



INTERCOM

A Newsletter for students and others contributing to the Commonwealth Youth Programme

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From the Editor

Hallo all and welcome to the next edition of Intercom. It is terrific to be with you for another year. I am delighted at the number of students that have written pieces for this edition. We have articles from the Solomons and from the Pacific Youth Council. I think it is the first for both. The Pacific Youth Council is very new and I am very pleased to publish a report on their progress and vision. There are still a couple of places around the globe we have not managed to include in this edition so please be inspired to tell me what is happening in your part of the globe.

I have put our interesting facts on India and I hope that means that we may get some articles from India as a follow up in the next edition.

I want you to note not only their work that students are reporting on but also the partnerships that they are forming for change. I was particularly impressed with Lawrence's article on his trip to the Oxfam International Youth Parliament.

I think it is also important to note that many of the comments refer to the need to be reflective in our practice. We must constantly review our practice and its impact on our community and on our advocacy for young people. Because we are advocates for change and the Diploma has given many of you the professional tools to add to your enthusiasm for change in your particular part of the globe. Being able to be reflective is a good tool for professional life.

of students from the Carribean also write for Intercom. I love reading about your work and experiences in the Carribean as I have never visited and they have given me a greater sense of the community. So, to others around the globe please take the time to tell us about your work and journey and let our global community peek inside your front door.

2007 will hold many challenges for many of us as our compatriots around the world struggle for peace, democracy and a voice in their future. Whatever your struggle I hope 2007 brings you closer to success.

I look forward to working with you again this year.

**Robyn Broadbent
Intercom Editor**

In this edition we had a number

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Interesting Facts— The Republic of India

According to Wikipedia: India is the seventh largest country by geographical area, the second most populous country, and the most populous liberal democracy in the world. India's national sport is field hockey, although cricket is the most popular sport in India.

And a most intriguing definition from Lonely Planet

India will sideswipe you with its size, clamour and diversity - but if you enjoy delving into convoluted cosmologies and thrive on sensual overload, then it is one of the most intricate and rewarding dramas unfolding on earth, and you'll quickly develop an abiding passion for it.

Quotable Quote:

A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.

CYP/UWI Diploma in Youth Development: A Challenging and Rewarding Journey

by Sandra Phillip Hodge – BVI Student

Getting Started

When I heard about the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Diploma Course in Youth Work two years ago, the programme was already in progress and I had to move fast to enrol and catch up with the studies. I must acknowledge the encouragement and assistance I got from the Country Coordinator for the BVI students, Ms. Arlene Smith who assured me it was not too late to join the programme, and remained consistently supportive throughout the duration of the programme.

The Deal

At first I was very excited to get started and get on with the programme. The module subjects were all interesting and my mind was ready to take it all in. I must admit that I have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. I like to learn new things. I do believe in life enrichment activities that stimulate the mind and broaden one's perspectives on issues that are of human interest and in this case, national concern.

Being able to practice reflective thinking through the Learning Journals as part of the course work served to connect the experiences of working with young people over the years in various capacities, the issues that society agonize about, the concerns of young people themselves, and the way that governments and other authoritative bodies approach these issues.

The wide scope of the study areas, taking material from all over the Commonwealth world, and the fact that all participating Caribbean countries could interact through the UWIDITE system contributed to the fun element of the learning experience. The structure of the tutoring sessions being flexible to accommodate working students, the project assignments that involved teamwork, the multiple choice exam papers all made the overall experience not so daunting for us as mature adults who had been out of school for so long. Had it not been for the support and conscientious facilitating of the University of the West Indies and the Commonwealth Youth Programme officials taking this into consideration, the experience could have been less rewarding.

The Challenges

For me, this was a real test of fortitude, not because of the work itself, but because of the other competing factors in my domestic and working life during the second half of the course, particularly. At one point I was so far behind that I didn't think I could get it all in before the final grading. But as I mentioned at the beginning, the Country Coordinator really pushed for us, to get extensions of deadlines and we couldn't ask for more support than that. I appreciate every opportunity that was extended to me to complete this training and set the exams accordingly.



In Summary

I regard this course as a must for anyone who aspires to work in any capacity with young people. As Mr. Henry Charles told us on his visit to the BVI a couple of months ago, the youth markets span every aspect of the society and the community in general, and as long as we have to deal with young people in any sphere of commercial activity, whatever our jobs are, as long as we are coming into contact with young people, which is most likely since young people comprise a good portion of the active population, we can benefit from a course such as this.

As a responsible citizen, I value the experience of learning all that the course had to impart, and will hold the material dear to me for reference as needed. I would also like to share the information with as many persons as I can. I feel proud to have been a part of this national effort to improve the human resources to work in areas of youth development in preparing our young people to take their roles and responsibilities in society with a sense of purpose.

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Presentation by Pacific Youth Council President at 37th Pacific Islands Forum

Wednesday, 25th October, 2006
Presented by Jacque Koroivulano, Pacific Youth Council President

The Hon. Chairperson, The Secretary General, the Two Deputy Secretary General, the Hon. Leaders around the table, Officials, Observers and Ladies and Gentleman.

On behalf of the young people of the Pacific, I would like to first extend a hand of thanks to you, our Leaders, the Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for your vision and commitment to the Pacific Plan.

Of particular interest to us are initiatives 9.1 and 15.4 as they are the Youth Component of the Pacific Plan, of which we are proud partners in their implementation. I am please to report that implementation of these initiatives is progressing as planned.

I must say it has been an exciting past few days in experiencing how forums of this magnitude operate.

We believe that the Pacific Plan maps a challenging road to a positive future, and calls for the closer collaboration amongst all countries involved.

Youth between 15 to 24 years of age make up 20% of the countries' population and in some cases half of the population. We face a number of pressing challenges such as the disintegration of the family unit, the lack of educational and employment opportunities, the tension between culture and globalization, gender inequality, the rise in HIV cases, and some apparent short falls in adherence to good governance principles.

However we are delighted to note that the Pacific Plan addresses areas such as capacity building, education, employment, adolescent health, and the empowerment of young women leading toward sustainable development for all.

In addition, The Plan is strongly complemented by the Pacific Youth Strategy 2010 adopted by the Pacific Youth Ministers in Port Moresby in December 2005.

The PYS 2010 is currently administered by the

SPC with the Pacific Youth Council, to provide opportunities for young people to access integrated education, nurture sustainable livelihoods, promote healthy lifestyles, build stronger communities through strengthening institutional capacity, promoting youth identities and conducting targeted research into youth issues.

Within these frameworks, we therefore humbly request leaders to take a lead role in facilitating the development of appropriate initiatives to improve the quality of lives of our young people of the region.

Accordingly we seek increases in budgetary allocations and resources for Youth Ministries, Youth Divisions and NGOs working with young people. We call for regular messages of hope and inspiration through the media for our young people, and not only at special events such as National Youth Days.

Proverbs Chapter 22: 6 reminds us to "teach our children in the way they should go and when they are grown, they shall not depart from it". In other words, as leaders gifted with a special responsibility of leadership may our conduct and speech, our thoughts and actions, leave a positive impression upon the upcoming generation to follow.

We as young people to the best of our abilities pledge to be productive citizens in nation building.

At the most recent gathering of Pacific Youth, the 1st Pacific Youth Festival, in French Polynesia in July this year, almost 1000 young people from over 25 countries developed the Pacific Youth Charter, as an advocacy tool for addressing youth development issues in the region.

Riding on the aspirations of the Charter, we appeal for your commitment, guidance, and faith in us, along with our own belief in ourselves to take the necessary steps in ensuring a secure, prosperous and sustainable future for our region.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to address this important forum.

May God bless you all.

Solomon Islands

By Lawrence Nodua

Since I have been studying the diploma in youth studies I have gained practical youth experiences in the community, national and international levels. In July 2004 I led the Solomon Islands delegates to the Oxfam international youth parliament in Sydney, Australia.

I completed the program in 2003 but because of the problem in our country we had our graduation in December 2004. After returning home I was working for an international NGO as a country coordinator for disaster preparedness project until June 2006 when I departed the organization to join another organization.

However, what stand out clearly to me is the skills and knowledge I gained from the DYD. It drives me to learn new things everyday.

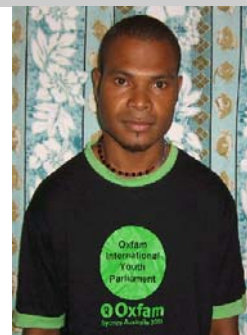
As a person who graduated from the DYD this is now my new destiny. I had been a team leader for Solomon Islands delegates to Oxfam interna-

tional youth parliament 2004. In 2005, I lead my group again to Oxfam Pacific regional meeting in Suva, Fiji. In 2006 I was the only delegates from the Solomon Islands to attend the Oxfam global review meeting in India.

Without the Diploma I would not be able to communicate the youth language to other young people around the globe.

The DYD makes me has given me new thinking in my work with young people. Sadly there are few mechanisms to turn my ideas into reality and in the Pacific Islands we must work hard for young people to be recognized and given a voice.

Our photo during the global review meeting in Chennai, India June 2006.



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I only hope now that institutions and organizations that could benefit from the training of youth workers, and that the programme would continue and improve as time goes on would draw upon this experience. Should an advance programme come on board, I would like to be among the first to get involved. This is a well put-together programme and I recommend it to teachers, guidance counsellors, after-school programme workers, etc. I plan to use the training I got to improve my career options within the Public Service.

by Sandra Phillip Hodge – BVI Student

MY JOURNEY OF YOUTH WORK

By Tanya Richards (30 years)
Best Graduating Student – Jamaica
2nd Offering Pan Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Work (2004 -2006)



I do not think this journey of youth work that I am on was one that I chose as much as it was the one that chose me. I found myself in a church community with so many young people who began to somehow look to me and why? All I knew was that I was once as 'messed up' young person on a journey to be 'whole'. I saw young people as I saw myself, needing a chance to be heard and to feel empowered to continue speaking, but wait, even this word **empowered** I only now know what it really means! We had been using it so much but never really took the time to understand what it meant. I found out what it meant and that my own journey to be whole was simply a journey to be empowered, and then I saw the CYP course advertised in the Sunday Gleaner. Many people including family members thought I was absolutely crazy, as nobody had ever heard of youth development and considering that I had already been making a complete mess of my life, by volunteering my time to help young people, I was alone on this journey but I did not care because for once what I was doing felt right to me.

Empowerment is allowing an individual, through the creation of an environment that fosters self discovery of one's personal powers and abilities, to act in the best interest for one's own development. That's my definition from a combination of thirteen modules on youth development. Isn't empowerment then what we all seek as individuals? So CYP didn't just create an environment for me to learn to empower youths which I most certainly did, but it empowered me to face critically my own history and how I got to be who I am and how to change my tomorrow. Society helps to shape us and so I believe we must help to shape society and ensure that young people know that society requires them to do the same. Governments and society often use young people as the scapegoat to divert the public's eye and attention from other serious and critical issues but I believe the day has come when people, like myself and this generation, are being empowered earlier and our eyes are being opened to our reality as Paulo Friere says 'we are awoken from a naïve consciousness and have begun to question the status quo and demand change'.

CYP emphasizes critical thinking which is good because societies, such as Jamaica, that have once been oppressed need youths in particular, because of their questioning nature, to ascertain if what we do as a people especially in terms of development is good for us or is even necessary.

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In this state of questioning I have decided to come together with other youth workers and create a Youth Workers Association that will not just advocate for the positive motion of the youth development process and the treatment of youth workers in Jamaica, but advocate and facilitate advocacy for and amongst youth. Youth workers main responsibility in this process of development is to help young people to open their eyes, or if their eyes are opened, to look critically at life not just for them but for others as everyone in a society is important and what affects one will ultimately affect someone else.

The programme was not easy but I loved the material; it might not be for everybody but it was real for me because it enlightened me about what I have chosen to do and so I continue on this journey and I have a cause that I am willing to give my life for and that's young people as I can't go back in time and be young again but I can enjoy youth as I see young people empowered and enjoy their lives.

By Tanya Richards

British Virgin Isles Graduation 2006



Back row:

Left to right Ms Arlene Smith, Diploma Country Coordinator, Ms Simone Simpson-Pope, Mr. Jeffrey Forbes, Mr. Henderson Tittle,

Middle row:

The Hon. Lloyd K. Black, Minister with responsibility for Youth Affairs, Mr. Sylvester Smith, Ms Joan Johnson.

Front Row:

Ms Celia Georges, Ms Sandra Phillip Hodge & Ms Janice George-Harris (Best Graduating Student BVI) Absent: Ms Sherwin Anatole and Ms Jacqueline Marie Nibbs.

BVI STUDENT ARTICLES

(Extracted from the GIS Publication for the Graduation 2nd December 2006)

Since I graduated in 1979 from the BVI High School, I was reluctant to pursue any higher level of education after that. When this Diploma Programme was advertised, my wife Arona Fahie-Forbes encouraged me to take up the Programme since I mentored young men and women in the Sea Cows Bay area for years. Again I was very reluctant but she continued to encourage me and promised to help me.

I finally made the decision and I am very happy for doing so. The Programme was tedious and at times I wanted to give up. I was given a lot of encouragement from many family members, tutors, the coordinator and my wife and with God's help I am now elated that I have successfully completed the Programme.

I was able to learn about various principles, concepts and the methodologies of doing things. Despite the fact that I had some experience, this Programme helped me to appreciate the technical aspects of youth work more.



Jeffrey Forbes (BVI)



Sylvester Smith (BVI)

My experience was one that I will never soon forget about. This was not just about learning how to work with young people and impacting their lives, but an expedition of self. Without a question, I will strive to make an impact

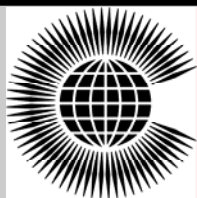
on the lives of young people that I come in contact with because of this course I desire to see youths do well in life. I further believe the experience and wisdom I gained while taking part in this CYP course was one of awakening, clarity and triumph, if you will.

As I reflect on the many challenges I personally encountered in completing this course I've come to the realization that it was not just about becoming a youth worker. It was about me learning how to connect with different people, learning how to understand others points of

view, sharing my experiences, being a team player, embedding hope in despair and overcoming myself, being able to make sacrifices and being able to see the bigger picture. I was stripped naked of the barriers that impaired my vision and was given a fresh perspective of how to effectively be a youth worker. It began first with me seeing myself and making changes.

Being a youth worker is to be a great leader always seeking ways to empower, enable, encourage and give hope. Youths need to know that you care and believe that they are worthy of your investment and the return will be great. Youths like any person have a voice and desire for it to be heard; unfortunately it can be snuffed out by culture, traditions and unintentional systems in society. What this course has taught me is how to remove those elements that will be obstacles to young people developing to their true potential. This however, is no miniscule task, yet it is not impossible. I believe what I learned from this course can and will be given to young people to make a difference in the British Virgin Islands.

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A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDENTS AND OTHERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME DIPLOMA IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

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Have Fun!

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I believe that all the participants in this youth course walked away with a wealth of knowledge and the confidence to effectively make a significant impact in young people's lives. Therefore, it would be of no value if we do not utilize this knowledge.

I want to encourage my colleagues to continue to make an impact and continue to be a light for our youths in these British Virgin Islands.

By Sylvester Smith (BVI)

The Spinster

*The hardship of waiting
Never cease
I've become used to this pain
Once sharp
Now dull in my chest
Never ease
Numbing
Never knowing
To you,
I'm walking head held up high in faith
But:
To me,
only empty comfort I feel
The daily brushing of cat hairs
From my clothes
A constant reminder
Of unfortunate circumstance
The silence
The emptiness in my bed
Shared with one pussy cat
Alone
Watching the passing
The sun and the moon
Night day
30 soon to be 40
The clock ticks
Seemingly unto infinity
January soon to be February
Another new year
Silent prayers
Hope renewed*

*Wondering
Sighing
Will it ever come to me
Sitting
Standing
Trying to get comfortable
Reclining on my family sized couch
My only companion
One pussy cat
Longing
Hoping
Daydreams and night dreams
Fantasies so much nicer
Than this unfair reality
The only touch I feel
Belonging only to
One pussy cat
My need for companionship
Screams through my pores
A new year
Another resolution
A pleasant trip to the pet shop
Contentment at last
For a while
The completeness of my bed
Shared
By not one but
Two pussy cats*

By Andrena Simmons