

Call for Papers, Presentations or Case Studies

The 4th Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work: “*The Power of Youth Work: Forging a Sustainable and Peaceful Common Future*”

Reading, United Kingdom 10-12 July 2023

The Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the National Youth Agency, UK (NYA) and the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers’ Associations (CAYWA) is pleased to announce the 4th Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work. The Conference will be held from 10-12 July 2023 in person and online.

Final date of Proposal Submission: Friday 2nd June 2023

Conference Objectives and Themes

The objectives of the conference:

- The promotion of discussion, debate and exchange between practitioners, Ministers, young people, and other stakeholders.
- Provide a platform to celebrate youth work.
- Provision of opportunities for all stakeholders to liaise and work with senior government officials in co-creating potential actions or strategies to raise the quality of youth work in Commonwealth member states with global and regional partners.
- Facilitation of the building of partnerships between global, regional and Commonwealth member states where possible and appropriate.
- Deliver a virtual platform to significantly widen engagement and provide opportunities for meaningful interaction for those unable to attend in person.

We invite you to contribute to this important discourse by submitting papers, presentations or case studies that align with the conference themes and aims to enhance our understanding, practice, and impact in the field of youth work. The sub-themes for the conference, although cross-cutting, offer a broad framework for exploring various aspects of youth work theory and practice. These sub-themes include:

1. Celebration and promotion of Youth Work

The diversity of youth work across the globe is its richness. This theme encourages the showcasing and discussion of best practice; the trusted, the innovative and the exciting approaches from across the Commonwealth that demonstrate the needs of young people, the scope of methodology and approaches taken, and the impact achieved through youth work.

2. Collaboration, locally, nationally, and internationally both within the sector and across allied sectors

We have strength through partnerships, pulling together our knowledge of young lives, youth work and our practice expertise. This theme explores the purpose, nature, challenges, and benefits of working collaboratively and scopes opportunities for the future, both with our close youth work partners and more widely across professions that support or engage directly with young people.

3. **Collectivism and solidarity across geographies**

Supporting young people in their desire to be active citizens locally, nationally, and globally. This theme will consider how youth policy across the Commonwealth could align, complement, and strengthen youth work for young people. With discussion through different cultural, economic, and spatial lenses, and in indigenous and collective world views, what can be identified as pathways for a collective advocacy that will empower youth work to thrive.

4. **Youth Work's role in the encouragement and development of peace**

The “safe space” is a key concept in youth work. From personal wellness, through to workers interventions in local neighbourhood conflict and peacebuilding, to international solidarity and community development, considerations of peace are integral to the practice. This theme will explore examples of, and the potential for connecting and learning across member countries and discuss the role youth work could play in enabling this, using cross cultural understanding and compassion as a basis for more inclusive and tolerant futures. How do we support young people to find their place, purpose, and voice both in their local communities and global? What roles can youth work play both in easing conflict and embedding peace? It will create opportunities to embed dialogues around social justice (including racial justice, economic inequalities, gender, and inclusion) and its connections to peace.

5. **Development of appropriate training support and opportunities for learning**

A robust, powerful youth work sector calls for training and workforce development to sustain it. A professionalisation of the workforce should be coherent and engages education, training, and continuous professional development. This calls for provision of qualified youth workers working in partnerships with diverse entities including voluntary sector, universities, and professional bodies to raise standards across the whole sector. Youth work is inclusive and is underpinned globally by a rich workforce of professionals and volunteers. Promoting training and development for the whole workforce demonstrates valuing the needs of contemporary, global young people and those that work with them.

Background on Conference

The fourth Commonwealth Youth Work Conference aims to work collaboratively with partners around the globe to shape an inclusive and inspiring platform to celebrate and strengthen the collective impact of Commonwealth youth work and youth workers.

At the heart will be the exploration of youth work theory and practice that supports the education and development of young people worldwide. It will look across shared values, policies, methods, practices, and priorities that we have in common, learning from points of difference and variation. It will create space to share and learn from each other both during and after the conference. It will challenge participants to innovate ways to create sustainable and relevant networks that help us grow youth work. Through our collective

knowledge and experiences, it will enable us to work together in the future, alongside young people, to create a better, and more peaceful world.

The conference aims to elevate Youth Work in the eyes of policy and decision makers.

Participants will leave the conference feeling informed, inspired, equipped, and empowered to continue their work with young people, with a strong sense of their vital role within Youth Work and the aspiration to advocate for more and better for all Commonwealth young people.

The conference is to be centred on key themes and will be addressed through a series of key notes and breakout groups.

These sub-themes, provide a broad framework for the inclusion of opportunities to connect and learn from each other. These are cross cutting, but not exhaustive or prohibitive. This is to ensure that there are spaces to celebrate and share the diversity of youth work innovation from around the globe, in the spirit of learning and collaboration.

Proposal Guidelines

General Instructions:

- a. All submissions for papers, presentations and case studies should be written in English.
- b. All submissions must adhere to the specified formatting guidelines.
- c. Each participant can submit a maximum of two papers.

Abstract Submission:

The abstract should include, where applicable:

1. Introduction/Rationale - Why did you conduct the research or adopt the approach/practice you will present? What problem/challenge was it intended to address/solve?
2. Approach/methodology - Which methods of data collection and analysis were used and why? If based on professional reflection on youth work practice, which methods and processes guided the reflective process? Or which approaches define the practice/initiative being presented?
3. Results/Findings- what are the main issues raised by the initiative? What are the findings?
4. Conclusion/Implications - what do the findings suggest about the solution to the problem? What recommendations do you have for further research or for new/expanded policy or practice responses? How does your reflection contribute to forging peaceful and sustainable future?
5. Include the title of your paper, author(s)' name(s), affiliation(s), and contact details.
6. Clearly indicate the conference theme that your paper aligns with.
7. Abstracts should be submitted in Microsoft Word.

Full Submission:

- a. Full paper should be between 4,000 and 6,000 words, excluding references.

- b. Presentations should be approximately 20 slides.
- c. Case studies should be between 700 to 1000 words, excluding references.
- d. The submission must be written in clear language and be logically structured to include introduction, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion **where applicable**.
- e. Use APA or MLA style for citations and references.
- f. Include a cover page with the submission title, author(s)' name(s), affiliation(s), contact details.
- g. Full papers should be submitted in Microsoft Word format.

Review Process:

- a. All submissions will undergo a review process to ensure fairness and quality.
- b. Papers will be evaluated based on their relevance to the conference theme, theoretical and methodological rigor, clarity of presentation, and potential contribution to the field of youth work.
- c. Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by the specified notification date.

Submission Process:

- a. Ensure that your document is properly labelled with the paper title and author(s)' names.

Important Dates:

- a. Abstract Submission Deadline: Friday 2nd June 2023
- b. Notification of Acceptance: Friday 9th June 2023
- c. Full Paper Submission Deadline: Friday 30th June 2023

Presentation Format:

- a. Authors of accepted papers will be invited to present their work in a suitable session format (workshop, round table, panel discussion, or presentation).
- b. Guidelines for the presentation format will be provided upon acceptance.

Conference Proceedings:

- a. All accepted and presented papers will be included in the conference proceedings, subject to registration.
- b. The proceedings will be made available to conference attendees and may be published online or in print.

Abstract Submission should be sent to youth@commonwealth.int with the email subject 'Proposal Submission - Youth Work 2023' by Friday 2nd June 2023

