

COMMONWEALTH

YOUTH AWARDS

2023 SHORTLIST



The Commonwealth
Youth Programme

This edition of the Youth Awards pays homage to the Commonwealth Heads of Government declaring 2023 as the 'Year of Youth' and a year to celebrate and promote youth-led action for sustainable and peaceful development.

To observe the Year of Youth and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, we are pleased to recognise the outstanding work of 50 young people in this special edition of the Youth Awards!



COMMONWEALTH YOUTH AWARDS

The Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work aim to recognise the contribution young people aged 15–29 make towards promoting and enhancing democracy and achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It raises the profile of committed and innovative Commonwealth youth who are working hard to address pressing issues such as poverty and conflict.

The Commonwealth believes that this work should not go unnoticed, and our Youth Awards give international, regional and national recognition and support to men and women who are shining examples of young people's capacity and potential to make positive contributions to their communities, nations and the world at large.

The Awards show that our youth are not passive beneficiaries or spectators of the policies and programmes that drive development. Rather, they are actively involved in catalysing and implementing change, and are integral to the decision-making process that will lead to a more innovative and interconnected future.



Specific objectives of the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Awards

- Highlight the outstanding contributions young people are making to achieving the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals;
- Create an environment which will encourage and sustain investments in youth led development;
- Illustrate the breadth of talent and creativity of young people across the Commonwealth by highlighting nominees' success stories;
- Motivate and encourage young people to set high standards for their work at community, national, regional or international levels;
- In collaboration with the Queen's Commonwealth Trust (QCT), give special recognition to outstanding young social entrepreneurs.

AWARD SHORTLIST

AFRICA

Anaporka Adazabra

Country: **Ghana**

Area of Work: **SDG 1 – No Poverty**

Anaporka Adazabra is the founder of FarmIO, an agritech company driving accessibility and inclusivity of the best technologies across African food value chains, serving as a one-stop shop to smallholder farmers. FarmIO aims to make sustainable technologies available, accessible and affordable for as many African farmers as possible, using these technologies to drive efficient management of natural resources and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.



Babatunde Bale

Country: **Nigeria**

Area of Work: **SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being**

Babatunde Bale has over four years of volunteer and leadership experience in community eye health interventions in Nigeria. He is the co-founder of the R.E.T.I.N.A Initiative, a non-profit organisation that helps vulnerable populations overcome preventable blindness through community-based interventions, sustainable eye care innovations, awareness programmes, and advocacy campaigns. Their programmes have benefited over 4,600 people, improving their quality of life.



Haja Isatu Bah

Country: **Sierra Leone**

Area of Work: **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production**

Haja Isatu Bah is a Sierra Leonean feminist, environmentalist, and entrepreneur with a BA in Environmental Studies from Skidmore College, New York. She founded Uman4Uman in 2019, a social enterprise that produces and sells reusable sanitary pads for girls and women. Uman4Uman is focused on the creation of reusable, affordable, and accessible sanitary products, providing a cheaper, eco-friendlier, more comfortable, and healthier option to the market. Since its inception, Uman4Uman has assisted 5000+ girls and woman and the initiative has a functioning menstrual hygiene club with over 100 members. Haja is also a two-time TEDx speaker on TEDx Mayor, Freetown, and TEDx WallaceJohnsonStreet.



Joseph Chimatata

Country: **Malawi**

Area of Work: **SDG 1 – No Poverty**

Joseph Chimatata is a self-starter who believes in collective effort to create a positive change. He started Growth Pillar, a social enterprise with the aim of supporting families, small scale businesses, and local organisations to successfully plan and deliver growth and sustainability strategies. Growth Pillar has supported 1606 small-holder farmers (887 youths and 719 women) to commercialize agriculture.



Mawuse Christina Gyisun

Country: **Ghana**

Area of Work: **SDG 1 – No Poverty**

Mawuse Christina Gyisun has a vision to eradicate poverty among rural women in West Africa through capacity building and innovative finance. She co-founded Sommalife to make this vision possible. With over 8 years of experience spanning Community Development, Agricultural Consultancy and Administration, she has equipped herself with skills that have driven rural community growth and development. In the three years that Sommalife has existed, she has impacted the lives of 20,000 rural women through skill development and an increase in their income. Over 7,000 women out of the 20,000 have seen a 22.75% increase in their income.



Ghislain Irakoze

Country: **Rwanda**

Area of Work: **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption**

Ghislain Irakoze is a climate entrepreneur, activist and researcher. He founded Wastezon, a cleantech company that is innovating for materials circularity-so far impacted 5500 Rwandan households. Ghislain sits on Global Greengrants Fund's Next Gen Climate Board and EU Commission's Youth Sounding Board. He has received recognitions and awards such as the Green Biz 30 Under 30 Honoree and UNEP's Young Champion of the Earth Prize-Finalist.



Dr Doorga Jay

Country: **Mauritius**

Area of Work: **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production**

Dr Doorga Jay is an Oxford trained author, consultant, and is currently a lecturer at Université des Mascareignes. He has over 20 journal publications and one book with over 400 citations, influencing the policy climate of Africa through scientific research, bridging the gap between scientific energy and climate issues and policy making. His works have been featured in Forbes, University of Oxford, and Daily Maverick, influencing multilateral financial institutions, global think tanks, and policy makers to bring sustainable change in Africa.



Foday David Kamara

Country: **Sierra Leone**

Area of Work: **SDG 1 – No Poverty**

Foday Kamara is a social entrepreneur and the founder of Ecovironment, a social enterprise which utilises indigenous recycling innovation through recycling municipal plastic waste in eco-bricks and paving tiles in Makeni City. Through this project, 600 tonnes of plastic waste were recycled, preventing over 1.5 tons of plastic carbon emission into the atmosphere. 100 jobs have been created, 100 000+ people have been reached and environmental rights awareness have been transferred to 40+ communities who have been trained in environmental conservation and waste management.



Deliwe Makata

Country: **Malawi**

Area of work: **SDG 1 – No Poverty**

Deliwe is the founder and Director of Women Inspire and Swift Capital. Her work has for the past 6 years reached over 10,000 direct beneficiaries in areas of education, economic empowerment and health improvement. She works to achieve three major objectives 1. Education as an empowerment and poverty alleviation tool. 2. Financial Literacy and Economic empowerment as a poverty alleviation tool. 3. Health Education and Healthy individuals as active contributors to economic development.



Michelle Wanjiru Njuguna

Country: **Kenya**

Area of Work: **SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy**

Michelle Wanjiru Njuguna is a Kenyan architect with over 6 years of experience in implementing social, economic and environmental development projects. She co-founded the Litre of Light Kenya initiative under her non-profit organization Ethnodesign Global, which trained 730 women to build 460 solar streetlights and 885 solar house lamps that directly impacted 11 100 people living in rural villages and informal settlements.



Hamidu Ssonko

Country: **Uganda**

Area of Work: **SDG 7 – Clean Energy**

Hamidu Ssonko is the Founder of Biha Eco venture that builds net-zero homes in Uganda, with reliable energy using their dual purpose solar powered roof tiles made from solid waste integrated with customized solar panels. The organization has served 350 homes impacting 2500 lives saving 2.5 million carbon emissions, 250 tonnes of solid waste and created over 750 green jobs for trauma survivor women using an e-waste system to support their recycling operations.



Emmanuel Tlemu

Country: **Republic of Tanzania**

Area of Work: **SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation**

Emanuel Tlemu is an Engineer and entrepreneur from Tanzania. He founded the SWASH Competition APP a social educative platform envisioning to challenge people to change undesired behavior on WASH practice using consistent physical to online sanitation competitions made in streets/wards, schools and gives people access to telehealth services. Platform engaged and inspired 30,045 students and attracted 19,954 community members in 2022.



Sem Mandela Utoni

Country: **Namibia**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

African Pathfinder Leaders Initiative is a Namibian youth development organization founded by Sem Mandela Utoni in 2018. APLI's ethos is to build bridges of opportunity by equipping youth with skills, resources and networks to achieve personal goals and contribute to societal development. APLI has since trained 386 youth in entrepreneurship, community development and leadership, and amassed over 3000 programme beneficiaries.



Soumya Dabriwal

Country: **India**

Area of Work: **SDG 5 – Gender Equality**

Soumya Dabriwal is a development practitioner and an Economics Graduate from the University of Warwick. While volunteering in Ghana, she observed girls skipping school 3 days/month during their periods and using unsafe menstrual protection. Understanding that this is a global phenomenon gave birth to Project Baala. This initiative delivers innovative menstrual hygiene solutions, and since 2018, Baala has provided 1.5 million reusable pads, conducted 4000+ awareness workshops for 500,000 women and girls across 4 countries and 25 states of India.



Ahmed Imtiaz Jami

Country: **Bangladesh**

Area of Work: **SDG 1 – No Poverty**

Ahmed Imtiaz Jami is the Founder of OBHIZATRIK Foundation. His journey of 12 years has had major impacts on Education and Livelihood sector, alongside Health and Food sector. A social entrepreneur, who conceptualized the idea of Sustainable living and Model Village for the underprivileged population of Bangladesh. Through his initiative, he has aided 5000+ individuals and established a Model Village.



Mathura Kannan

Country: **Malaysia**

SDG 4: Quality **Education**

Mathura Kannan is the Co-Founder and Advisor of Ascendance, an International Youth Organisation that has impacted over 50,000 students over the past 8 years. Ascendance provides a platform for students to discover their passion, develop their careers while still being in school and contribute back to their communities. Ascendance aims to impact and inspire #OneMillionTeens to embark on this experience.



Akshay Makar

Country: **India**

Area of Work: **SDG 13 – Climate Action**

Akshay Makar is a driven and passionate Entrepreneur who is determined to make a difference in the world. As the CEO of Climatedenza Solar, a mission-focused company that is working to decarbonize the industrial sector, he is leading the charge towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future. Under Akshay's leadership, the company is working with leading Global companies like Coca-Cola, Tata Group and Unilever to decarbonise their Industrial Heat where they are implementing 23MW to cut 37,430 tons of carbon emissions. Over the next 5 years, he aims to manufacture 273 MW capacity that will save over 650,000 tons of carbon emissions.



Shaiwana Nisar

Country: **Pakistan**

Area of Work: **SDG 13 – Climate Action**

Shaiwana Pathan Nisar is a social entrepreneur, and co-Founder of Aurat Raaj. Hailing from the rural hub of Sukkur, Pakistan, Shaiwana is dedicated to tackling challenges faced by women, including gender equality and health. She co-created Raaji pads, an eco-friendly, reusable and sustainable sanitary product, in collaboration with rural women artisans so as to bridge the menstrual product gap, tackle employment issues and reduce carbon footprint in rural Pakistan. Together with Aurat Raaj's other initiatives, over 50,000 women and girls have been positively impacted in Pakistan.



Chiranthi Senanayake

Country: **Sri Lanka**

Area of Work: **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities**

Expanding upon eleven years of community service within the South Asian development sector, Chiranthi Senanayake founded Hype Sri Lanka: South Asia's only youth empowerment incubator working to create spaces for youth in all their intersections within national policy processes and development systems. The Incubator has built the capacities of 82 voluntary social service organisations, worked with over 30 development sector institutions and empowered approximately 1600 young people from Sri Lanka.



Kaushal Shetty

Country: **India**

Area of Work: **SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities**

Kaushal Shetty, Co-Founder and CEO of Nostos Homes, a non-profit organisation that builds sustainable emergency shelters for people displaced by natural disasters. These homes act as a scalable, data-driven, low-cost, rapid deployment solution for areas in disasters. Kaushal's work has been recognised by Forbes, World Bank, Mastercard, the Diana Award and has already facilitated over 481,000 nights of shelter in India and on the African Continent.



Shrutika Silswal

Country: **India**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Shrutika Silswal is a Dalai Lama Fellow, and the Head of Programs at the Simple Education Foundation in Uttarakhand, India. The Simple Education Foundation is an organisation that supports more than 200 government school children across 5 schools by delivering contextual & sustainable school transformation programs. She is currently designing another program which will impact more than 100 government schools in Uttarakhand. Together, these programs will ensure that children in this region have age-appropriate academic and social-emotional skills.



Moazzam Shah Bukhari Syed

Country: **Pakistan**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Moazzam Syed is the founder of The Walkway School, a Pakistan-based social enterprise which aims to enable access to education for underprivileged children in rural Pakistan. Since 2018, Moazzam has sent nearly 4000 children to school – benefitting over 1000 families and expanded the schools' network to multiple cities that will benefit over 10000 children in the next five years.



Afruza Tanzi

Country: **Bangladesh**

Area of Work: **SDG 5 – Gender Equality**

Afruza Tanzi is a social entrepreneur and the founder of Protibha, a Bangladesh-based organisation which creates sustainable earning opportunities for rural women in remote areas. Afruza is committed to make women financially capable by shaping gender neutral perceptions regarding economic opportunities. Also, Tanzi provides training for underrepresented youth around the globe in taking social actions for Sustainable Development Goals through capacity building workshops.



Izat Ullah

Country: **Pakistan**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Izat Ullah is the founder of Chiragh Educational Welfare Society-(CEWS), an organisation which aims to make education accessible to vulnerable communities in Pakistan. CEWS has enrolled 5000+ children in schools and trained 25,0000 young people to become responsible leaders. Having impacted the lives of over 200 000 people through CEWS events and activities, Izat's future aspirations include achieving a 100% literacy rate in Pakistan.



Jeanelle Brisbane

Country: **Dominica**

Area of Work: **SDG 15 – Life on Land**

Jeanelle Brisbane is the founder of 'WildDominique', a women-led conservation NGO empowering Dominicans with the tools to protect their natural environment by creating biodiversity-friendly solutions and fostering inclusive national and regional collaborations. The organisation has worked with over 150 Dominicans and ten Caribbean islands in the tourism, agriculture, and conservation fields to improve livelihoods while increasing ecosystem health.



Ché Greenidge

Country: **Barbados**

Area of Work: **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth**

Ché Amor Greenidge is the Founder and Chairman of The Deaf Heart Project (DHP) with a mission to realise visibility, empowerment, and success for deaf individuals in Barbados and the Caribbean. DHP's has brought employment opportunities to the over 93% of deaf unemployed persons in Barbados. DHP has also reached over 100,000 people raising awareness and championing transformative change.



Ruth Julianna Gutierrez-Corley,

Country: **Belize**

Area of Work: **SDG 14 – Life Below Water**

Ruth Gutierrez-Corley is the founder of 'Independence Youth Action Movement' and co-founder of 'Building Belizean Livelihoods and the Environment' community-based organizations. The organizations have impacted over 2,000 residents in Belize through environmental restoration, conservation outreach and youth mentorship initiatives. Her current PhD seeks to build capacity for 50+ seaweed farmers in developing local adaptation strategies to combat climate change-related challenges.



Glenroy Murray

Country: **Jamaica**

Area of Work: **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities**

Glenroy Murray is a social justice and human rights advocate and the youngest Executive Director of Equality for All Foundation (J-FLAG) which is the foremost and longest serving LGBT rights organisation in Jamaica. Over the last 25 years, J-FLAG have become the de facto voice of the community in Jamaica and have successfully advocated for two explicitly LGBT-inclusive government policies, sustained partnerships with several ministries and trained over 1000 public sector workers on rights-based service delivery.



Maya Kirti Nanan

Country: **Trinidad and Tobago**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Maya is the Founder/Director of the Autism Siblings and Friends Network, a non-profit that creates opportunities for her brother and others with special educational needs, and advocates for their inclusion at all levels. ASFN operates Rahul's Clubhouse, an autism centre where autistic individuals have equal access to developmental and social programmes, fully run by youths. It is actively developing educational, social and skills programmes for 10,000 autistic persons.



Christianna Paul

Country: **Commonwealth of Dominica**

Area of Work: **SDG 13 – Climate Action**

Christianna Paul is a young leader and Social Entrepreneur from the Commonwealth of Dominica. She is the co-founder of WePlanet Inc., a non-profit social enterprise that aims to raise environmental consciousness through innovative incentive-based solutions. As a web application WePlanet is designed with functionalities curated to motivate, educate and encourage all age groups, to implement eco-friendly strategies and choices. With over 1000 monthly visitors, the WePlanet mobile web application is successfully tackling issues such as the overuse and misuse of non-biodegradable items in the environment.



Shergaun Roserie

Country: **Saint Lucia**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Shergaun Roserie is a Mechanical Engineering major at Howard University and the director of Orbtrionics Ltd, a social enterprise focused on providing software and hardware solutions as well as STEM-related educational programming for youth ages 18-35. By upskilling young people in the areas of digital skills, programming and design, the STEM Education program aims to serve as the backbone for the development of the next crop of innovative engineers in the region.



Akola Thompson

Country: **Guyana**

Area of Work: **SDG 5 – Gender Equality**

Akola Thompson is the Managing Director of Tamùkke Feminists, an organisation which makes use education to change social attitudes and norms around GBV, safe abortions and anti-Blackness. In 2021, Tamùkke Feminists co-created with UNFPA Guyana the iMatter app, which provides information on relevant resources for survivors of violence to access services in their region. Through the organisations' Mind Fund and WorkReady programmes, LBT+ women in Guyana have increased access to mental health services, and work readiness programming.



AWARD SHORTLIST

CARIBBEAN

Marver Woodley

Country: **Antigua and Barbuda**

Area of Work: **SDG 14 – Life Below Water**

Marver Woodley is a young professional within the Caribbean's Ocean space and a National Maritime Ambassador from Antigua and Barbuda. She is passionate about the Blue Economy, working as a Technical Officer leading on the development, implementation, management and monitoring of the Antigua and Barbuda National Backyard Aquaponic Program.



AWARD SHORTLIST

EUROPE/CANADA

Yifei Chen

Country: **Canada**

Area of Work: **SDG 3 – Good health and Well-being**

Yifei Jefferson Chen is the co-founder of Lafiya Nigeria, a global health non-profit with the mission to eliminate maternal mortality through universal access to contraception; to date, Lafiya Nigeria has provided more than 5000 rural women with life-saving contraception. Jefferson combines his development consulting, biotech, and healthcare investing experience to bring an innovative model of operation to Lafiya Nigeria.



Rebecca Daniel

Country: **United Kingdom**

Area of Work: **SDG 14 – Life Below Water**

Rebecca Daniel is a marine biologist, award-winning science communicator, and Director of The Marine Diaries - a marine conservation non-profit, using storytelling and digital media to communicate ocean science. Rebecca, along with 60+ volunteers, has grown an online community of around 50,000 ocean advocates, launched two collaborative projects (Plastic Not Fantastic and Marine Ecosystem Diaries), as well as an editorial series, internship programs, events, and ocean expeditions. Reaching over 2 million people annually, The Marine Diaries connects people with the ocean and educates the public about its importance.



Adam Dhalla

Country: **Canada**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Adam Dhalla is the creator of Find the Birds (www.findthebirds.com), a free educational game for children about birds and habitats. It is being played by 10,000+ people in 47 countries. A survey he conducted showed that playing the game resulted in a significant increase in appreciation and knowledge of birds. The in-game links have helped many to volunteer with real-world conservation organizations.



Leejoo Hwang

Country: **Canada**

Area of Work: **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals**

Leejoo Hwang is a Canadian social entrepreneur and the co-founder and COO of MeaningfulWork, a social enterprise with a vision to create the most impactful global community for 'giving'. MeaningfulWork serves as a platform to create purposeful connections by connecting people and philanthropy dollars to NPOs doing awesome work in their impact space. With a strong commitment to the triple bottom line – people, planet, and profit – Leejoo believes in solving global challenges through entrepreneurship and business.



Daniel Shin Un Kang

Country: **Canada**

Area of Work: **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth**

Daniel Kang, a social entrepreneur from Canada is on a mission to create fair access to capital. Currently, he's the CEO of Flowbo, a social enterprise working to make funding available to thousands of creators and digital solopreneurs without financial access. To scale, he has raised \$3.4m from investors including Y-Combinator. Previously, Daniel was an investor at Softbank and Board-Observer of a multibillion-dollar company. He studied Finance at McGill and Policy at Oxford.



Charlotte Qin

Country: **Canada**

Area of Work: **SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation**

Charlotte Qin is a Canadian artist and youth advocate for water. Her mission is to create a healthy water culture by bringing emotional values and sensitivities to the discourse of water through art. She initiated the citizen art collective called the "Meeting of Waters", which has created performances on different water bodies including glaciers and oceans.



AWARD SHORTLIST

EUROPE/CANADA

Alexandra Tigan

Country: **United Kingdom**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Alexandra is a founder at Thuso, where she serves as Global Head of Operations and is a full equity partner. Alexandra has overseen operations on over 200 projects in all regions of the Commonwealth, focused on education in low-income, fragile, and conflict affected states. Supporting major policy interventions throughout the Commonwealth, her work impacts millions of children, and young people internationally.



Gabriele Wong

Country: **United Kingdom**

Area of Work: **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Gabrielle is a 17-year-old quality education advocate from the UK. She founded Discimus Foundation, which helps children worldwide access computers and quality computer science education. She is a Youth Ambassador for the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society and UNITAR (Asia-Pacific). An inspirational youth speaker, she has spoken at multiple global events, most notably at UNESCO Learning Planet Festival.



Meihuan Yu

Country: **Canada**

Area of Work: **SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**

Meihuan Yu is a 16-year-old Canadian and the inventor of the Computer Operating Assistance System Technology, a computer mouse that enables people with upper limb disabilities to use computer technologies with their feet. Her invention won the gold medal and 3 other awards at the International Invention Innovation Competition in Canada. COAST also received national news coverage.



Ally Zlatar

Country: **United Kingdom**

Area of Work: **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities**

Ally Zlatar is an artist, activist, and the founder of The Starving Artist; an artist initiative that utilizes creative voices as a way to create advocacy and systemic reform. She also founded The Starving Artist Scholarship Fund which helps people access inpatient treatment for eating disorders. Ally has received the highest accolade a young person can achieve for their humanitarian work, winning The Princess Diana Legacy Award 2021, King Hamad Award for Youth Empowerment 2022, and also special recognition from The British Citizen Award 2022.



Shelley Addison

Country: **Aotearoa New Zealand**
 Area of Work: **SDG 14 – Life Below Water**

Shelley Addison is a decade-long oceans advocate from Aotearoa New Zealand, who has driven initiatives such as being the first New Zealand champion for Race for Oceans. Shelley is passionate about our oceans and contributes towards ocean conservation through her initiative @SafeOceansNZ, which works to amplify environmental advocacy through sporting events, beach clean-ups and knowledge-sharing sessions. She is currently the Royal Commonwealth Society Environmental Working Group lead for Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific.



Raeed Ali

Country: **Fiji**
 Area of Work: **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption**

Raeed Roshan Ali is a climate champion and social entrepreneur from Fiji, contributing to sustainable development through his work with Precious Plastic Fiji. Established as Fiji's first youth-led plastic recycling hub, where machines are used to convert ocean plastic waste into new upcycled retail products, Precious Plastic Fiji have collected over 30,000 Kg of plastic waste from the coastal areas and redirected over 10, 000 Kg of plastic waste from landfills. Raeed is the 2022 One Young World Leading Pacific Scholar and is one of the youngest Tedx speakers.



Robea Daniel

Country: **Vanuatu**
 Area of Work: **SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing**

Robea Daniel is a Team Leader of Project Wake Up, a non-communicable diseases youth programme funded by the Pacific Community. By using art as an educational medium, Project Wake Up engages local youth in delivering health promotion and prevention messages to communities, building health literacy, and starting important conversations about non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention in the Pacific.



Nathaniel Diong

Country: **Australia**
 Area of Work: **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth**

Nathaniel Diong is the CEO of Future Minds Network, where they give disadvantaged youth a second chance to rewrite their career and life trajectory. Consequently, thousands have developed the confidence to thrive in unconventional careers and create their own employment. This includes starting 3D-printing businesses, software applications and charities supporting 10,000 elderly residents. Future Minds has directly upskilled 12,000 youth in 15 Commonwealth Nations and indirectly supported over 2.05 million young people to face the future.



Desmond Goru

Country: **Papua New Guinea**

Area of Work: **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**

Desmond Goru is the founder and Chief Director of Political Science of Papua New Guinea-Consultancy Agency Inc. (PSSPNG-CAI), a local youth-led non-governmental organisation currently working in the space of social justice, anti-corruption, and strong democracy in PNG. He is also a Fellow of the Indo-Pacific Youth Fellowship program held by the National Democratic Institute-DC, Taiwan.



Shuari Naidoo

Country: **Aotearoa New Zealand**

Area of Work: **SDG 5 – Gender Equality**

Shuari Naidoo is the founder of Moraka Menstrual Cups, an initiative to raise awareness of period poverty and provide cost-effective, accessible, and sustainable alternatives to disposable period products. Shuari is the 2022 Australia and New Zealand Sustainathon challengeY25 for 2021 winner and she was awarded the Young Woman in Public Affairs Award by Zonta International. She has also been a finalist of the Women of Influence award, the Impact Awards, and the Girls in Business award. Shuari is currently reading Politics and Criminology at Victoria University.



Apisit Best Uthakhamkong

Country: **New Zealand**

Area of Work: **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**

Apisit Uthakhamkong is founder of The Peace Club (Trust), a New Zealand-based initiative with the mission of promoting peace, arms control and disarmament through art and education. The Peace Club aims to empower young people by promoting inner peace and advocating for peace. His Art for Peace Competition, Mindfulness sessions, and Make Peace, Stop War Campaigns have attracted over 4,000 participants in four years, inspiring a generation to spread a message of peace and create positive change in their communities.



COMMONWEALTH

YOUTH AWARDS

2023

ADJUDICATION PANELS

Adjudicators:

- **HE Albert Fotabong** – High Commissioner, Republic of Cameroon
- **HE Francella Strickland** – High Commissioner, Samoa
- **Ijaz Hussein** – Third Secretary Political, High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- **Mumdood Passa** – Senior Policy Advisor Youth Strategy, United Kingdom Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- **Shem Ochola** – Deputy Director-General, Commonwealth Foundation
- **Chris Kelly** – Chief Executive, Queen's Commonwealth Trust, **(Online)**
- **Kim Allen** – Chairperson, Commonwealth Youth Council **(Online)**

Commonwealth Youth Awards Team:

- **Layne Robinson, (Chair)**
Head of Social Policy Development Section, **(Online)**
- **Zoe Mafoko,**
Assistant Programme Officer
- **Dona Kannagara,**
Assistant Research Officer
- **Miski Omar,** Programme Officer



PAN-COMMONWEALTH

ADJUDICATION PANEL MEMBERS

Achare Elvis Ayamba	Diane Mushimiyimana	Jodi-Ann Wang
Akash Jha	Dingirige Sameera Lakruwan Perera	Joel Bamwise
Alicia Ramdal	Dr Md. Zahirul Islam	Joseph Chiriyankandath
Ayobami Bakare	Duncan Akatukwasa	Joy Egbe
Bevon Chadel Charles	Ebot Jean Sanyi	Karuna Kumar
Bobby Siarani	Edward Yee	Kendell Vincent
Bochum Samuel Bache	Elizabeth V Kite	Kiyara Matambanadzo
Breanna Gabrielle Robinson	Ewarla Piper	Kumaragurru Varatharaja
Caroline Namubiru	Falit Sijariya	Kusala Kumara Jayendra Fernando
Charmaine Joseph	Franc Kamugyisha	Lauristan Choy
Chevaughn Brown	Francis Azubuike	Leanne Prendergast
Chrisna St. Brice	Fsahat Ul-Hassan	Leneka Rhoden
Christabel Derby	Harry James Olikwailafa	Lilan Dayananda
Crystal Alexander	Ibrahim Moshood	Madiha Hussein
Dário Camal	Jane Afua Ntiforo	Maria Kramvi
Dawsher Charles	Janneth Mghamba	Maria Vianca Jasmin Anglo
Deborah Akua Pokua Boakye Asirifi	Jasmine Parker	Marwan Umar Gwamba
Deus Thengo Lupenga	Jeremiah Thoronka	

PAN-COMMONWEALTH ADJUDICATION PANEL MEMBERS

Mickel Alexander	Pyoka Mfuni	Sarmad Shabaz
Ming Hong Choi	Qasim Farasat	Shomy Chowdhury
Miski Omar	Rashmi Samant	Solomon Adjei
Mogesh Sababathy	Raywin Taroaniara	Sowmyan Jegatheesan
Monica Islam	Rianna Patterson	Stephen McCubbin
Mothusi John Ramaabya	Rijve Arefin	Suraj Ranjan
Ms. Madinah Friday	Roma Anne Sashendranie Vedamuttu	Suresh Singh
Muhammad Ali Malik	Rozaline Joseph	Sushma Vishwakarma
Muhammad Ipoola Adeyemi	Sachinda Dulanjana Witharana	Tahiya Islam
Nahjae Nunes	Salma Zulfiqar	Taryahabwe Myers
Odunze Ebere	Sania Haider Shikoh	Victor Mafigi Turatsinze
Paul Habineza	Sarika Katoch	Zainab Hassan

ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME

The Commonwealth Youth Awards are sponsored and co-ordinated by the Commonwealth Youth Programme.

We engage and empower young people, provide thought leadership in youth development, and support governments, youth work professionals and young leaders to create policy and practice environments that help young people to fulfil their social, economic and political potential.

We encourage the effective participation of young women and men in development processes, and promote their engagement at all levels of decision-making, including with Heads of Government. We also showcase, celebrate and advance the capabilities and achievements of young people in driving democracy and development.

We place special emphasis on supporting youth-led initiatives, and giving young people a strong voice in decision-making processes. This includes convening youth forums at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings and ministerial summits, as well as technical assistance and support for national, regional and global youth networks.

These youth networks include:

- Commonwealth Youth Council
- Commonwealth Students Association
- Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network
- Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network
- Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network
- Commonwealth Youth Health Network
- Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs
- Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network
- Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Network
- Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network
- Commonwealth Correspondents
- Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Youth Network

COMMONWEALTH

YOUTH AWARDS

2023

Contact us:

Commonwealth Youth Programme
Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough
House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX

youth@commonwealth.int

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7747 6462

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7747 6549

thecommonwealth.org/our-work/youth



The Commonwealth
Youth Programme