



Caribbean YOUTH

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



ISSUE 3 MAY, 2006



About us

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

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Trinidad and Tobago's RYC elected Pan-Commonwealth Chair at CYMM 06



MObafa Baker

Mr. MObafa Baker, Regional Youth Caucus Representative of Trinidad and Tobago and the sole nominee of the Commonwealth Caribbean, was elected on May 22, 2006 by youth representatives of the four Commonwealth regions as the new Pan-Commonwealth Caucus Chair for the 2006 to 2008 term of Office.

Mr. Baker is a graduate of the University of the West Indies in Social Work with a minor in Human Resource Management and is currently pursuing his Masters in Youth and Community Studies at Brunel University. He has been involved in youth work and youth representation for over ten years.

MObafa currently serves as the National Youth Director of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies Trinidad & Tobago, National Youth Department, as well as a member of the International Youth Steering Committee of the International Youth Parliament.

Natalie Yearwood spoke with MObafa to get his views on his new appointment.

Natalie: As Pan-Commonwealth Caucus Chair, what new initiatives would you address?

MObafa: As Pan Chair, I plan to implement a number of new initiatives including: Strengthening the capacity of RYCs through e-learning and workshops; enhancing

our relationships with other international youth agencies; developing thematic areas around crime and violence, HIV and AIDS and other youth issues; creation of projects that will enable RYCS to implement activities within country; creating greater impact in places where RYCs gather in an attempt to give back to society

Natalie: How critical/significant do you see your role in addressing youth development issues in the Pan-Commonwealth?

MObafa: I believe that my role and that of RYCs is critical, in that it creates a space for young people with the ability to inform decision makers within the Commonwealth, on

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Caribbean RYCs in discussion during a pre-CYMM session

Editorial

Youth Participation

Youth Participation has been part of the social development jargon for quite some time. However, it appears that in recent times it is receiving more serious attention. Why?

Many reasons can be advanced for this change but one thing is certain. More young people are asserting their right to participate fully in decisions which affect their lives.

Participation is not simply about giving young people token representation at national or international organizations and fora, rather, it is about making sure that young people have access to adequate opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

In many developing countries significant numbers of young people are victims of social and economic exclusion primarily because they are denied opportunities to participate meaningfully in decisions which affect their lives.

The promotion of genuine youth participation has and remains a central theme of the Commonwealth Youth Programme's mandate. CYP advocates youth participation as a key ingredient of empowerment and a critical success factor for sustainable development.

For CYP, Youth Participation plays a critical role in promoting respect and understanding. The potential of our youth will be fully realized only when their right to

participate is fully respected and they become active citizens in the social, political and economic development processes at the community, national, regional and international levels.

Mandated by successive Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings (CYMM), CYP has actively promoted youth participation as a key ingredient of sustainable development, and today is a leading partner in the movement for effective youth participation.

Many stakeholders have facilitated genuine youth participation in the development process. However, there is still evidence of tokenism.

At the 6th CYMM recently held in the Bahamas, Ministers discussed the way forward for ratification of the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE). The PAYE also sets criteria for youth participation in development which should be embraced and implemented by all governments in the Commonwealth.

Let us all join hands to ensure youth participation is fully adopted and practiced by all stakeholders in the youth development process. The potential of young people can only be realised if they are active citizens through their participation in and contribution to the development process at all levels.

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policies and programmes that affect our lives.

Natalie: Give a brief background on your youth related activities and achievements in Trinidad and Tobago.

MObafa: Over the years I have been involved in several youth related activities but I will highlight two of them.

I am the current National Youth Director for PAWI T&T Youth Department, where I am responsible for the implementation of many programmes including Project One to One (HIV&AIDS Prevention Programme), Sports outreach (in an attempt to create spaces for young people to use sports in a positive manner to affect our lives and representing the organization on several government committees.

As former President of UWI Student's Guild, I was instrumental in a number of activities including: The "Stop the Hate Campaign" that addressed on-campus and national issues of racism and prejudice; The Intercampus students Council that created a space for Guilds to share ideas, synergies and strategies to address campus concerns; Hosting of the Caribbean Students Council which brought together student leaders from the Caribbean to discuss matters common to us and present them to our leaders.

Natalie: How do you see your professional associations and network assisting you in your capacity as Pan-

Commonwealth Chair?

MObafa: I believe that my associations and networks established over the years will greatly assist because it provides me with a good foundation and with links to agencies that will aid me.

Natalie: In your view, how critical is youth participation in national development?

MObafa: It is very critical since we are not only citizens of our country, and therefore have a right to participate but we are also the inheritors of the decisions made today, and we have to live with the consequences.

Natalie: What are your impressions on the just concluded CYMM? How do you see it impacting on youth development in the Commonwealth?

MObafa: I thought that while CYMM presented a good start, it should not be measured until we see the fruits of the commitments and decisions made by Governments actually implemented. We heard the right tones and people used the correct buzzwords but the cry from young people is action

The Regional Director and staff of the Caribbean Centre take the opportunity to congratulate MObafa on his appointment, to wish him a successful tenure and to reiterate CYPCC's full support to enable him to discharge his functions in order to take the Youth Caucus to greater achievements as agents of change for youth development in their communities and countries.

RYC Chair shares views on young people and Human Rights



Norman Gilbert

Norman Gilbert is the Regional Coordinator/ Chairman of the Caribbean Youth Caucus and the Youth Representative of the Government of Grenada. Norman is a Youth Officer at the Youth Department in Grenada. He is also the president of the National Youth Council of Grenada.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right of all children and young people to have their point of view heard and respected in all matters of concern to them. (Article 12) Many world conferences reflect such strong commitments to youth rights and participation partly because young people themselves stood up for those rights and participated in the discussions and negotiations at these conferences, as members of government delegations and non-governmental organizations. Governments are slowly recognizing that young people are experts in their own right - the best sources of knowledge and information about the needs and concerns of youth - as well as committed actors for social change. Consequently, governments promised

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CYP Caribbean Regional Director shares feelings after CYMM

By Tahani Karrar
(Reuters Journalist)



observers from the University of the West Indies (UWI).

Mr. Charles said: "With regard to the 2006 CYMM, I wish to commend the delegates and organizers on what I felt was an excellent conference.

"However, I feel that many more ministers of youth, especially from the Caribbean region, should have been present."

Mr. Charles said that the 2006 CYMM meeting provided youth stakeholders with a good opportunity to analyse the issues affecting young people in the Commonwealth today.

He said: "The 2006 CYMM conference provided youth ministers and other youth stakeholders attending with a compelling *raison d'être* to make a deliberate and conscious effort to promote a comprehensive and strategic approach to youth development in their countries for the next two years.

"For me this was the golden opportunity presented by this meeting."

Another issue of important significance for Mr. Charles, who before joining CYP was a leading member of the Youth Movement and helped to re-establish the Saint Lucia National Youth Council, was the agreement, which came out of the CYMM, for greater involvement of RYC's in decision-making processes

concerning youth development.

strengthen mechanisms and support systems to facilitate greater RYC participation in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of functions of the CYP.

"The meeting also gave us at the Caribbean Centre, the opportunity to tell others about the work we have been doing in the region. It gave us the opportunity to discern the need for greater commitment. In particular, on the part of Caribbean RYC members when analysing the relevant youth development issues and formulating appropriate strategies to address them."

The 2006 CYMM accentuated the need for CYP to be repositioned and strengthened in the coming two-year strategic cycle.

Mr. Charles said: "Frankly speaking, while the CYP role and invaluable contribution was appropriately recognized, I left the meeting acknowledging delegates had correctly identified an urgent need for CYP to be repositioned and strengthened.

"The particular issues this would involve relate to strategic leadership, strategic partnership and strategic marketing."

Delegates attending the meeting

voiced their opinions that although CYP had accomplished many things, the emerging youth development landscape and environment required the various organs of CYP to be adequately empowered.

He said: "It would appear the clarion call is for CYP to provide visionary leadership, research support, capacity building support and cutting edge technical guidance to its partners."

Mr. Charles also feels that the conference provided a good platform to improve the situation of young people in the Commonwealth today.

He said: "I believe the Bahamas conference provided the ideal platform for a strategic and more sustainable approach to youth development. Moreover, this approach was not region specific but truly applied to all the countries throughout the Commonwealth family.

"I think the CYMM provided us with a golden opportunity but if we fail to grasp this opportunity then the struggle to ensure our societies remain cradles of creativity may become a fleeting illusion."

The CYP Caribbean Centre will be meeting during the next two weeks to review the CYMM outcomes and to refine its 2006-2008 Operation Plan in accordance with CYMM and CHOGM mandates.

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to find new ways to involve young people in the decision making process.

Among them are to:

- Advance the role of young people and actively involve them in health and environmental issues and in the promotion of economic and social development.

- Include youth representatives in their delegations to international and United Nations meetings.

- Develop new approaches to participatory policy-making and implementation of sustainable development programmes so that youth participation can become a reality.

- Ensure the participation of young people in planning and making decisions about their own future.

- Integrate youth concerns into all relevant policies, programmes and projects at national and local levels while integrating young people into staff structures and decision-

making committees.

- Strengthen international support and enforce laws and policies for the protection of children and youth against physical and mental abuse, economic exploitation, trafficking, child prostitution, female genital mutilation and child marriages.

- Make and enforce laws that will eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse and violence against adolescents and children, including abduction, prostitution and child pornography, and to punish those found responsible.

- Recognize the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other legally responsible for children with regard to providing school and community-based health, education and legal services as declared in the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

As young people of the Commonwealth we must ensure that we place the necessary pressure on

our governments to ensure that they meet their commitments to the youth of the Caribbean region. We must strive to ensure that youth are given

the highest respect and are allowed to participate at the highest level of decision making thus making youth more vibrant, vocal and visible.

CYPCC to host Planning Session

Pan-Commonwealth and RYC Chairpersons invited to attend

In keeping with the CYMM 2006 mandate, the CYP Caribbean Centre has invited newly elected Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus Chairman, Mr. MObafa Baker and Regional Youth Caucus Chairman, Mr. Norman Gilbert to participate in a two-day planning session from the 29 to 30, June in Georgetown, Guyana.

The sessions will among other things review CYPCC's 2006/2008 Operation Plan and effect necessary modifications in accordance with CYMM outcomes and engage in the allocation of resources for specific programme activities and projects for the 2006/2008 programme year.

Also attending the planning sessions are CYPCC's Regional Director, Mr. Henry Charles; Programme Managers, Ms Dwynette Eversley and Ms Glenyss James; Office Manager, Ms Cherrell Semple; Accounts Officer, Ms Maxine Bradford and Information Officer, Mr. Robert Bazil.

CYPCC will also take the opportunity to discuss strategies and supporting mechanisms to ensure that the tenure of Mr. Baker is productive and effective, as well as develop an outline of support and engagement for the RYC's for CYP's new programming cycle.

More must be done to secure the future of young people, says Commonwealth Secretary-General

Reprinted from CNIS



Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Hon. Don McKinnon with two young Bahamians at the opening ceremony of CYMM 2006 in The Bahamas.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon has urged member countries to do more "to secure not just the future of young people, but the present". It was important, he said, to enable young Commonwealth citizens to "grow up to see their own visions become reality".

Speaking at the opening of a plenary session of the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) in Nassau, The Bahamas, on 24 May 2006, the Secretary-General stressed that the prospects for young people today look grim.

"Two hundred million youth

worldwide live on less than a dollar a day; 130 million are illiterate; 88 million are unemployed; 10 million live with HIV. Those figures are difficult to absorb, but one thing is clear -- they are millions too many."

Mr. McKinnon said the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), which is run by the Commonwealth Secretariat, has given hope to young people through financial and technical assistance. In the past three years, he said, the CYP has provided small loans to help establish some 8,000 youth businesses across the Commonwealth, generating jobs for about 50,000 young people. Three thousand young people have been given new skills in information and communication technology (ICT) through the CYP Technology Empowerment Centre. He said the CYP has conducted training with government and partner agencies in 25 countries on

CYP from its current annual budget of £2.2 million -- a figure that has remained the same since 1985.

"If we want to keep having any sort of impact on one of the biggest single challenges that the Commonwealth faces -- to give its young people a future worth having -- then we simply cannot continue to do so on this level of funding. It is my fervent hope that this meeting will not just endorse but underline the proposals in my paper, and revise the CYP budget upwards," stated the Secretary-General.

At the 23 May opening of the CYMM, which bears the theme 'Youth Empowerment for the Eradication of Crime, Poverty and HIV/AIDS', Mr McKinnon encouraged ministers to create success stories in their own countries. He cited the cases of four young people from Botswana, India, Malawi and Zambia who have triumphed through adversity.

"These are stories of lives which have been changed. These stories, and more, give us confidence to keep going, to keep engaging with our youth. We want more of these stories to spread our messages -- to make a difference and change lives," said the Secretary-General.

The Prime Minister of The Bahamas, Perry Christie, said his country has succeeded in combating HIV/AIDS, but told ministers and youth delegates that crime and drug trafficking have become major issues in many small states.

"For various reasons, too many of our young people in all of our countries seem drawn to a life of crime. We are faced with the reprehensible recruitment of young people as child soldiers and criminal operatives by warlords in areas of armed conflict and by the drugs and criminal enterprises in some regions, including the Caribbean, which perpetuates the cycle of violence, fear and some of the most heinous crimes," stated Mr. Christie.

The Minister of Youth, Sports and Housing of The Bahamas, Neville Wisdom, said his country has made substantial inroads in youth development by refocusing on a 'Fresh Start Programme' -- an initiative designed for at-risk, out-of-school youth to give them a second chance in business, education and social involvement.

CYP has provided small loans to help establish some 8,000 youth businesses across the Commonwealth, generating jobs for about 50,000 young people.

CYPL Training Manual released

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) through its youth HIV/AIDS initiative, the Commonwealth Youth for Positive Living (CYPL) is pleased to announce the release of its training manual. The manual entitled, "Commonwealth Youth for Positive Living: A Manual" documents the training process of the first CYPL programme which was

launched in Guyana in 2003.

The manual provides clear and unambiguous steps for forming CYPL groups. It is sufficiently comprehensive to give clear guidelines, yet flexible enough to allow for country differences. The CYPL manual is also suited for effective adult education and training in areas of behaviour change and various aspects of positive living.

developing, managing and monitoring youth enterprises.

CYP's Youth Work Diploma programme is being delivered through 26 tertiary education institutes to 42 Commonwealth countries. It has trained 20,000 youth workers since the establishment of the CYP 32 years ago. The Secretary-General said the CYP has been working with other development agencies, including the United Nations, in youth development projects like the establishment of global Youth Development Indicators to measure trends in youth welfare such as population, education, employment, poverty, health, environment, migration, drug abuse, delinquency and ICT usage to better target development programmes.

Mr McKinnon said the CYP can do much more with increased funding and called on member countries to increase their financial support for the

CYPCC Programme Manager discusses RYCs and 6CYMM

by Tahani Karrar
(Reuters Journalist)

If respect and understanding are to take root in the Caribbean then respect will have to be based on genuine reciprocity, a willingness to adapt, to flex, to understand, to share, to lead and to follow, according to CYP Programme Manager Dwynette Eversley.

Ms Eversley is from Trinidad and Tobago and is the Programme Manager at the Caribbean Centre who manages Regional Youth Caucus matters. She is also the RYC Coordinator for the upcoming Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in the Bahamas this month.

She said: "While we all hope young people learn from mistakes of past generations, there is still a long way to go right here in the Caribbean on respect for one self and each other.

"I say this because there are problems even in the respect of basic human rights. There is still too much tension in some Caribbean countries based on population diversity. I feel if the drive is to be achieved, it has to be powered at all levels. It has to reach and be enjoined at the grass-roots level else there can be no long term effects."

According to Ms Eversley, the main issues facing Caribbean youth today are unemployment, HIV and AIDS, crime and violence.

She said: "Many people in the Caribbean have reported they want their governments to manage these issues with CYP by attacking ignorance. CYP wants to do this through education, skills training,

behaviour and life skills training, ICT training, leadership, exposure to holistic development, pro-poor schemes such as youth entrepreneurship and so on.

"CYP offers all of these programmes but we have to find better ways to make our best practices in one country more accessible to others for adaptation. We need to



Ms. Dwynette D Eversley

pioneer "training bundles" for youth starting with our RYCs and NYC executives as a good mechanism for moving forward."

Ms Eversley is coordinating up to 17 Caribbean RYC's who will be on official country delegations. She praised the work of Caribbean RYC's and stressed the need for Commonwealth governments and CYP to empower them through increased participation.

She said: "The young RYC members work hard and are true inspirations. They have good projects to take forward to improve their communities but they need better

support from CYP and Governments to hone skills and talent as Commonwealth leaders.

"We can't call upon young people to work with other youth, to spread Commonwealth principles and values and to engage youth in communities and not give them any tools to do all this work."

In the next two years the Caribbean Centre will pioneer a RYC project managed by RYC's for a community in at least one country as a "business" venture.

Ms Eversley said: "Caribbean RYC's have already developed projects and after they meet for a capacity building session later this year, they will choose which project and which country will go forward as the model. Then we will be able to see first-hand how RYC networking can positively impact the lives of young people in the Caribbean. I also feel this will draw important conclusions for future CYP work."

Ms Eversley hopes the 6CYMM

meeting this month will encourage better mainstreaming of the CYP developed Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) and Youth Development Index (YDI).

She said: "The PAYE and YDI are pioneering instruments for global youth development. But they cannot remain static documents. There must be the resources to implement, monitor, evaluate and continue adjusting targets."

She stressed CYP's reputation for delivering results, even when resources are limited. She said: "We have the advantage of size and in-region presence that allows us to be timely and relevant. This is very understated.

"I really want to hear clear decisions on mainstreaming youth and on making multi-sector youth investments that go forward to CHOGM, otherwise we'll continue to grapple with dwindling returns being given to what amounts to the development of our entire future."

Guyana commenced consultations on Competency Standards for Youth Work in the Caribbean

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) provided technical assistance to Guyana's Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports' one-day consultation on the draft Competency Standards for youth work.

The forum was held under the theme, "Towards the Professionalisation of Youth Work", at the Guyana National Service Sports Complex in Georgetown, Guyana on May 10, 2006.

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Hon. Mr. Anthony Xavier, in a brief address at the opening ceremony, assured that the "Government has bought into the idea of youth work professionals".

He admonished that a necessary ingredient in the professionalisation and development of youth workers at every level is their own personal dedication to the profession. "This will make them professionals," Minister Xavier declared.

Pointing to the development of competency standards for youth work in the context of the CARICOM

Single of Market and Economy (CSME), the minister indicated that professionals operating in the region will need governmental recognition and reiterated that the Government of Guyana was committed to facilitating this.

Minister Xavier also said that he, personally, would like to see the re-opening of the training facilities that CYPCC once operated in the compound of the state-run Kuru Kuru Co-operative College on the Linden-Soesdyke Highway in Guyana.

CYPCC has been providing specialized training for youth work practitioners in the region, at the certificate and diploma levels since its inception in 1974.

Over the years many graduates of both programmes, but more so the Diploma programme, have been expressing the concern that their youth work qualifications are not recognized by their respective Public Service Commissions and as such did not have much marketability. As a consequence many cannot gain employment, receive promotion or adequate remuneration. CYPCC's



Participants at the consultations in Guyana

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assessment of the current state of youth development throughout the region points to the need to have specially training personnel to work with the large youth population in Member States.

To address these and other related issues, CYPCC secured the services of HEART Trust, National Training Agency, Jamaica to design regional occupational standards for youth work in the region. The standards will articulate:

- An agreed set of competencies which can be used to inform the range of qualifications for youth workers within a regional qualifications framework;
- A baseline for recruitment processes and drawing up of job specifications; a means for developing and evaluating training materials occupational standards for youth work at all levels of training; and
- A basis for professionalizing youth

work and providing youth workers with career choices.

A key component of the process is National Consultations with all stakeholders. Some countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean have already completed their National Consultations and others are well on their way to have this process completed soon.

The consultations provide an opportunity for stakeholders to be apprised of CYPCC's youth work initiatives and more specifically to examine the 59 competencies to see whether they adequately address the needs of Member States.

Programme Manager, Youth Work Education and Training at CYPCC, Ms Glenyss James, advised stakeholders gathered in Guyana that "since *Young people are the custodians of our society and the trustees of prosperity for future generations* they first need to have a vision of where they would like to see Guyana 10 to 30 years from now and based on that vision ensure relevance of the 59 competency units they have

been requested to interrogate. It is critical for governments to institutionalise youth policies and youth development work within the integrated framework of national development. They must also ensure that the new discipline of youth development work is firmly entrenched in the Public Service and that youth development workers are properly trained and empowered to execute the professional functions required of them."

Ms James further added that "youth empowerment must become everybody's business where governments, NGOs, family, communities, media, education, health, employment, financial and other institutions act in concert. While it may be spearheaded by youth departments, the multi-stakeholder approach is imperative if true youth empowerment is to be achieved," Ms James observed.

Director of Youth in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Mr. Carl Brandon, in the welcome remarks said that the forum was being held at an

important juncture, adding that the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports was appreciative of the efforts of CYPCC in ensuring that Member States embraced an evidenced-based approach to youth development.

"It is through CYPCC's initiative that a holistic approach to young people and youth issues is being given prominence in the region," he said, noting the need for more accreditation to be given to those persons who have been working with young people for several years.

Emphasising that Guyana is a developing country, Brandon urged that a partnership be forged with all agencies that are involved in the development of young people.

Among the stakeholders at the consultations were the CARICOM Secretariat, Public Service Ministry and Commission, University of Guyana, government ministries, youth workers, graduates of the Diploma in Youth in Development Work and representatives of various youth non governmental organizations.

Four Caribbean projects win Commonwealth Silver Awards

After receiving some thirteen projects from around the Commonwealth Caribbean, the Ashton Wharf Reclamation, Beautification & Education Project of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was adjudged the best of four projects recommended for Silver Awards in the Commonwealth Youth Development Awards (CYDA) 2006.

A total of seven Caribbean countries submitted projects for the silver awards. Submitted projects came from Antigua, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis and St. Vincent & Grenadines respectively but only five met the stipulated criteria.

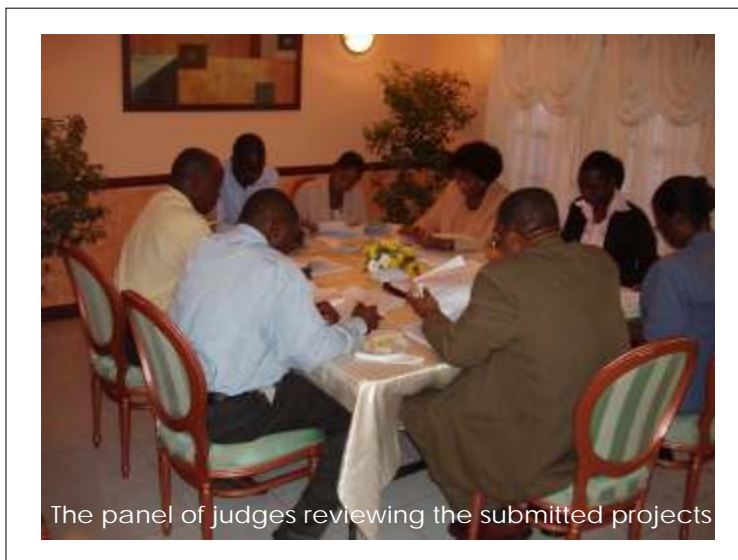
The Ashton Wharf Reclamation, Beautification & Education Project was awarded 68 points; Union Island Environmental Programme, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, 65; Community and Tourism Enhancement Project, Dominica, 60 points; Intensifying the Impact of HIV/AIDS Education and Training in a Natural Environment Setting, Dominica, 60 points; and National Tree Planting Project, Cayman Islands, 47 points.

The panel, which met in Georgetown, Guyana on May 2, agreed to award CYDA Silver Awards

to each of the four projects listed above that scored over 50 points. These four will also be recommended for consideration for the CYDA Gold Award.

Judging the awards were: Mr. Henry Charles, Regional Director,

Yearwood, CPAD Intern, CYPCC; Mr. Carl Brandon, Director of Youth, Guyana; Mr. Trevor Benn, Governance Advisor, UNDP; and Mr. Daniel Torrington, Coordinator of Guyana Information Youth Project, Volunteer Youth Corps.



The panel of judges reviewing the submitted projects

CYPCC; Ms. Dwynette Eversley, Programme Manager, CYPCC; Ms. Cherrell Semple, Office Manager, CYPCC; Ms. Natasha Grovesnor, CYPCC Intern; Ms. Natalie

Here is a brief synopsis of each project competing for the Gold Award within the Commonwealth.

Ashton Wharf Reclamation, Beautification and Education

Project

The Ashton Wharf Reclamation, Beautification and Education Project started in 1996 to develop youth through caring, support and empowerment to develop a caring and secure environment to its members.

Consisting of twenty members, this group is involved in the reclamation of areas to protect the mangroves from garbage pollution by monitoring, cleaning and erecting no littering signs. They are also involved in transforming littered areas into recreational/relaxation areas for youth in Union Island.

The Ashton Wharf Reclamation, Beautification and Education Project has taught persons to be responsible by caring for plants and protecting the mangroves and sea resources for future generations.

This project hopes to continue integrating youth and senior citizens in the teaching and learning of the indigenous techniques unique to Union Island.

The Union Island Environmental Programme

The Union Island Environmental Programme of the Union Island Environmental Attacker was founded in 1999 in response to the importance of the environment to

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survive as a tourist area and to promote economic survival of the Island.

The main activities of the group include ongoing public awareness and sensitization; environmental clean-up beautification including the cleaning up of beaches to provide additional recreation while providing possible livelihood for others; sensitizing the public to the need to maintain a clean and healthy environment and distribution and erection of garbage disposal units and billboards with reminders to keep the environment clean are placed around the island.

This project has gained a significant amount of awareness of the importance of the environment and has highlighted topics such as illegal dumping of garbage by local yachts and small businesses. It has also addressed environmentally healthy home practices and water,

beach and general pollution.

Union Island Environmental programme hopes to continue the beach project but would like to erect semi-permanent beach umbrellas and a snack shop to generate some income for groups and provide employment for persons from the community.

Intensifying the impact of HIV/AIDS Education and Training in a Natural Environmental setting

The goals of this youth group are to improve the quality of life among youth by facilitating their personal development and promoting their full involvement in all physical and social issues and to encourage and enhance the involvement of its members and society in general - local regional and national in the preservation of the natural environment. In that regard, the organisation will support and foster education and training of youth where necessary.

This project has undertaken work in environmental education;

HIV/AIDS; leadership training; social activities (hiking; camping); and reforestation, Health and Marine Life. The 38-member group uses the natural environment to bring greater awareness to safe sexual practices among youth to reduce the risk of young people aged 16-25 contracting HIV/AIDS. Young people are also educated on the importance of preserving their environment for future generations.

The group's future plans are to ensure that all its members are trained in First Aid, Conflict Management and Counselling. There are also plans for the programme to target schools in Dominica so that a different approach can be taken with the dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS.

Community and Tourism Enhancement Project

The Community and Tourism Enhancement project of the Association for Improvement and

Development was established in 2000 to undertake various community projects through volunteerism.

The group assists in the development of the tourism sector by building and developing side walks, refurbishing standpipes, tree planting, landscaping, sanitation and beautification of the environment. Support is also provided to youth in the Lagoon village of Portsmouth.

Club members are responsible for planning, identifying projects, raising funds and preparing project sites for development. This group hopes to organise training workshop for its member in technical assistance, leadership skills and self development.

For more information on the Commonwealth Youth Development Awards please visit our website at www.thecommonwealth.org/cyp.

CYPCC and COL hold follow-up meeting in Guyana



From left are, CYPCC Regional Director, Mr. Henry Charles; Programme Manager, Ms. Glenyss James and COL Representative Ms. Helen Lentell.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) and the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) recently held a follow-up meeting to explore ways in which the two organisations can collaborate in the implementation of their respective mandates.

Representing CoL was Ms

Helen Lentell, Education Specialist, Training and Materials Development. The two-day meeting agreed on the nature of CYPCC's participation in the Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF) conference scheduled for October 2006 in Jamaica. The PCF conference will give CYP an opportunity to present and discuss its use of the

Open and Distance Learning in executing its programmes across the 4 regions of the Commonwealth.

The meeting, which took place at CYPCC's office during May 30 to 31 also formalized CoL's provision of technical support in the Centre's strategy for professionalising youth work.

The Commonwealth of Learning is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. training in the Commonwealth.

Up-coming Events

June 12 - 16, 2006 - Planning meeting for Commonwealth Caribbean Youth Exchange

June 29-30, 2006 - CYPCC Planning Session

July, 2006 - University of Guyana internship programme begins.

August 10-21, 2006 - Commonwealth Caribbean Youth Exchange, 2006, **Tortola, British Virgin Islands**

September 30, 2006 - Caribbean Youth Day

Best Practice magazine set for July launching

The St. Francis Community Developers best practice magazine 'Making a Difference' will be launched on July 5 in Georgetown, Guyana.

The magazine will document among other things intervention strategies, challenges and successes faced by St. Francis. It will also feature the

Caribbean Centre's Youth Enterprise Development programme.

St. Francis is a three-time recipient of the Commonwealth Youth Development Awards.

This NGO works towards the upliftment of residents in targeted local communities in Guyana,

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

PUT IT DOWN
By Henry Charles

PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
YOUTH MAN PUT IT DOWN
PUT DOWN YOUR GUN
PUT DOWN THIS WEAPON

PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
BADMAN PUT IT DOWN
PUT DOWN YOUR NINE
PUT IT OUT OF YOU MINE

PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
MY BELOVED SISTREN
PROTECT THEM CHILDREN

PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
MY BELOVED BRETHREN
STOP THIS MAYHEM

PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
PUT IT DOWN
ME BELOVED CHILDREN
SING FOR US A LOVE SONG.

BARREL CHILDREN - By Henry Charles

My mother
No, she is not home
But she visits every month
Well almost every month

My sister goes to get her
She arrives via western union
Oh you should see her
How her face shines

Sometimes I don't even get to see her
My sister, she takes her
To see the new houses of worship
And then she becomes exhausted

Oh she may be back for Christmas
She should arrive on the M.V. HOPE
Loaded with trinkets and masks
Oh how beautiful she looks
Plump, and filled with hope

Oh but she will be here next month
You see my brother is on trial
She will be here to pay the fine
But not long enough to comfort him.

Anyway I must send an email
To remind her of the new game boy
And sleek sneakers.

Any poems
or short stories?

Publish them here!
You can e-mail them to
nyearwood@cypcaribbean.org

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

Photo highlights of CYMM 2006

