



INTERCOM

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

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From the Editor

Welcome to our third edition of Intercom for 2005. It is terrific to be speaking with you.

This edition will have a focus on the Pacific but there are also contributions from Asia and the Caribbean. I don't think I had mentioned earlier that I am also the External Moderator for the Pacific and have had my first visit to the Solomon Islands. It was a great experience to visit somewhere with a richness of culture such as the Solomons. I was kept very busy working with students and tutors.

In my workshops with students it was a great opportunity to talk youth development work Australian and Pacific Island style. We should not have been surprised that we had much in common.

I continue to be impressed with the standard of work that is being undertaken even where students have limited resources. They have their knowledge and work with their communities and their own networks of other youth and community workers.

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It is very important work because improving skills and practice in youth development work will lead to increasing the capacity of young people to effect change.

Inside this edition we also have a special report from Sri Lanka. At the beginning of the year my first newsletter started on a very sad note as the world watched and then tried to take action to assist the victims of the Tsunami. It made us all a little more respectful about life and the challenges that some of our Commonwealth partners were facing. I am delighted, therefore, to have an article about Tsunami relief in Sri Lanka and the contribution made by CYP students. I am very grateful to Nishantha, a current CYP student and Youth Development worker in Sri Lanka for keeping me in contact with her work.

I also have an article from another young woman from India. Thanks to Arundhati for sending me an article about her experience in CYP. Arundhati highlighted the quote from the Commonwealth Secretary General that inspired her to be a part of the programme. I have used the quote in our quotable quotes below.

Finally I really like the article I received from a group of students in the British Virgin Islands about their critical thinking workshop. They challenge us all to think about our practice using the following questions;

What if? Why? What are the implications of? Is this necessary? Is this the only solution?

So all that is left is to say is that this is my last newsletter for 2005. It has been a wonderful introduction to CYP and I have valued the many collegiate relationships I have made with you over the past year. Please keep writing to me and sending me your experiences and articles about your work. I look forward to working with you in 2006. Our next edition will be March and I will be able to report on my visit to PNG who have just begun a new course with a new cohort of students.

Peace be with you and your families

Warmest Regards
Robyn Broadbent
CYP Newsletter Editor

Quotable Quote: "Young people are either part of the effort or the effort fails." Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General,

Interesting Facts—Solomon Islands

CAPITAL: Honiara
POPULATION: 509,190

Lonely Planet—Solomon Islands at a glance

Those lured to the Solomons by the promise of extraordinary natural features will not be disappointed; the islands have a well-deserved reputation as possibly the world's best destination for scuba divers, snorkellers and fishing freaks.

Youth Development Work in the Solomon Islands



Hallo to all my new friends and colleagues in the Solomon Islands. I learnt much about their culture and work whilst I was visiting. In this group people are working with young people in the area of literacy and adult education, in the Library of the college, in the local Catholic parish, through the Planned Parenthood Association, Church Youth Groups, Radio and communications including computer literacy, self sustaining community projects, the police and the list goes on. It is important work that will assist communities to make change at the local level. It is important work because it values young people in that process and the contribution that they make to a community. It is important work because young people don't only want to be considered as the future of the community they want to be considered as active contributors NOW—that have a voice, opinions and are a part of improving the capacity of their communities to be self sustaining

in every way.

We discussed some very serious issues that are currently confronting their communities, including the use of Cannabis and the fact that HIV is present in this Island community. We discussed their role in providing information to the community, advocating for resources for young people and the important issue of prevention versus intervention.

Prevention in the case of HIV is challenging for any community but particularly for a deeply religious community such as the Solomons. It challenges community values because prevention must be prepared to discuss openly the sexual health of a community. It was a timely discussion because we were focusing some of our attention on Module 5 and the issues that surround the social construction of gender.

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HIV is a gender issue with regards to women along with education and economic sustainability. We had the chance to discuss what prevention means in the context of our work



with young women. It was a lively and interesting discussion and I found CYP students to be insightful about the issues that they confronted in that work.

This group of students also discussed with me how their course had assisted them in their work, to understand the context of their work and how they can continue to work to improve their practice. The course, they outlined, had also

provided them with new skills and knowledge that they were using every day. They evidenced the professional attributes of reflective practitioners. Each day it is important that as practitioners we reflect on our work to enable us to take it to the next stage. It is how we progress as professionals and how our work improves and our practice is able to continue to respond to the community whatever change is upon them.

Finally below I must also say hallo to the students on Gizo Island who I visited. I was hoping to bring you a picture but it would seem my camera did not take the desired pic (its always better to blame the technology). So it will have to wait until my next visit. Instead I have a picture of the market place right on the waterfront.

These students discussed the limitations that distance forced upon them. The limitations of communication systems, resources and the cost of trying to continue their study. Nevertheless they were resilient and certainly steadfast in their commitment to the programme. We had a terrific day together working through two of the modules and discussing their work in the Health Industry of the region. Some of this group have nearly completed the Diploma and are looking forward to their graduation. Some are at the beginning. All were enthusiastic. The Solomon Islands is rebuilding and your student colleagues in the Diploma will be active in that rebuilding.



Arundhati. P. Kane

My experience as a student of 'COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME'

When I was first introduced to the Commonwealth Youth Programme, I had many questions in my mind. What is this Programme about? What will we study in this course? Will it help me career wise? Why is it specifically for the Youth? There was a sea of questions in front of me. I had read and heard a lot about the Commonwealth, but doing a course through this organisation would be a completely different experience.

I tried to check out the Commonwealth website, which gave me an insight into the course and the objectives of the course. While going through the website I read a quote by Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General, "Young people are either part of the effort or the effort fails." This sentence made me realize that being a 'youth' we criticize the working of our country and blame the federal systems

for not doing more for our country and the world. But as a young person, we should work on making a change rather than just pointing out the mistakes. In a developing country like India, its more important the young people are aware of the world and have a global perspective towards the issues and concerns of our own country as well as the others. It made me clear about the objectives of this Programme and I enrolled in it.

When I, along with the other enrolled students, met the Commonwealth Youth Programme co-ordinators and Ms Cristal de Saldanha Stainbank (Senior Programme Officer, Pan-Commonwealth office), my questions were answered. Cristal cleared the doubts of enrolled students regarding the Modules, the tutoring and examinations. The examinations are flexible keeping an account of our work timings and our own University examinations. Dr. Reeta Sonawat, Programme co-ordinator,

SNDD Women's University explained the modules briefly and we had an interactive session with the tutors about the Course outline, the assignments and the tutorial sessions. The tutorials take place every Thursday and Friday and the tutors give us a holistic picture of the problems and issues of concern in different nations.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme has been a worthy investment for me as a student as it not only gives me a lot of knowledge but also an association with the Commonwealth and its values. The modules are very informative and each module quotes many examples from the entire world to help us understand it easily. While doing this course I don't feel like a student doing just another course. It makes me feel like the YOUTH of the COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME, as it makes me feel like a part of it.

Arundhati. P. Kane
CYP Diploma Student
S.N.D.T Women's University
Mumbai, India
May 2005

AFTER THE TSUNAMI— A PROGRESS REPORT

By Nishantha Mallawaarachchi for **MRHD**
Youth Development Professionals' initiative for Restoration
of Human Dignity.

I wanted to write a progress Report covering the first six months of the year 2005 to report on the current level of progress achieved in the Tsunami projects in Sri Lanka. These projects have had a special involvement of CYP students from the Open University in Sri Lanka. The projects are based in the Divisional Secretariat area of Periya Kallaru in Southern Batticaloa in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

Identification of needs at Ground Level CYP Special Project Committee's Special visit to Periyakallaru

The project team including the students of the CYP embarked on a special mission to Periyakallaru in the Batticaloa district from 20th to 21st January 2005. The purpose of this visit was to (a) explore the possibility of implementing a special social upliftment project in the area, (b) to strengthen the established contacts with Executive Committee Members of the Batticaloa District Undergraduate Association which has 125 members, (c) mobilizing their support in working together on common projects to strengthen a devastated community, and, (d) pave the way for normalcy in all aspects of life.

Our discussions with grass root activists of the Batticaloa District Undergraduate Asso-

ciation, (whom we consider as our local level partner to provide leadership through empowerment) had identified specific needs that the victims had such as (a) reproduction of notes for GCE Advanced Level students, (b) provision of educational material needs of Primary school children in preparing for their State Scholarship Examinations this year.

The Batticaloa District Undergraduate Association carried out these tasks under our guidance, collecting original notes to help approximately 60 children who are to sit for their Advanced Level and Ordinary Level examinations in 2005. There were also contributions made by colleagues from the Canadian community under the leadership of Ms. Lori Farr.

Specific Relief Needs Identified and carried out by CYP Special Project Team for Immediate and Long Term Assistance

- These included relief measures for education and extra curricular activities at the Periya Kallaru Central College, a state owned school as follows: The Reproduction of notes for Advanced Level students in all subject streams. The Provisions of educational gift pack-

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- ages including Colour pencils and pens, Toys and Story books to uplift children's minds and help them to regain normalcy.
- Obtaining a photocopying machine free of charge on leasing basis from a private company through the request of Facilitator/ Dr. Mahim Mendis. The Facilitator/ Advisor provided photocopy papers and other necessities from the Open University of Sri Lanka.
 - The Coordinator of the project Mr. Ranjith Kaluarachchi negotiated with a NGO named SAMADHANAM based in Kandy to tap financial aid to cover the expenses for Grade 5 Scholarship Books.
 - Mr. Ranjith Kaluarachchi was also able to arrange a vehicle free of charge to transport books and equipment, with the fuel bill being paid by support from the Canadian school donation.

Presentation at the CYP 2005/2006 Inauguration Session

The General Secretary of our organization made a special presentation on the activities at the CYP 2005/2006 Group Inauguration Session held at the Open University of Sri Lanka. The idea was to inspire the newly recruited learners of the CYP.

**COMMONWEALTH YOUTH
PROGRAMME UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUD-
IES THE OPEN
UNIVERSITY OF
SRI LANKA**
P.O. Box 21, Nawala, Nugegoda, Sri
Lanka
Telephone: 94-1-2853777, 2822712-16,
Ext: 221, 417
E-mail: mahim_hd@yahoo.com

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAM WORKSHOP ON CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING SKILLS BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS STYLE

We the students of the British Virgin Islands who are currently enrolled in the Commonwealth Diploma Programme in Youth in Development Work this week participated in a two-day workshop on Critical Thinking and Writing Skills.

Throughout the workshop

emphasis was placed on the importance of critical thinking and how essential it is to remain objective when analyzing any situation.

We focused on the use of Socratic questioning because it can be used as a tool to empower young people that they may come up with differ-

ent answers, and broader perspective and new solutions to the issues that confront them. By asking questions such as: What if? Why? What are the implications of? Is this necessary? Is this the only solution? These questions shed new light on various situations and force us

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to explore other options in order to satisfy our curiosity.

Another aspect covered in this workshop was writing styles. Two in particular which were given major concentration were the Toulmin style which consists of objections and rebuttals, and the Rogerian approach. Using the Rogerian approach is the most neutral way to handle things, it calls for one to accept both sides of the argument/ situation and come up with a solution to appease all sides and is especially helpful when preparing reports or when trying to negotiate between parties.

“This two day workshop helped me better understand what is expected and required of me throughout this course and the role I

must play as a Youth in Development Worker. Other Diploma students that attended also shared the same views and felt that the delivery of this workshop at this particular time was quite timely and most appreciated.”

Special thanks must be extended to our workshop facilitator, Mr. Dennis Gill, who effectively used the participative approach to make the discussions more meaningful. We also applaud the efforts of our Country Coordinator, Ms. Arlene Smith, for coordinating this workshop. The support of our local UWI Centre for Continuing Studies as well as the BVI Ministry of Education and Culture is also appreciated.



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

Editor:

Robyn Broadbent

Layout editor:

Perri Broadbent-Hogan

Address for Articles:

School of Education,
Victoria University,
PO Box 14428
Melbourne City Mail Centre, 8001,
Australia.

Robyn.Broadbent@vu.edu.au

Follow the three R's:

- Respect for self,
- Respect for other's and
- Responsibility for all your actions.

And
Watch out for the
slippery bits.

