



Commonwealth Secretariat

Briefing Note – Young people

The challenge

- Lack of capacity in youth ministries to deliver programmes and services.
- High unemployment.
- Increase in crime and violence.
- Substance abuse.
- Threat of HIV/AIDS.
- Lack of knowledge, skills and attitudes in youth development.
- Limited or no access to lending institutions.

The Commonwealth strategy

- Running skills training workshops.
- Providing funding and training to entrepreneurs.
- Developing policies that take into account the fast-changing needs, priorities and aspirations of young people.
- Promoting awareness about the Secretariat and its work.
- Increasing resource allocation by Heads of Government for youth development and employment.
- Promoting sport as a means to promote peace building and development initiatives.
- Raising awareness for health and positive living, reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the youth.

Key principles

Empowering young people to play a key role in development and democracy.

The practical response

- The Young Ambassadors of Positive Living (YAPL) programme was initiated to enable young people living with HIV/AIDS raise awareness about the pandemic and advocate for positive living.
- The Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (CYCI) is a micro-credit enterprise intended for the promotion of youth employment. It offers loans, training, education and business support.

- More than 1000 enterprises have been set up in India as a result of this scheme; Chifundo Youth Project in Zambia has trained young people in carpentry and welding since 2002.
- Through the Commonwealth Youth Caucus (CYC), young people actively participate in policy development and implementation.
- The Youth Work Education and Training (YWET) programme brings together youth leaders, youth workers and other stakeholders to work together and help raise professional standards.
- The Commonwealth Youth Programme Diploma in Youth Development Work provides youth workers with professional knowledge and practical skills.
- In November 2008 St Kitts and Nevis in collaboration with the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) concluded a consultation on Respect and Understanding aimed at promoting mutual understanding and respect among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth.
- The Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre (NUYDC) is a Government of Uganda project located in Gulu District aimed at rebuilding northern Uganda in partnership with young people and helping them to reclaim their identity.
- The Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2007-2015 is a policy framework aimed at empowering youth by creating conditions under which they can act on their own behalf.
- The Youth Development Index (YDI) has been developed to measure the performance of youth development programmes.

Ministerial meetings or other highlights

- Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meetings, comprising ministers, senior government officials and youth representatives of the Commonwealth, convenes every four years. Two meetings were held in the last 5 years in the Bahamas in 2006 and Sri Lanka in 2008.

Other Commonwealth players and their works

- The Secretariat works through a central office at the Commonwealth Secretariat and four regional centres in Zambia, Guyana, Solomon Islands and India.

Relations with other bodies involved in the sector

- The Secretariat partners with UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, EU, NGOs, multilateral, governmental and regional youth organisations.