
ROLE OF COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME

There is a vital role to be played by the Commonwealth Youth Programme. The stated objectives of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) are well known as are the various activities at present undertaken under its auspices. We acknowledge the contribution made through these efforts, but suggest certain shifts in the emphasis in line with the call repeated by Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council (CYAC) in both 1976 and 1978, for flexibility to meet the particular needs of individual participating countries, and a variety of activities to meet as many needs as possible. In particular we recommend the following:

1. An increasing emphasis on fellowships. These give relevant personnel first-hand experience of policy initiatives in other countries, and the programmes formulated for policy implementation. They also enable individuals to investigate projects designed to solve or alleviate particular problems e.g. youth unemployment. Such initiatives are efficient in terms of expenditure set against knowledge gained. They allow for both host country and sponsoring country to benefit from the interchange of ideas and information. They are also flexible and easily adapted to meet specific needs of individuals and governments.
2. An increasing emphasis on short term national training courses to meet the growing demand by many countries for large numbers of trained youth workers. This demand is likely to escalate if a national youth policy is to be formulated along the lines that we are recommending. We feel that this can be best achieved through two approaches - choice to be dependent on the requirements of the country involved.
3. Short term courses at the regional centres.

Responding to the needs of individual countries, these would concentrate on specified issues. For example an international group of regional participants might concentrate on a single problem (e.g. unemployment). Alternatively a single national group might study a variety of related problems (e.g. programmes for implementing a National Youth Policy). By locating these short courses in regional centres, the existing resources and information stored in these centres could be retained and utilised. Opportunities for field-work in a new environment and culture are also presented.

- b. Development of small mobile training teams to conduct short term training courses in those countries requesting them. Such an approach does not, of course, give the same breadth of field experience but it does combine a higher training output with a considerably reduced financial input.
- c. An expression of faith in international youth exchanges within Commonwealth countries. We welcome the proposal for a meeting of existing exchange agencies as recommended at the CYAC meeting in Ottawa (April 1978). Furthermore we support the involvement of the CYP in such exchanges and particularly confirm the proposed emphasis on involvement of youth in technological problem solving. We further recommend that a link-up be established between past participants of CYP youth worker training courses, and young international exchange participants, in order to initiate meaningful dialogue on youth affairs, facilitate updating of international knowledge and identify directions of current change.
- d. A clear statement of support for meetings of young leaders. We are impressed by the Ochos Rios Declaration and recommend strongly that such gatherings should be repeated at Commonwealth level, and inaugurated at regional levels.

The emphasis in all of these recommendations is on flexibility of design and implementation to meet the individual needs of Commonwealth member governments.