

INTERCOM

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

Volume 2. Issue 3

June 2005

From the Editor

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

This edition has been a very busy one. Firstly we have taken some time to congratulate graduands from The Gambia and Sierra Leone. CYP are very proud of all our graduands and it is lovely to be able add to the voices of people from their own communities. This edition also has had a focus on Professionalism in Youth Work. Here in Victoria we have called this issue the old chestnut—in relation to a saying of how difficult a chestnut is to crack.

This is an important issue for all of us. Without clear professional guidelines that assists professional standing in a community our work continues to lack some value in the eyes of the community. In turn it is seen that many people can successfully work with young people regardless of their training and experience.

What I have seen, on too many occasions, are workers that are unsupervised, provided no training and lack

the important framework of practice that is essential to be a successful and effective youth work practitioner. This framework enables us as professionals to see how our work fits into a bigger picture of community development and empowering young people. We understand that the programmes that we are involved in become tools of the trade to connect disengaged young people into their community, facilitate their access to information and resources and more importantly provide them with the opportunity to interact with role models and community mentors.

For young people who are our present and our future it is essential that we encourage them to sit at the table where community decisions are made. This is not just about developing their skills for the future but to acknowledge the importance of having young people involved in decisions that affect them. What important and essential community builders we are! For this important work we must ensure that our professional standards are recognised so as to facilitate good workers and good practice in our very important work with young people.

Peace be with you and your families

Warmest Regards
Robyn Broadbent
CYP Newsletter Editor

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GAMBIA CYP GRADUATES

Landing B. Sanneh
Hudul E.N. Colley
Kassamanding Touray
Pierre Gomez
Abubakr S. Saidy
Mawdo Amadou Jallow
Suute M. Jawo
Adama Sabally
Omar Jammeh
Ousainou Sarr
Ousman Baldeh
Amadou Tamberdou
Pa Malick Ceesay
Mustapha Kebbeh
Dodou Mbye
Pierre M. Correa

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Quotable Quotes-

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere Martin Luther King

Interesting Facts—Barbados

CAPITAL: Bridgetown
POPULATION: Approximately 254,000

Until recently sugar and rum dominated the Barbados economy. Now it is tourism. Probably because of the weather—tropical with a rainy season.

Barbados has the third oldest parliament in the world with 358 years of an uninterrupted parliamentary system of government.

PROFESSIONALISATION OF YOUTH WORK IN VICTORIA

(Australia)

Excerpts from the discussion paper, "That old Chestnut" from the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria)

What is youth work? Is there a difference between a youth worker and a worker with young people? Is youth work recognised as a profession? Does youth work training and practice need to be improved and if so, how? How can the youth sector achieve greater recognition and improved workforce conditions?

Over the years there have been a variety of responses to these questions resulting in open-ended debates with no clear resolution. Although there may be a range of responses to these issues, it is fair to say that workers with young people in Victoria are seeking greater recognition for the role they play, further opportunities for professional development and a means to voice workforce issues. So how can these needs be met?

Is youth work a profession?

The debate around greater recognition of youth workers and the establishment of a professional association centres on the professionalisation of youth work. The Australian Council of Professions defines a profession as:

'A disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and uphold themselves to, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to exercise this knowledge and these skills in the interest of others'.

Youth work once exhibited the hallmarks of a profession. By the mid 1980s youth work in Victoria had developed many of the attributes of a profession: the establishment of the Youth Workers Association, a degree level qualification, and a Youth Work Award that recognised expertise were all indicative of the professionalisation of youth work.

However, commentators tend to agree that youth work does not currently have the status of a profession. As a result it's been argued that 'youth workers continue to be marginalised in professional teams, in professional consultations, or case management panels because their professional standing is not recognised by other professionals. Their knowledge and expertise is frequently dismissed, limiting their capacity to advocate effectively for their clients'.

Trust and ethical standards

According to the definition of a profession, professionals adhere to ethical standards. Is youth work in Victoria a profession given there is no agreed set of ethical or professional standards?

Over the years there have been calls for the introduction of a code of conduct or ethical standards in Victoria but no concrete plans to introduce one. A code of ethics has been described as 'a set of norms based on the belief systems or values of a group of people who agree to adhere to commonly held philosophical principles'. They provide guiding principles about practice. A code of ethics may also provide a degree of accountability. Bessant writes that:

While not suggesting that disciplinary procedures are a solution in themselves; a code offers an accountability mechanism for 'service users' and the public more generally, and it has, albeit a limited role, in preventing misconduct on the part of workers.

Bessant suggests that a code of ethics would have 'serious limitations unless accompanied by specific mechanisms to give it material effect. To be successful, codes need to be regulatory and enforceable by an organisation that adjudicates complaints of breaches of the

code. Without the backing of legislative mandating, and proper sanctions (including the power to strike off practitioners for misconduct), the effectiveness of a code of conduct can only be minimal'.

The key characteristics of a profession include:

- A degree of specialised body of knowledge and skills
- A period of intensive training or educational requirements
- Members adhering to a code of conduct
- Legal and or stated regulations for admission to practice
- A mechanism for investigating and sanctioning misconduct
- Continual renewal and educational updating
- A professional association which unifies the field.

The case for

Arguments for greater professionalism typically revolve around the need for greater recognition of the role of youth worker, improved youth work practice, enhanced working conditions and remuneration and more specialised training:

- Youth work requires specific knowledge and skill. Youth workers receive specific training and this should be recognised professionally and with respect to salaries.
- Young people deserve ethical and effective practice. Examples of unethical practice continue to filter through and must be addressed. There is currently no uniform process for dealing with poor practice or grievances.
- Youth workers should be committed to an ethical code of conduct and held accountable to this.

(Continued on page 7)

CYP in Botswana

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Africa Center has been supporting the delivery of Youth Development programmes in Botswana in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MLHA). The main programme is the Youth Work Education and Training Diploma implemented through the University of Botswana's Centre for Continuing Education in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MLHA). This has been in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University. The first cohort of students graduated in October 2004.

CYP diploma awards ceremony 16 students graduated with CYP diplomas in Youth work in a colorful ceremony presided over by the Director of Culture and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Mr. Gaogakwe Phorano.

Remarks were made by the University of Botswana, Centre for continuing education (CCE), the Course Coordinator CYP diploma programme, Dr. Adekamnbi, 2 graduands, the Director of Culture and Youth Affairs and CYP representative.

The two graduands, in particular, made remarks that were focused on the value of the Diploma certificate and the knowledge acquired from the 18-month course. The 2 graduands thanked CYP for financially and technically supporting the Diploma course, though it was a difficult 18 months balancing work, family and school demands, they felt that the course was both refreshing and rewarding.

My Impression of Youth Work Training and The CYP

Author: Rodgers Newa

Malawi's population has a large youth composition. It is estimated that about 64% are young population of below 25 years. This number is justification enough to consider a heavier investment in young people in the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of human development.

Youth policy has changed considerably in Malawi with the Government, like many Governments around the globe realizing the importance of investing in our young people. Probably the most important to mention is that young people are now active partners in the development of policy and are given the opportunity to participate in the formulation of policy on the issues that will 'eventually affect them. The language of youth participation has taken a lead on all issues that affect young people. A review of the new constitution has included a greater focus on human

rights as a part of the Government policy and practice of the new century.

There has been a review of a number of policies which has meant new policies in many areas. The Government developed a new youth policy in 1996. This policy aimed to focus on a number of challenges to problems affecting the young people in Malawi. The problems have been compounded in the past by the lack of qualified human resource capacity in both the public and the private sector which need to be addressed by the provision of training.

The acceptance of the Commonwealth Youth Programme by the Malawian Government and in turn offering the Diploma in Youth Work was an important component of the solution. This has provided many youth workers in

Malawi much needed training for their work. This has given an opportunity to youth workers in Malawi to improve their work practice as they have already started offering professional service to young people.

Previously, there were only about seven qualified (professional) youth workers in Malawi against the 64% youth population. This course is a valuable asset in providing a service to young people. Youth work in Malawi has become so complex as young people have changed. Therefore the training being offered has started to address some of the challenges being faced to assisting the young people to guide them in the best way possible.

(cont on pge. 5)

Professionalisation of Youth Work in the Caribbean

THE AIM OF PROFESSIONALISING YOUTH WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN

- Occupational Standards and Competencies for Youth Work in the Caribbean Region
- Consultation with the Public Service Commissions and Directors of Youth
- National plans of action for Youth Worker Occupational Category

BACKGROUND

Engaging with the Public Service

For the first time in 31 years, the CYP Caribbean initiated formal consultation with the Ministries of the Public Service. This was in order to assist in the establishment of the youth worker occupational category and the creation of pathways for professionalising youth work in the Caribbean region.

Impact of Social Problems on Youth

Research has shown that the majority of social problems afflicting the Caribbean region are disproportionately skewed towards young people, either as perpetrators or as victims. No other age group is more severely affected by crime and violence; drug abuse and trafficking of illicit substances; unemployment; HIV/AIDS; disempowerment and disenfranchisement than young women and men. Unemployment figures from the ILO shows that youth unemployment is, in some cases, double the national average in the Caribbean. All these socio-economic situations lead young people to desperate acts of an anti-social nature, threatening the safe and comfortable lives of society as a whole.

As a result of the social problems displayed by young people, governments have had to spend inordinate amounts of national resources on corrective interventions which could have been avoided, if adequate attention was paid to young people living fruitful, safe, productive and beneficial lives.

If we continue to ignore the problems of

youth or if we continue to employ the untrained and non-professional person to work as youth officers, we will only be compounding rather than addressing the problem. As a society, if we continue to preside over the destruction of our youth, we will be doing so at our own peril.

Professionalising Youth Work – Competencies and Standards

The CYP is of the view that increasingly, the youth worker is becoming more and more relevant in the national effort to engage our young people in activities, structures and institutions that draw on their innate, positive potential. No longer can we continue to treat the field of youth work as a non-technical area of work that is undertaken by anyone who is, or at one time was young, or by those who simply have a love for young people. Whilst these may be important components for a youth worker, it is hardly sufficient if youth work is to have any significant impact on the problems that our young people grapple with on a day to day basis, and which are at the bedrock of the destruction of our societies.

CYP's advocacy role therefore is to design approaches to seek the endorsement of respective governments to recognise youth work as a profession which requires key sets of competencies and to consider the occupational standards that will guide the profession.

Engagement with Ministries of the Public Service is absolutely critical as CYP recognises that government is the largest employer of youth workers. The PSC had to be engaged as the employer for acknowledging and distinguishing youth work as a discrete profession, and creating a path for the greater recognition of youth work with its specialised training, as we develop the human resources to provide professional

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One of the most important developments in the region is the advent of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, and particularly the proposal for the free movement of Caribbean professionals across a single economic space. Youth Workers will be at the forefront, and occupational standards for youth work will ensure that youth work training is standardised across the Commonwealth Caribbean and can serve as the platform upon which trained youth workers can travel the region in search of opportunities. CYP's vision is to have specialised training and occupational standards in youth work acquiesced by each member government, and that these competencies become the basis for employment into any youth work field across the region.

(Extract from opening speech from CYP Caribbean Regional Director, Mr Armstrong Alexis, 25th January 2005)



Beverly Sharon McKay CYP Caribbean

Beverley Sharon McKay demystifies writing the Learning Journal

With the guiding philosophies of “The largest room in the house is the room for improvement” and “the sky is the limit”, it is no wonder that Beverley Sharon McKay’s Learning Journal is being circulated for the second time.

Beverley a talented play writer and actress said, ***“I use this skill to construct and enhance my journal writing for this course. Journal writing has given me a feeling of deep involvement in the course and has made learning interesting. I feel a sense of satisfaction and I am humble that for the second time around my journal has been selected to be shared with the students of the programme.”***

“I use this skill to construct and enhance my journal writing for this course. Journal writing has given me a feeling of deep involvement in the course and has made learning interesting. I feel a sense of satisfaction and I am humble that for the second time around my journal has been selected to be shared with the students of the programme.”

This student, who is ever improving herself, is a student of the Diploma in Youth in Development Work, offered by the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre and the School of Continuing Studies, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica, which commenced in June 2004.

Ms. McKay, working out of the Cayman Islands for the past fifteen years, was recently promoted to senior residential care worker, Children and Youth Services Foundation (CAYS), with a clientele comprising of children with behavioural problems and those in need of care and protection. She has previously worked as residential care worker with the Department of Children and Family Services in Cayman. Beverley credits the course for helping her to develop professionally as a youth worker. She said ***“I find that I have used a lot of what I have learned on the programme in my working relationship with clients and co-workers.”***

In her ten years of experience working with children and young people, she has actively participated in the planning and implementation of youth summer camps and activity programmes for young people. She is also involved in the youth ministry of her local church and community youth groups.

“I have a genuine interest and an undying passion for working with children and young people” she says. This just may be the driving force behind Beverley’s continued success and promotion.

The mother of three girls, Beverley, is a Jamaican by birth. She hails from the parish of Manchester and is a graduate of Knox College in the parish of Clarendon.

IMPRESSIONS OF CYP (CONT from page 3)

As a former graduate of the programme and someone from outside the public service, I have personally benefited from the course as I have experienced a better way of organizing the young people. This is especially on issues of developing policy and advocacating for young people on the services needed from the Government. More importantly, the context of the materials being offered are very relevant to the situation of the young people in Malawi .

Lastly, let me personally take this opportunity to thank the CYP that through the programme. I am transformed to a professional youth resource bank and would very much like to be offered a scholarship for a Degree Award should the opportunity be there as there are less than THREE professionals at the Degree level award in the whole of Malawi.

CYP CONGRATULATES Sierra Leone Graduates

Allieu, Philip	Samura, Bockarie	Conteh, Satta
Bangura, Amadu Alhusain	Yambasu, Davi	Ellie, Jonathan
Bangura, Christopher C.	Kamara, Janet	Gbla, Sheku
Bangura, Josephine	Kamara, Lansana S.	Maheyne, Philip
Conteh Paul	Kamara, Richard	Morsay, Maybelle E.
Maheyne, Philip	Conteh, Paul	Samura, Bockarie
Morsay, Maybelle E.	Yambasu, Davi	

Ruth Kawale-Magela Director of Programmes Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA) COUNTRY Malawi

My general perception about Youth Work Training and the Diploma Course is that it is very relevant to working with young people in their communities. The Modules designed for the Programme are very good and strategically developed. For instance, in my daily work as Director of Programmes for Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA), a voluntary organisation for girls and young women, I keep referring to the contents of the Modules.

Using the skills that I acquired during the Course, I was able to design a project for the Association which got funded by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Following this project, several other small projects have been designed and funded by different donors.

The Course equipped me with skills in the following areas: General Management, Conflict Resolution, Project Management, Advocacy and Social Mobilisation, Research and Data Collection, Management of NGOs etc which has enabled me to effectively and efficiently discharge my duties.

My current job has enabled me to work with young people and it is my desire to continue serving this age group, as I know by so doing, I will positively contribute to the future development of this country as well as the whole world.

My husband is pursuing a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) and I see him referring to the CYP Modules every now and then. This shows how relevant the Modules are to today's life. I would however wish if another Module could be developed on Management Information Systems and Data Analysis for young people to have skills on data processing and computer programming since many Youth NGOs are being established that need people with general I.T. skills for easy running.

Having passed the Diploma with a Distinction, I only wish if, and it has ALWAYS been my dream that, I be considered for either a Degree or a Masters Degree in Youth Development Studies, as I already have a First Degree, in order for me to have my career advanced and my ambitions fulfilled.

I realise that Young People are future leaders and investing in them means investing in the future development

Professionalisation of Youth Work in Victoria, (Cont. from page 2)

- A professional body may have considerable political clout. This could have implications for improved wages and conditions and the quality of youth work education.
- A professional association can help determine issues such as student staff ratios and training curriculum in educational institutions. Political clout – improved wages and conditions, quality of youth work education

What is a professional association?

A typical characteristic of a profession is the existence of a professional body that represents the in-

terests of members. All professional associations have specific aims related to the profession. However, in general professional associations aim to:

- Promote and build on the professional status of its members and recognise the expertise and proficiency of those it represents.
- Work closely with training bodies and tertiary institutions to ensure that qualifications provide the skills needed in the industry.
- Provide a forum for networking between workers and the exchange of information and

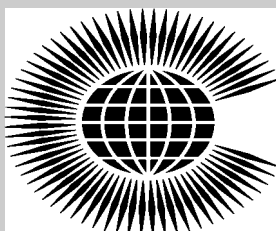
ideas.

- Develop models of best practice.
- Advocate on industrial issues such as pay.
- Be a voice in the media about worker issues.
- Provide professional development opportunities.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, this paper has been written to provide an overview of the key issues and to inform the development of the current discussion. Any impetus to establish a professional association for youth workers must now come from the youth sector.

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



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Have Courage

