youth and Development" is a multidisciplinary biannual publication that seeks to promote understanding of, and impetus for, the empowerment of youth. Its unique editorial board, with two representatives from each region, ensures the journal's representative, Commonwealth character.

"The Diploma course has helped to contribute to a change in attitude among those who deal with young people and their development...I would urge [the participation of] teachers, health sector workers, and those in non-governmental and service organisations."

Gail Teixeira, former Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Guyana, reported in "Intercom".

As argued by Dr Rawwida Baksh, Head of Gender Affairs at the Commonwealth, building the body of knowledge for youth work and the youth movement is comparable with the critical knowledge base for the gender movement.

Baksh identifies four kinds of knowledge building which journals such as "Commonwealth Youth and Development" can play a role in:

1. Validating Young People's Contribution:
 - Quantifying and Making youth work visible
 - Critically examining young people's place and relationships in the world
 - Recognising that their experiences are valid subjects for public enquiry and discourse
 - Recognising their contributions as citizens, labourers, family members
2. Theorising by and about young people
3. Building a Youth Studies Discipline
4. Recognising the importance of Critical Evaluation

In the Caribbean a regional e-journal has been set up, and countries have agreed to host a revolving lecture series on youth work commencing in Barbados in September 2006.

“The pan-Commonwealth journal on youth and development is an important milestone. This journal will provide a forum where academics and practitioners can report their experiences, engage in debate, and refine the theoretical basis of good practice in the area of youth work. It is also an opportunity to promote youth perspectives of analysis within a great variety of academic disciplines...the volume of quality research about young people is low, and is not always able to embrace the multi-disciplinary approaches that are called for...Congratulations to UNISA, the editors, contributors and everyone who have made [the journal] possible. Long may it flourish!”

Commonwealth Secretary-General The Rt Hon Donald C McKinnon, writing in issue number one of “Commonwealth Youth and Development”

A research article on the impact of international mobility on youth work students:

“In addition to ethnocentrism, ontological security, taken to its extreme, produces social and cultural myopia and generates prejudice. Thompson draws a continuum, stretching from ‘excessive reliance on security, producing defensiveness and rigidity’ to ‘insufficient security, producing anxiety and low levels of coping skills’ with a central, balanced point...To develop ontological awareness involves the ability to identify, reflect on and ‘name’ the components of one’s cultural security...”

Helen Jones (University of Huddersfield), “Naming the Taken-for-Granted: what British youth and community work students learn from international mobility”

The Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (Caribbean region) is reported:

“To date over 500 persons have been registered in the project, one hundred and twenty loans have been disbursed, and close to 400 jobs have been created. Slightly more women than men registered and received loans. Businesses receiving credit have included hairdressers, grocery and convenience shops, craftspeople and garment makers, catering for cruise tourists (including wood and leather craft), garden and home care, and small manufacturers (of concrete products, herbal drinks and confectionary.)”

Cecil Ryan, Products Promotions Ltd (St Vincent and the Grenadines)

8. Transition to Distance Learning: Regional Experiences

Delivery of the Diploma in Youth Development Work was implemented on a rolling basis. Asia region was first to deliver the programme and the first to see students achieving their Diplomas. The Caribbean and Pacific regions followed. Africa region was fourth to start the programme and was able to benefit from the experience of other regions. Each region and indeed each country has faced different challenges. These include, for example, vast distances between learners and their training institutions and the difficulties presented by inter-island travel.

External evaluation was undertaken first in Asia region (2001) and subsequently in Africa and the Caribbean (2002), then in the Pacific (2003). The evaluations identified many aspects for improvement but found, 'the Diploma has achieved a significant measure of its objectives' (Musandu-Nyamayaro: 2002, I); 'students' experiences were enriched and their skills and competencies as youth workers enhanced' (Irvine: 2002, xi) and the Diploma 'is a significant achievement, symbolically and practically celebrating the spirit and the unity of the Commonwealth, and at the same time offering practical benefits to young people through the enhanced training of youth workers' (Christian 2001: 3).

During this period the partnership network has grown from sixteen to 27 institutions. Further, a tier of Partner Support Institutions (franchises offering the Diploma in association with larger institutions) have become self-standing.

Diploma Graduates

The transition to distance learning has greatly increased the student intake. Prior to 1998, the residential mode of delivery trained two students per country every two years.

The table below shows students by country, excluding those who did not complete the course. The average cost across of the programme per student is £465 which compares very favourably with the cost of £2,000 per student in the residential mode. This figure should fall further as materials are converted into electronic formats.

Region/Country	Graduates (1998-2006)	Currently Studying (2006)	Certificate/ Short Course Graduates
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Africa

Botswana	19	30	40
Cameroon	NA	NA	40
The Gambia	-	16	-
Ghana	48	250	-
Kenya	33	-	-
Lesotho	47	-	-
Malawi	58	-	-
Namibia	14	25	-
Nigeria	NA	50	-
Seychelles	NA	25	-
Sierra Leone	16	30	-
South Africa	72	65	-
Tanzania	56	70	-
Uganda	27	35	-
* Zimbabwe	56	-	-
Zambia	58	30	-
Africa sub-total	504	626	80

Asia

Bangladesh	76	142	-
Brunei Darussalam	NA	NA	30
India	589	620	-
Malaysia	90	80	-
Pakistan	36	-	-
Sri Lanka	27	121	-
Asia sub-total	818	963	30

Caribbean

Anguilla	3	-	-
Antigua & Barbados	2	-	-
Bahamas	2	4	19
Barbados	10	12	22
Belize	-	12	7

Stimulating Excellence in Youth Work

Region/Country	Graduates (1998-2006)	Currently Studying (2006)	Certificate/ Short Course Graduates
British Virgin Is.	-	10	-
Cayman Is.	-	4	2
Dominica	9	14	17
Grenada	1	5	15
Guyana	26		5
Jamaica	7	11	13
Montserrat	3	6	16
St Kitts & Nevis	4	-	2
St Lucia	4	15	37
S.V.G	8	13	11
Trinidad/Tobago	2	27	37
Caribbean sub-total	81	133	203
Pacific			
Australia	26	16	-
Cook Is	1	1	2
Fiji Is	20	9	2
Kiribati	4	-	-
Marshall Is	-	-	1
Nauru	-	-	-
New Zealand	34	-	-
Niue	-	-	-
PNG	29	-	-
Samoa	1	-	-
Solomon Is.	24	40	-
Tokelau	-	-	-
Tonga	3	1	-
Tuvalu	1	-	-
Vanuatu	12	1	2
Pacific sub-total	155	68	7
Pan-Commonwealth total	1558	1790	320

* Zimbabwe has withdrawn from the Commonwealth

Africa

In Africa the Diploma has been firmly institutionalised as a sustainable tripartite programme: all memoranda of understanding and financial agreements are signed not only by CYP and partner universities, but also by government. More than this, governments are meeting 50% of the cost, a commitment over and above their regular pledges to the CYP fund. Over 90% of students are from youth councils or government.

Technical consultations have recently taken place on extending the programme to Cameroon, a move that will require translation of modules into French. Cameroon's youth service training is well developed and it would be a welcome partner in the programme.

“The Diploma is a dream come true for youth workers here in South Africa. The qualification is important to give weight to the profession.”

Diploma Graduate Kgomotso Mabusela, South Africa

“The Module on Youth and Health was very interesting. There is plenty of food in Uganda, but I now realize that people have poor eating habits right from youth, I have learned issues in food and nutrition”

Sarah Mukyala, Kibuli Dental Clinic, Kampala, Uganda.

“I have learned that the diploma is youth in development work, but it is not merely about youth, but adults rather. It has developed me, I can handle adults now. It applies to everyone in life. There are terminologies people talked about that I did not know, now I know. I was blind before I did this course, now I can see things happening in the society and around myself”

Ruth Kawale-Magela, Malawi

- There are relatively few female students in the Africa region.
- The Mid-Term Review in Africa identified research methods as a weak area within the curriculum. In response, the updated course now opens with a module on Learning Processes.

Asia

Gender and language issues have featured strongly in the story of the Diploma in Asia. Some 90% of students are male and a high proportion are post-graduate, partly reflecting the fact that at present English language competence is necessary for success on the course (in Sri Lanka a language refresher course was run as part of induction). In this way the English language format is affecting not only the numbers of students reached but also their profile. Translations of course materials will be a key development.

“The discussions and assignments gave me a whole new insight into my day to day work and I learned to look at every work assignment as a learning experience...an excellent opportunity to understand youth in a more political, social and a gender perspective.”

Diploma Graduate Kumari Welegedara, Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka and Malaysia the Public Service Commissions and the Ministries of Education are on board, indicating a good level of sustainability for the programme. In Malaysia the Diploma is fully nationally owned and nationally financed, CYP playing a role only in quality assurance and the award of the Diploma itself.

Some universities had previously relied almost exclusively on examinations, but all have agreed to assess the Diploma with a 60/40 exam/coursework split. This is just one example of the programme's impact on teaching and assessment methodologies, some of which has gone beyond youth work education to other subject areas.

“I have found that teaching on this Diploma through the inter-active style has had a very benign influence in the way I teach on the other courses.”

Diploma Tutor

CYP and its network has been applauded for “not only answering questions but questioning answers” (VC Prasad, former Vice-Chancellor,

Indira Gandhi National Open University), and even for “humanising education”.

- Plans are underway for extending short courses and the Certificate to Brunei Darussalam

Caribbean

The evaluation of the pilot phase found insufficient government involvement in the programme, and as a result national Directors of Youth are now at the heart of it. This is producing positive spin-offs in the effort to institutionalise youth work. There are now National Advisory Committees guiding the programme, comprising the government-appointed country coordinator, representatives of tutors/mentors, students and graduates.

“Dominica is one of the success stories of the Diploma programme, and demonstrates what is possible when government is very much involved in the organization and management at country level, where the right individual in terms of association with government and dedication to the cause is the Country Coordinator, and where there is commitment on the part of tutors and students.”

Caribbean Evaluation

St Vincent and the Grenadines is another success story. Dedicated student support has resulted in a 100% pass rate, and outstanding work with the Public Service Commission has been carried out.

“A strong sense of commitment was observed on the part of the students and the tutors...it was also noted that the tutors often provided personalised instruction to the students outside the scheduled times.”

Dr Mark Kirton, External Regional Moderator for the Caribbean region.

Recognising that the youth development worker must be allowed to craft a career governed by acceptable occupational standards and competencies that promote

professionalism in youth development work, CYP 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.

- A milestone for the programme has been the acceptance of the Diploma as a qualification for employment in the public service of Barbados and Grenada (2005). It is hoped that all member countries in the region will soon do likewise.
- Plans are under way to extend the programme to other universities and community colleges in the region.
- National Associations of Youth Workers, in which Diploma graduates play a leading role, are being formed in Antigua, St Vincent, Dominica and elsewhere.
- Some 80% of Caribbean Diploma students are women.

“The Diploma course along with my qualifications on teaching gave me full exemption from a Bachelor’s degree in International Community Economic Development (ICED) at the University of Southern New Hampshire, USA. I therefore pursued studies in the Master’s Programme...My career opportunities soared; besides heading the Department of Youth Affairs, I served as the Director of Social Development for seven (7) years before assuming the post of Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development and Local Government.”

Rosita Snagg, St Vincent and the Grenadines

Pacific

The Pacific is home to some very small states; the focus of the pilot evaluation in the region was whether youth work is even a viable profession in such small communities. The study found that youth work is indeed a regional necessity.

“Yes this diploma helps me with my work, yes it helps me to get a job and yes it helps me to get professional recognition.”

In response to attrition rates a flexible system of study has been developed, whereby if four modules are completed this earns a certificate, nine modules earn an Advanced Certificate, and fourteen modules earn the Diploma. Moreover, students can “drop out and drop in” to the course as desired, moving through these levels. This assists students who are having children, for example, and thus impacts positively on the reach and gender balance of the programme. The system has been taken up in the Asia region also.

“Withdrawal is low and retention is high in NZ. The reason for this is the dedication and the supporting and caring environment provided by the National coordinator, Betty Chapman. She has travelled extensively to meet with the students and gone beyond the call of duty to provide this support. There is a huge demand for this program for the minority populations in NZ. While there are other youth programmes in country they are not flexible enough and don’t address the issues in the practical way that the Diploma does.”

Pacific Evaluation

Three Common Problems in Supported Distance Education

1. “Centralised top-down approaches...bring with them their own infrastructural and organisational demands which are frequently underestimated. The literature provides widespread evidence of programmes that have been developed centrally but ahead of their capacity to support learners at local levels, particularly in remote and deprived areas. As a result, as many evaluations acknowledge, large numbers of distance education learners on programmes are studying while working, with little local face-to-face support or supervision. Other local level difficulties are evident: delays in delivering study materials; difficulties in recruiting appropriate local tutors; low participation in tutorial sessions because getting to centres requires long journeys. Since distance education is typically used to reach long underserved areas, learners in these areas are likely to be the least able to cope with lack of support. Exact figures for drop-out, non-completion and unsuccessful pass rates are often not available but many programmes acknowledge that low rates are directly related to poor support systems...”
 2. “Quality is often seen to reside, ready-made, in the standardised package of self-study print materials rather than in their local-level mediation; the materials are often regarded as self-standing, teacher-proof and with the potential for a long shelf-life. As mentioned previously, materials can be viewed as a tangible output, tutorial support as a cost. From these perspectives, a tutorial support system can end up being seen as an additional rather than as an integral part of ODL delivery.”
 3. “DE...has tended to operate as a parallel system to the mainstream educational structures. As a result, rather than using existing pools of mainstream expertise and infrastructure, many programmes are instead preoccupied with setting up their own structures in curriculum development, materials production and outreach infrastructures and it is easy to see how sometimes the quality of tutorial systems issues can get overshadowed. Additionally, the structural complexity of distance education can make for fragility in student support systems. To make distance education work you need structures and facilities for seven main functions: governance, planning, management and funding; materials development and production; materials reproduction and distribution; student recruitment, advice and support; assessment and evaluation of learners; feedback systems for formative evaluations; record systems. In many cases, it will not be possible for one institution to carry out all the functions and they have to be shared between several partners. ...Partnerships have strengths but they tend to function with varying degrees of success. Consistency of quality is difficult to achieve in large-scale programmes with decentralised field operations, which also need to be responsive to local conditions. ...The centralising tendencies of distance education need to be balanced with more regular two-way, field-based interaction between students and tutors if it is to be more effective.
- “The art of the possible: issues of learner support in open and distance learning in low income countries,” Creed, Allsop, Mills and Morpeth for IRFOL/Commonwealth of Learning 2005

How does the Youth Development Diploma measure up to these common problems?

9. Challenges

Adequacy of learner support; attrition and failure rates

Although it would be inaccurate to describe the Diploma programme as “centralized and top-down,” (see below) it has expanded rapidly and adequate learner support is one concern. As with other distance education programmes student attrition is indeed high across all regions, and infrequent teacher-student contact is one factor.

Strategies to reduce the rates of attrition include:

- Induction and orientation including tuition in study skills;
- Tutor and mentor training to promote the role of the tutor as facilitator;
- Support from employers such as study leave and the provision of fieldwork opportunities;
- Recruitment of Diploma graduates as student mentors (this is working well in India, where a full study into attrition was carried out).

“Learning from Ghana, Uganda and Malawi we get to know that counselling and guidance is very important and a key success factor. Two-way communication helps to support students in difficulties and keep everyone motivated and focused. Distance education does not mean that university institutions should distance students. Learner frustration and disillusionment and learning difficulties characterise students at institutions that have weak two-way communication and distance themselves from students.”

African Mid-Term Review

One challenge in designing student support systems is that there is little parity in

students’ level of youth work experience either previous to, or during, their participation in the Diploma. Across the Commonwealth several types of learner have been identified:

- People who are working on a paid or voluntary basis with young people. Some in this group have previous experience of tertiary education. Others do not.
- People who are working with young people and are studying for the Diploma because they are required to do so by their employer. Some in this group have previous experience of tertiary education. Others do not.
- People who are not working with young people but who are keen to enter the field. Some people in this group have previous experience of tertiary education. Others do not. The provision of practical experience is vital in order for them to have the opportunity to develop into skilled and reflective practitioners.
- People, usually with previous experience of tertiary education, who are attracted by the Pan-Commonwealth dimension of the Diploma and who hope to use it as a route to further studies, possibly in another country. They may have no practical experience of youth work. The provision of such experience is vital in order to provide them with the opportunity to contextualise their studies and develop into skilled and reflective practitioners.
- People seeking ‘to gain a foothold in the University to pursue studies for a degree’ (Irvine, 2002). This is relevant to the University of Guyana where the Diploma was linked into degree programmes. They may have no practical experience of youth work and the provision of such experience is as vital as it is for all other groups.

Naturally enough, those students without sufficient work experience have found difficulties in grasping the concepts covered in the course. In their case, finding suitable practical projects is a part of student support. Meanwhile, those studying while working have found the workload to be high and in some cases excessive.

A Diversity of backgrounds: some Pacific Diploma students

- Livingstone, Tara and Delphy who work for the youth division of the Department of Education in Nauru;
- Ariti, Uriam and Tioon who work for the government youth division in Kiribati ;
- Vilamina, who is involved in village youth projects and is interested in eco-tourism and job creation;
- Shailja, who works in the Prime Minister's Office in Suva and holds a position with Gujarati Youth;
- Paula, a facilitator for a Muslim young women's group in Lautoka, Fiji;
- Laitia, who is a full-time volunteer with the prison fellowship;
- Moana, who works for the Tonga National Youth Congress and has responsibility for HIV awareness.

The programme has experienced low participation by students from remote areas, and as a result discourages applications from students who are isolated and will not be able to draw on a peer group to get through the course. Where the technology exists, however, such as in Malaysia, remote students can participate by web-cam.

“A feature which may have played a significant part in the degree of success of the Dominican students was their working together as a group as much as possible, and being able to interact



with each other in tackling the Modules.. The [Anguillan students] were very dedicated and worked together as a team, which contributed in great part to the success they achieved. They had to rely entirely on the contents of the Modules as there were hardly any resource materials to be accessed”

Caribbean Evaluation

Delays in distribution of learning materials have been experienced with regard to some of the “mega-universities”, on this point small has proven to be beautiful.

CYP has not experienced difficulty in recruiting appropriate local tutors with relevant specialties and abilities. However it has found that these people may lack experience in distance education, adult education or transformatory youth work. For this reason CYP invests in tutor training over and above its financial support to partners. The tutor training is carried out with the assistance of External Regional Moderators, who are also members of the Pan-Commonwealth Quality Assurance Team. This enables learning and communication between the grass-roots and strategic levels of the programme.

Appropriateness of learning materials and their use

As seen above, CYP and its partners certainly do not regard quality as residing in the study materials in and of themselves. However, it is true that lack of English language proficiency has been a factor in high student attrition, and therefore more needs to be done in terms of local mediation. As regards shelf-life, CYP has been very aware of the need to provide up-to-date material, hence the renewal of the modules of both the Diploma and the Certificate courses in 2006 – 2007.

“All the students interviewed had high praise for the learning materials. They thought the supplementary materials were excellent...The designers of the Course clearly foresaw the need to give meaning to the generic materials in the local context through the vehicle of fieldwork and relevant practical assignments.”

Caribbean Evaluation

CYP is aware that orientation and pastoral support are important investments in student retention. Orientation offers an opportunity not just for learners to familiarise themselves with material and meet tutors, it also provides an opportunity to develop study skills and develop confident and realistic expectations.

Challenges have stemmed not so much from inappropriate materials as unfamiliar learning methodologies, including the creation of materials by the students themselves, in the shape of learning contracts and learning journals. The concept of the ‘learning contract’ presented a conceptual barrier for many learners. The use of the legal term ‘contract’ engendered concern in learners who were reluctant to enter what was interpreted, owing to cultural associations, as being a legally binding agreement. Irvine found confusion about a concept ‘that had not been encountered before’ (2002: 3.2.2) and was ‘difficult to implement’ (2002: 3.4.2). Christian identified difficulties: ‘some students

and tutors felt that the concept of a ‘learning contract’ was inappropriate in oriental culture’. He added, ‘Words such as discipline, submission to learning, a “karar” (from the Arabic, meaning a covenant) were suggested in place of “contract” which was seen in legalistic connotations’ (2001: 13.5).

In a theoretical article unrelated to the Commonwealth context, Atherton (2001) explored some of the difficulties involved in using contracts: ‘There may be considerable student resistance to learning contracts: they are not part of the rule of the education game as they are familiar with it. The common cry is, “Just tell me what to do!”.’ Such agreements need to be underpinned by supportive, developmental dialogue between tutors and learners. The principle of learning contracts and reflective journals of action research is sound:

there is...the need to find pedagogical strategies which recognise that becoming a part of an academic discipline is not so much a question of assimilating an immutable canon of knowledge but more an apprenticeship into the social practices of a particular community, not only of learning from, but learning to write and speak appropriately; that subject areas are communities of practice and ‘impose requirements of recognised participation’

(Lankshear 1997): 42

Meshing of infrastructure; strength of partnerships; consistency of quality

CYP is certainly not concerned with replicating university structures: the growth of the programme has been with and through local resources. One measure of this is that for every pound invested by CYP, five or more pounds are spent by partners in universities and governments. CYP’s role in the programme is not static but shifting: as the programme becomes institutionalised our focus will increasingly be on the

professionalisation of youth work and decreasingly on the youth work training side.

CYP has made strategic interventions where it can really add value: for example, participating on admissions panels and encouraging the participation of Youth Ministries, NGOs and youth worker associations alongside university staff. This has proved successful in recruiting appropriate candidates.

The partnership structure may be complex but it has proved able to deliver the Diploma in vastly differing circumstances, and external regional moderators have found a level of consistency in terms of students' written work.



Achieving true parity of outcomes is a more ambitious and long-term proposal. The Diploma is to some extent a "portable" qualification already and in most institutions, as is the intention of the programme, the Diploma represents the foundation stage of a degree:

- It is worth the first year of a three year BA (Hons) in Youth and Community Work at the University of Huddersfield, UK;
- One year's credit towards a Youth and Justice degree at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology;
- Two year's of the four year B Tech: Youth Work at Technikon SA;
- One and a half year's credit towards the BA Youth Work at Victoria University (Australia);
- Entry to the second year of the education degree (University of Nairobi);
- The Diploma leads to the BA in Youth Development (Universiti Putra Malaysia);
- Four credits towards the degree in Sociology (University of the South Pacific).

What is exciting about the Diploma partnership is its Pan-Commonwealth character. This is illustrated in the evolving status of the Diploma itself. At the University of South Africa, the University of Sri Lanka and the University of the South Pacific, the Diploma was initially rated at Certificate level (partly because those institutions had not yet read the modules). However, when they saw that reputable universities elsewhere rated the Diploma higher, they followed suit.

10. Professionalising Youth Work

CYP's Youth Work Education and Training (YWET) programme, which includes the Diploma, Certificate and short courses, is dedicated to professionalising youth work in the Commonwealth.

As with all professions, this means:

- The worker undergoes formal training, benefiting from and contributing to a certain body of knowledge that is shared with other workers
- The worker agrees to a code of professional ethics
- The worker is formally registered and can be de-registered if they are in breach of professional ethics
- The registered worker is part of a professional association that can protect their interests in the workplace, and collectively lobby government on policy matters
- Registration signals that work will be carried out to a certain level of quality and in accordance with certain values
- Competency of practice is ensured
- There is accountability to relevant bodies and to the public

Professionalising youth work is also about explaining to all stakeholders – clients, workers and third parties – what the professional relationship in youth work is all about.

Lots of professionals work with young people: teachers, social workers,

police officers, lawyers, doctors, psychologists and so on. Each of their relationships to young people are limited and regulated in accordance with the law, placing them in a position of trust on particular matters. But the special nature of the youth worker's professional relationship is that for them, the primary client is always the young person themselves. The young person's interests are paramount.

This means that professionalising youth work is not about:

- Surrendering management of youth work to non-youth workers, such as funding agencies
- Cramping creative and unorthodox youth work with too much bureaucracy
- "Youth workers" becoming involved with detention, punishments, curfews or other street-clearing exercises
- Gaining advantages for youth workers at the expense of young people
- Claiming a monopoly of knowledge about the youth sector and refusing to cooperate with other professions

Professionalising youth work is about rendering a quality service to young people and their communities, and modeling a process of human growth and development for the young people concerned. Ultimately it is about ensuring that young people's rights (under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other instruments) are upheld.

"The professional relationship is not primarily a matter of effectiveness, efficiency, or even competence, although it has implications for all these. The professional relationship involves an ethical stance taken by a person with a vocation to serve people in particular ways."

Howard Sercombe, "The Youth Work Contract"

11. The Way Ahead

Building on the many positive aspects of the pilot phase and looking to the future, several areas require planning and action. These include,

- Dissemination of modules in new media;
- The inclusion of a clear role for practical fieldwork;
- The development of further routes into the Diploma and academic routes beyond the Diploma;
- The promotion of youth development work as a profession across the Commonwealth and the recognition of the Diploma as a professional qualification;
- Realisation of a Rights-Based Approach across the programme;
- Attention to the spiritual dimension of youth work and youth development

As CYP's partnerships evolve it will remain important to use consultative methods to ensure mutual understanding: "Particularly in an emerging profession such as Youth Development Work, it is easy for language to obscure the nature of the tasks to be performed. There is a danger of *assuming* there is consensus..." (Martin Notley for CYP, 1997, emphasis added)

The specifically "Commonwealth" character of the Diploma programme is precisely that it operates by consensus and is therefore developmental at every level. This will continue to imply a culturally sensitive, thematic approach to Youth Work Training (rather than a narrow topic based approach), alongside a deep-seated commitments to human rights and democracy.

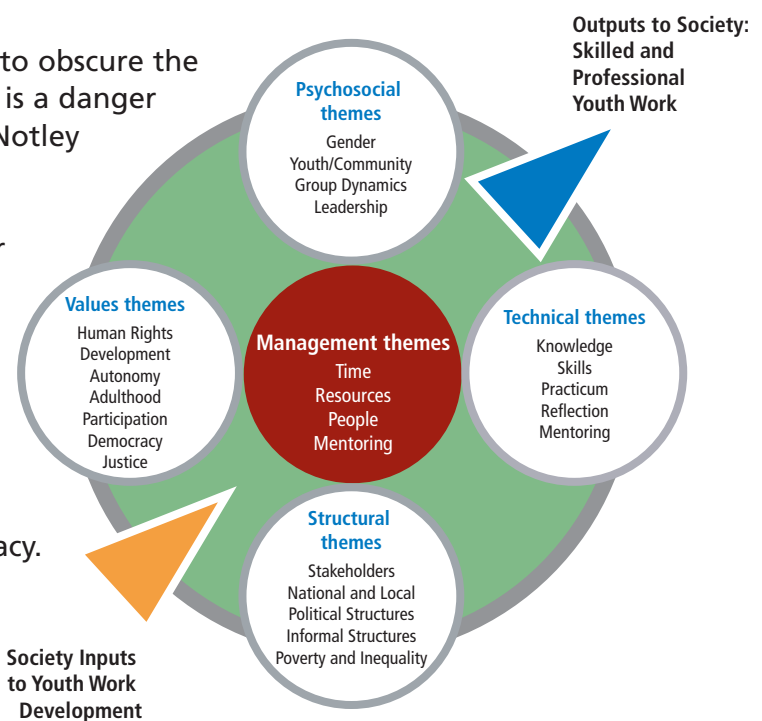
"(The CYP Diploma) and youth work is all about our love for fellow human beings"

Diploma tutor, Asia

In order for distance education to fulfill an appropriate role in the third world, its underlying assumptions must be critiqued, and rather than reproduce the structures of the developed world, distance educators must seek to generate appropriate and sensitive models and practices, derived from forms of research which are reflective, participatory and emancipatory in intent and procedure and are situated in the cultural contexts of the third world.

Guy 1989: 58³

Five thematic areas for Youth Work Education (adapted from Christian: 2003)



3 Quoted in "The art of the possible: issues of learner support in open and distance learning in low income countries," IRFOL/Commonwealth of Learning 2005

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PO Box 78
Chandigarh - 160012
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Tel: 91 172 2741658, 2745505,
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CYP Caribbean Centre

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Lower Panatina Campus
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Tel: + 677 38374
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Partner Institutions

Universities offering the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Development Work:

- | | |
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| 1. Adult Learning Distance Education Centre | Seychelles |
| 2. Allama Iqbal Open University | Pakistan |
| 3. Annamalai University | India |
| 4. Bangladesh Open University | Bangladesh |
| 5. Indira Gandhi National Open University | India |
| 6. Makerere University | Uganda |
| 7. Management Development Institute | The Gambia |
| 8. National University of Lesotho | Lesotho |
| 9. Open University of Sri Lanka | Sri Lanka |
| 10. Open University of Tanzania | Tanzania |
| 11. Papua New Guinea Institute of Public
Administration | Papua New Guinea |
| 12. Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology | Australia |
| 13. SNTD Women's University | India |
| 14. Solomon Islands College of Higher Education | Solomon Islands |
| 15. The Namibian College of Open Learning | Namibia |
| 16. Universiti Putra Malaysia | Malaysia |
| 17. University of Abuja | Nigeria |
| 18. University of Botswana | Botswana |
| 19. University of Ghana | Ghana |
| 20. University of Guyana | Guyana |
| 21. University of Malawi | Malawi |
| 22. University of Nairobi | Kenya |
| 23. University of Sierra Leone, Fourah Bay College | Sierra Leone |
| 24. University of South Africa | South Africa |
| 25. University of the South Pacific | Fiji Islands |
| 26. University of the West Indies | Jamaica |
| 27. Zambia Insurance Business College Trust | Zambia |

Pan-Commonwealth and Regional Quality Assurance:

- | | |
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| College of the Bahamas | The Bahamas |
| Governor General's Office for Education | India |
| Mahatma Gandhi University | India |
| National University of Samoa | Samoa |
| Universiti Putra Malaysia | Malaysia |
| University of Botswana | Botswana |
| University of Ghana | Ghana |
| University of Guyana | Guyana |
| University of Huddersfield | United Kingdom |
| University of South Africa | South Africa |
| University of the South Pacific | Fiji Islands |
| University of the West Indies | Jamaica |
| Victoria University | Australia |