



To: All Youth Workers in the Commonwealth

30th July 2014

Dear Colleagues

**Youth Work Week 2014: “*Youth Empowerment through Soft Skills*”
3rd - 9th November 2014**

We are pleased to announce that for the third year running we will be celebrating Youth Work Week across the Commonwealth, from 3rd - 9th November 2014. Youth Work Week celebrates the contribution and achievements of youth workers, youth organizations and young people throughout the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth pays tribute to youth worker practitioners at all levels, for your service and commitment to young people in all our member states. Your commitment and dedication are essential to progress across the Commonwealth in youth development and empowerment.

This year Youth Work Week will be held under the theme ***Youth Empowerment through Soft Skills***. Soft skills are the skills, traits, work habits, and attitudes that all workers across all occupations need in order to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment. These include being dependable, punctual, adaptable, responsible, positive toward work, and appropriately dressed/groomed. Soft skills also refer to such attributes as the ability to get along with others, work in teams, attend to tasks, resolve conflict, work independently, and take initiative. Soft skills help young people succeed not only in employment but also in postsecondary education/training and social situations.

In the weeks leading up to Youth Work Week we hope you will engage the main stakeholders in your society on the how youth workers empower young people with soft skills. We will provide you with a **Resource Kit** with ideas for what you might do, and will support you in getting your message across. We encourage you to plan activities and events to celebrate Youth Work Week, and to tell us about it. Send us your event plans so we can upload them on the Commonwealth’s **Youth Work Week Calendar**.

Last year we introduced the ***Commonwealth Youth Worker Awards*** to recognize the contribution and impact of individual youth workers across the Commonwealth. Based on the success of last year’s Awards, in 2014 we will again be recognising outstanding youth workers across the Commonwealth. The Award highlights exemplary youth workers, showcasing their work, and demonstrating how youth workers are making a positive difference in society. We encourage you to send us your nominations and stories of

outstanding youth workers and their projects so that we can share these with the rest of the world.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme continues to prioritise youth work professionalisation, and we have a number of interesting plans that we hope will raise the profile of / support for youth workers. These include:

- Launch of a new Youth Clubs Manual in November
- Joint hosting of the second *Commonwealth Conference on Education and Training of Youth Workers*, in collaboration with the Government of South Africa and the University of South Africa in September 2015
- Formation of a new Consortium of Academic Institutions for the delivery of Youth Work Training
- Establishment of a Commonwealth Youth Workers Association.

We also plan to facilitate better networking between youth workers, so you can share your good practices and reflect on your contribution to supporting young people.

Please contact the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Division for more information on Youth Work Week or any of these other exciting programmes on l.robinson@commonwealth.int.

We hope you are inspired to make Youth Work Week 2014 one to remember.

Yours sincerely,



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