MODULE 6: COMMONWEALTH VALUES IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

UNIT 1: Introducing Commonwealth values and structure

A Commonwealth of diversity
Our values are our beliefs about what are the right ways to behave. We have personal values/subjective values and shared values of communities. Values are standards or principles of behaviour. Examples of individual or community values include; respect for elders, honesty in trade, kindness to strangers, etc.

Sources of values are our parents, elders, from teachers, from leaders and people we admire, from religious communities, from our cultural traditions and from our own experience. Values can be said to be our sense of morals while principles are written set of rules.

The origin of the Commonwealth
Commercial interests in the slave and sugar trades was the motivation of early Commonwealth. “Triangular trade” is a term used to describe the driving forces of the slave trade where Europeans sent manufactured goods to trade in Africa for slaves, who were transported to South America, Caribbean and North America as labour for their plantations of raw materials or agriculture products. These products were transported back to Europe.

The legacy of colonisation
+ Roads, railways and ports in developing – were built and strategically located to enhance the export of raw materials and agricultural produce from local areas of production.
+ Schools – were built and numeracy and literacy skills were taught. The language, history, culture and values of the colonial masters were taught, but not those of the indigenous people.
+ Formal legal and political institutions – these were the bourgeois institutions established and the colonial people had limited or no power over their own decisions.

The mandate of the modern Commonwealth
The 1949 meeting in London of Commonwealth Prime Ministers marked the birth of the modern Commonwealth. The initial eight members were New Zealand, Britain, Australia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Pakistan, Canada and India. (NBASPCI)
The Commonwealth Secretariat was established in 1965 and the first Commonwealth Secretary-General was Sir Arnold Smith. Independence from colonial masters marked the beginning of new challenges of political, social and economic development.

The Declaration of the Commonwealth Principles in 1971 in Singapore is known as the Singapore Declaration. Heads of government agreed to promote the following:

- Liberty and equal rights for all citizens
- Democratic values and participation
- Decolonization and self-determination
- Elimination of global disparities in wealth and race
- Peace through international co-operation
The 1971 Singapore Declaration was revised and updated in 1991 in Harare, Zimbabwe, after examining the continuing relevance of the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles in a changing world.

The Harare Declaration bound the member states to work with renewed vigour and strength in the following areas:
- Universal access to education
- Protecting the environment
- Ending apartheid and building a new South Africa
- Combating drug trafficking, abuse and communicable diseases
- Helping small states with their economic and security concerns
- Protect and promote core Commonwealth principles including, democracy, rule of law, just and honest government and fundamental human rights.

Commonwealth values and citizenship
Citizenship is about being included in a society and participating in it, about equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities to ensure better economic, political and social conditions.

The rights of citizens include the right to:
- Own property, marry, etc without discrimination
- Vote and participate in electoral processes
- Choose who governs
- To fair trial before independent court
- Have minimum standards of living
- Freedom of speech, opinion, association, movement etc
- Have access to primary education and basic public services

The responsibilities of citizens include:
- Pay taxes and other legally imposed levies
- Protect the environment
- Respect the needs and rights of others
- Obey laws and behave in socially accepted manner

Commonwealth values in the world
- Human rights as the foundation of democracy and development
- Equality for all humans regardless of gender, race, colour or political belief
- Empowerment through education and participation
- Equity or fairness between nations, generations and protecting the vulnerable
- Democracy to allow expression of opinions and participate in decision-making
- Development based on principles of sustainability
- Peace without which these other values are unobtainable
Putting Commonwealth values into practice

a) **The Commonwealth Youth Programme** - is an example of how the Commonwealth puts its values into practice. The Commonwealth Youth Programme seeks to "promote the Commonwealth values of social justice, democracy and human rights amongst the young people of the Commonwealth. **Commonwealth Youth Programme was founded in 1974** and work to promote youth empowerment through education and training, expanding employment opportunities and increased participation in decision-making.

b) **The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)** - was formed in 1995, where eight Foreign Ministers from Commonwealth countries are appointed and tasked with investigating any serious infringements of the Harare Declaration and recommending measures for collective Commonwealth action aimed at restoring democracy and constitutional rule. As the CMAG intervened in the Sierra Leone civil war from 1991 to 2002.

c) **The Commonwealth and apartheid** - In this example the Commonwealth’s commitment to continuous effort was made over a period of 30 years to bring about an end to apartheid - white minority rule - in South Africa. Mostly achieved through dialogue and debate.

Unit 2: Human rights: universal values

**Human rights** are the rights that every person is entitled to simply by virtue of being a human. Violations of our human rights amount to denials of our basic humanity.

**Two main sets of principles that underpin the concept of human right are:**

1. **natural law principle:** In this principle the concept of human rights is deeply rooted in the idea of "natural law". Natural law principle assumes that there are underlying rational principles of justice and morality that are universal in their nature and apply in all societies and at any time in history.

2. **positive law principle:** “Positive law” means man-made law, created by government and responsive to the needs of the state. Legal positivism denies the existence of natural law and accepts only the justice implied in the law of the state.

Why do we need human rights?

1. **Moral vision** - we need human rights because they give us moral vision of human nature and human dignity. Human rights creates a vision of what life would look like if everybody’s basic humanity was equally respected and protected. War, violence, intolerance and poverty around the world results in daily violations of human dignity.

2. **Political vision** - human rights give us political vision or an agenda for change. If we evaluate our own communities against the standards set out in the Declaration, we can develop an agenda for new policies, laws and development projects to try to improve the achievement of human rights for all. Ie: reducing the inequality gap between the very wealthy and the very poor or between men and women.

3. **Protection** - we need human rights for protection when our legal rights are violated by the state and to encourage justice and fairness in our societies.
How are human rights protected?
Human rights are protected through international conventions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was made a treaty, usually called "Conventions" or "Covenants" to be signed by member states to make them legally binding to observe its terms.

Important Human Rights Conventions
Four important human rights conventions, representing aspects of Commonwealth values, are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commonwealth values</th>
<th>Corresponding human rights conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic rights</td>
<td>The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development and the eradication of poverty</td>
<td>The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality for women</td>
<td>The Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Woman (CEDAW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection for children and youth</td>
<td>The Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
(a) freedom of speech and association
(b) the right to vote and participate in public life
(c) equal treatment before the law
(d) presumption of innocence in law proceedings, until proven guilty
(e) freedom from arrest or detention without any reason
ICCPR also contains a list of "non-derogable rights" or rights specified in a treaty that member states cannot violate under any circumstances. These non-derogable rights are:
- the right to life
- freedom from torture
- freedom from slavery
- freedom of thought and religion
ICCPR also contains two (Optional Protocols) that states my ratify separately. A) Allow for individuals to make direct appeals to the ICCPR monitoring committee for legal redress. B) The abolition of the death penalty.

The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
(a) social security
(b) work, rest and leisure
(c) education
(d) participation of culture
(e) adequate living standards to ensure health and well-being

The Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Woman (CEDAW)
This convention is also known as "Women's Convention" was adopted by United Nations in Sept, 1979. This convention protects the rights of women and girls:
(a) to participate fully in decision-making
(b) to have equal access to education and training
(c) to have equal access to employment opportunities
(d) to enter into marriage with their free will and full consent
(e) to decide on the number and spacing of children
(f) to access health service and adequate nutrition during pregnancy and delivery
(g) to access financial credit and property in marriage
(h) to access support services that enable them to combine work and family responsibilities

The Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC)
This is also known as “Children’s Convention) adopted by UN in Nov 1989, for the right to:
(a) life
(b) protection under the law
(c) freedom of thought
(d) education, health and adequate living standards
Other new areas include the right:
- to adoption and care for those without families
- to have views considered in all decisions that affect them
- to support for those with disabilities
- to protection during periods of armed conflict
- to have contact with their parents
- to protection from sexual exploitation, neglect and abuse

Human rights protection at regional level
Regional governmental organisations also negotiate binding treaties that apply to their members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional organisation</th>
<th>Human Rights instrument</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa Union</td>
<td>African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of American States</td>
<td>American Convention on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>European Convention on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Con you prioritise human rights?
Mostly rights are divided into 3 different categories.
1. **Civil and political rights**: these are rights such as the right to freedom of speech or the right to vote. Viewed as “liberty or freedom rights”.
2. **Economic, social and cultural rights**: these include the right to work or health care for all. Viewed as “equality rights”
3. **Collective rights**: rights that apply to people as a whole, ie; the right to peace, food security, healthy environment, development. Viewed as “fraternity or solidarity rights”.
Module 6: Commonwealth Values in Youth Devt. Work

Unit 3: Democratic values and structures

What is democracy? A system of government by the whole population typically through elected representatives.

The core meaning of democracy
Core elements entailed in all types of democratic decision-making are:
* debate  
* participation in decision-making  
* respect for alternative views  
* protection of minority interests  
* willingness to work towards understanding and agreement

What are democratic values
Democracy is all about being able to make informed choices. For example, selecting between two political parties in an election.

Principles underpinning democracy
Three principles that lie at the heart of democracy are:
(a) pluralism/diversity  
(b) citizenship  
(c) respect for human rights

Pluralism/diversity
Pluralism is a condition or situation of society, in which members of diverse social class, religion, race, ethnicity, political groups, etc coexist peacefully for development of their special interests. Pluralism is something we have to strive to achieve as it does not automatically exist within a democracy.

Challenges to pluralism
Structural imbalances of power and structural social exclusion can be challenges for pluralism.

Citizenship
Citizenship is the position or status of being a legal member of a democratic or sovereign state. Citizenship entails statutory rights and responsibilities (refer to page 2) between individuals/groups and their governments. Citizenship can be viewed as a ‘social contract’ between the state and the individual. Citizens’ rights can be found in the Constitution or the Bill of Rights of a state.

Globalisation is a term used to describe an increasing economic interconnectedness among individuals, organisations, groups and states.

Citizens' attributes
A paper by the Commonwealth Foundation (Merrifield, 2001) describes three broad areas of citizen attributes.
1. "Knowledge" - is to exercise your rights and participate effectively. You have to understand how power operates and government work so that you can have an impact.
2. “Abilities” – are the essential skills to communicate and negotiate with others, ie; listening, speaking, influencing, collaborating and teamwork skills.

3. “Dispositions” – the “habit of mind” or values and attributes that underpin citizenship include a sense of justice and fairness, an awareness of common interests, willingness to resolve disputes peacefully, confidence in your vision and a feeling that you can have an impact.

Respect for human rights
Respect for human rights covers the three categories of human rights; liberty, equality and fraternity which are embodied in democracy. We all have a duty to respect each other’s rights and act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Running a democratic government
Democratic government is a commitment to democratic values and sharing certain institutions and practices which include:

* Elections
* Citizen participation
* Organised opposition
* The rule of law
* Just and honest government

Elections – is the most obvious aspect of national democracies. Elections must be free and fair and happen at regular intervals such as every four or five years.

Citizen participation – democracies must involve some level of citizen participation in decision-making, mostly through elections where each eligible citizen is allowed a say in choosing a government to represent their interests. “Referendum vote” is where citizens make decisions directly in a national vote on specific issue which by-passes the elected representatives. Example, the recent Brexit referendum. Other forms of citizen participation can be involvement in NGOs and or community groups.

Organised opposition – democracy is implemented through debate and dialogue about the political and economic issues that are essential to run a properly informed country. Opposition of a political party which sits “in opposition” to the government in the national legislature should present an alternative view to the setting governments policy and what it would itself do if it were in government.

Other forms of organised opposition include trade unions or pressure groups, ie, NGOs, peace and environment groups. Others include freedom of speech, freedom of the press and media are also indispensable elements in maintaining a healthy opposition and an informed public.

The rule of law, justice and honest government
If democratic government is to be ‘of the people, by the people and for the people’ as former US President, Abraham Lincoln suggested then it requires both the rule of law and transparent, accountable government.
The rule of law is the principle that a ruler must not govern arbitrarily but according to agreed procedures and standards. To avoid tyranny, government must separate powers between the body making the laws (the governing party) and those interpreting and enforcing the laws (the judiciary). Corruption remains a major challenge to just and honest government.

**Democratic decision-making**

Democratic systems use three main styles of decision-making, which are:

- **Majority vote.** This is common in groups all throughout society, where majority vote cast is a win over a minority vote cast for one of two adopted suggestions.
- **Consensus.** Consensus decision-making can be explained as a democratic method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement through input of ideas from all participants to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all.
- **Proportional outcomes.** In this democratic method decisions are designed to reflect the proportions of the group membership that hold different views. It works as a cross between consensus and majority vote. Proportional outcomes decision-making is where a group has a greater say than others about issues over particular areas that affect them most.

**The Commonwealth and democracy**

Commonwealth support for democracy has been inconsistent. Read page 96.

**Unit 4: The Commonwealth values and youth development**

* Participation     * Power     * Empowerment

Youth development work is often described as a process of increasing the participation of young people in national development and decision-making. This is assumed to include youth empowerment.

‘Participation’ and ‘empowerment’ in the youth development context implies giving young people more control over their personal development through the use of consensus decision-making style.

The principles underpinning young people’s involvement in the decision-making process are:

**Participation**

Participation in democracy, in employment, in education, in cultural development – these are all enshrined as individual rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and included in the Harare Declaration as priorities for the Commonwealth.

Participation examined from the point of view of project planning is where the main beneficiaries of a project have also been involved in some way in designing and managing the project.
Participation and young people
Traditionally, young people have been excluded from active participation in many decisions that affect their lives. Adults do not always recognise when young people become able to begin to make their own decisions and to take responsibilities for the consequences of those decisions. This struggle for greater influence and autonomy takes place not just within out families, but also at school and in the community contexts.

Power
Participation is concerned with issues of power, which have an impact on who can get involved in decision-making, speak at meetings, whose ideas are listened to, who benefits and who does not. In some cultures, men have more power over women and elders also have more power than the youth.

Understanding power
Differences in power are often the source of inequalities in participation in groups, communities and national politics. Four ideas of the word 'power' are:

- **Power over**: control over people, resources and decision-making
- **Power to**: knowledge, skills/ability to solve problems or learn new things
- **Power within**: inner strength based on self-acceptance and self-confidence
- **Power with**: group or collective strength as people work together with common goals

Poor people, children, youth, women might not have much 'power over' others, but they possess other kinds of power based on their special skills and knowledge, their ability to work together or their self-confidence. It is psychologically disempowering to describe someone as ‘powerless’. We all have huge potential for intellectual and psychological development, provided we are not deficient in some way.

Sources of power
- **Wealth and business-acumen**
- **Army general with access to weapons**
- **Ability to fix things ie; mechanic or carpenter**
- **Power of love and shaping the learning of children by a mother**
- **Laws**
- **Social position**
- **Resources**
- **Creativity**

Power within families
There is power imbalances within families. Men have some kinds of power ie; control over resources and decision-making than female members. Adults have more power over children. In families those with more power use it in the interest of those with less. This is usually not the case as incidents of physical abuse, emotional abuse, economic and sexual exploitation is the testimony to the misuse of power within certain families.
Empowerment

Empowerment is about:

- Helping to increase the skills and capacity of individuals
- Helping people to become more self-confident
- Helping groups to work together
- Helping to create a more equitable division of resources and decision-making

*Empowerment is usually ‘self-empowerment’* because no one can be forced to learn or be empowered.

Empowering young people

As a youth development worker, your role is to create an enabling and empowering environment for young people, taking cognisance of factors such as troubles home, negative mass media images (particularly affecting young women) or shrinking employment markets.

Consensus

The word *consensus* comes from the Latin for ‘to think together’. We use it to mean conclusion or agreement. Consensus is a process as well as a product.

How consensus decisions are made

In a consensus decision-making, the position of all parties in a consensus decision must be taken into account and a practical solution found that everyone must agree to abide by or live with.

Principles of consensus

There are no set rules for consensual decision making. Here are some well-tested principles and key ingredients that everyone should understand prior to embarking on the process.

- Participation in the consensus process by everyone who will be affected by the decision
- All positions and concerns of all participants need to be heard out fully
- All participants need to listen and understand each other’s views whether they are in agreement or not
- Where differences exist, diverse positions and expectations can be integrated and common ground can be reached.

Best conditions for consensus

- Consensual decision-making works best when participants genuinely respect each other and everyone fundamentally has shared goals.
- It demands considerable commitment from group members to participate in the process.