

# INTERCOM

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

Volume 1, Issue 2

April 2003

## From the Editor

Welcome to the second issue of Intercom. I am pleased to be able to point to three articles by graduates on their experience of the diploma. I might add that Lawrence Takilima sent his article written in long hand by ordinary mail. You do not have to be on the internet to get your ideas printed here. Sadly, while I write this war rages in Iraq. Let us hope that our efforts in the field of youth development will contribute to peace in the future. The challenges of poverty, AIDs, employment, education and drug abuse (ably described for Uganda by William Kigwanye) are enough for us to face.

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## Transforming the Lives of Young People: CYMM to Meet in Botswana

By Ignatius Takawira, Special Adviser and Head of Youth Affairs, Commonwealth Secretariat.

In May 2003, in Gaborone the capital of Botswana, Ministers responsible for youth affairs from the 54 member countries of the Commonwealth will gather for their triennial Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM). Accompanied by senior officials and representatives of young people in their countries, they will discuss and map out strategies to move the youth development agenda forward. They will deliberate on the work done by the CYP in the last three years since 2000 and provide strategic guidance for CYP's future work plans.

The CYP was established at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Lusaka, Zambia in 1973. The Programme was given a special vision, mission and mandate to be financed by a special fund solely dedicated to improving and transforming the lives of young people. Even at that time in the history

of the Commonwealth, the founding fathers of the organisation realised with a lot of foresight that the future of the Commonwealth lay in the hands of its youth. This view was also echoed by CHOGM at their last meeting at Coolum in Australia in March 2002, nearly thirty years after they founded the CYP. Their vision of the youth in the future of the

must have felt that their own up-bringing did not do much to prepare them adequately as the future leaders of their own countries. Some of them had come out of different experiences and spheres of life such as teachers, church ministers, trade unionists and others as liberation army leaders in the fight for Uhuru.

One may then ask: What have been the achievements of the CYP in the last nearly 30 years of its existence? What are the challenges facing the CYP and the young people across the Commonwealth in the new millennium? Have the lives of the youth been transformed and improved?

To date, the CYP has implemented a number of youth programmes through its four Regional Centres and the Pan-Commonwealth Office. These programmes cover the following areas:

*(Continued on page 2)*



Commonwealth might have been driven by the hard reality of their own lives in that most of the leaders at that meeting

## Youth Issues in Uganda Today

By William Kigwanye, Diploma student, Uganda.

As for any developing economy, Uganda has a population composed of more youth than the rest of the population. According to the population and housing census of 2002, out of approximately 24.6 million people, about 50% are youth. The rural and urban youth have expressed similar issues concerning them. The different cate-

gories of youth, say, in school and out of school youth experience these issues differently though the issues remain the same. They include:

- Unemployment
- HIV/ AIDS
- Education
- Poverty
- Drug abuse

The above issues feature

prominently amongst all categories of youth. It is because of these issues that the youth feel sidelined in terms of development. If these issues are addressed appropriately, the youth will contribute to development. Take for example, unemployment, it is

*(Continued on page 4)*

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- Youth employment creation through micro-credit and micro-enterprise development;
- Youth health with special focus on HIV/AIDS and adolescent reproductive health;
- Awareness programmes on street youth and other youth in special circumstances;
- Training for enterprise and entrepreneurship;
- Youth exchange and special youth camps for personal development and leadership training;
- Development of a Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment;
- Piloting a CYP Youth Development Index;
- Development and implementation of National Youth Policies;
- Development and implementation of a CYP Diploma in Youth Work currently being delivered in partnership with 25 Universities and tertiary institutions in 40 countries every two years with a biannual student intake of 2000;
- Collaboration with other agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, the Organisation of American States (OAS), the British Council, the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC), International Council of National Youth Policy (ICNYP) and more partnerships are being developed;
- Mobilised extra-budgetary resources (EBR) from corporate sector and multi-lateral organisations such as Body Shop in the South Pacific, TATA in India UNICEF, OAS and the World Bank;
- Young people have also been mobilised to participate in a number of national, regional and international fora where youth issues are discussed. These include the Commonwealth Youth Forum meetings in Durban, Edinburgh and Coolum, the Youth Employment Summit in Egypt, meetings of the UN and its agencies, Regional Advisory Board/Regional Youth Forum meetings, CYP Committee of Management meetings and CYMM;

• Youth participation has also been accepted and institutionalised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in its Commonwealth election monitoring and observer missions by including young people in the group of eminent persons. This was the case in Zimbabwe, Kenya and in the forthcoming elections in Nigeria.

If so much has been done and accomplished, what else is left to be done for the young people by the CYP?

• The CYMM in Botswana meets against a background of both hope and despair among the young people of the Commonwealth. Indeed the theme of the meeting itself is most timely - **Young People: Develop-**

*What is really emerging out of all this is of great interest for youth issues and perspectives for a new youth development paradigm that is radically different from the past.*

**ment Partners Against Poverty and HIV/AIDS.** The theme captures the despair of the majority of the youth in the Commonwealth today which the Ministers must address through CYP programmes. Young people are faced with several challenges through the lack of:

- Participation and social inclusion;
- Education and training.
- Employment opportunities.
- Access to information.
- Democracy, security and peace.

This is the reality-check for the Commonwealth Youth Ministers at their meeting in May 2003 in Botswana.

Between October and Nov 2002, CYP consulted governments and young people through its Regional Advisory Board/Regional Youth Forum meetings about the new CYP Programme priorities, and the following were identified as priorities:

- Youth Enterprise Development;
- Youth Work Training;
- Youth Participation;
- Youth Networks and Governance.

What is really emerging out of all this is of great interest for youth issues and perspectives for a new youth development paradigm that is radically different from the past. This new development paradigm is stating that:

- Youth are not a problem, but a resource and force for development;
- Youth are not leaders of some distant future, but leaders of tomorrow through today;
- Youth are not a demographic burden, but a demographic imperative and gift to society;
- Youth are responsible and ready to play their part as active citizens;
- Youth development is not an incidental operational cost, but a deliberate capital investment by strategic nations that would like to be alive tomorrow;
- Youth are not passive objects or recipients or beneficiaries of development, but active and trusted partners in development;

• Youth work is not welfare, it is not charity, and it is not for those who cannot do anything anywhere. It should be a profession with a body of knowledge gained through education

*Youth work is not welfare, it is not charity and it is not for those who cannot do anything*

and training, regulated by a code of ethics and conduct and registered.

• Even in the poverty-ravaged and HIV/AIDS infected countries of the Commonwealth, youth have demonstrated that they can break the walls of silence and stigma attached to the disease and demystify sex, sexuality and abject poverty.

These are some of the challenges facing Commonwealth Youth Ministers when they meet in Botswana.

Are Young People Development Partners Against Poverty and HIV/AIDS? This is the challenge and the debate will continue long after the next CYMM.

## Three-day Regional Youth Forum meeting in Guyana

Guyana's Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ms Gail Teixeira opened a three-day workshop of the Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Youth Forum at the Hotel Tower in Georgetown, Guyana in February 2003. Sixteen Regional Youth Forum members attended the workshop which is part of the technical support provided by the Commonwealth Youth Programme: Caribbean Centre aimed at strengthening the network. The Regional Youth Forum is a network of national representatives from each of the 17 Commonwealth Caribbean countries and Canada. The RYF serves as a link between the youth of the member countries and the Commonwealth Youth Programme: Caribbean Centre.

Among those present were Mr. Ignatius Takawira, Special Advisor and Head of Youth Affairs, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat; Mr. Keith Booker, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport; Mr. Armstrong Alexis, Regional Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme: Caribbean Centre; and Ms. Patrice LaFleur, Senior Programme Officer.

Minister Teixeira in an address said that the world is confronted with issues and challenges for peace and we in the Caribbean face the consequences if there is war... if Iraq is attacked. "A war would increase the magnitude of our crises and social problems," said Ms Teixeira who added that peace is at the national and international level is necessary.

She called on the media in Guyana and the Caribbean to help find solu-

tions to issues facing young people especially since globalisation will impact on the Caribbean region.

"As Commonwealth Day approaches, under the theme Partners in Development, you have to look at the kinds of partnership you have with your governments... you have to be change agents and

*Some people look at young people as a problem...we have to see them, not simply as beneficiaries, but as partners*

find ways in creating change," Minister Teixeira urged the young people of the Caribbean.

The RYF members attending the meeting are Merti DeSouza, Guyana; Nicole Balcombe, St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Damien Hughes, Anguilla; Nishard Mohamed, Trinidad and Tobago; Chad Blackman, Barbados; Emmalin Pierre, Grenada; Jimmy Calder, St. Lucia; Jeneve Mills, St. Kitts and Nevis; James Myles, Cayman Islands; Jerry Carbon, Dominica; Nataliah Cardona, Belize; Paul Thomas, British Virgin Islands; Danielle Lee, Montserrat; Nicole Hunte, Antigua and Barbuda; Janiell Spencer, Jamaica; and Sandena Mortimer, The Bahamas.

Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth Caucus, Ms. Mulako Mwanamwalye from Zambia also attended the Guyana meeting.

Youth Participation is one of five

strategic areas through which the Commonwealth Youth Programme will realise its goal of empowering the young men and women of the Commonwealth.

The CYP: CC has prioritised strengthening the Regional Youth Forum as one of its priority areas for enhancing the effectiveness of the Youth Forum and to maximise their knowledge and skills base for participation in governance and decision-making.

In the feature address, Mr. Ignatius Takawira, Special Advisor and Head of Youth Affairs Commonwealth Youth Programme, declared, "Some people look at young people as a problem...we have to see them, not simply as beneficiaries, but as partners...we have to include young people by accepting them socially and politically as genuine partners."

Mr Takawira reiterated that young people need skills and training to give them the means of earning a livelihood. According to him, "we need to work together in partnership and not in competition in which there is no winner."

Meanwhile, Mr Alexis reminded participants that the workshop is not just an opportunity for them to meet periodically and engage each other in friendly discussion. "It is an opportunity to shape the future of the Caribbean from the perspective of the young people of the region," said the Regional Director. "You have to work on behalf of the young people who are not here, and challenge us, the policy makers, to ensure that that young people are in the forefront," Mr. Alexis declared.

## Foundations for a Successful Future

Lawrence Takilima (Solomon Islands College of Higher Education Student, Solomon Islands).

I enrolled in the DYD program in 2001 and I am now completing the last part of it. However what is most interesting and a little frightening is that I was the youngest of all students in maturity, experience and educational background. I had just completed my fifth form in 2000. While reading the newspaper on one occasion, I came across the advertisement for the DYD. Without delay, I submitted my application. Months went past and there was no reply. All of a sudden, one evening, I turned on the radio and heard the long list of accepted candidates and I was one of them.

From that moment there was great joy burning in my heart.

What makes life easier is that in other, ordinary courses, you only study one major component but in this diploma you are covering every aspect of life. As such, it opened my eyes to future aspirations.

The diploma really forms the foundation for a successful future. This is because the focus on youth gives us a wider idea of how to improve their outcomes.

Lately, I have learnt the stages of the development of a group thanks to the diploma. I have also learnt much about the behaviour of people in relation to their cog-

native style. I want to stress that in order for any person dreaming of playing a leadership role, this is the foundation. You have to start here.

Finally, I want to stress to my fellow students in and around the Commonwealth that it is not the qualification that fosters our integrity to be respected. Rather it is the output that we achieve that will raise our name higher and contribute to the accelera-



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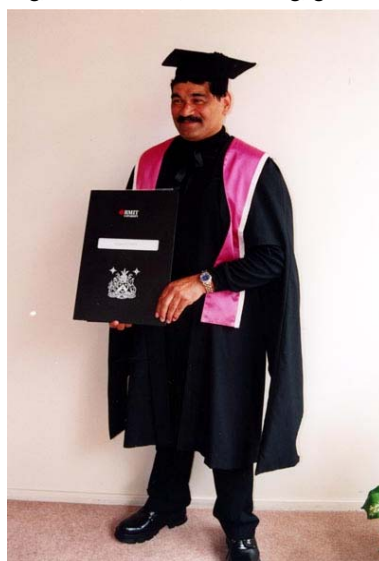
## My Experience of the CYP Diploma

by Edward Clarke (New Zealand)

Having worked for a refrigeration and air conditioning business in the past, it never occurred to me that one day I would be involved in the area of ‘youth work’. But then I became involved (on a voluntary basis) with a Church program which provided counselling, pastoral care and educational programs to young people and their families. I found this work stressful and difficult and worse of all was the depressing reality of knowing that I lacked the skills and knowledge to work with young people. I jumped at the opportunity to study the Diploma because I instantly recognised the benefits of this programme. I knew for sure it would provide the opportunity for making ‘youth work’ a serious career for myself. My previous experience of studying through correspondence for my work helped immensely in picking up the self-directed learning promoted by the Diploma. Once enrolled in the course, I learnt everything I wanted to know about working with youth in the widest possible sense. It taught me that whatever capacity one works with regarding youth the needs are basically the same, whether they be unemployed, at risk, come from broken homes or just rebellious. I found that there are ways of building on what is before you in terms of resources, community organizations, church groups and most importantly to involve youth at the

centre of all activities.

I now work for a small Government agency that runs a strengths-based model of intervention of youth offenders requiring me to work with approximately 20 young people per year doing anything from getting young people back into school, sports clubs, mentoring, career search, counselling, goal setting and decreasing offending behaviour.



The work is not only awesome but rewarding and educational for me. Youth Work is

now fun and not a chore. Most adults I meet during my working day congratulate me on my successes of working with youth and say that I should be paid good money for such a difficult and stressful job.

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 and provides many different models of youth practice which are relevant in New Zealand. It has opened doors to

***The experience and journey has been exciting so far and I know that the best is yet to come.***

many networks. The biggest thrill I learnt from the Diploma is that of building knowledge on top of knowledge learnt previously and being creative and innovative with ways for working with young people. People generally praise me for having a natural flair for working with young people but they do not know that I have had to develop these skills and through practice, gained a lot of confidence. The experience and journey has been exciting so far and I know that the best is yet to come.

*(Continued from page 1)*

common both in rural and urban areas. The structural adjustment program has made it impossible for the youth to acquire gainful employment. Even the few, who had been employed, have lost their jobs in the process of restructuring. Since the government has been the major employer here. The youth in the countryside have moved to towns in search of jobs, this has worsened the situation in urban areas leading to high crime rates (delinquencies).

HIV/aids has affected the youth more than any other age group. Local statistics indicate that, the youth especially between the age group 15—45 years are more infected than the rest of the population. This is the most productive age group; therefore economic growth is affected because of this scenario. And having a big

population of sick people strains the limited resources of government via increased expenditure on food and medications. Statistics also reveal that, the female youth are six times more infected by HIV/AIDS than their male counterparts. Education is seen as the key to success. Majority of the youth I have interacted with have expressed fears for their future education. As someone has put it, “Jesus is the only saviour for Christians, but education is the only saviour for the poor”. With high rates of school dropouts, there are very few youth in Uganda with employable skills. This bars the majority from getting employed. Vocational training would play a role here but it is still inaccessible due to the costs involved and the distances especially to the rural poor. This is even worse with the girl child. The youth who try to seek vocational employment find it difficult to cope with the already flooded job market. Sort of vacation employment, some

youth express fears about continuing education, especially because of cost sharing.

Drug abuse, the various youth who come to towns in search of jobs end on 5th streets and take on drug abuse because of frustration. Drug abuse and trafficking has been taken on by the youth as a means of survival. Drug abusers have caused a lot of harm to the population in Uganda. For instance, a drug addict killed three primary children in Bwaise a suburb of Kampala in 2002. So many crimes ranging from murder, rape, robberies to pick pocketing are common with drug abusers.

Another issue for youth in Uganda is Poverty. The many NGOs and CBOs operating in Uganda are finding difficulties in their operations due to high levels of poverty. They fear to advance loans to the youth because they are not credit worthy. Because of this, those youth who have acquired the loans have lost their properties in

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Reflections on the CYP Diploma

By Shelton Daniels (University of Guyana graduate)

The thought that one day I will become the best graduating student with a Diploma in Youth Work was certainly a dream in the wilderness, but that dream became a reality. After reading the weekend newsprint, an advertisement in Youth in Development Work offered by CYP in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, and the Extra Mural Department of the University of Guyana, struck my attention and enquiries began as to the possibility of my participation. I applied and was accepted. The course of study began in January 1999 with about 20 students. The participants were youth activists drawn from among youth, religious and political groups.

The training modules were compiled by persons who work with youth and could have been used as Case Studies. The materials helped us in running youth programmes and dealing with youths in the community and our work places. The diploma required a lot of hard work and many sacrifices had to be made at the early stages of the course. Many of my colleagues had encountered difficulties that forced them not to continue the programme. The process was a new feature to many of us who were accustomed to the chalk and talk method of learning. I believe the system of Distance Learning may have been a factor for the

dropouts. Nevertheless with time, we were able to survive the turbulent waters.

The relentless efforts in preparing the journal, especially the plan for the learning contract, as part of the module assignment was difficult. The contract varied from



Lecturer to Lecturer. As a result, some of us did not complete the contract before the study but at the end. The tutorial sessions were compulsory but there needed no compulsion in the execution of fieldwork.

Some of my colleagues in the study group worked with youths at the New Opportunity Corps on a devised plan of action to apprise young people of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. A sit and chat session was also done with a group of youths in one of the depressed areas of Georgetown among other activities; these were all in keeping with the assignments in the Modules.

For me, young people need answers and once you are in a leadership position they expect you to have an answer to their many questions. It is with this view that I believe that the CYP Diploma in the Guyana context, is a worthwhile investment in the development of young people. We can never pay for the education of young brains. What is learnt today may not necessarily be applicable now but in the future. The investment by Governments can only be applauded since there is a guarantee of a young, and educated population. Once you are in it and the love for the youth is genuine, your personal investment counts later. The convocation at the University of Guyana's Square on November 16, 2002 brought the curtains down to what was known as a Pilot programme with nine (9) students finishing

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a way of compensating for the loans so acquired. It is also because of the widespread poverty that the youth are more willing to cooperate with only those NGOs whose projects are likely to yield immediate returns.

Uganda is an agricultural country. Our major cash crop is coffee. With a fall in the world coffee prices, coupled with the coffee wilt disease, the poverty situation has worsened especially for youth. This creates wide spread poverty and unemployment among the youth of Uganda. AIDS has also increased among the youth because of poverty. For example the female youth have resorted to prostitution because of poverty and by so doing, they are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Those youth, who have ended up on the streets because their parents have died of AIDS, do so in a bid to salvage themselves

from the hard-hitting poverty in the countryside.

High illiteracy rates are attributed to the high levels of poverty in Uganda.

**All in all, the major issue  
affecting the youth of  
Uganda is Poverty**

Many parents have of late realized the importance of educating their children, but resources available cannot permit this.

All in all, the major issue affecting the youth of Uganda is Poverty. If appropriate strategies are put in place to fight poverty especially at household levels, all the other issues can be handled. Say AIDS, the infected would live longer if they have incomes to supplement their food and go for the necessary medications.

## Fiji student seeks overseas contacts

The editor has received a message from Neelam Singh in Lautoka, Fiji who is finishing the diploma this year. Neelam is hoping to secure a scholarship to continue her studies and complete a degree. She writes:

*I am a 22 year old school teacher from Fiji. I am currently undertaking the CYP diploma. My hobbies include dancing( Indian classical), singing, travelling, and playing volleyball. I love kids, flowers, animals and music. I would like to make friends with students undertaking CYP, so please feel free to email me:*

**singh\_nilu@yahoo.com.**

## UPM nearing completion of Second Intake

Siti Raba'ah Hamzah and Azimi Hamzah

On December 1st 2001, Universiti Putra Malaysia launched the second cycle intake for the Diploma Youth in Development Work, comprising of 50 students, 15 students are from the rural area and 35 are from the urban area. These students are attached to various ministries/agencies: 15 students are attached to the Ministry of Youth and Sports; 19 students are attached to Non-Governments Organizations (NGO); and 16 students to the youth development organizations. The CYP Diploma is completed within 4 semesters. The duration of each semester are 16 weeks. The semester schedule is as follows:

- Semester 1 -1 December 2001  
-26 April 2002
- Semester 2 -27 April 2002  
-13 September 2002
- Semester 3 -14 September 2002  
-8 March 2003
- Semester 4 -9 March 2003  
-21 July 2003

The demand for the program is overwhelming. Immediately after the initial intake, we received many applicants from Non-Government Organizations and Government departments to participate in this program.

As this is an international program, it was recently awarded full recognition by t



A class at UPM.



The full student body

the government. This provides the impetus for more youth leaders to participate in this program. As a matter of fact, we have already selected and enrolled a new batch of students for the first semester.

## UPM on the move again

Following their successful visit to England last year (see Intercom Issue 1, January 2003) staff and students of youth development work at UPM are planning a visit to Australia in July 2003. Invitations have been extended from the youth work course at RMIT University and Victoria University in Melbourne. We look forward to hearing of the experiences in the next issue. Has any one told them it is cold in Melbourne in July?

*(Continued from page 3)*  
tion of our professionalism.

To you who have already completed the program, congratulations. This diploma is recognised by the 54 countries of the Commonwealth. For those of you dreaming about enrolling, please go for it and do not be reluctant to make a commitment. The fact is that you will be the happiest person when you go to receive

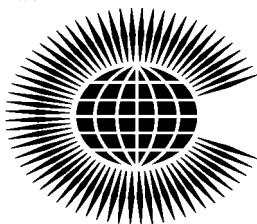
## Who are the external regional moderators?

People appointed to improve the quality of the Diploma and work for a common standard across all partner universities. Picture from the 2002 Conference in Namibia.



Back row (l-r) Prof David Maunders, Dr Ann Harris, Dr Fred Mutesa, Dr Helen Jones, Dr Thomas Abraham Chirayil, Prof Linda Cornwell, Dr Shamsuddin Ahmad  
Front Row (l-r) Dr Clara Fayorsey, Dr Sina Va'ai, Dr Caroline Rolle, Ms Stella Odie-Ali.

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## Recent graduations from Zimbabwe Open University

### Malawi

The following 24 students graduated in March 2003 through the Bunda Agricultural College, Malawi:  
Chinyama M Z, Chitsulo W, .Fusani M.B, Gondwe D, Kabwila, Kalima A, Kammayani H, Kathumba D, Kubweza-Banda G, Lichapa W, Magela R, Mkumbadzala, Mulenga OD, Mbendera D Neba K, Nawa R, Ngwala D, Nyirenda J Nyirongo G, Siabu G, Sinkhala J, Zombe E Luhanga M, Mazinga C

### Zambia

The following 17 students graduated through the University of Zambia Insurance Business Trust:  
Chengo, H, Munkonka, H.M, Musonda, K Mutale, O, Mutuma, E.G, Mweetwa, T. Namangolwe, K, Ngandu, M, Njovu, P, Phiri, B., Shiku, J, Sitali, V, Chisanyi, B Kawanga, A, Mutale, O, Muwowo, B. Mwewa, G.

*(Continued from page 5)*  
the race.

The Diploma allowed me to create programmes in a sustainable manner and help strengthen the groups within the place of worship – Presbytery of Guyana and was able to share the excitement of the programmes with others. Every Diploma graduate should be proud of his or her achievement. The task set out was confusing but interesting as the remaining modules reduced in number. Many of us would have breathed a sighed of relief when MODULE 13 was delivered and the final examination was written. I personally enjoyed the Module on Youth and Society

The new batch will commence shortly. I would expect that a thorough investigation be taken in the selection of students for this programme since I believe that much could be done if you are an active youth worker in the field. The diploma is no ordinary Diploma. It is an opportunity to experience the principles and values of the Commonwealth in a real setting. So let us be honest with the youth we intend to serve.

## Send Us Your News

Intercom welcomes contribution from diploma students and others on any subject related to youth development. You might like to modify an assignment or just send us news about what is happening in your part of the world. Photographs are also welcome either electronic or normal prints. Articles should normally be between 500 and 1000 words. The editor reserves the right to shorten or modify contributions to fit into the space available. Letters to the editor are also welcome and should not exceed 250 words. **Our next deadline will be mid-October 2003.** Material should be sent by email, fax or post to the addresses on this page.

## Reaching Our Readers

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

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

**www.youthdevelopmentwork.org**

**Issue 1 is also available.**

## Forthcoming Events

**May 2003 Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting, Gaborone, Botswana; Launch of *Journal of Youth Development*.**

**July 2003 5th External Regional Moderators' Conference, Melbourne, Australia.**

## Youth Training in Fiji

By Tamela Tuinaceva

My work among the youths in Fiji involves training and empowerment for paid and self employment, I find it exciting and challenging because failures, setbacks and frustrations often threaten my commitment.

I work as a civil servant with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is currently operating two youth camps. The first is the National Youth Training Centre which offers Carpentry / Joinery and Agricultural courses. We have sixty trainees who are currently undergoing the above courses. (30 per course for one year). The second centre is Yavitu Youth Camp which offers a two-year training program in agriculture We have ten Second year and fifteen First year trainees at camp undergoing extensive training. Training is Non-Formal and we recruit rural youth and dropouts. Our strength is the flexibility, consistency and continuity of the program which has seen us through so many troubled times.

### Program Setting

#### a) Phase One Training

Trainees' undergo a four to five weeks training at NYTC for induction and empowerment before going back to Yavitu camp, Military personnel at NYTC helps out in military drill and much needed discipline for the trainees.

#### b) Phase Two Training

This next phase will carry them through to their graduation.

#### i) Format

Trainees spend one month at Yavitu camp undergoing training and agricultural practical and the next month in their Village farms. The incentive is for them to school farms and at the same time expanding their village farms After their training we hope that their village farms will attract them back to their villages to further pursue semi-commercial farming Instead of flocking to urban centres.

#### ii) Follow up

Follow-up and monitoring is done when they go out to their farms during Village Rotational Farming. Our staff goes with them to monitor, supervise and record all progress. The trainees went as a group and spend two rounds before coming back for another month of training We provide their food ration while they undertake their village rotational.

#### c) Graduation

The centre provides agricultural take-away tools with their certificates during graduation. The centre continues to monitor them and networks with other stakeholders concerning further assistance and marketing. The Ministry is also undergoing an Income Generating Projects (I.G.P) scheme to identify Potential youth projects for financial assistance. I have briefly stated my involvement in Youth work and to say it again, it is not that easy. Problems range from financial to emotional and set backs will always be a challenge. Yet I find working with youths exciting and fulfilling because they are our future. What we invest into them today will be the foundation of their society tomorrow. So where there is nothing to lose by trying and everything to gain if successful: by all means try!