



2nd Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work

'Engaging Young People in Nation Building: The Youth Worker's Role'

Theme - 'Engaging Young People in Nation Building: The Youth Worker's Role.'

What is the theme about?

Youth work should not be seen in isolation. Youth workers play a mediatory role between young people and national development by supporting the channelling of youth empowerment to sustained national and global development efforts. Youth Work plays a key role in that it creates conditions for enabling and empowering young citizens, and in turn impacts on a country's social, economic, political and environmental success.

Across many states of the Commonwealth there is a youth bulge. This demographic dividend can be unleashed and utilised to make significant strides in development, and youth workers play a critical role in that.

Within this context, the theme also advances the Commonwealth values of gender equity, inclusion, peace, development, human rights and democracy as key tenets that determine meaningful nation-building. The conference will see discussions on the youth worker's role in moving towards these democratic and participatory ideals in member states.

Key questions that will be discussed are:

- Is the impact of youth work being strategically thought of in terms of contributions to national and global development?
- Why should countries invest in youth work? What evidence exists that shows linkages between youth work successes and national development? Can there be national development without targeted youth development? What have been the contributions of professional youth workers to national and global development?
- What youth work theory and practice exists to support this linkage?
- What mechanisms exist in policy that create the space for youth workers to contribute directly to nation-building?

Sub-themes

1. The concept and practice of youth work

1. Youth work models in practice, with a focus on empowerment, social and political education and care
2. Role of youth work in youth citizenship, nation-building and peace-building
3. Youth work in building youth-led organisations
4. Sports and the arts as tools in youth work practice
5. Building solidarity through intergenerational programmes

2. Advancing the legal, regulatory, educational and support frameworks for youth work

1. Professional recognition of youth work
2. Education and training for youth workers
3. Sustaining professional youth work through certification/licencing
4. Breaking the silos – a multi-sectoral approach to youth work

3. Building a strong front: the role of professional associations and youth work institutes

1. Creating, strengthening and sustaining national youth worker associations
2. The role of youth work institutes and communities of practice in promoting active citizenry
3. Empowering young people through national youth services

4. Building and promoting ethical standards in youth work

1. Ethical issues in youth work
2. Promoting research ethics in youth work
3. The role of youth work in creating future leaders of integrity

5. Standardizing and measuring the progress and impact of youth work

1. Promoting evidence-based youth work practice
2. Breaking new ground: cutting edge youth work research
3. Case studies of using results-based management in youth work projects