

Foreword by Director, Youth Division

Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning: Transforming Young Lives is a key part of the long-term commitment of the Commonwealth Secretariat to working with young people, to champion their rights and develop broad-based strategies to incorporate their capacities, participation and interests in the youth sector and beyond.

For more than 40 years, the Commonwealth Secretariat has focused on enhancing the capacity of youth sector actors to deliver youth empowerment strategies. Initiatives have included building the technical capacity of youth ministries and departments, supporting universities to deliver youth work education and training, and creating and strengthening youth-led networks and youth worker networks, among a range of other policy and practice approaches. This co-operation within the sector, and the remarkable achievements of Commonwealth member countries, has resulted in significant gains in realising young people's empowerment and rights.

Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning envisages strengthening the wider influence of the sector in establishing holistic, youth-centric development planning across all sectors. This will contribute to young people's social, political and economic empowerment and open doors for their inclusion and contribution in broader development strategies.

The publication addresses a noted gap in guidance for youth mainstreaming. It is intended to trigger dialogue and mobilise consensus around visions and strategies for youth mainstreaming, and provide practical tools and techniques that help make young people and their interests visible in development planning. It continues the commitments made by the Commonwealth in the *Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE)* to support cross-sectoral work with, and for, youth. This commitment has been reaffirmed through the years in high-level dialogue, including at consecutive Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings in 2008 and 2013, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 2009.

We hope that *Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning* will be a useful and impactful resource that informs youth

mainstreaming strategies designed and implemented by the youth sector, by national/subnational planners and by other discrete sectors.

For the Commonwealth Secretariat, this publication marks the beginning of planned collaborative engagement with young people and the youth sector, as well as other sectors, to realise the potential of youth mainstreaming. This work with, and for, youth, will further strengthen young people's opportunities for living in dignity, good health, peace and economic security, in a society that respects and values intergenerational equality and justice.

Katherine Ellis

Director, Youth Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Foreword by Chair, policy and advocacy, Commonwealth Youth Council

New initiatives in youth policy formulation and their translation into programmes and practice have played a significant role in engaging young people meaningfully in development processes. But there remains room for improvement to integrate a holistic, youth-oriented approach and provide an enabling environment that captures the experiences, skills, expertise and aspirations of young people.

The Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) welcomes the timely publication *Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning: Transforming Young Lives*, which will enrich and inform the sustainable engagement of young people in intergenerational spaces, at all levels of decision-making and as key actors and agents of change.

The CYC sees the handbook as a useful resource to engage with governments and other stakeholders working with young people, to better inform policy decisions and quality of engagement and to ensure that we achieve tangible outcomes and real change in the lives of young people.

The handbook provides a strong foundation for understanding and building on the concept of youth mainstreaming. It speaks to those who are new to youth work and youth empowerment strategies, as well as those who are experts in this area. This guide also does an exceptional job of clarifying any level of uncertainty on the relationship of youth mainstreaming to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Commonwealth Youth Council, National Youth Councils and other national and regional youth bodies are poised to take away a wealth of knowledge from this publication. The CYC commits to integrate the concepts and tools of this handbook in its work and mobilise stakeholders to do the same. We are committed to the empowerment of a dynamic sector of individuals – who make up 60 per cent of the Commonwealth's population!

Nikolai Edwards

Vice Chairperson Policy, Advocacy and Projects, 2017
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A Cross-Sectoral Approach: Youth Mainstreaming

Effective ways to bolster youth development include developing robust, stand-alone youth policies and integrating young people into sectoral policies of line ministries. In recent years, a cross-sectoral approach to youth policies has emerged both as an imperative for effectiveness and as a pragmatic answer to two challenges: the increasingly large youth population in many countries, especially the developing countries, on the one hand; and the poor implementation and funding of youth policies, on the other. A cross-sectoral approach also helps to support the development of young people so that they can achieve their full potential in all spheres of their lives. Additionally, mainstreaming is a recognized methodology for ensuring effective policies for specific social cohorts, as shown by the successful example of gender mainstreaming.

Nevertheless, cross-sectoral approaches come at a cost: they require increased dialogue, planning and coordination within governments, and even beyond, when considering multilevel governance mechanisms, as in the case of decentralized or federal states. Strengthening the youth expertise of sectoral ministries and subnational governments is a winning strategy to build strong alliances on youth issues.

From: “Policies and programmes involving youth”, Report of the Secretary-General to the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-fifth session (E/CN.5/2017/5), United Nations, 21 November 2016, pages 4–5.

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