



Embracing Commonwealth Values in Youth Development

Introducing Commonwealth Values

Course Summary

The principles that Commonwealth governments have proclaimed that they stand for – those contained in the Singapore and Harare Declarations and discussed throughout the course – are powerful values. They reflect some of the deepest aspirations of individuals and communities – to be treated as equals, with their human rights and their differences respected, to be empowered to participate in decisions that affect their lives, to be able to pursue their own path to development in a peaceful environment.

To say that these are Commonwealth values does not mean that each Commonwealth government automatically fully reflects these ideals in everything they do. It means that these ideals are the aspects of the Commonwealth's history that are most worth celebrating and renewing. Part of that renewal process is through the work of the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Commonwealth Secretariat, working with young people and their governments, to achieve these goals through Youth Development Work.

If you recall, this course on Commonwealth Values had three goals. The first was to introduce you to a set of values that have come to underpin the Commonwealth – human rights, equity, democracy, pluralism, citizenship, participation and empowerment. You should now have a good sense of what these terms mean in general, as well as what they mean in the context of youth in development work.

The second was to introduce you to the Commonwealth as an international organisation, how it evolved, how it is structured, and what it is trying to achieve. You should now have a sense not just of Commonwealth values, but also of the value of the Commonwealth itself.

As a voluntary association of sovereign, independent states, it is unique in its ability to bring together such a diverse range of peoples committed to dialogue and consensus building, where developing and developed country governments sit as equals around the table.

It is hoped that you now will be able to understand and appreciate these values, and importantly, to have some idea of how to pass your own understanding and appreciation on to the young people with whom you may be working.

The third goal was to introduce you to the CYP Diploma program. The Diploma in Youth Development Work is designed to provide youth workers with an underpinning knowledge on which to base their work with young people; an understanding of the values and ethics of the profession, grounded in the values and principles of the Commonwealth; and the practical skills to undertake the work. More information can be found on the [Commonwealth website](#).

Course Learning Outcomes

Now that you have completed this course, you should be able to:

- describe the origins of the Commonwealth, and key events in its history since formation
- demonstrate a clear understanding of Commonwealth values and principles, and how they are put into practice
- explain elements of democratic theory and human rights philosophy and practice, and identify the mechanisms through which different rights are protected in democratic systems
- apply these principles in your work with young women and men
- explain the value of the diverse cultures and traditions embraced by the Commonwealth

- o participate in activities or programmes to help young people understand the principles that underpin Commonwealth values
- o operate different styles of democratic and participatory decision-making, in particular consensual styles.

In addition to the learning outcomes that were described in the course overview, some additional outcomes were identified – those we described as changes in attitude. To review these now, we hope that at the end of this course you will:

- o feel positively about cultural diversity and see diversity as something to be celebrated rather than ignored or feared
- o accept that your perspectives need not always be the 'correct' ones
- o have an attitude of openness: to search for ways and means to promote and cross-fertilise the values you see among different individuals and sub-groups
- o be honest with yourself, and will work to ensure that there is no gap between what you preach and what you practice.

We wish you every success in your work and future endeavors.



Reflection

Think for a few moments about these outcomes. These changes in attitude may be hard to measure, but try to identify them. Has this course helped you clarify your own values? Have you experienced some positive changes in your attitudes to the various issues covered in this course? And above all, how will these changes affect the way you behave in certain situations now and in the future?



Reflection Activity for Certificate Students

eJournal Reflection Activity - Summary (about 20 minutes)

Log in to the [Mahara ePortfolio Website](#). Make a note of your observations in your learning journal. Title the entry, "Reflection Activity - Summary".

If you need help posting your reflection, please refer to the [Mahara Learning Journal Guide](#).

Final Quiz

1. Human rights, democratic principles, consultation, cooperation, and consensus-building are fundamental political values of the Commonwealth.
 - True
 - False
2. Citizenship, human rights, participation, democracy, empowerment, robust pluralism and equity are key Commonwealth values and principles.
 - True
 - False
3. Which facility is often upheld as the Commonwealth's greatest contribution to world affairs?
 - The ability to maintain friendly relations while "agreeing to disagree" is crucial for securing international peace
 - Economic co-operation
 - Achieving of consensus on political issues
4. Why are human rights necessary? Select all that apply.
 - because they give us a moral vision of human nature and human dignity
 - because they give us a political vision or an agenda for change
 - because we need human rights for protection when our legal rights are violated by the state, and to encourage justice

and fairness within our societies

all of the above

5. Human rights can be protected by: (select all that apply)

raising both national and international awareness of human rights violations

human rights conventions

regional governmental organizations

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

all of the above

6. Youth development work is a process of:

increasing the participation of young people in national development and decision-making

increasing the participation of young people in games and social activities

7. Youth development work aims to:

empower youth

keep youth entertained

8. Empowerment is about: (select all that apply)

helping to increase the skills and capacity of individuals

helping people to become more self-confident

helping groups to work together

helping to create a more equitable division of resources and decision-making

all of the above

9. Which styles of democratic decision-making requires the greatest participation, and the one that most promotes empowerment.

majority vote

consensus

proportional outcomes

10. As citizens, you have the power to stop discrimination, to eliminate oppression, and to bring an end to ignorance and indifference. You can choose to help end human rights violations, or you can choose to ignore them. Where do Universal rights begin?

at home

with each individual person

at school or college

in every factory, farm or office

in neighborhoods, communities and countries

all of the above

Further Reading

Ahmed An-Na'im, A. A. and Deng, F. M. (1990) (eds.) *Human Rights in Africa: Cross Cultural Perspectives*, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC.

Anyaoku, E. (1998) 'Democracy in Africa: the Challenges and the Opportunities', address by HE the Commonwealth Secretary-General to the South African Parliament, Cape Town, 1 June 1998. Available from the Documents section of the Commonwealth Secretariat website at www.thecommonwealth.org (accessed 26/02/07).

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- Shepherd Jr., G. W. and Anikpo, M. O. C. (1990) (eds.) *Emerging Human Rights: The African Political Economy Context*, Greenwood Press, New York.
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Conventions:

- o Slavery Convention, 1927
- o Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1951
- o Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967
- o International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969
- o International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1976
- o International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, 1985
- o Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1987

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