



Establishing and Supporting National Youth Work Associations

In partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Work Associations (CAYWA) is committed to supporting emerging and existing national youth work associations through capacity grant projects, mentoring and training.

About CAYWA

Formally launched at the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Kampala, Uganda in 2017, CAYWA is an alliance of national youth worker associations, acting as the collective voice of youth work professionals across the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth. Its mission is to raise the standard and status of youth work by connecting, strengthening, and championing the professionalisation of youth work across the Commonwealth and beyond.

CAYWA is a not-for-profit organisation with 27 member associations that are at various stages of development. Its member associations are drawn from all five regions of the Commonwealth:

- 12 in Africa
- three in Europe
- five in Asia
- five in the Caribbean and Americas
- two in the Pacific.

These associations currently represent more than 3,000 youth workers, from academics to grassroots youth work practitioners, across the Commonwealth.

Furthermore, CAYWA is in the process of establishing 10 new associations in member countries that are yet to establish national youth work associations.



Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations

CAYWA is run by a 11-member CAYWA board with the support of a co-ordinator. The board meets regularly to discuss matters of progress, expansion, capacity building and professionalisation.

What is CAYWA's focus?

CAYWA was set up to act as the collective voice of youth workers in the Commonwealth, bringing them together through the establishment of national associations dedicated to the professionalisation of youth work. In a joint communiqué, Commonwealth ministers and senior government representatives commended the role and work of CAYWA.

The key objectives of CAYWA are to:

- promote the standard of practice and status of youth workers in the Commonwealth
- support youth worker associations in the Commonwealth
- promote the professionalisation of youth workers in the Commonwealth

- encourage education and research in youth work in the Commonwealth
- build strong partnerships with stakeholders in the youth work ecosystem across the globe.

Supporting member countries and governments

At the global level, CAYWA's key programme and activities include support for various national youth worker associations to strengthening, build capacity and professionalise the youth work space. CAYWA support member associations through capacity grant projects, mentoring and training.

In addition, CAYWA supports and leads the Annual Youth Work Week every November, as well as the Commonwealth Youth Work Conference held every two years. CAYWA encourages collaborations and exchange programmes and, to further build capacity and share best practice among member associations, CAYWA will soon launch the CAYWA Youth Work Labs.

CAYWA works closely with various stakeholders in the youth work space across the Commonwealth, including the National Youth Councils and the Commonwealth Youth Council. It also works with the African Union, European Union and the Caribbean region to promote youth work and its practitioners.

Achievements

Below are some of CAYWA's key impacts and achievements since its launch in 2017.

- CAYWA is striving to be a unifying and collective voice for youth workers in the Commonwealth.
- CAYWA has researched and developed a 'Global Definitions of Youth Work' document.
- CAYWA holds regular events with members.
- CAYWA has partnered with the leadership programme run by Commutiny in India 'Ocean in a Drop', a youth work training programme for youth workers.
- Forming a global network that shares resources such as in-country research, codes of practice, governance mechanisms and youth work practice examples.
- Building the capacity of youth workers to organise and professionalise.
- Provided five capacity grants that ensured the formal establishment of five new associations in 2021/2022.
- CAYWA has endorsed a *Commonwealth Code of Ethical Practice for Youth Workers*, and supports youth worker associations in all Commonwealth countries to engage with it as an ethical framework.

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Delivering Qualifications in Youth Work

The Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work (CHEC4YW) and the Commonwealth Secretariat is offering higher education institutions (HEIs) the opportunity to develop and deliver certifications, degrees, bachelor's and master's qualifications and expand career pathways in youth work.

About the Consortium

CHEC4YW is led by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning and the University of the West Indies. The Consortium was officially launched at the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting held in Kampala, Uganda in 2017.

The Consortium supports the education and training of youth workers through a bachelor's degree programme.



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What is CHEC4YW's focus?

Building on the success of the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Work, CHEC4YW aims to meet the demand for higher level qualifications and expanded career pathways in youth work.

This Consortium comprises higher education institutions across the Commonwealth that offer youth work education and training programs. It aims to promote the professionalisation of youth work by fostering collaboration, curriculum development and research.

Support for member countries and governments

The Consortium can offer member countries the Commonwealth Bachelor's Degree Programme in Youth Work, which is:

- available as an open educational resource
- offered by HEIs
- delivered through open and distance learning and blended learning
- offered at minimal cost to students
- aims to support students to become competent, professional youth workers
- links theory and praxis.

The Consortium supports participating HEIs to deliver cutting-edge youth work learning programmes through:

- needs analysis to create targeted training opportunities
- online and/or face-to-face training and capacity building workshops
- designing and delivering practice-based youth work curricula
- sharing good practice across all partners and institutions
- assistance with quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation
- partnerships and a community of practice for lecturers, practitioners and policy-makers.

Achievements

To date the Consortium has:

- engaged 15 HEIs, across 12 countries, to become part of the Consortium and sign letters of understanding
- provided technical expertise from lead partners in setting up and running the course, as well as a platform for member institutions to share their own knowledge and experience in delivering the programme, sharing best practice and lessons learned
- provided access to a full suite of modules that will enable the establishment of a bachelor's degree in youth development work, with minimal upfront development costs required to adapt modules and materials for local contexts
- created a wider network and support system while raising the profile of the course and institution in this pan-Commonwealth initiative
- provided opportunities for undertaking the joint delivery of courses across institutions, and contributed to programme, staff and student mobility which could enhance the employability aspects of the course
- held nine national and regional workshops across Commonwealth since 2018 to provide guidance and build the capacity of participants and their institutions.

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Delivering Youth Leadership Skills Training, through Non-Formal Education and Learning

The Commonwealth Alliance for Quality Youth Leadership (CAQYL), co-ordinated by the Commonwealth Secretariat, is committed to delivering skills training for young people through non-formal education and learning approaches.

About the Alliance

The Commonwealth Secretariat has joined forces with globally recognised youth organisations, including the global youth leadership organisation Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales, the Volunteer Service Overseas International, Rotary International, the Indian youth organisation Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, and the 'Big Six' – an alliance of leading international youth-serving bodies. The Big Six include the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, World Young Women's Christian Association, World Organization of the Scout Movement, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations.

What is the Alliance's focus?

Backed by compelling research, non-formal education – defined as structured programmes outside the formal education curriculum, designed to improve a range of skills and competencies – has become more popular in recent decades.

There is growing recognition of the importance of organisations and clubs focused on areas such as personal development, leadership, confidence-building, sports, drama and music.

At their 2022 meeting, Commonwealth Education Ministers acknowledged the contribution of non-formal education and learning to supporting young people and building their resilience.

This sparked the idea of a Commonwealth partnership with existing youth-serving organisations to promote and expand non-formal education and youth leadership in the Commonwealth's 56 member countries.

This led to the birth of CAQYL, which has the following core objectives.

- Accelerating youth leadership skills training, using non-formal education and learning approaches, to reach over 100 million young people by 2030.
- Harnessing the vast potential and contribution of young people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Developing the wider 'soft' or 'core' skills – such as resilience, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, decision-making and communication – that can help young people to ensure they are ready for the world of work post COVID-19.

Support for member countries and governments

CAQYL can support member countries to do the following.

- Promote and maintain an approach of volunteerism within all areas of co-operation and engagement that allows recipients of programmes, projects, and specific activities to join and depart of their own free will.
- Develop and support an experiential learning approach across projects and programmes that provide practical experiences to young people as defined by their needs.
- Promote youth volunteerism to advance practical learning and their contribution to development by enhancing, inclusion, ownership, innovation and participation.

- Support progressive programmes that ensure a flexible environment that facilitates growth and monitors young people's progress.

Support the establishment of frameworks and processes that encourage the exploration of thought and the exchange of ideas and learned experiences among young people.

Support opportunities to establish a partnership between young people and adults based on intergenerational dialogue and mutual respect to learn from one another.

Support the development of youth leadership and life skills training as part of programmes to enable and develop leadership skills.

Undertake and promote areas of work that reflect the values of all organisations to give young people an opportunity to discover, analyse and understand values and their implications, and to build a personal set of values that will guide their lives.

Strengthen non-formal education and learning approaches and programmes aligned with Commonwealth values and objectives, the Global Education Charter, and livelihoods, education and health programme strategies.

Work towards improving the monitoring and evaluation of non-formal education and learning approaches.

Achievements

The CAQYL partnership was formalised with a memorandum of understanding signed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda in 2022, which includes commitments to:

- work together to promote volunteerism
- offer young people the practical experiences needed to compete in the labour market
- create an environment in which collaboration and innovation can thrive
- support the development of leadership and useful life skills.

Organisations within the Alliance already work with over 250 million young people, and have contributed to the empowerment of more than one billion over the last century.

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Empowering the Voice of Commonwealth Youth

The Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) is dedicated to advocating for the empowerment and active participation of young people in the Commonwealth throughout all decision-making processes.

About the CYC

The CYC was first established in 2013 with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Youth Programme. It was endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their biennial summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka as an 'autonomous, youth-led organisation'.

The CYC serves as the official representative voice of more than 1.2 billion young people in the diverse and extensive networks of the Commonwealth. It is a youth-led organisation that bring together national and regional youth councils within the 56 Commonwealth member countries.

The vision of the Council is 'empowered and engaged young people, working for a better world'. Its mission is, 'Empowering and engaging young people in sustainable development, democracy and the values of the Commonwealth'.

What is the CYC's focus?

- To contribute to the achievement of the Commonwealth's objectives by promoting mutual collaboration among young people,



and working in partnership with state and non-state actors to empower the young people of the Commonwealth.

- To act as a global platform that mainstreams young people into the work of the Commonwealth at all levels; to be a centre for mobilising, harmonising, formalising, recognising, legitimising, utilising and prioritising the voices and actions of young people in the advancement of youth; and to be a unified voice for youth in the Commonwealth.
- To advocate for the inclusion of young people in delegations to international functions and as members of, in particular, Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings, Commonwealth Heads of Governments meetings and United Nations meetings.
- To be a centre for information on youth work and development, and accordingly to collect, monitor, analyse and disseminate information including the exchange of experiences and best practices in youth-led development.
- To partner with the Commonwealth Secretariat and other Commonwealth organisations with a focus on youth development, to ensure a relevant, impactful and unified youth development agenda across the Commonwealth.

Support for member countries and governments

The CYC can support member countries in the following ways.

- By serving as the official representative voice of young people in the diverse and extensive network of the Commonwealth. This formal recognition provides the council with a unique platform to advocate for youth rights, interests, and development on the international stage.
- By serving as the bridge between young people and policymakers. Through forums, consultations and advocacy campaigns, the council facilitates meaningful dialogue and engagement between youth representatives and decision-makers, ensuring that youth perspectives are considered in policy formulation and implementation.
- By co-ordinating youth-led policy recommendations it has the potential to impact policies at both national and international levels. Its involvement in Commonwealth Youth Forums and other high-level meetings allows it to influence in the agendas and discussions of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and other key platforms.
- By aligning its initiatives and programs with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting the CYC's commitment to addressing pressing global challenges such as poverty, education, gender equality, climate action, and more.
- Through leading capacity building, leadership development and skill enhancement for young people through workshops, training programs and initiatives, the council equips youth with the skills needed to become effective advocates, leaders and change-makers.

- By showcasing the achievements and contributions of young leaders within the Commonwealth, it inspires others to engage in similar efforts and create meaningful impact within their communities.

Achievements

Increased youth participation: The CYC's advocacy and initiatives have increased the participation of young people in decision-making processes at both national and international levels.

Policy influence: The CYC convened the successful Commonwealth Youth Forums, and other advocacy initiatives across the Commonwealth related to education, health, employment and other issues.

Youth-led projects and impact: The CYC's support for youth-led projects and initiatives has had tangible impacts in areas such as environmental sustainability, entrepreneurship and social inclusion, creating positive change and benefitting local communities.

Capacity building and leadership development: The CYC's capacity-building programs and leadership development initiatives have equipped young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to become effective advocates and leaders.

Networking and collaboration: The CYC's role has facilitated networking and collaboration among youth leaders, resulting in the exchange of ideas, sharing of best practices and joint initiatives that amplify the impact of youth-led efforts.

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Supporting Academics, Educators and Researchers in Youth and Community Work

The Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work (PALYCW) and the Commonwealth Secretariat have partnered to deliver quality training that is relevant to national contexts, and that enables higher education institutions (HEIs) across the Commonwealth to enhance the capacity of youth development practitioners. PALYCW is now extending membership to Commonwealth member countries.

About PALYCW

PALYCW is a member organisation that represents the interests of academics, educators and researchers in the field of youth and community work. The Association supports and represents more than 250 educators at over 50 institutions and agencies in the UK. PALYCW seeks to promote an informed understanding of youth and community work in the UK, and across the globe, by connecting its membership through conferences, events and sector activity.

The Association has its roots in the emergence of youth and community work as a distinct profession across the four nations of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Association plays a key role in supporting the teaching of professionally qualifying awards in youth and community work. It also welcomes interest in the Association from academics, educators and researchers working in the field of youth and community work across the UK. Its membership reflects the diversity of people engaged in the disciplines of youth work and community development.



What is PALYCW's focus?

The key aim of PALYCW is to promote research, education and training in youth and community work in higher education for the public benefit, and more specifically to:

- draw on and extend current thinking and practice in relation to the development of knowledge, understanding, skills, abilities and personal values in, and commitment to, youth and community work
- improve the quality of professional youth and community work education and training

- support the development of youth workers to enable them to provide quality youth and community work to young people and communities
- facilitate and support the education, development and flourishing of young people and communities in the area of benefit.

Support for member countries and governments

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a long history of promoting youth work and youth work training. This collaboration allows both the Secretariat and PALYCW to deliver training that enables HEIs across the Commonwealth to work to enhance the capacity of youth development practitioners. PALYCW recognises the value of youth work in the lives of young people, and wishes to raise the profile of this work across the Commonwealth.

The Secretariat has partnered with PALYCW to support member countries to professionalise youth work, through capacity-building in HEIs, especially open universities, to deliver high quality diplomas and youth work degrees that are relevant to national contexts. PALYCW is now extending membership to, academics, educators and researchers in Commonwealth member countries, who can now join.

Achievements

PALYCW's accomplishments so far include the following.

- **Enhancing professional identity:** Collaborated with colleagues in the sector to renew validation processes for professional courses, ensuring that they were sustainable and fit for purpose in a contemporary context.

- **Strengthening shared integrity:** Worked with sector bodies to ensure a clear articulation of youth and community work practice, informed by shared principles, values and ethics. PALYCW has supported sector agencies to raise the profile of their work, and developed a statement on Association ethics.
- **Recognising innovation in emergent and established practice:** Supported its local member institutions to partner with local youth and community work agencies to explore issues in a series of 'policy and practice seminars'. More than 700 participants engaged in knowledge exchange seminars across nine regional venues in 2018.
- **Extending impact, influence and interconnections:** Engaged widely by hosting conferences, forging new partnerships and contributing to the growing awareness of the distinctive contribution of youth and community work within contemporary society. PALYCW has expanded its national conference presence, its contributions to consultations, its international profile and its policy influence – exemplified by its presentation to the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs in July 2018, a contribution highlighted in its final report in 2019.

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Delivering Skills Training and Capacity Building in Youth Work

The National Youth Agency (NYA) and the Commonwealth Secretariat are supporting member countries to train youth workers and stakeholders, to review and set occupational standards, and to offer accreditation for professional development.

About NYA

The NYA is the professional statutory regulatory body for youth work in England, setting occupational standards as well as supporting the sector to build its skills and capacity to enable more young people to access the personal, social and emotional development opportunities provided by youth work.



National Youth Agency

The NYA has worked collaboratively with partners around the globe to shape an inclusive and inspiring platform to celebrate and strengthen the collective impact of Commonwealth youth work and youth workers.

What is NYA's focus?

- **Championing youth work:** Showcasing great practice, incubating new approaches, celebrating its many thousands of practitioners and gaining greater understanding of the value and depth of the discipline among policymakers, educators and employers.

- **Professionalising youth work:** Training youth workers, setting occupational standards, offering accreditation for professional development, and constantly researching, innovating and improving the methodologies and practice of youth work.
- **Enabling youth work:** 'Making it happen' through its networks of frontline youth work providers, its deep experience of managing complex projects, and innovative tie-ups and funding arrangements with imaginative commercial and public sector partners.

Support for member countries and governments

The NYA, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, hope to support member countries and governments to:

- increase the recognition, value and understanding of the youth work profession, including promoting youth work as both a career and a methodology
- develop and support sector innovations in youth work and sharing best practice
- develop infrastructure to support growth and standards
- improve policy, practice and advocacy
- conduct research
- set national occupational standards and quality standards

- offer accreditation for professional development
- convene and work in partnership with the youth sector
- develop and implement safeguarding and practice standards.

Achievements

Supported the youth sector during the COVID-19 pandemic and provided guidance on how to deliver youth work safely during the lockdowns.

Hosted the fourth Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work over three days which was, for the first time, available to attend online as well as in person.

Launched a new level 4 qualification which enables those working in youth work to develop their specialist management and leadership skills, as well as deepen their knowledge in areas such as gender identity and digital youth work.

Provided a range of valuable continuing professional development and free webinars to equip youth workers with the skills and confidence to deliver optimum youth work, such as the recently launched Cost of Living Toolkit.

Produced the *Better Together: Youth Work with Schools* report, which found that youth work with schools significantly improves engagement with learning and attendance, and boosts young people's mental wellbeing and wellbeing. The report included policy recommendations for national and local government, Ofsted, school leaders and the youth sector.

Designed safeguarding standards and practice standards to support the youth work sector with best practice safeguarding and youth work delivery.

Resources

- The National Youth Work Curriculum enables a greater understanding of youth work practice, providing an educational framework and acting as a reference tool to be used by decisionmakers, policymakers, commissioners, youth workers and young people.
- Youth Work One is a dedicated, online, free-to-use marketplace portal to support practitioners, trustees, funders and supporters of youth services to find and share all the information and support they need in one place.
- The NYA Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub is a freely accessible online resource providing guidance, support, advice and access to training resources in relation to safeguarding and risk-management for organisations and individuals working with young people. The Hub provides a comprehensive risk-management framework that can be applied to the diverse activities across the youth sector, and is intended to be a 'go-to' place with content drafted and maintained by safeguarding and risk experts.

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Professionalising and Building a Resilient Youth Work Sector in the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) enables and empowers young people in the Commonwealth to realise their potential by transforming and improving the quality of their lives and working to promote peace, democracy, equality, equity, respect and good governance – and doing so in a way that ensures they are as recognised and valued as partners in their societies.

About CYP

The Commonwealth's 56 member countries have a combined population of 2.5 billion people, of which more than 60 per cent are under 30 years of age.

The Commonwealth sees young people (aged 15 to 29) as assets to their countries' development who should be empowered to realise their potential. Young people have a proven capability to lead change, and are a vital and valuable investment both for now and for the future. The CYP has been supporting Commonwealth member countries with youth development work for 50 years.

What is the CYP's focus?

- To promote and facilitate the active, meaningful and inclusive participation of young people in decision-making processes at various levels of governance, thereby enhancing their representation and influence in national development processes.
- To facilitate the formulation and implementation of evidence-based policies and legislation through youth mainstreaming that empowers youth

led and youth serving organisations to actively contribute to their nations' sustainable, fairer, peaceful and prosperous development.

- To foster cross-border collaboration and knowledge exchange among governments aiming to create an environment conducive to holistic and positive youth development.
- To actively advance the professionalisation of youth work and non-formal education and learning, thereby elevating their standards, effectiveness and impact.
- To promote equitable access to education, digital literacy, skill building, apprenticeships, vocational training and the entrepreneurial development of young people, preparing them for the evolving demands of the global economy.
- To give recognition to the contribution made by young people to the economic, social, political and cultural development of their societies.
- To support innovative initiatives that address emerging challenges faced by young people such as climate change, mental health, social inclusion,

peace-building and digital literacy with the goal of nurturing resilient citizens and enhancing their contributions to society.

Supporting member countries and governments

The CYP promotes the professionalisation of youth work by facilitating youth work education and training, setting competency standards, celebrating good practice and advocating for national and international youth worker associations. As youth workers are instrumental to the positive development of young people, the CYP provides technical assistance for national and regional youth policies and creates youth development frameworks, guidelines and tools.

The CYP continues to support the professionalisation of youth work by supporting youth work education and training and setting competency standard and celebrating good practice through strategic partnerships.

The Programme offers:

- capacity-building and thought leadership, including through both formal and non-formal education and training sessions, courses and programmes, and the development of educational, training, research and other materials and resources
- policy development and advocacy
- technical assistance and advisory services
- promotion of youth-led initiatives, including through grants, awards and other types of support.

Achievements

The CYP has supported Commonwealth Member countries to **professionalise youth work** by:

- developing the first **Global Youth Development Index**, launched in 2013
- developing and implementing youth work qualifications and training, including a **bachelor's degree and diploma in youth development work** for member countries
- establishing the **Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Work Associations** in 2017
- establishing the **Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work**

- developing, designing and delivering **four Commonwealth Youth Work Conferences**
- developing the **Competency Standards for Youth Work**
- building the capacity of **national youth worker bodies**
- establishing the **Commonwealth Alliance for Quality Youth Leadership**
- supporting the annual **Commonwealth Youth Work Week** for the advocacy of youth work.

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