

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Assistant Programme Officer (Education)

Division: Health and Education Unit

Job Grade: Y (Young Professionals Programme)

Reports to: Head of Health and Education

Location: London, UK

Young People in the Commonwealth

Young people constitute more than 60% of the population of the Commonwealth, and the wellbeing and development of this 1.2 billion youth cohort are essential to the success of the Commonwealth and its 53 member states.

Commonwealth sees young people as assets to their societies, with a proven capability to lead change, who should be developed and empowered. It is vital to ensure they realise their individual potential, and to recognise and nurture their ability to contribute to their countries' development, and the success of the Commonwealth.

Health and Education Unit

The Health & Education Unit under the direct supervision of the Deputy Secretary-General (Social and Economic Development) provides closer focus and attention to situations where Commonwealth nations collectively carry high burdens of poverty-related health diseases. It will also actively address education challenges, including the provision of pre-school education which continue to be constraining factors to the achievement of sustainable development outcomes on health and education in the Commonwealth. Given that the attainment of social development targets such as access to education and health are fundamental human rights, the realization that most member countries are still striving to address the underlying social drivers of health and education disparities as well as weak and non-performing social institutions is the bedrock of the Health & Education Unit's work.

The objective and focus of the Health & Education Unit is to support member states through policy analysis and development, regulatory frameworks and systems for strengthening of policies and bridging gaps between policy formulation and implementation. The work approach will be anchored on in-depth research, social policy analysis, documentation of Commonwealth good practices and models in two sectoral areas - Education and Health.

Job Summary

The Assistant Programme Officer (Education) will be responsible for providing technical and administrative support to the Education Programme Section of the Health and Education Unit, specifically to support the delivery of the education work programme, including the design, implementation and management of pan-Commonwealth education research and policy development; and education strategic partnerships. He/she will work in collaboration with the Advisers in Education, and report to the Head of Health and Education Unit.

The Assistant Programme Officer Education role is for a two-year term, as part of a new Young Professionals Programme (YPP). Therefore, as well as the role described above, the Assistant Programme Officer will participate in YPP professional development opportunities and experiences. He/she will also contribute to developing (initially) and strengthening (in future) the YPP. To be considered, candidates must be no older than 27 years old as the date of close of applications.

Key Accountabilities

1. Contributes to the Education strategic direction and operational planning, especially with respect to projects, research and policy work within the education work programme, and thereby the Commonwealth Secretariat 4-year Strategic Plan.
2. Supports the positioning of the Commonwealth as a thought leader in education development, and ensures the relevance and impact of education work, by:
 - Contributing to ground-breaking research on key education issues and opportunities, and promoting knowledge sharing and exchange of the research findings to key stakeholders;
 - Contributing to the development of context-specific research papers, toolkits, resources, guidelines and training programmes, for use by member governments, education leaders and professionals; and
 - Contributing to the building and nurturing of relationships and strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders.
3. Supports the Education team by:
 - Contributing to meet project management requirements, including monitoring and evaluation, of the ongoing projects being implemented within the Education Programme Section.
 - Support the development of speeches, presentations and talking points for senior staff.
 - Providing administrative support, including drafting of correspondences, procurement and processing payment related to the relevant projects.
 - Representing the Commonwealth Secretariat in research, projects and policy networks, forums and meetings as delegated by the Advisers and Head of Health and Education Unit.

4. Participates in professional development opportunities as a participant of the Young Professionals Programme. Contributes to development / strengthening of the programme.
5. Adhere to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and the Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy.
6. Carries out any other appropriate duties as required by Education Advisers and the Head of Health and Education Unit for the efficient operation of the organisation in a continually evolving environment.

Person Specification

This role forms part of the new Young Professionals Programme (YPP), so to be considered, candidates must be no older than 27 years old as the date of close of applications.

Education

- A strong bachelor degree or equivalent, with a significant project management and or research component, in a relevant discipline, such as education, social sciences, or international development.
- A relevant post graduate qualification highly desirable.

Experience

- At least one year of demonstrated work experience in designing and delivering projects. The work experience may be gained through a combination of paid employment, volunteer, placement or internship positions.
- Knowledge of cutting edge education development research and/or projects/policy work highly desirable.
- Experience at a leadership level in an education-led social change initiative or representative organisation highly desirable.
- Experience of working in developing countries highly desirable.
- Experience of working in/with Government, intergovernmental or international NGO organisations highly desirable.

Skills

- High personal standards of excellence.
- Demonstrated commitment to Commonwealth values.
- Strong knowledge of policy/ project design and implementation, research methodologies / institutions / environments.
- Excellent:
 - Verbal and written communication skills in English.
 - Interpersonal skills.
 - Creative thinking and solution building abilities.
 - Strategic thinking and operational planning capabilities.

- Administrative and organisational abilities, including an eye for detail.
- Numerically literate.
- Technologically savvy .
- Ability to work autonomously and in teams, and in a multi-cultural work environment.
- Demonstrated drive and initiative, a self-starter with a can-do attitude.

Competencies

Working with Others

Regularly shares information of value with colleagues
Shows commitment to delivering on key agreements made to colleagues
Makes an effort to view a situation from the other party's perspective as well
Demonstrates awareness and sensitivity to colleagues' pressures
Develops a wide network, including senior level contacts to facilitate activities and further own knowledge
Develops long term relationships across cultures and/or geographical boundaries
Uses relationships to identify the best people to help in the completion of tasks
Tactfully deals with difficult people to gain buy-in and manage their expectations

Communication

Interacts and communicates effectively with internal/external contacts
Ensures information is communicated to all the appropriate people
Provides feedback to more senior colleagues effectively, providing justification where necessary
Uses the correct method of communication, depending on the message and the audience
Anticipates objections in dialogues and prepares convincing responses
Writes reports and papers that are succinct accounts of key information

Developing & Applying Professional Expertise

Proactively identifies how to develop specialist knowledge
Takes learning from previous experience and applies it appropriately
Demonstrates willingness to learn new skills and/or approaches

Respect for Diversity

Works effectively with people from all backgrounds
Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally
Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making
Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group
Identifies biases in systems & processes

Adhering to Principles and Values

Adapts professional style to suit different situations with different individuals where appropriate
Takes ownership of assigned tasks, honours deadlines
Ensures timely delivery of outputs within defined cost and quality standard parameters

Adapting and Innovating

Recognises opportunities for improvement and proposes change with impact and effect
Drives forward improvements and innovations within own area of responsibility, adding value where appropriate
Quickly grasps new concepts and how to apply them
Demonstrates flexibility e.g. by working beyond own remit in order to achieve an objective
Will effectively reorganise activities when faced with changing contexts and demands
Promotes new ideas that are picked up by senior colleagues
Adapts personal style to meet the needs of others

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