

This section is concerned with the question of how the Commonwealth 'works' today: how the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) operate, and what kinds of development projects both the 'official' and the 'unofficial' Commonwealth are involved in. It takes the form of information followed by suggested activities, the purpose of which is to translate the various types of work and co-operation to a local level, within the school and the community. These small-scale co-operative or development projects are not specifically Commonwealth activities but are designed to give practical expression to the aims and principles underlying the work of Commonwealth organisations.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings

Commonwealth summits attended by Heads of Government - Presidents or Prime Ministers, or their representatives - take place every two years. For a full week intensive discussions are held on matters of concern to the Commonwealth - both global affairs and intra-Commonwealth affairs - and the meetings are characterised by an atmosphere of informality. Plans for future Commonwealth action are laid and at the end of the meeting a communique is issued: this consists of a statement of decisions and views which have been reached by consensus. The meetings are held in different Commonwealth capitals. Some of the more important outcomes of recent meetings are listed below.

Major outcomes of some Heads of Government Meetings

1961	The cardinal principal of racial equality was reaffirmed. South Africa was obliged to withdraw its application to remain a member of the Commonwealth after becoming a republic.
1965	Heads of Government agreed to set up the Commonwealth Secretariat.
1966 Lagos	First meeting held outside Britain, convened to formulate a Commonwealth response to Rhodesia declaring a Unilateral Declaration of Independence.
1966 London	Britain agreed to Heads of Governments' request that Rhodesia would not be granted independence without majority rule.
1971 Singapore	The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles was issued. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation was established.
1977 London	Rhodesia and South Africa were high on the agenda. The Gleneagles Agreement was issued, stating the Commonwealth's opposition to sporting links with South Africa.
1979 Lusaka	The Lusaka Declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice was issued. Heads of Government persuaded Britain the Rhodesian crisis could not be overcome without the participation of the Patriotic Front. The way was paved for the Lancaster House talks which led to the independence of Zimbabwe. Leaders agreed to send a team of observers to supervise

elections of a new government in Zimbabwe. The Commonwealth Secretariat's Industrial Development Unit was established.

- 1983 New Delhi** The nuclear arms build-up and the fragility of international security led to the Goa Declaration on International Security. Commitment to a New International Economic Order was reaffirmed in the New Delhi Statement on Economic Action.
- 1985 Nassau** The meeting was dominated by the problem of South Africa. In the Nassau Accord on Southern Africa a number of 'measures' against South Africa were agreed upon. An Eminent Persons Group was set up, and charged with encouraging political dialogue in South Africa.
- 1987 Vancouver** The Okanagan Statement and Programme of Action on Southern Africa reaffirmed shared international responsibility for eradicating apartheid. The Vancouver Declaration on World Trade called for a more open, viable and durable multilateral trading system to promote growth and development. Agreement was reached on the creation of a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education.
- 1989 Kuala Lumpur** In the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment Commonwealth leaders pledged themselves to a programme of national and international action to protect the world's natural resources and integrate environmental concerns into economic decision-making. In the Kuala Lumpur statement on Southern Africa further financial sanctions against South Africa were agreed, except by Britain.
- 1991 Harare** In the Harare Commonwealth Declaration Heads of Government reaffirmed their support for Commonwealth principles and for programmes of co-operation especially in support of democracy, human rights, the promotion of sustainable development, protection of the environment, and the development of human resources. Ten Heads of Government undertook a high-level appraisal of the Commonwealth, a process which will continue into 1992. It was agreed that the Commonwealth should remain ready to assist the negotiating process leading to a constitutional settlement in South Africa.

Meeting the challenge of Southern Africa

For nearly three decades Southern Africa issues have remained before Commonwealth leaders. They have continued to oppose apartheid in South Africa and to support Namibia's attempts to free itself from illegal South African occupation and gain independence. An arms embargo (1971) and a ban on sporting links with South Africa (1977) were two of the earlier measures taken by the Commonwealth. In recent years efforts to help bring an end to apartheid have redoubled.

Countering apartheid propaganda

The Commonwealth has helped disseminate true and accurate reports about South Africa in the face of the regime's media censorship and programme of propaganda.

**Nassau Accord on
Southern Africa
(1985)**

Commonwealth leaders agreed a number of economic measures against South Africa and set up an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to try to engage South Africa in genuine dialogue. The EPG visited South Africa three times, sounded out all sides of opinion and evolved a 'Negotiating Concept' which was well received. Its work was halted by Pretoria's attack of three neighbouring countries. The group's report, *Mission to South Africa*, concluded that South Africa had made inadequate changes and further Commonwealth economic measures were needed.



Displaced family on the South African veld

**Okanagan Action
Programme
(1987)**

Heads of Government, with the exception of Britain, agreed on tighter sanctions and established a Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa (CFMSA) to study the impact of sanctions as well as South Africa's links with the international financial system and its campaign of destabilisation against neighbouring countries. The Secretariat's International Affairs Division and Economic Affairs Division serviced the CFMSA in this work (see Commonwealth Secretariat, page 43).

**Kuala Lumpur
Statement on
Southern Africa
(1989)**

Commonwealth leaders, except Britain, agreed to keep pressure on South Africa – despite some signs that the regime was relaxing some of its harshest controls – by extending financial sanctions and strengthening the arms embargo. They agreed to continue support to victims and opponents of apartheid through educational, legal and humanitarian assistance. They reaffirmed full support for the UN in its security role during elections in Namibia leading to the country's genuine independence.

**Outcomes of the
Harare Heads of
Government
Meeting (1991)**

Commonwealth leaders acknowledged important initiatives in South Africa under President de Klerk. They welcomed the Peace Accord in South Africa and called for its full implementation. Changes in the application of sanctions would be linked to real and practical steps to

end apartheid. They agreed that people to people sanctions should be lifted immediately, the arms embargo should be applied until a new post-apartheid government is established, financial sanctions should be lifted when there is agreement on a new democratic constitution, and trade and investment measures should be lifted when there are mechanisms to allow all parties to participate in negotiations. The British Government wished to see economic and financial sanctions lifted more speedily to encourage investment in South Africa. Leaders welcomed the Commonwealth report *Beyond Apartheid* on Human Resources Development for a Post-Apartheid South Africa and agreed to assist programmes of training, bilaterally and multilaterally.

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Upper secondary

Working towards consensus

This activity allows students to state their views on a subject, to examine each others' views critically but positively, to indicate their agreements and disagreements, and to reach a consensus. It is intended as a preparation for the mock Heads of Government meeting (Activity 2, page 40).

Students form small groups of five or six. Each person is given four cards or slips of paper. On each of these he or she is to write a contribution to a group statement on the subject-matter under consideration. The subject should be one on which the students will have views of their own; in the example here 'education' is chosen as the topic.

When each student has written four statements, one on each of the four cards or slips of paper, the statements are collected in, and shuffled as in a game of cards. They are then dealt out - three for each 'player', with the rest placed face upwards on the table.

EVERYONE HAS THE
RIGHT TO EDUCATION
- IT SHOULDN'T BE
FOR A FEW PEOPLE

EDUCATION SHOULD
BE PRACTICAL AS
WELL AS ACADEMIC

WE LEARN MORE
IMPORTANT THINGS
OUTSIDE SCHOOL
THAN IN SCHOOL

EDUCATION IS
LEARNING TO
READ AND WRITE

EDUCATION SHOULD
ENABLE PEOPLE TO
PARTICIPATE FULLY IN
THEIR SOCIETY

EDUCATION SHOULDN'T
MAKE YOU FEEL TOO
GRAND TO WORK IN
RURAL AREAS OR IN THE
VILLAGE

WITH A GOOD EDUCATION
YOU BECOME FREE TO GO
WHERE YOU LIKE AND NOT
BE STUCK AT HOME

EDUCATION IS
IMPORTANT BECAUSE
IT HELPS TO GET US
BETTER JOBS

WE NEED EDUCATION
TO UNDERSTAND THE
WORLD WE LIVE IN AND
HAVE POWER OVER IT



ACTIVITY 1: CONTINUED

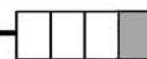
Everyone looks at his or her hand. They should discard anything which they wrote themselves, and anything they disagree with. From the 'pool' they select cards with which they agree, provided they have not written them themselves. The students continue to discard and pick up until they have three (or four) cards with which they agree.

Groups sub-divide into twos and threes to discuss the statements selected and to make a composite statement. Then the group comes together as a whole, discusses the different viewpoints and arrives at a consensus. After the exercise it is important that the class analyses the process of reaching a consensus.

Variation

If it is feared that any one student's ideas may be completely rejected by all the others, the game can be adapted so that each participant is to have a final hand of four cards, at least two of which were written by someone else.

ACTIVITY 2



Level: Upper secondary

A students' 'Heads of Government' meeting

Senior secondary students should find the holding of a mock Heads of Government meeting an enjoyable and valuable exercise.

Student 'CHOGMS' are one of the principal activities that take place on Commonwealth Day, or alternatively to coincide with real CHOGMS, in secondary schools and colleges throughout the Commonwealth. Below, Peter Johnston, Education Officer at London's Commonwealth Institute, sets out the key features of these events and an organisational framework. It should be noted that the preparation described assumes access to material and human resources which will obviously be easier to come by in some countries than in others and in capital cities rather than remote rural areas.



Student CHOGM in Tanzania

ACTIVITY 2: CONTINUED

Key features and rationale

- 1 Student 'CHOGMS' are simulated international meetings where senior secondary (or college) students play the roles of Commonwealth Heads of Government and senior advisers. After extended preparation they meet in a 'Summit' to discuss issues of Commonwealth and international concern and then to summarise their deliberations in a Communique.
- 2 There are points in common with other simulated international meetings, e.g. model United Nations meetings, but important differences too: a) decisions are reached by consensus, not by taking votes; b) procedure is informal: there are no long set speeches, and responses to speakers are expected to be succinct and spontaneous.
- 3 Student 'CHOGMS' are powerful learning vehicles from which participants can derive considerable benefits and skills, such as:
 - Responsibility for individual research, using libraries, press and other media, and consulting individuals and institutions (e.g. High Commissions and Embassies), teachers and other adults
 - The motivation to give an account of themselves in public and defend positions in debate
 - The acquisition of insight into the views of other nations and cultures
 - The understanding, by practice, of international diplomacy
 - The internalising of knowledge acquired through research and the enlarging of students' own conceptual framework.

Organisation

Student 'CHOGMS' can be inter-school or within one school and need the support of senior educational administrators.

Timetable (for an inter-school event)

October:

- 1 Contact Commonwealth Secretariat to find possible items to be debated at the next CHOGM. Locate other sources of information on international issues, which can be used by students in their research.
- 2 Secure a venue, if possible in a prestigious location (approach the local authority for use of the Council Chamber?). Work out how many delegates per country can be accommodated (usually two, three or four).
- 3 Circularise schools with information and assess interest.
- 4 Set limit on number of countries per school. Send out enrolment forms, asking schools to nominate countries in order of preference (say 15 choices).

**October/
November**

- 5 Confirm with schools which countries have been assigned to them.
- 6 Send out Briefing Packs with information on a) the Commonwealth in general, CHOGM procedural arrangements, the meaning of 'consensus' and the form of the Communique; b) three or four agenda items (for a one-day Meeting).
- 7 Advise High Commissions that student delegations will be contacting them for assistance and may wish to visit them.



ACTIVITY 2: CONTINUED

**November/
December**

8 Organise a briefing meeting in a central location, with a speaker on each agenda item and one on the Commonwealth and CHOGMs. Every delegation should send at least one person.

9 Select 'leaders' for the student 'CHOGM', either very mature and (ideally) experienced students or experienced adults. Positions to be filled are: Chairperson (or co-Chairs), Secretary-General (whose main function is the completion of the Communique) and his/her assistants. The Chair should be the Head of Government of the country to host the next real CHOGM. These leaders have a very responsible role and will need thorough briefing and practice.

**December –
February**

10 Let them get on with it! The co-ordinator should liaise with teachers to encourage student research, help facilitate visits to High Commissions and send out updates on preparation for the real CHOGM. Sustain friendly but persistent contact in order to encourage schools to run mini-CHOGMS, role-play exercises and debates as valuable preparation.

11 First contacts with press, especially education correspondents, to encourage coverage of forthcoming event.

February

12 Make final arrangements for the meeting day: catering, seating, microphone arrangements if necessary, invitations to distinguished guest, the media and others.

March

13 The Meeting is held on Commonwealth Day (the second Monday in March) and the Communique issued to all participants, the media and other interested bodies.

Points to note

- Practice and familiarisation are essential for role-play and public debates; the process of reaching a consensus; preparing the Communique. The last item poses special problems. It is not easy for even the most mature student to produce a lucid, succinct and accurate record of the day's proceedings. An adult will usually be needed to assist the student Secretary-General.
- Proceedings can be enlivened and consensus facilitated by encouraging delegations to lobby each other (by passing notes via the Secretary-General's assistants). This will mean considerable, but productive, movement round the room, and meetings being held in corridors, etc. Like other procedures, this will need to be explained and practised.

ACTIVITY 3

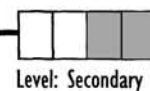


Level: Primary

A Heads of Government 'presentation'

Younger children could act out a Heads of Government meeting in a simple dramatic performance. The pupils could each represent a head of government (or a country), walk across the stage bearing that country's flag, and announce the country and president or prime minister they represent. They could also prepare posters listing dates and venues of Heads of Government meetings.

ACTIVITY 4



Level: Secondary

Disseminating information about South Africa

Depending on the available information, students may be able to help members of the local community learn and understand more about what is going on in South Africa. Sources of information may be anti-apartheid organisations in their own country as well as headquarters of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Commonwealth Secretariat in London (see page 80 Resources).

On Commonwealth Day

- **Hold student Heads of Government meetings and 'presentations' which have been carefully prepared beforehand.**
- **Invite a speaker on Southern Africa to address the school.**

The Commonwealth Secretariat

The main agency through which Commonwealth countries work together is the Commonwealth Secretariat, established by Heads of Government in 1965. The Secretariat organises consultations between governments, services Commonwealth meetings, conducts programmes of co-operation and is a central source of information. It is funded by all member governments in varying proportions and works under their overall direction.

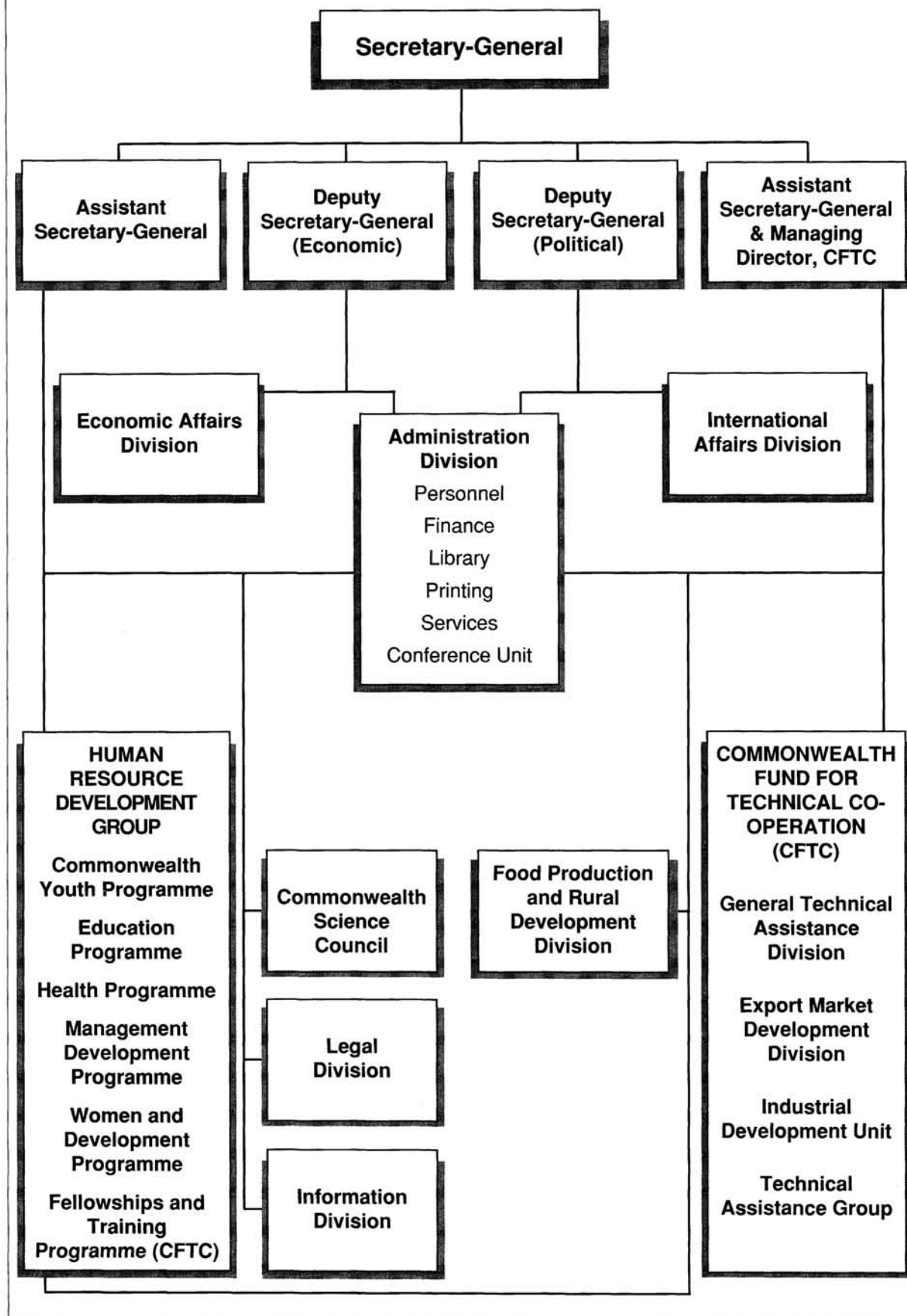
The Secretariat is active in many different fields, as shown in the diagram on the following page. Departments work together as much as possible, so that they can benefit from each other's expertise.

Heading the Secretariat is the Commonwealth Secretary-General, elected by Heads of Government; there are two Deputy Secretaries-General, also elected by governments, one responsible for political affairs and the other for economic affairs; all other staff are appointed by the Secretary-General and in 1992 numbered 400 people from 30 different countries.

The current Secretary-General is Chief Emeka Anyaoku. The first Secretary-General was Arnold Smith, a Canadian diplomat who served from 1965-1975. He was succeeded by Shridath Ramphal (1975-1990), former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guyana.

The Secretariat also includes the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) which is the Commonwealth's own multilateral agency. It provides technical assistance to all developing countries by injecting expertise through 300 long- and short-term experts each year. The CFTC also funds training awards and fellowships, assists the expansion of industry and exports and offers a consultancy service on a wide range of development concerns.

Structure of the Commonwealth Secretariat



ACTIVITY 1



Level: Primary

Looking at the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat

Junior pupils could be given a simplified introduction to the work of the Secretariat. They could prepare charts illustrating the Secretariat's areas of work (see page 44). They could discuss why development work is important in such areas as health, education, and industry, looking particularly at the needs of their own community. The Secretariat's role in helping governments plan and carry out improvements could then be explained in simple terms.

ACTIVITY 2



Level: Secondary

Looking at the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat

Secondary school students could examine the Secretariat's work in more detail. The Secretariat publishes numerous booklets on its work, including *The Commonwealth Today* and *Commonwealth Skills for the 1990s*, both providing useful introductory information and both free (see page 80 Resources).

Some of the activities of the Secretariat and of non-governmental Commonwealth organisations are referred to in more detail in the rest of this section.

On Commonwealth Day

- Display project work
- Primary school children could put on a 'presentation' of the work of the Secretariat, using placards or banners on which its areas of work are printed and making short statements about each.

Working for better health

Commonwealth countries work together to improve health care. Here are some examples of their work:

Health Ministers meet every three years to identify priorities for action.

The training of nurses and other health workers is helped by CFTC's Fellowships and Training programme.

The Commonwealth Health Development Programme promotes exchange of skills and experience between Commonwealth countries.

The Secretariat's Health Programme undertakes work on AIDS by: a) promoting community based approaches to the management of AIDS in Africa, and b) assisting with development of safe blood and blood products.

The Health Programme runs projects to fight drug abuse: a) identifying training needs for health workers; b) working with women and families to find out ways of helping prevent and combat drug abuse.

Nurses, doctors and pharmacists in different countries are kept in touch through their Commonwealth organisations.

The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind runs the world's largest sight restoration programme.

Many other charitable organisations work with the deaf, children in need, the disabled, victims of leprosy, the handicapped and the elderly.

Environment and Health

Development aims to improve the well being of the people in a country but the cost to the environment is often too high.

Sustainable development calls for everyone to co-operate in careful use of the environment. Many programmes in the Secretariat are working on ways to manage this.

The Ministers of Health chose 'Environment and Health' as the theme for their meeting in 1992.

The Health Programme has listed countries' priorities and is getting experts to write about Environment and Health so that countries can work out practical solutions for their particular problems.

NB The activities on the following pages are mainly designed for rural communities in developing countries but could be adapted to other situations.

ACTIVITY 1

Level: Primary/secondary

Health scouts

What health services are available to the community?

Often there are many people in the community with different kinds of health knowledge:

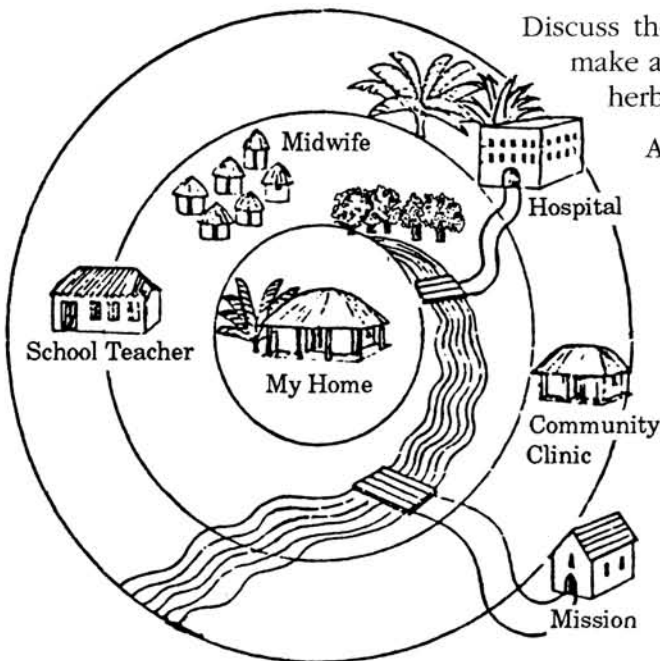
- People who know how to make herbal remedies
- Women who help at childbirth
- People who know about first aid
- Trained health workers in hospitals and clinics

Children can find out where such people can be found in their community and what their special health knowledge is.

Discuss these things with the children and let them make a list of the people, e.g. clinic sister, midwife, herbalist.

Ask the children to make a health services map of their community. On it they can mark where to go for help. Circles can be drawn to represent each hour's walk from home.

The children could play games using their maps and asking each other, for instance, 'If somebody gets burnt by the cooking fire, who will you get to help and how long will it take?'



Health map for our village

Helping to care for the health of others

There are many ways in which children can help in looking after the health of others. For example, they can become helpers at the health clinic. Teachers and health workers would need to plan this together, but some ways in which children can help are:

- Weighing babies, measuring arm circumference and filling in growth charts
- Organising play groups for children waiting with their mothers
- Acting as interpreters for mothers and health workers, to pass on instructions for feeding programmes or treatment
- Helping to cook at feeding demonstrations
- Helping to clean up at the clinic



ACTIVITY 1: CONTINUED

Carrying out an immunisation survey

Children can find out whether babies and young children have been immunised against diseases like tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis and measles. They can assist health personnel collect these health statistics as well as spreading the message about immunisation clinics.

On Commonwealth Day

- Children can make up and perform a play about getting help from different people in the community.
- Display results of surveys; community health maps; project work.
- Invite all the people who have given information and ask them for their comments on the work produced.

ACTIVITY 2



Level: Primary/secondary

Our community – making it healthier

The activities below are based on the idea that a community can become healthier:

When the people in it understand better what their problems are and how they are caused;

When the people communicate with one another and discuss what they can do to make their lives better;

When they act to improve community health.

Children are important members of the community and can play a part in making a better neighbourhood. These activities are designed to:

- Encourage children to find out the factors which contribute to health or disease
- Encourage children to think about how the community can help its children
- Lead older children to think about actions they themselves can take to improve matters
- Help children find ways of passing these ideas on to younger children

Mapping the community

This could be done using copies of maps already prepared, or children could make their own maps. They need first to discuss what should be shown on the map, e.g. they could identify:

- Areas where animals and insects spread diseases
- Areas where accidents could easily happen
- Areas where people spread diseases

ACTIVITY 2: CONTINUED

In some schools, and with younger children, it will be difficult to make a map of the neighbourhood; instead they can make a plan or a picture map of:

- Their home
- The school
- The way to school



Deciding what can be done

Children could look at their map and talk about what they have found. They need time to discuss what can be done and by whom. They may decide that action should be taken by different groups within the community.

Children themselves could tell other children in the school about their work. They could try to make their school a healthier place. They could talk with their parents about how improvements have been made in the past. They could talk with teachers about what the school could do.

Community action can be explored. Role play and drama can help the children understand how communities make decisions. Children can play the parts of council members, policemen, health aides, agricultural officers, elders and teachers. They could hold a simulated council meeting to discuss village and health problems.

Children could spread ideas to their friends and families. Teachers could remind them that sharing expertise is also an important part of the way the Commonwealth works.

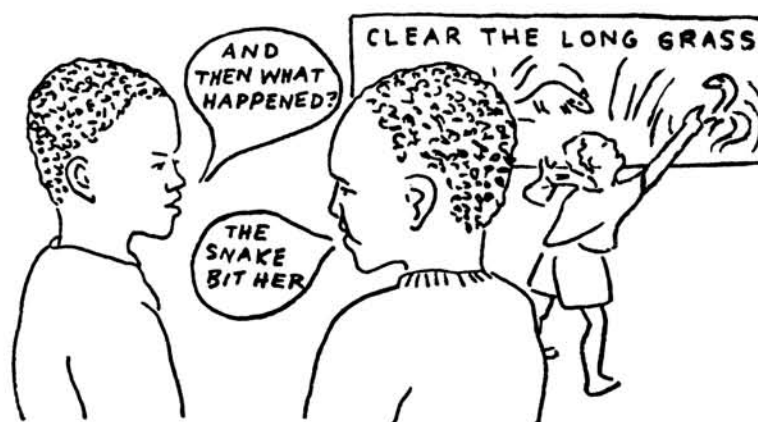
Children could organise action campaigns and games e.g. 'A clean school compound'.

ACTIVITY 2: CONTINUED

Other ideas

Understanding and communication can be improved by various activities. Older children could become involved in:

- Writing books or reading cards for younger children
- Drawing posters and helping younger ones to talk about them



Talking about posters

- Designing health games to play with younger children
- Making plays and puppet shows for younger children
- Organising small children into teams to compete in cleaning up activities



A 'council' meeting

On Commonwealth Day

- Children's work – maps, posters, reading cards, drawings etc. – can be displayed.
- Children can give a performance of the 'council' meeting to discuss community health problems and plans for action.
- A local health worker who has been involved in the action campaign can be invited to speak about progress made and future plans.

ACTIVITY 3



Level: Primary/secondary

Producing healthy food

Children could discuss what kinds of food are needed for healthy growing and which are the high energy foods.

Children set up their own food 'market'. They could make play money to buy food for the family. They could plan the cheapest healthy menu. They could visit the local market to observe prices of foods there.

Children could plan and cook healthy meals at school. Parents could be invited to help teach the children.

Young children could be encouraged to plant a quick-growing vegetable plant or fruit tree, e.g. tomato, in a pot. They could watch it grow and then plant it in their garden at home.

Each class could plant vegetables and fruit trees in the schoolyard. The produce could be taken home or used in school meals.

Each class in the school could measure the height and weight of everyone in the class. Grades 5 and 6 could also help to measure the younger children. All these measurements should be written up on a poster on the wall. This activity can be carried out every 3 months and the results compared.

Children could take their younger brothers and sisters who are under five to be weighed each month.

On Commonwealth Day

Work in progress and the result of projects can be displayed

Education for development

Education is an important area of Commonwealth co-operation, made easier by the broad similarity of educational systems in member states. Many different activities are undertaken:

Commonwealth Ministers of Education meet every three years to discuss what practical measures need to be taken.

The CFTC provides educational advisers to governments and institutions.

The Fellowships and Training Programme and the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan enable people to study or train in other Commonwealth countries.

The Education Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat holds conferences, workshops and training courses, concentrating on:

- co-operation in higher education
- teacher education
- training for school principals
- education and structural adjustment

- educational development in small states
- science, mathematics and technology education
- developing entrepreneurial skills
- distance education

Educational activities are often supported by the Commonwealth Foundation.

Distance-education schemes have been set up for Namibian and South African refugees.

DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA



Nandi

Let's make red uniforms for the pioneers.

No, we can't do that because we always make blue uniforms for them.



Mekulu



Nandi

Can you get stamps at a grocer's shop?

No, you can't.



Disho

Namibian artist's illustrations for teaching materials produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) for the Namibian Extension Unit

The Commonwealth of Learning, a new official Commonwealth organisation, was created in 1988 to help distance education centres work together.

Many non-governmental organisations are involved in education too. Among these are:

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) which promotes, in practical ways, contact and co-operation between the universities of the Commonwealth;

The Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA) which operates on a regional basis;

The Commonwealth Association of Science, Mathematics and Technology Educators (CASMTTE);

The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration (CCEA);

The Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults (CAETA).

The Commonwealth of Learning

The Commonwealth of Learning was set up by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1988. Its purpose is to widen access to education and to raise quality through the co-operative use of distance education

Many students throughout the Commonwealth have studied and gained qualifications through distance education, taking courses from open universities and other distance-teaching institutions. Once a good course has been developed, it can in principle be used by students anywhere in the world. That is the fundamental idea behind the Commonwealth of Learning. It provides a mechanism to share educational resources throughout the Commonwealth. Some of its work is technically very simple; to encourage the exchange of printed materials, developed in one country but of use in another. Some is technologically more exciting to set up satellite links between Commonwealth colleges and universities. But its starting point is the determination to use technology to share resources for common educational purposes.

The Commonwealth of Learning started work in 1989. It has set in train a programme of work throughout the Commonwealth for example, encouraging the sharing of teaching material in subjects as varied as accountancy and agricultural extension and helping to get a new Open University in Bangladesh under way. It expects to expand its work in areas that include continuing professional education for teachers and many others, vocational education and training, and education about the environment. It is exploring the ways in which communication technology can help universities and colleges develop and expand their work.

The Commonwealth of Learning is funded by member governments but also raises funds for particular projects. Of course, as a new organisation, it has started small. But it has a large long-term ambition; 'that any learner, anywhere in the Commonwealth, shall be able to study any distance-teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth'.

Training Support for Namibia

In the period before independence, Commonwealth multilateral support helped train about 8,500 Namibians. Hundreds more were trained through bilateral efforts from Commonwealth governments. At the time, the Commonwealth concern was to train skilled personnel from among those exiled for resisting the South Africans.

Since independence, emphasis has shifted to intensive courses for skills in particularly short supply. Three courses in Windhoek (Namibia's capital) have been held for more than 100 diplomatic officers, while senior civil servants from a variety of ministries have received training at special workshops and seminars. Seventy-five immigration officers and twenty-five customs and excise officers have been trained in Zimbabwe.

The Programme has also provided training in agriculture, banking and accountancy, distance education techniques, environment management, fisheries, marine fitting and maritime administration, literacy organisation, nursing, the law, trade union administration, teacher training (including courses for technical school instructors and trainers for women entrepreneurship), and skills development in a variety of technical and vocational fields. Study visits have been arranged so that Namibian officials can benefit from other Commonwealth countries' experience in rural and agricultural development, managing food systems, game utilisation and hunting laws, the protection of elephant, rhinoceros and roan antelope populations, and tourism.

The Commonwealth is also training the police for its new and different role in independent Namibia. This two-year project began in June 1990 and is significantly helped by Britain, Canada and Zimbabwe.

In October 1990, the materials and assets of the Namibian Extension Unit, which had provided distance learning courses for almost 7,000 Namibian exiles since it began in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1981, were formally handed over to the Namibian Government. The Unit has been integrated into the Ministry of Education and Culture as part of its Department of Non-Formal and Adult Education

Adapted from The Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, 1991



◀ *Namibian teenagers flying to India to study with CFTC support*

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Junior/secondary

Creating a school information base

The idea behind this activity is that every community has resources which can usefully be pooled and shared. Collecting the information will also require certain skills and attitudes that are considered essential by the Commonwealth: communication skills, respect for people of different kinds or performing different roles in society, and commitment to co-operation.

Possible sources of information

- libraries
- post offices
- churches
- local and overseas organisations working locally (e.g. Christian Aid, Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind)
- hospitals and clinics
- missions
- parents, teachers, students and other individuals
- train or bus stations, lorry parks
- police stations

In large towns or cities: community advice services, societies for special interests or voluntary work, museums, art galleries, travel agents, etc.

Planning and organisation

The students should decide on the categories of information they are seeking, e.g. health services, local history, women's organisations, cultural archives, etc. Where appropriate they should make appointments to go and see people who may be able to help them. They should explain what they are trying to do. If the school has its own library the school librarian will be a key resource person.

They will need to discuss where in the school the information base could be situated. What shelving will be needed? Who could help make this?

Could local shopkeepers provide boxes which could be used to divide the material into various categories?

Remember that much of the information about the community will not be in written form. If tape-recorders are available students can gather a great deal of information by interviewing people (they should practise this on each other in the classroom first); if there are no tape-recorders students should take notes during interviews and write them up afterwards as information sheets or documents.

If cameras are available, photographs will greatly enrich the information base. Drawings and paintings may also be made.

On Commonwealth Day

Arrange a special opening of the information base. Invite one or more of the people who have provided information to officiate at the formal opening. Invite all the people who have co-operated to make the project possible.

ACTIVITY 2

Level: Infant/primary/secondary

Sharing skills and knowledge

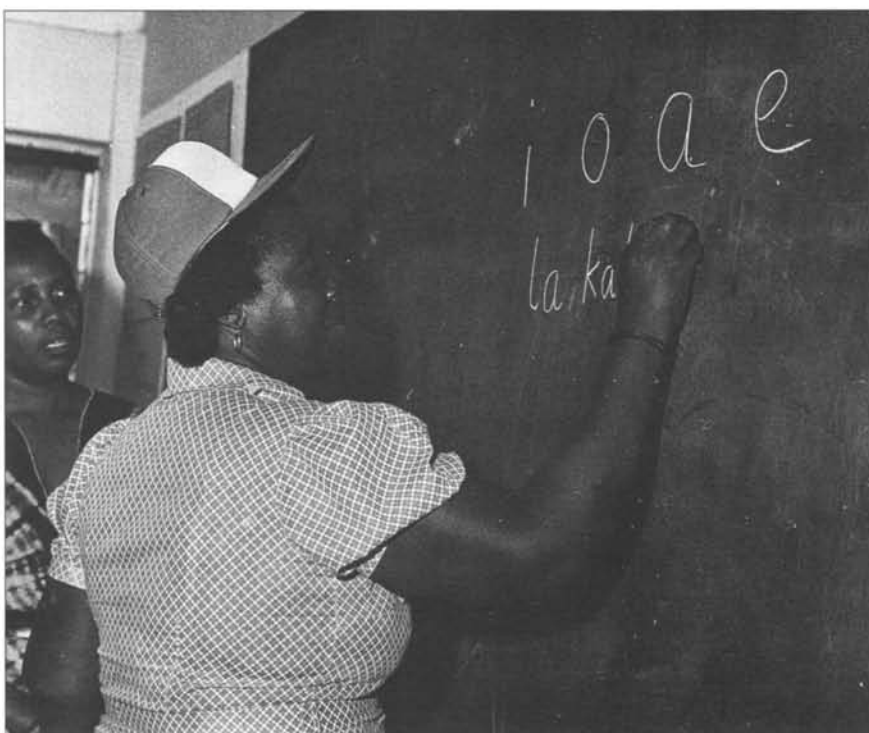
Sharing expertise is a central principle of Commonwealth co-operation. Through its General Technical Assistance programme, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) supplies experts, mainly from developing countries, to work in various development fields as requested by Commonwealth governments. Training programmes are seen as very important, as is regional co-operation.

Much can be shared in the school and in the community. As a pre-Commonwealth Day project a school could devise ways of sharing skills and knowledge. Starting off in the classroom, students can be asked:

What they would like to learn that someone else in the class might be able to teach them;

What skills or knowledge they have to pass on to others.

Examples could be first aid, speaking another language, a handicraft skill, cooking a special dish etc. Girls could teach boys some skills or domestic tasks which are conventionally the province of girls alone; boys could teach girls skills they do not normally have the opportunity to acquire. Over a number of weeks students can become involved in teaching or learning new skills, or both. Obviously the teacher must ensure a structure and support for this project.



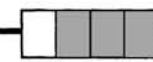
A more ambitious project is for the school to share skills with the outside community. Would it be possible, for example, for older students to help with literacy teaching? This should only be done after very careful consultation with the head teacher, governors, parents associations and local community groups.

◀ *Adult literacy programme in the Seychelles: learning to write*

On Commonwealth Day

Display of work/performances by those who have acquired new knowledge and skills.

ACTIVITY 3



Level: Junior/secondary

Making toys and games for young children

Teachers can discuss with older children (say top junior upwards) why children need to play. (They learn mental, social, creative and physical skills through activities they enjoy.)

Children can then talk together about the different toys they could make for their younger brothers and sisters or other small children, and where they should go to collect materials. There are many sources in the community:

From shops

- scraps of cloth
- packing materials
- cartons
- bottle tops

At home

- tins
- boxes
- gourds
- old or broken toy parts

From local craftspeople

- scraps of wood
- bits of metal
- scraps of leather

From environment

- cornstalks
- stones
- shells
- cloth
- clay
- sand
- grasses
- seed pods
- leaves

Older children must be reminded to make sure that toys for young children are safe to use. They must avoid using:

- Things with sharp edges
- Small pieces which young children can swallow or put up their noses
- Plastic bags, which can cause suffocation.

Different lessons can be used for making play materials.

The art and craft lesson

Toys, e.g. cars, lorries, dolls, models.

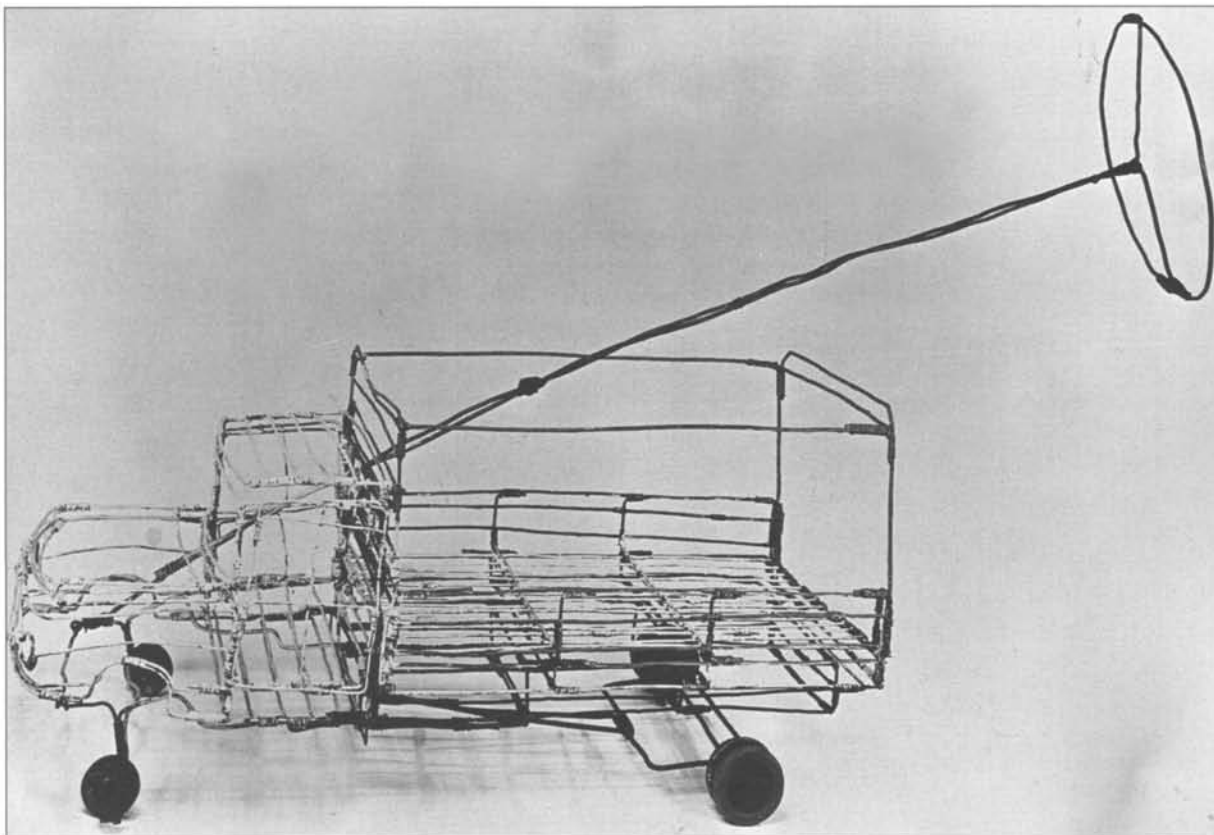
Games equipment e.g. balls, hoops, ropes.

Puppets.

Building blocks.



ACTIVITY 3: CONTINUED



Wire trolley made by children

The language lesson

Books with stories and pictures.
Reading cards with pictures and words.
Posters and charts.

The maths or science lesson

Puzzles, shapes and dominoes.
Games e.g. Snakes and Ladders.

The music lesson

Instruments, drums, rattles and flutes.
Collections of songs and singing games for children to sing and play.

Other people may be able to help:

Craftspeople and parents may be needed occasionally to provide skills and labour;

Teachers may need to help children raise money for some materials;

Headteachers may be needed to arrange for the school to be used for playgroups;

Local women's groups or health workers may be needed to explain why children need to play.

On Commonwealth Day

- Put on displays of toys and games.
- Organise activity workshops and play groups for young children, using toys and games made in class.

Women and development



Air-traffic controller in the Caribbean

The Women and Development Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat was set up in 1980 to work for the advancement of women within the Commonwealth and to promote their concerns within development. It works with governments to help meet the needs of women. It also helps women themselves to press for their own interests, and the well-being of their families.

Work undertaken so far includes:

Training women in senior positions to develop more skills in organisation and communication. Pointing out how women make contributions to their societies and national economies. Showing the dangers to the whole community of ignoring women when making economic policy.

Working to help governments and officials to make laws to assist women who are beaten by their husbands. Training police forces in sensitive but effective handling of cases of violence against women.

Developing a training programme to help young unemployed girls who want to start their own businesses.

Developing a training programme to help rural women protect their environment.

Helping to make school text books more fair and equal in the way they present ideas about men and women.

Working with other departments of the Commonwealth Secretariat, e.g. with the Health Programme in explaining the dangers of misusing dried baby milk, and with the Export Marketing Division in providing export training for women.

Helping governments set up women's bureaux (special departments for women) and providing training on how to include women in development activities and policies.

Family tensions over women's time and income

Eva lives in Northern Zambia and is an ex-nurse, married with four young children. Since 1982/3, she and her husband have been growing maize and other food crops, helped by government loans. They also sell beans, groundnuts and caterpillars. With the dramatic increase in the producer price of maize, Eva expanded the farm. Eva found her labour time heavily used. After intense struggles with her husband, she was able to keep control over part of the income from the maize. But she could not keep up the production of the traditional food crops, such as beans and caterpillars, which had brought her an income in the past. There was also some conflict between time spent on maize production and on household tasks. Her husband spent less time than Eva on crop production but gave her no help with household tasks. In the busiest periods Eva was often forced to leave the youngest children in the care of her eight year old daughter while she worked in the fields.

Adapted from a case history prepared by Alison Evans,
Institute of Development Studies, Sussex.

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Secondary

Survey on attitudes to and needs of women

If the school is co-educational, girls should take the lead in devising the questionnaire and carrying out the survey. Questions should be designed to elicit answers revealing attitudes towards the status and role of women: the work they should/could do, their role in domestic life, child-rearing etc., their health and leisure needs, their part in national development, their right to gainful employment and control over their incomes. It should also seek to identify what women (and girls) need and want in terms of skills and resources to enable them to fully participate in society. It may be helpful to apply the questions to areas such as health, education, employment, agriculture, the family, politics etc. Some sample questions are given below:

Who are responsible for the following jobs and activities:

	Men	Women	Both
cleaning the house	☐	☐	☐
gardening	☐	☐	☐
running the government	☐	☐	☐
looking after children	☐	☐	☐
cooking meals	☐	☐	☐
running factories	☐	☐	☐

Who should control how money is spent in families?

How many hours of leisure/relaxation do people need per day?

☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐

ACTIVITY 1: CONTINUED

The results of the survey can then be analysed and discussed. Students can identify where attitudes need to be changed and where more provision for women/girls is needed.

They may want to put forward proposals for changes in the curriculum e.g. the introduction of vocational skills, management skills, book-keeping and learning about labour-saving technology, access to credit, land ownership, etc. They could also consider which of these new areas of learning could be undertaken in primary schools.

ACTIVITY 2



Level: Junior/secondary

Imagine the worst

In groups, students discuss what would happen to the town or village if all the women and girls were spirited away. What work would be left undone? How would the town or village survive? Students then list on the board all the things that women do in the community.

ACTIVITY 3



Level: Junior/secondary

Examining media images of women and men

Teachers can encourage discussion, in groups, of popular television programmes, magazines, comics and newspapers, with a view to analysing how male and female characters are portrayed (e.g. clever/stupid, confident/shy) to see whether gender stereotyping emerges. They may be able to acquire a few publications from other Commonwealth countries and see whether a similar pattern emerges in these. The students should then discuss in what way the media images may be inadequate, untrue, offensive etc. What changes would they like to see in the media's attitudes: What action can they take themselves?



Follow-up

Students write an imaginary radio news programme (or newspaper) in which all the leading figures are women and all the main news items are about things that concern women. Discuss what the news items would be about, what is important to women, whether it is different from what is talked about in the news.

ACTIVITY 4



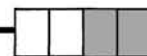
Level: Junior/secondary

Interviewing women about the past

Each student could interview her/his mother, grandmother or an older woman they know very well, and find out what life was like for women and girls when she was young. The student can ask about her education; what work she did as a child; what home life was like; how she met her husband and got married; what the major events in her life were; what people used to do when they were sick or having a baby; what groups or community organisations there used to be; how homes and villages/towns have changed.

After the interviews students compare what they have learnt about the past with modern life for women, decide which is better or worse, what has changed and what has stayed the same.

ACTIVITY 5



Level: Secondary

Finding out about women's needs in the community

Again this is an activity where girls can take a leading part.

Students could talk with women in their own families and with local women's organisations and find out what they see as the major problems faced by women and the main priorities for action.

- How much time do women spend carrying water and firewood?
- What problems do they face in agricultural work - weeding, sowing, planting, watering and harvesting?
- Are they able to earn an income?
- Are they being by-passed by local development projects?
- Are they being included on training schemes e.g. learning new technology?
- What about access to credit?
- Do they have access to literacy schemes/continuing education?

After discussing the information they have gained, they could try to identify ways in which they may be able to help women in the community.

Could they assist with literacy teaching? Could they share some of the skills they learn in school but which their mothers or other older women in the community may not have had the opportunity to learn?

Could they (boys and girls) help provide labour in bringing clean fresh water to the village? Could they help maintain waterpoints?

Could they devise ways in which women can save labour and energy when carrying out agricultural or domestic tasks?

NB These questions should be adapted according to the location and circumstances, e.g. urban/rural, industrial/agricultural etc.

ACTIVITY 5: CONTINUED



A women's meeting in Tokelau

On Commonwealth Day

- Questionnaires, charts, results of surveys etc. can be exhibited.
- Women whom students have worked with can be invited to take part in celebrations, to contribute their ideas and skills.
- An open discussion could be held on possibilities for further action benefiting women.
- Students could make up a humorous play called *The Day the Women Left* based on the discussions in Activity 2.

Action for industry

Industry is essential to development. Local industries help develop agriculture by providing inputs such as tools and agricultural machinery and by processing agricultural raw materials such as sugar, and rice, fruits and vegetables. The creation of industrial employment in rural areas slows down population migration in towns. When countries are able to turn locally available raw materials into manufactured goods they can sell them internationally for higher prices and earn foreign exchange to pay for goods that have been imported. If industrial development is well-planned it brings an improvement in the quality of life by increasing national income and by providing for basic human needs such as food, clothing and housing. It also increases local skills and capabilities.

The Industrial Development Unit (IDU) is a division within the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC). Like all CFTC divisions it responds to requests for technical assistance from Commonwealth developing countries. It helps to set up new industries and to reactivate or improve existing industries and concentrates on the poorer countries. Here are some of the areas of work it has been involved in:

Food production

- rice milling in Guyana
- chicken and egg production in Antigua
- bread manufacture in Uganda
- fish processing in Trinidad and Tobago
- pineapple chunks and juice in Zambia
- palm oil in Ghana and Nigeria

Textiles and clothing

- children's school uniforms in Montserrat and St Kitts and Nevis
- T-shirts in Kenya and Antigua
- woven cloth in Guyana and Nigeria
- knitwear in Ghana
- footwear in Kenya and Trinidad

Building materials and housing

- clay bricks and roofing tiles in Sierra Leone
- low-cost housing from laterite soil in Ghana and Malawi
- construction lumber in Dominica and Guyana
- cement and lime in Malawi, Zambia and Uganda
- corrugated steel roofing in Antigua

Medical supplies

- antibiotics in Malaysia
- bandages in Guyana
- tablets and capsules in Malawi and Uganda
- intravenous fluids in Lesotho

Pollution control

- mining effluent in India and St Lucia
- leather tannery effluent in Malawi
- palm oil effluent and smoke pollution in Ghana

Recycling of scrap materials

Scrap metals

In Botswana, Lesotho, Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda, five of the countries linked through the Southern African Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), the IDU has helped set up hand-tool manufacturing units. Technicians from India, where blacksmithing skills are traditional, have helped the villagers make tools from scrap metal such as vehicle springs and axle shafts. They are now making:

axes	forks	chisels	hoes	shovels
hammers	sickles	slashers	punches	

Waste paper

In Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Guyana IDU has helped set up small units to convert waste paper into stationery items like envelopes and writing paper.

Waste rubber

In Kenya, IDU has helped to establish a large factory, the first of its kind in Africa, that can make rubber products such as gumboots from old truck, bus and tractor tyres.

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Top primary/secondary

Re-cycling material

Students could collect scrap metal, waste materials, discarded machine parts and broken furniture and try out ways of recycling them for new uses. If metalwork, woodwork or technical drawing classes are run in the school, projects could take place within these lessons and under the guidance of the teachers responsible.

If students make a careful study of their local environment, including their homes, it may be possible to identify areas of work where a simple gadget, tool, or container would make a task less arduous. In farming, for example, women are often not consulted when new machinery is introduced and it is important to find out from them what their needs are.

ACTIVITY 2



Level: Secondary



Constructing a building for the school

In rural areas in developing countries students may be used to taking part in the construction of domestic buildings. Does the school need an additional building? Is it possible to identify local building materials and to plan a simple functional building? Students may possibly be able to work jointly with adults in constructing the building.

◀ *A bricklayer on a self-help project in Zambia*

ACTIVITY 3



Level: Primary/secondary

Making equipment for a play area

Young children need a safe and interesting place to play in. Older students can help by making equipment for this. First they should decide what natural materials can be used. For example, the soil itself can be used for making slides. Fallen trees and steep banks are good places to climb and slide. Large stones or ends of poles can be laid out for stepping and balancing games.

Trees have many different uses. They can be used for climbing, perhaps with a few steps built into difficult places. Simple swings can be made from rope and old tyres can be hung from strong branches. A long thick rope with a series of knots about one foot apart is good for climbing up into the tree. It may be possible to build a slide coming down out of the tree.

ACTIVITY 3: CONTINUED

Trees also provide shade for younger children playing with water and sand. Cut an old tyre in half and fill it with water. Provide materials that will float (wood, plastic) or sink (stones, metal). Provide hollow reeds and containers of different sizes. Use the other half of the tyre for sand and in it put bits of wood, containers, gourds.

Where there are no trees, children can still climb if they have a climbing frame. Old tyres can be used for tunnels. Odd bits of wood may be used to make balancing boards or see-saws.

(See also Making toys and games for young children, page 57.)

Using and preserving natural resources

Helping developing countries exploit their natural resources and taking action against environmental degradation are important concerns for the Commonwealth Secretariat and CFTC:

Science Council

The Commonwealth Science Council's work has included:

- a major 10-year programme on energy resources in Africa
- finding and evaluating groundwater resources
- promoting sustainable use of plants which survive environmental extremes and supply food, fodder, fuel or fibre
- assisting international efforts to preserve rainforests
- helping small island states exploit their water resources

Economic Affairs

The Economic Affairs Division has prepared studies on:

- the socio-economic and other impacts of changes in climate and sea level on member countries
- ways of promoting environmental conservation for sustainable development, including special provision for the needs of small states and for a gender perspective
- The economic consequences of natural disasters and how to cope with them

Food Production and Rural Development

The Food Production and Rural Development Division has been involved in sustainable land use, fishery and forestry practices:

- post-harvest conservation of food crops, fish and dairy products for small producers
- low-cost solutions to foster conservation farming for small farmers
- sustainable methods of utilisation and conservation of African rangeland resources
- the conservation and sustainable use of forests in Guyana
- fish handling, marketing and distribution in the South Pacific

Mapping the sea's riches

The Commonwealth Science Council, The Indian Government and Commonwealth Caribbean countries are partners in a marine resources project in the Caribbean. The economies of Caribbean nations are tied to tourism and the export of commodities, both of which bring an erratic income, so they are conscious of the need to tap their most important resource of all: the sea.

The project initially trained a group of Caribbean scientists on how to collect marine resources data of all kinds including physical, chemical, biological and geological information. The trained scientists as well as Indian scientists later collected the data on the Caribbean sea. The collated data are now at designated centres in the Caribbean and are being used to obtain information on the natural resources in the waters surrounding the Caribbean countries.

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Secondary

Monitoring pollution

With the assistance from science teachers, students may be able to undertake surveys of water, ground and air pollution. Can the source of the pollution be identified? (Animals? Fertilizers and pesticides? Industrial emissions?). What can be done to reduce pollution? What could be done to raise public awareness of the problems? What measures can be taken by the community itself? What further action is needed? Could students help organise a campaign?

Students can help to communicate important messages about keeping water clean by making simple posters for display in the school and local community.

Do's and Don'ts of Water



ACTIVITY 2



Level: Infant/primary/secondary

Planting trees

Students may be able to take practical action to conserve the environment by planting seedlings, either in the school grounds or in the local community. They should choose spots where trees will be particularly useful in terms of giving out oxygen, providing cover and helping prevent soil erosion.

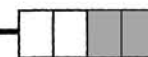
On Commonwealth Day

- Invite a member of a local environmental action group to address the school and its visitors.
- Display results of surveys and campaigns.
- Hold a tree-planting ceremony.

Promoting exports

The CFTC assists member countries in increasing their earnings from exports. Its Export Market Development Division carries out market surveys, provides experts in marketing, mounts training courses in export sales techniques, and organises 'buyer-seller meets' and contact promotion programmes.

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Secondary



Market in Papua New Guinea

Organising a mock 'buyer-seller meet'

Students play the parts of buyers from one country or sellers from another. It may be easier for students to relate to the activity if the country doing the selling (or, where appropriate, the one doing the buying) is their own. The students decide what products are to be promoted, which country is likely to be interested in buying, whether the products need to be adapted to meet the requirements of the export

market, and how they should be packaged and presented. Advertising brochures can be prepared. An exhibition of products should be attractively mounted for the buyer-seller meet. Sellers explain the qualities and advantages of their products and try to persuade buyers to place orders; buyers ask questions about the products and put forward their views of what will sell well in their country.

ACTIVITY 2

Level: Infant/primary/secondary



Sunday open-air market in Sri Lanka

Market trading

Children can be given an experience of trading and promoting products by running their own miniature market. Each brings one or more items from home, or makes an item e.g. in woodwork or home economics classes. Toy money could be used with young children, or if real currency is used the money raised could be donated to a local development project of the children's choice.

Teachers could consider ways in which this activity could be designed to increase understanding of the idea (inherent in the buyer-seller meet) of bringing one group of people into contact with another for the purpose of economic exchange. Perhaps the school could organise a market for the outside community; or one group within the school could make the physical arrangements for the market and deal with advertising and promotion, while another is responsible for production.

On Commonwealth Day

A buyer-seller meet could be enacted before an audience. The various stages before the meet takes place, and involving the expertise of the Export Marketing Division, could be shown as a series of very short scenes. At the buyer-seller meet itself the general hubbub and activity of trading can be 'frozen' at intervals: while everyone else remains silent and motionless two traders engage in a conversation; the general activity resumes, followed by another 'focus' on a different buyer and seller, etc.

Youth participation

Most Commonwealth countries have very young populations, and helping youth fulfil its potential and participate fully in society are important Commonwealth concerns.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), whose headquarters is at the Commonwealth Secretariat, provides a variety of services to support young people and operates out of four regional centres in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. It helps train youth workers, promotes exchange of experience and information and gives awards for youth initiatives.

Important themes for the CYP include the following:

Enterprise and employment

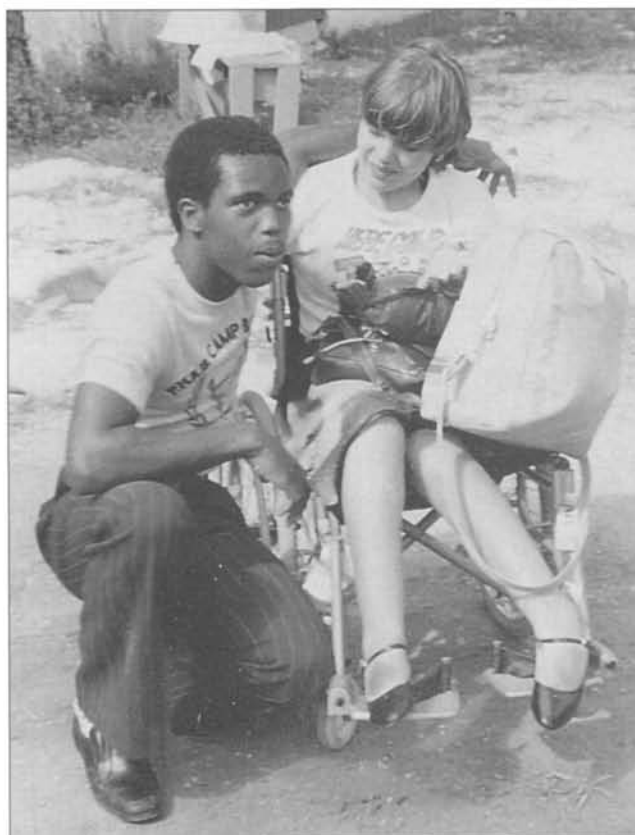
CYP works with governments to encourage enterprising young people through training programmes, the production of learning materials, direct support to pioneering youth enterprise projects, identification of examples of good practice, and recognises that enterprise skills are relevant in every walk of life, not only in small business development.

Young women and development

CYP emphasises the development of young women and their participation in the process of national development. CYP addresses a number of issues from young women's perspectives and gives funds to young women setting up small businesses and monitors the obstacles they face.

Literacy

CYP's youth-oriented literacy programme utilises the special characteristics of youth groups, such as their community bases, to tackle illiteracy. Young people with literacy skills serve as teachers, delivering programmes to their seniors as well as their peers and younger brothers and sisters.



◀ *About a dozen Commonwealth voluntary organisations work mainly with young people or children. One of these, the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (see p.81) organises educational visits and exchanges between young people in Britain and other Commonwealth countries.*

Environment

CYP runs workshops on youth participation in environment programmes, produces sets of learning materials and offers young people opportunities to record on video their assessment of the major environmental issues in their communities for use by television companies and by youth, community, environmental and welfare groups as a training tool.

Health, drugs and AIDS

CYP assists governments to address youth health and welfare concerns such as raising the awareness of AIDS and the steps young people can take to avoid contracting the disease, producing training materials and conducting workshops to individuals and groups to explore the value of counselling, group work, peer education approaches to drugs issues.

Drug addiction is wrecking the lives of more and more young people all over the world. Finding the right way to tackle a very complex problem is not easy, but young people must be involved in finding solutions. A CYP conference, Dealing in Solutions, brought together 72 young people from 46 Commonwealth countries, all working in the drugs field, to thrash out ideas and recommendations for action.



Posters produced for the CYP conference in Malaysia



A scene from 'Alan' part of an anti-drugs campaign launched in Britain in 1988/89

Youth Policy Development

CYP plays vital role in assisting governments to formulate National Youth Policies through its detailed knowledge of the problems young people face; its encouragement of a high level of youth participation; and its research into the kind of youth policies that work.

Some recent Youth Service Awards

Barbados

Youth to youth project, set up by 10 young people concerned with the use of drugs by young people. It offers counselling services, drugs information and leadership training and targets its work at schools, youth organisations and delinquent youth.

Canada

Operation Surveillance Anjou mounted a play written by a 16 year old girl on the growing problem of juvenile prostitution. Its aim is to improve communication between young people and adults and reduce the risks of drug abuse and prostitution. The play has been presented to other youth groups and schools.

Malaysia

Youth Entrepreneurial Programme provides self-employment to its young members who in return contribute to the development of the local community. The employment projects include poultry and cattle rearing, printing, tailoring, and automobile workshops.

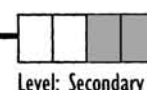
Nigeria

Oba Akenzua II Scout Camp Complex provides year round camping and training facilities for scouts all over Bendel State and throughout the rest of Nigeria. It also assists in the development of the community by providing health care facilities and introducing literacy programmes. The scouts have set up fish farms and agricultural projects, farming yams, cassava, soya beans, potatoes and maize.

Northern Ireland

Ballywater Youth Club Cross-Community Project promotes friendship between young people from different educational, cultural, social, religious and political backgrounds by holding discussions and debates in an atmosphere free of threat or violence.

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Secondary

Youth participation at school and in the community

Teachers can encourage students to participate in the running of their school. Students can find out how decisions are made in the school and what organisational structures exist. Could these structures be expanded and improved? Students can interview teachers, administrative staff and other students and draw up a proposal for a participatory framework.

How can the school be of use to the community? Are there ways in which young people can participate in local development? Students can talk to as wide a range of people as possible, women and men, if possible tape-recording the interviews. They can discuss all the suggestions made and the problems raised and try to draw up a plan of action.

On Commonwealth Day

After permission has been sought from the interviewees, highlights from the tape could be played to visitors and a report on the community action/youth participation project could be given.

ACTIVITY 2



Level: Mid-upper secondary

Work experience

Young people leaving school may have few opportunities for employment. Unemployment is a growing problem for both Third World and industrialised countries. Schools can help students gain experience of the world of work, and opportunities to contribute to the development of their communities, by organising work experience schemes. Instead of having set ideas, perhaps unrealistic ones, about careers they wish to pursue, students can be encouraged to try out various possibilities, to investigate different ways of helping other people and themselves.

Teachers will need to make contact with local industries, businesses and services and discuss the possibilities, terms, conditions and responsibilities involved. Timetable changes may be necessary and long-term planning will be required in order to avoid clashes with examinations and ensure that the scheme causes minimum disruption. It will also be important to devise ways of assessing the scheme and to allow students to discuss their experiences, report back and make their own assessments.

ACTIVITY 3



Level: Upper secondary

Designing a project for the youth project fund

This is really an extension of the last activity. Students who will soon be leaving school could devise a project which will satisfy a community need and which will involve young people in the economic, social or cultural development of the community. If the idea is thought to be a viable one (particularly if it creates employment and is potentially self-sustaining), the school - or the group of young people - could try to interest their government in applying for a small grant from the Youth Project Fund to help the project get started. All applications to the Youth Project Fund have to meet with the approval of the government and be sent through the department responsible for youth affairs.

On Commonwealth Day

Commonwealth Day is a good occasion for reporting back to the school and to visitors. Students' own records - in the form of diaries (photographs, tapes, reports) - are of particular importance. Local employers who have been co-operative and helpful could be invited to speak about the scheme from their point of view. Special initiatives, e.g. applications to the Youth Project Fund, should obviously be emphasised.