# Embracing Commonwealth Values in Youth Development

## Course Overview

## Introduction

> The Commonwealth recognises that no one, or no country, is perfect. All are journeying, and the Commonwealth pledges itself towards journeying with its members, on the rugged, winding, uphill paths towards the goals of democracy, development and diversity for which we aim.
>
> ~ Kamalesh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General

Welcome to the online course, Embracing Commonwealth Values in Youth Development. Here you and your fellow students from countries across the Commonwealth connect in learning unbounded by space, time, geography and history, at your own keyboard and at your own pace.

This course is designed to equip you with:

- a knowledge and understanding of the key Commonwealth values and principles: citizenship, human rights, participation, democracy, empowerment, robust pluralism and equity.

- a knowledge and understanding of the nature of the Commonwealth, decision-making structures and key areas of work.

- a knowledge and understanding of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth: power, human rights: democratic principles; leadership; political decision making processes; consultation, cooperation, consensus-building.

- knowledge and skills to promote Commonwealth values and practices in youth in development work.

- a knowledge and understanding of conventions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, youth, communities and nations.

We wish you every success.

## About this Website

This website is designed for both online and offline delivery. It is organized by units. Each unit includes information, reflection activities, a quiz and optional readings and resources. These are all designed to help you achieve the learning outcomes that are stated at the beginning of the course.

Students at the Chandigarh Lawn Tennis Association, who are sponsored by
the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Asia Centre.

## Technical Requirements

This standards compliant, simple, fixed width website template is written entirely in **HTML5** and **CSS**, and has been tested in the following browsers:

- Internet Explorer 7 and 8
- FireFox 3.5 and 5
- Google Chrome release 14
- Safari 4 and 5.1

The website has been tested in the following operating systems:

- Windows xp, vista, and 7
- Mac OS-X (Leopard, Snow Leopard, Lion)
- Linux (Ubuntu 11, Fedora 15)

For the best viewing experience, your screen resolution should be at least 1024 x 768 pixels and at least 16-bit colour. Your comuter system should also be equipped with a sound card and speakers or a set of headphones.

## Acknowledgements

### Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)

CYP focuses on these three strategic programme areas:

- Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods
- Governance, Development and Youth Networks
- Youth Work Education and Training

Through these programme areas, CYP:

- Provides skills, resources and contacts for young people to create their own business ventures.

- Strengthens youth governance and youth networks so that they serve young people more effectively.

- Develops youth work as a profession.

- Works with governments to create value for contributions of young people to have a say in how their countries are run.

- Provides learning tools, models, Commonwealth experiences and best practices in youth development across countries and regions.

- Provides opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support young people and their development.

- Builds youth leadership and decision making.

- Helps young people play a greater part in economic and social development.

- Provides a platform for advocacy and mainstreaming youth development in the work of multilateral development agencies

## Commonwealth of Learning

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is the only intergovernmental agency that focuses exclusively on using technology to expand the scope and scale of human learning. It operates on the premise that knowledge is the key to individual freedom and to cultural, social, and economic development.

COL helps governments to develop policies that make innovation sustainable and to build systems or applications that expand learning.

It partners with other multilateral and national development agencies working on the Millennium Development Goals. These include the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), New Zealand's Agency for International Development (NZAID), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the regional development banks, and the World Bank.

The Chair of the Board of Governors is His Excellency, the Honourable Burchell Whiteman, O.J., former Jamaican High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, and COL's President and Chief Executive Officer is Sir John Daniel. The project manager for *Embracing Commonwealth Values* eLearning is Ms. Angela Kwan, COL Learning Manager, International Organizations.

*Embracing Commonwealth Values* eLearning is adapted from Module 6 "Commonwealth Values" of the Diploma in Youth Development Work distance learning programme. The course development team would like to thank all of the following for their advice and feedback provided throughout the materials development process: the original development team of "Commonwealth Values", Henry Charles, Layne Robinson, and Tina Ho.

## COL Course Development Team

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Instructional Designer and Editor: Sandy Hirtz
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## Published by

# Course Overview

The Commonwealth is a political and cultural organisation of great complexity and does its work guided by a philosophy based on certain key values and principles. These are designed to hold its complex and sometimes contradictory social systems together as a coherent whole. This course is designed to equip you with a knowledge and understanding of the key Commonwealth values and principles. The emphasis is on the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth, as defined in the *Harare Commonwealth Declaration* of 1991 – adherence to human rights and democratic principles. For this reason, two of the units will look at the principles of human rights and democracy at a universal level.

The course also explores the values that underpin the way that the Commonwealth actually works: through consultation, co-operation, and consensus building. It will focus on the key concepts of citizenship, human rights, participation, democracy, empowerment, robust pluralism and equity. This course will describe the nature of the Commonwealth as an institution of diverse cultures and traditions, its decision making structures and its key areas of work.

You will be given opportunities for reflection at regular intervals to help you relate the theory to the real world.

# Course Goals

Welcome to the eLearning course, *Embracing Commonwealth Values in Youth Development.* This online course has three goals. The first is to introduce you to a set of values that have come to underpin the Commonwealth – human rights, equity, democracy, pluralism, citizenship, participation and empowerment.

The second goal is to introduce you to the Commonwealth as an international organisation: how it evolved, how it is structured, and what it is trying to achieve. You should be able to develop a sense not just of Commonwealth values, but also of the value of the Commonwealth itself. As a voluntary association of sovereign, independent states, it is unique in its ability to bring together such a diverse range of peoples committed to dialogue and consensus building, where developing and developed country governments sit as equals around the table.

The third goal is to introduce you to the CYP Diploma program. The diploma program is made up of 13 "core" modules, in addition to region-specific modules. The modules cover topics such as enterprise and economic development, youth policy, gender, health, project management, the environment and sustainable development. Each module takes approximately 4-6 weeks of full-time study. More information can be found on the Commonwealth website.

# Course Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that tell you what knowledge and skills you will have when you have worked successfully through the course material.

### Knowledge

When you have worked through this course, you should be able to:

- ◦ demonstrate an understanding of Commonwealth values and principles
- ◦ be familiar with elements of democratic theory and human rights philosophy and practice, and identify the mechanisms through which different rights are protected in democratic systems
- ◦ reflect on how to apply these principles
- ◦ appreciate the value of the diverse cultures and traditions embraced by the Commonwealth.

**Skills**

When you have worked through this course, you should be able to:

- operate different styles of democratic and participatory decision-making, in particular consensual styles.

As further outcomes, when you have completed this course, you will have undergone a process of examining and clarifying your own values. You may also experience certain positive changes in your attitudes. While these changes will be hard to measure, we hope that you will be able to:

- feel positively about cultural diversity and see diversity as something to be celebrated, rather than ignored or feared

- develop the ability to accept that your perspectives need not always be the 'correct' ones

- have an attitude of openness: to search for ways and means to promote and cross-fertilise the values you see among different individuals and sub-groups.

- be honest with yourself, and able to work to ensure that there is no gap between 'what you preach and what you practice'.

As you work through the course, try to be aware of any clarifications in your values and to reflect on them.

# Course Outline

This course is divided into four units.

## Unit 1: Introducing Commonwealth Values and Structures

This unit explores the Commonwealth as an association and examines Commonwealth principles and values. It looks at the impact of these values both for the Commonwealth and for the global community.

This unit also explores how these values are put into practice through the work of the Commonwealth. It introduces the concepts of consensus decision making, co-operation and consultation, which form the heart of how the Commonwealth works. These processes will be discussed with reference to the structure of the Commonwealth, and the operation of the Heads of Government Meetings and the Secretariat. The latter part of this Unit relates citizenship to Commonwealth values.

## Unit 2: Human Rights: Universal Values

This unit introduces human rights both as a philosophy and in practice. It outlines different categories of human rights and discusses a number of important international human rights instruments, including the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and key Commonwealth human rights documents.

## Unit 3: Democratic Values and Structures

This unit presents democracy both as a style of government and a set of values – including pluralism and diversity, citizenship and respect for human rights. The issue of rights versus responsibilities is debated. Democracy as a style of government is explained, and several of the ways the Commonwealth Secretariat supports democratic cultures in member countries are examined. Finally, three different styles of decision-making are outlined.

## Unit 4: Commonwealth Values and Youth Development

The final unit in this course explores participation and empowerment and discusses how these can be facilitated in decision-making. Working with democratic styles of leadership, in particular through consensus, is suggested as a way to encourage empowerment.
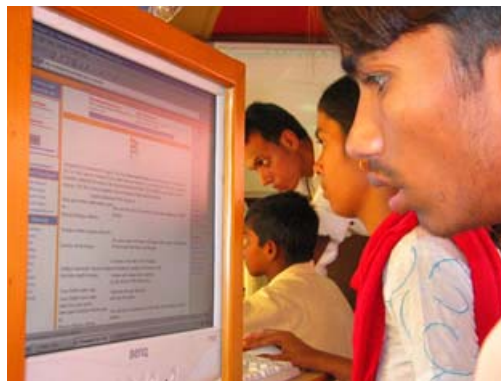
# Course Options

This course may be taken for credit or audited (read only). Those wanting a certificate and credits transfer will need to complete an online Learning Journal or ePortfolio.

## Non-Credit Option

Students choosing the non-credit or audit option work through the materials independently for personal professional development.

## Credit (Certificate) Option

Students choosing the credit certificate option complete reflective assignments in an online Learning Journal or ePortfolio.

## Assignments for Certificate Students

This course is divided into four units. Each unit addresses some of the learning outcomes. Certificate students will complete reflective tasks in an online learning journal to demonstrate competence in achieving the learning outcomes.

### Methods

Your work in this course will be assessed by a review of your online Learning Journal or eJournal.

### Learning Journal

Educational research has shown that keeping a learning journal is a valuable strategy to help your learning development. It makes use of the important faculty of reflecting on your learning, which supports you in developing a critical understanding of it. For certification in this course you are required to participate in ongoing journal reflection. This reflection will be facilitated through Mahara, an online ePortfolio application. The Learning Journal is where you will record your thoughts and feelings as you are learning. Although there are specific activities that you are asked to reflect upon, you may write in your online learning journal, eJournal, as often as you want.

Every insight you get that helps you clarify your values can find its way into your eJournal. Record your thinking about what you are learning:

- ◦ Does what you learn confirm what you already thought?
- ◦ Does it relate to young people in your country?
- ◦ Does it give you a new way of looking at young people?
- ◦ How might your learning affect the way you work with young people?

In this way, your eJournal will become a diary of your own personal growth.

Your eJournal is intended to carry the 'footprints' of your journey through the learning process about values and possibly beyond. The Mahara system is actually designed to be an ePortfolio for life. As such, it can be used for more than just your online reflections. You can use it to maintain a personal or public journal, as an online file storage area, even as a space for an online resume. You can control who sees what and for how long. You can decide to keep some things completely private. You can link with other students in the course.

While Mahara has many powerful features that you are encouraged to explore at your leisure, all you are required to use Mahara for is a platform for your online reflections. This will require you to use only the Journal tool.

## Mahara eJournal Guide

### Creating a Learning Journal

The Mahara Journal application is more powerful than a paper based journal because you can link to other web pages, include images, make it available over the Internet, and control who has access to it. Mahara permits you to keep as many journals as you want to, but you need only keep one for this course.

To get started, register for a Commonwealth Youth Program Mahara account at http://mahara.col.org/.

Click on the "Content" tab and create a profile. Upload a photo and share information about yourself.



To begin a Learning Journal, click the "Content" tab, then the "Journal" tab from the menu below it. Your journal will appear.



## Adding Journal Entries

In a paper journal, you write entries one at a time. The Mahara Journal works in the same way. To add a new entry:

1. Access your "Journal" in the "Content" tab and click "New Entry."

2. Type a title for your journal entry. A 'title' is like an overall heading, similar to the 'subject' line of an email. For your first journal entry, you might want to use the assignment title – e.g. Activity 1.1, Personal and Community Values.

3. The format bar can be used to adjust your text, just like in a word processor. You can insert pictures, link to other Web pages, add bulleted and numbered lists, etc. using the toolbar.

4. You can save your work as a "draft" by clicking on the "draft" button near the bottom on the page. This will allow you to save your work if it is not ready to be published and viewable by other participants in the course.

5. Add tags to highlight key concepts. If you click the "Show my tags" link, the tags you previously created will appear. Click on those that best describe the entry you have just added. If you need to add another tag, just click inside the tag box area, place a comma after the previous tag, and type a new one.

6. You can add attachments, similar to how you add attachments to an email.

7. Allow comments

8. Click on "Save entry" when you are done. The post is now added to your journal.

## Making Your Journal Accessible

Your profile page is what others see when they click on your name or profile picture. You need to add your Journal to your profile page. To do this, click on the "Portfolio" tab, then "Profile Page". From your Profile Page, click on "Edit this page" in the top right corner.

Drag and drop content blocks from the tabs to create your public profile page. From the "Journals" tab, drag the "Journal block" to the page below. You can add other blocks too. When you have added all the blocks you want, drag the blocks around your page layout to position them.

Click on "Done" at the bottom of the page when you are finished. Your page should like something like this.

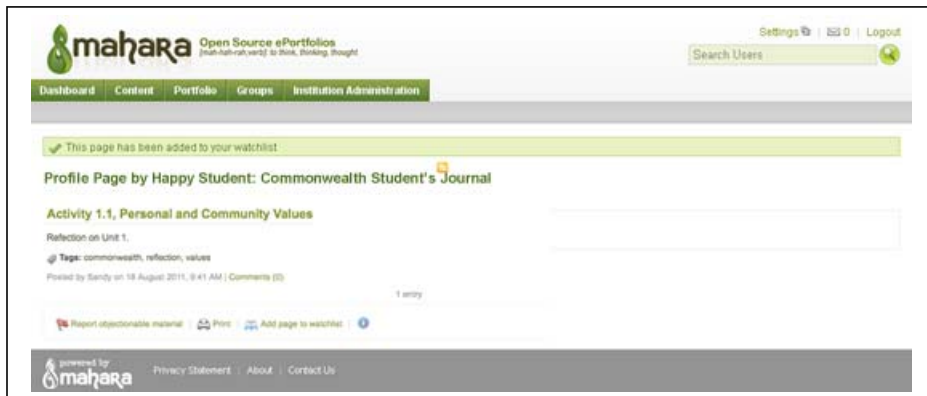### Viewing Feedback and Subscribing to Your View

From time to time, comments and feedback might be added by other students in the course. To access the feedback:

1. Login to your Mahara account.
2. Click on the "Portfolio" tab, then "Profile Page".
3. Click on your Journal.

Feedback will be visible at the bottom of the page. You can receive email notifications once feedback is left for you by clicking the "Add page to watchlist" link that appears at the bottom middle or right of the view. Once activated, an alert that a new comment has been placed will be emailed to you.

The orange RSS button next to the title will allow you to subscribe to the feed.

Here is what your Journal will look like.



A comprehensive set of video tutorials on Mahara is provided by Newham College, London.

## Learning Tips

There are many advantages to studying by distance education – a full set of learning materials is provided, and you can study close to home in your own community. You can also plan some of your study time to fit in with other commitments, such as work or family.

However, there are also challenges. Learning away from your learning institution requires discipline and motivation. Here are some tips for studying at a distance.

1. **Plan** – Give priority to study sessions with your tutor and make sure you allow enough travel time to your meeting place. Make a study schedule and try to stick to it. Set specific days and times each week for study and keep them free of other activities. Make a note of the dates that your assessment pieces are due and plan for extra study time around those dates.
2. **Manage your time** – Set aside a reasonable amount of time each week for your study programme – but don't be too ambitious or you won't be able to keep up the pace. Work in productive blocks of time and include regular rests.
3. **Be organised** – Have your study materials organised in one place and keep your notes clearly labelled and sorted. Work through the topics systematically.
4. **Find a good place to study** – Most people need order and quiet to study effectively, so try to find a suitable place to do your work – preferably somewhere where you can leave your study materials set out ready until next time.

## How Long will it Take?

It will probably take you 25 hours in total to work through the course materials and activities.

Here is an estimate of how much time it might take for each unit.

- ◦ Course Overview

◦ Credit Students - Mahara eJournal Orientation 2 hours
  ◦ Non-Credit Students – 1 hour

- ◦ Unit 1 - 7 hours
- ◦ Unit 2 - 6 hours
- ◦ Unit 3 - 6 hours
- ◦ Unit 4 - 5 hours

## Activities

At the end of each unit there is a list of the main points. There is also a short quiz to help you review your understanding of the unit material. Immediate feedback is provided for each question.

Each unit has reflective exercises designed to get you thinking about aspects of the subject matter. You are asked to reflect on your own opinions or feelings about a topic, with no right or wrong answers.

Certificate students will record thoughts and responses in their eJournal. A time is suggested for each activity (e.g. 'about 20 minutes'). This is just a guide. It does not include the time you will need to spend on any research involved.



## Icons

You will find these icons that tell you what to do:

**Reflection**
Reflect on your own opinions or feelings about a topic.

**Reflection Activity for Certificate Students**
Complete the reflection activity in your Online Learning Journal.

**Self-Assessed Quiz**
A short self-assessed quiz at the end of each unit to give you feedback on your knowledge of the material.

**Case study**
Read these examples and complete any related self-help question or activity.

## Readings and References

There is a section of Readings at the end of each unit. These provide additional information or other viewpoints and relate to topics in the units. There is a list of references at the end of each unit. This gives details about books, articles or websites that are referred to in the unit. It may give you ideas for further reading. You are not expected to read all the references on this list.

**Please note**: In a few cases full details of publications referred to in the course have not been provided, as we have been unable to confirm the details with the original authors.

There is a list of Readings at the end of the course. This includes books, websites and articles referred to in the course and are suggestions for those who wish to explore topics further.