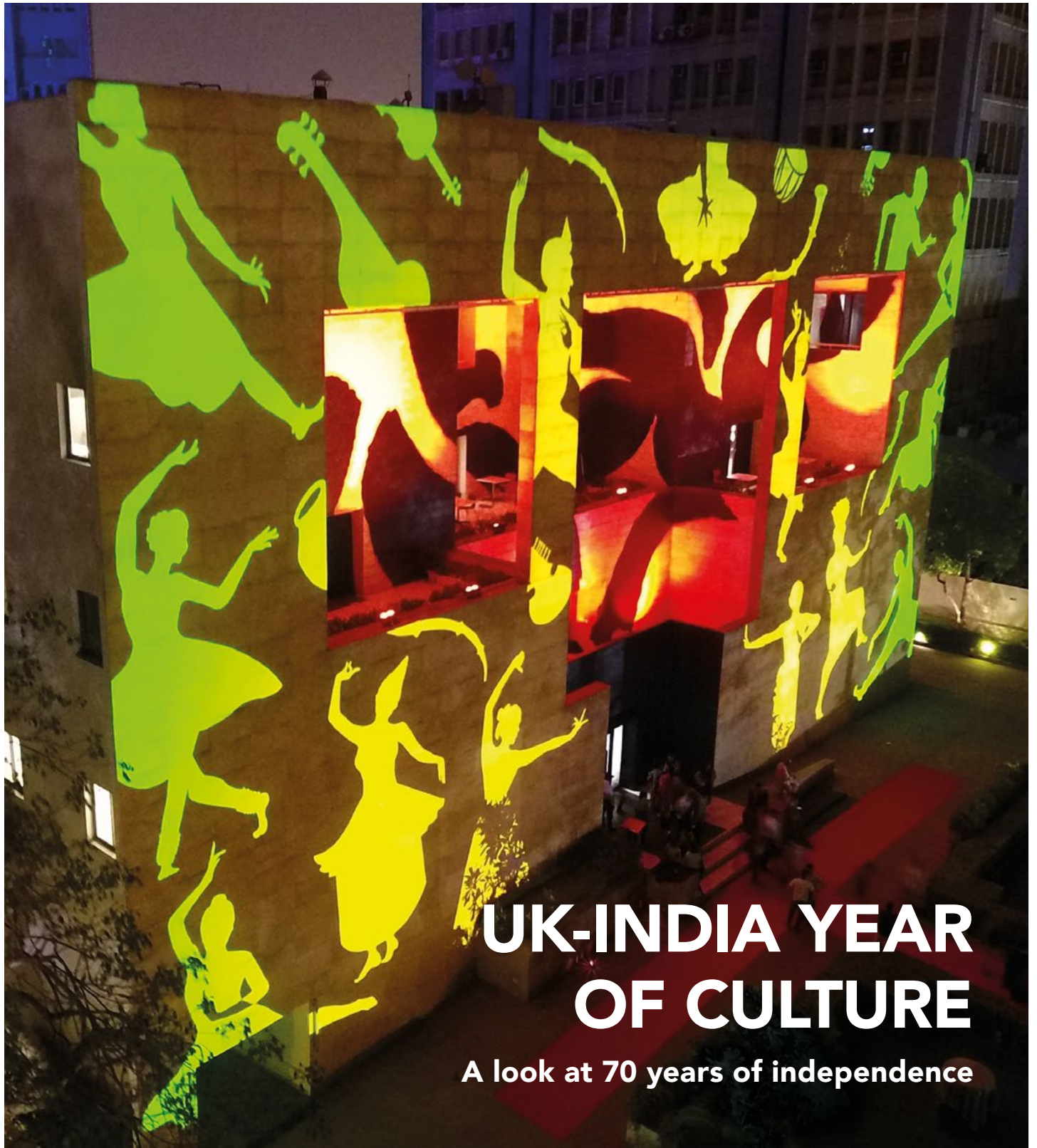


VOICES




UK-INDIA YEAR OF CULTURE

A look at 70 years of independence

 **THE ATHLETE IMPACT LABS**
Commonwealth Youth
Games in The Bahamas

 **CYPRUS JOINS THE OCC**
Growing The Queen's
Commonwealth Canopy

 **RCS ASSOCIATE FELLOWS**
The network for the best of
The Queens Young Leaders



PRACTICAL ACTION
Technology challenging poverty



How can a humble pumpkin help rebuild lives after flooding in Bangladesh?

Practical Action is an international charity that works with women, men and children across the developing world to find simple solutions to the problems they face. Our vision for the future is for a world where all people have access to the technologies that enable them to meet their basic needs and reach their potential, in a way that protects the planet today and for future generations.

Technology underpins all aspects of our lives: our health, how our food is produced, how we access water and energy and how we can protect ourselves from disasters. Technology allows us to live well, with less effort and fewer resources, and plays a critical role in solving some of the major challenges facing humanity - poverty and climate change.

But in the developing world, the lack of technology is stark: one billion people lack access to electricity; four million people die each year as a result of smoke inhaled while cooking on an open fire; and 800,000 children die each year from diarrhoea due to poor water and sanitation.

This year, Bangladesh has seen the worst flooding since 1988 and millions have been affected. People have lost their homes, their livelihoods and some have lost their lives.

Practical Action has been working in partnership with families living in flood-prone areas of Bangladesh, to help them become more prepared and resilient to the flooding that occurs every year. When the flood waters recede, large sandbars appear where the water once was. The soil is barren but can be made productive by using the technique of pit cultivation for pumpkins and other crops. Pit cultivation is a simple solution – small pits dug into the ground and filled with compost.

Pumpkins are a perfect crop for these communities, they are highly nutritious, last for months and can also be sold at market. During the recent flooding, these pumpkins were a lifeline for many families as they continued to have a source of food and income.

“We are experiencing flooding for the second time. Our livestock and homestead garden has been washed away. We were without food. Two days ago my son sold 120 pumpkins worth 2100 Taka (£20) and has bought rice, pulse, oil and salt. We would die this time without food, however this pumpkin has helped us to cope and survive.”

Halima Begum, Bangladesh.

This is just one example of the incredible difference Practical Action is making to people's lives every year.

Find out more about how we're using technology to tackle poverty:

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www.practicalaction.org/CW

WELCOME



India and the UK have dedicated this year to celebrate our diverse and exceptionally rich heritage that has acquired some uniquely similar characteristics in our 70 year long history. These traits play a significant role in shaping the cultural discourse that we seek to celebrate through the UK-India Year of Culture. India is a land dazzling and rich

in culture, history and natural beauty; we have striking forms of dance, soul-stirring music, resplendent theatre productions, the world's highest distribution of films, hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects. In the same way, the UK is a cultural powerhouse that has set the parameters for theatre and film production across the globe which are adhered to even in the 21st century.

As a performer, trained in the classical Indian Dance form 'Odissi' and an actress and TV presenter who has worked in both India and the UK, I am excited to see the UK-India Year of Culture unfold. The CSOI's contribution to this year has been the launch of the Commonwealth Cultural Forum (CCF), a platform dedicated solely to the Commonwealth that will seek to celebrate its diversity through a free exchange of arts, crafts, culture and cuisine between member nations.

It is surprising to note India's staggering contribution to the Commonwealth (Ps 8-9), alongside the range of views on the UK-India relationship and its significance to the Commonwealth (Ps 10-11). We look forward to the arrival of The Queen's Baton Relay in India on 3rd October and hope to meet some of the fifty RCS Associate Fellows from across India during its visit. The RCS and its affiliate organisations, as representatives of the people, must continue to take effective steps to enable individual and social communication within the framework of a common culture and value system that has come to define the Commonwealth.

Shivani Wazir Pasrich

Chairperson, Commonwealth Society of India (CSOI)
RCS Regional Co-ordinator, India



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

CONTENTS

- 2 IN THE NEWS:** 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting
- 3 SPOTLIGHT:** Universities for a brighter future
- 4 COMMONWEALTH CONCERN:** Section 57 ...and the legacy of bad laws in Bangladesh
- 6 COMMONWEALTH YOUTH:** Connecting Youth through the RCS Associate Fellows Network
- 8 UK – INDIA:** India and the Commonwealth: seventy years on
- 10 UK – INDIA:** Views on the UK-India Year of Culture
- 12 COMMONWEALTH ACTION:** Visa Reform Campaign
- 13 COMMONWEALTH COMMENTARY:** Commonwealth Science Conference 2017
- 14 COMMONWEALTH YOUTH:** Who's Next? Empowering Commonwealth Young Athletes
- 16 PROGRAMME IN PARTNERSHIP:** Cyprus joins The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy
- 18 RCS REGION-WIDE:** Who's New? Update on RCS Regional Co-ordinators
- 20 COMING UP IN THE COMMONWEALTH**

KEEP IN THE CONVERSATION

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- [/thercs](https://www.facebook.com/thercs)
- [@TheRCSLondon](https://twitter.com/TheRCSLondon)
- [/TheRCSociety](https://www.youtube.com/TheRCSociety)

9TH COMMONWEALTH YOUTH MINISTERS MEETING

Held every four years, the focus for the 2017 meeting was to address the gap in financing youth development.

The 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) took place between 31 July and 4 August 2017 at the Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort, Uganda, and was attended by over 300 delegates, including Ministers and senior officials from 32 countries, youth leaders and workers, youth development stakeholders and donor organisations.

This CYMM was convened at an important juncture for global youth development. The world's youth population has reached a record 1.8 billion people aged 15 to 29, and in many Commonwealth developing countries young people make up a third or more of the population. The landmark 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda stated that investment in young people was critical to achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Yet, whilst there is increasing recognition that empowered youth make a vital contribution to national development, huge gaps exist in financing young people's needs, including their health and education.

↓ **RCS Associate Fellow and CYGEN member Faith Nafula Wavula addresses the Meeting**



In order to bridge the widening gap in investment in young people's development, countries need to redouble efforts and follow a multi-stakeholder approach. For this reason, the theme of the 9th CYMM was 'Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Young People'.

The main Ministerial meeting was opened by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. The meeting also included a Youth Leaders' Forum and a Stakeholders' Forum, for which the RCS had helped to convene key partners. Leading development partners and donors at the summit included the African Development Bank, DfID, MasterCard Foundation, Comic Relief, USAID, the IFRC and UN agencies. Youth leaders and stakeholder representatives joined Ministers in a successful day of interactive round table discussions and solution-sharing. Members of RCS-supported CYGEN (Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network) were proactive in advocating on gender matters, and participated in panel sessions.

In their discussions, Youth Ministers recognised that the youth sector stands at a crossroads, with pressure on governments to do more for young citizens with fewer resources, and growing aspirations by young people to contribute. They acknowledged that national youth strategies are a key instrument, alongside innovative and multi-stakeholder approaches, to promote youth participation in civic and political life, remove barriers to entrepreneurship, and expand opportunities for education, skills development and meaningful employment.

Helen Jones, RCS Director of Youth Affairs, said 'The CYMM had a rich variety of participants with a huge depth of knowledge and expertise. The impact will grow as we build on the discussions, recommendations and networks developed at this crucial meeting, to which RCS Associate Fellows and Branch representatives contributed.'

UNIVERSITIES FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Dr Joanna Newman, MBE FRSA is Chief Executive and Secretary General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).



The ACU was the world's first international university network, and it remains one of the most uniquely diverse. Our 500+ members include some of the world's most established and historic universities alongside some of the very newest and sparsely resourced. What unites us, however, is a belief in the power of higher education to transform lives.

As the ACU's newest Secretary General, I am proud to join an organisation with both such a distinguished history and an important role to play in the future. The global youth population is at an all-time high, and higher education will be critical if they are to reach their potential. Yet its value extends far beyond the individual: ACU member universities will be central to achieving every one of the Sustainable Development Goals, not only through the research they undertake, but through the skilled and globally-aware graduates they produce.

If universities are truly to deliver on this promise – and do so in an increasingly globalised world – co-operation and collaboration will be key. And that's where the ACU comes in. Our far-reaching networks of institutions and individuals mean we are uniquely placed to promote international co-operation and build capacity – from the interchange of staff and students, to collaborative research. In keeping with this commitment, I am proud that the ACU administers the UK government's three main scholarship schemes – Chevening, Commonwealth Scholarships (in the UK), and Marshall Scholarships – as well as its own grants for members.

Equally importantly, we are passionate and vocal advocates for the power of higher education to solve global challenges. Universities deserve far greater recognition for the contribution they are making to international development, and we will be working closely with Commonwealth governments and other partners to ensure this vital work – as well as the wider concerns of our members – is reflected in the outcomes of the forthcoming Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that follows.

In the meantime, our important projects and programmes continue in earnest. An exciting new programme will use blended learning to help universities in east Africa meet the surging demand for higher education. A seminar in Pretoria will look at how universities can ensure their graduates thrive in a knowledge-driven economy. And a new campaign highlights the role of higher education in promoting understanding between faiths, beliefs and cultures.

In the longer-term, the ACU will be central to discussions about a new Commonwealth-wide framework for the recognition of qualifications. I also look forward to closer links with the Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara), and am keen to encourage more universities to host academics put at risk by conflict or persecution.

Finally, and never far from our work, is our commitment to the values and aspirations of the Commonwealth. Universities are a wonderful example of those values in motion. Moreover, the genuine willingness to collaborate and co-operate that exists between them has infinite potential to bring about positive and enduring change.

 **MORE INFORMATION**
www.acu.ac.uk



SECTION 57

...AND THE LEGACY OF BAD LAWS IN BANGLADESH

As a controversial law takes effect across Bangladesh renowned journalist **Syed Badrul Ahsan** argues that it sits within a legacy of threats to democracy.

Journalists in Bangladesh are an unhappy lot these days. In the last five months, no fewer than 23 of them have had cases under Section 57 of the country's controversial ICT Act slapped on them. In a good number of instances, as even Bangladesh's Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, who is also the general secretary of the ruling Awami League, has observed, Section 57 is being abused.

The Information and Communication Technology Act (ICT Act) was enacted

in 2006 by the government, led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in coalition with the Jamaat-e-Islami, and was amended in 2013 by the Awami League government now in office. The amendment stiffened the provisions relating to defamation and causing grief and damage to reputations on the internet, by publishing or putting up false reports through prescribing a prison term of 14 years for offenders. The results have been horrendous, as some recent instances have so amply shown. A government official was arrested (he was later released) on the charge that he had insulted the founder of the country, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, by having his 'distorted' image inscribed on an invitation card to an official independence day programme in March this year. More recently, a journalist put up

a satirical note on social media about the minister for livestock and fisheries handing out goats to a few poor families. The death of one of the goats prompted a humorous comment from the journalist. Swift was the response. He was carted off to prison.

Quite a few have been the laws that have damaged democratic institutions in Bangladesh since it emerged as an independent state in December 1971. The earliest of shocks that came for the country post-liberation was the Special Powers Act in 1974. It damaged the image, to a significant extent, of the government led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Then imposed on the country was the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution in January 1975 through which the country effectively turned into a single-party state. Though defenders of the amendment have consistently argued that it was a necessary move, it was anything but. And in line with the amendment, the government found itself armed with the authority to decree all political parties, other than the ruling party, rechristened as Baksal or Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League, and all but four newspapers out of existence.

The legacy of bad laws was given a worse turn through the violent coup d'état that overthrew the legally established government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in August 1975. Khondokar Moshtaque Ahmed, commerce minister in the Mujib government until 15 August and installed as the country's President following the coup, promulgated the infamous Indemnity Ordinance, prohibiting any trial or prosecution of Mujib's assassins.

The tradition of repressive laws took a horrifying turn when General Ziaur Rahman, who seized power through a counter coup in November 1975, tampered with the Constitution by cutting out of it the core principles of socialism and secularism. And then, through the parliament his regime caused to be elected in 1979, he had the Indemnity Ordinance become part of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. It was a move that for twenty one years, until the election of an Awami League government in June 1996, prevented any legal measures from being taken against the assassins

SECTION 57 IN NUMBERS



2013

The ICT Act was amended by the Awami League government



14

14 year prison term for defamation and causing grief and damage to reputations



23

23 journalists have had cases under Section 57 brought against them

of 1975, a number of whom were sent off by Zia as diplomats to Bangladesh's missions abroad.

The regime of General Hussein Muhammad Ershad, who seized power in March 1982, worsened the situation. Throughout his nine-year rule, Ershad made sure that the media toed his regime's line through following the 'advice' sent out in the late hours to editors about particular news reports that need not go into print.

It would take more than two decades for the Indemnity Ordinance to be repealed and a further number of years for the judiciary to declare illegal and unconstitutional the commandeering of power by extra-constitutional forces between August 1975 and March 1982.

In these present times, Section 57 has in a number of instances been misapplied and media persons have suffered. More to the point, this law has embarrassed the government at home and abroad, to a point where attempts to explain it away as not being at variance with the tenets of democracy, have fallen flat.

Section 57 undermines democracy and strikes at Bangladesh's core values. One might add that those values are at the heart of the Commonwealth, with its insistence on democracy and all the transparency it entails. From such a perspective, Section 57 is an untenable and undesirable proposition.

MORE INFORMATION
RCS blog on media freedom in the Commonwealth bit.ly/FreedomInTheCW

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Syed Badrul Ahsan is Associate Editor, The Asian Age, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He is also a columnist for the online newspaper bdnews24.com and the weekly newspapers Dhaka Courier and First News. He contributes articles to the Indian Express.

CONNECTING YOUTH TO THE COMMONWEALTH

In 2015 The Royal Commonwealth Society launched its pan-Commonwealth youth network: RCS Associate Fellows. Set up to empower youth, invest in their future and give emerging leaders a platform to make their voices heard, the network has become a thriving community that connects young people with the Commonwealth.

Developed as a legacy initiative from The Queen's Young Leaders programme, the Associate Fellows Network aims to ensure the continued engagement of young leaders with the Commonwealth by harnessing and celebrating youth leadership. Two years in, it is clear that there is great interest in the Commonwealth amongst young adults, who have been using the network to effect change and make their voices heard.

One of the primary assets of the Associate Fellows Network is its wealth of talent, expertise and enthusiasm. Totalling 1,200 young people in all 52 Commonwealth countries and beyond, the network consists of people from all backgrounds. From education to the environment, from gender equality to rule of law, the Associate Fellows

represent the wider interests of youth in the Commonwealth and communicate their priorities through the platform.

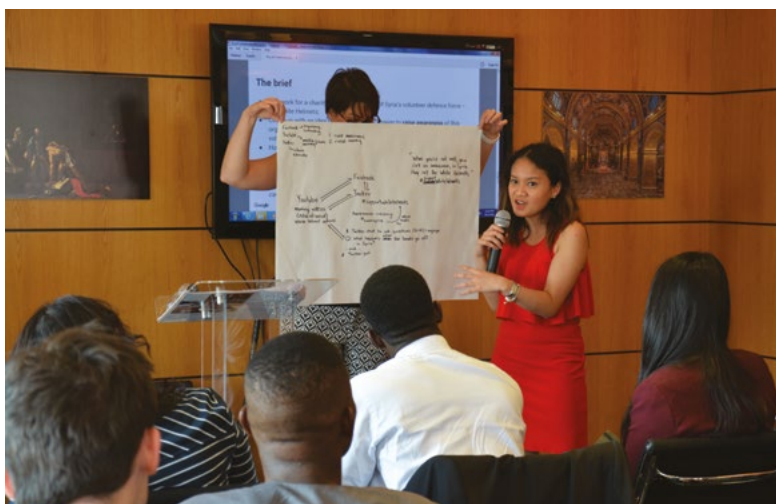
A community of learning

Paramount to the Associate Fellows is the opportunity to learn and grow as human beings and young professionals, using Commonwealth values as a guiding principle. A series of webinars was started last year, covering a range of relevant topics. These include international diplomacy, youth leadership and social action campaigns, and provide a way for young people to engage in conversation with experts in real time.

Peer-to-peer learning is an effective way of disseminating knowledge and awareness amongst young people, which we encourage by running workshops in a Commonwealth context to capacity-build our Associate Fellows. Most notable was the RCS International Youth Meeting in 2016, which was attended by, amongst others, 25 Associate Fellows from all Commonwealth regions. Equipped with new skills and experiences, they went back to their communities to share their knowledge and raise awareness of the Commonwealth, encouraging other young people to join the network.

↓ RCS International Youth Meeting

↓ The Queen's Baton in Georgetown, Guyana



As part of the signposting role of the network, the Associate Fellows themselves provide endless opportunities to learn, share and engage from and with each other. The online forum has become a rich source for young people to engage with each other in different subject areas. From campaigning on LGBTI issues to youth work, from mental health to the blue economy, there is something available for all within the network.

“

Together we can come up with exciting new ideas and innovation; our enthusiasm can make the Commonwealth relevant to young people.”

Sadia Haque Jui, Associate Fellow

Opportunities and giving back

The network provides continuous opportunities for engagement with the Commonwealth. Most recently, The Queen's Baton Relay in the run-up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games has been a tangible way for young people to interact with the Commonwealth. On its way to Australia, the Baton has been carried by Associate Fellows in numerous countries, including Barbados, Jamaica and Guyana. It acts as a gathering point for people from all backgrounds to celebrate sporting and other talent in the Commonwealth and unite behind the common values it represents.

The RCS has also helped to broker opportunities for Associate Fellows to make their voices heard by government and civil society. Recently, a number of network members attended the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Uganda to speak on the issues that matter to them and present solutions from a youth perspective.

Each year, Associate Fellows participate in RCS events, both in London and throughout the Commonwealth. These include the Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey, model Commonwealth Summits and panel discussions. There have also been opportunities for Associate Fellows to volunteer as Judges for The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition

Queen's Young Leaders



↑ Queen's Young Leaders 2017 at Australia House. © Victoria Dawe



Now in its third year, The Queen's Young Leaders visited London for the residential programme in June. Displaying great commitment to effect change in the Commonwealth and

shaping the future of youth, their achievements were celebrated at an Award Ceremony at Buckingham Palace, hosted by HM The Queen. Further activities included a leadership training course at Cambridge University, visits to the BBC and No.10 Downing Street, and a formal dinner at Australia House. At the end of the year, the 2017 cohort of Queen's Young Leaders will be invited to join the RCS Associate Fellows Network, making the community even richer, more exciting and more diverse in its opportunities for young people to engage with the Commonwealth and shape its future.

“

The Queen's Young Leaders Award recognises what these incredible young people have achieved, not for themselves but for others.”

HRH Prince Harry

and as Regional Youth Co-ordinators as part of the RCS' international network (ps18-19). Additionally, Associate Fellows are offered the opportunity to feed into the policy and programmatic work of the RCS. Through polling, discussion and consultation, they have been able to contribute to the work of the RCS, providing legitimacy and a mandate from young Commonwealth citizens.

MORE INFORMATION
www.thercs.org/youth-and-education/associate-fellows
www.queensyoungleaders.com



INDIA AND THE COMMONWEALTH: SEVENTY YEARS ON

India has been celebrating its 70th year of independence. The modern Commonwealth will mark its own 70th anniversary less than two years from now writes **Amitav Banerji**



Today's Commonwealth has an umbilical link with India. It is well known that it was India's desire to stay in the Commonwealth after opting to become a republic – and of Prime Minister Nehru's personal role in that quest – that paved the way for the April 1949 London Declaration. But for Nehru's commitment, and for the farsightedness of the other Commonwealth leaders at the time to accommodate India's aspiration, who knows how long the 'British Commonwealth' would have survived.

The London Declaration made it easy for a succession of former colonies across the globe, all strongly nationalist and anti-imperialist in character, to join the Commonwealth at independence. In

Nicholas Mansergh's words, "Not Smuts, not Mackenzie King, but Nehru was the architect of that achievement". The impact was not merely to augment the size and diversity of the Commonwealth, but to transform its very character – from a group no longer bound by common loyalty to the British Crown but by an affinity to shared values.

Nehru's reasoning had more to do with hard-nosed political calculations than his known anglophilia. In a post-war world being carved up by two super powers into spheres of influence, both the policy of Non-Alignment and membership of the Commonwealth offered independent India room for manoeuvre. There was also a moral imperative to his approach. As he told the Constituent Assembly soon after the London Declaration was adopted, "the fact that we have begun this new type of association with a touch of healing will be good for us, good for them and, I believe, good for the world."

The map displayed does not purport to show accurate political boundaries

Pakistan too emerged into existence in August 1947, indeed one day earlier than independent India, but remained a dominion until 1956. Pakistan’s relationship with the Commonwealth has been more chequered and the vexed mutual relationship between India and Pakistan has impacted on the association in ways more than one. Pakistan walked out of the Commonwealth in 1972 in protest at the admission of Bangladesh, in the creation of which India had a decisive hand, and returned only in 1989. Since then, it has twice been suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth for derogation from Commonwealth values by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), in 1999 and 2007, before being restored to full membership in May 2008.

It is primarily because of India and Pakistan being at odds over Jammu & Kashmir since 1947 that the Commonwealth laid down the rule that disputes between member states must not be raised at Commonwealth meetings.

It is sobering to note what India means to the Commonwealth in terms of the association’s global significance. The Commonwealth today has 2.4 billion people in its 52 member states, or 32% of the world’s population of roughly 7.5 billion. Without India and its 1.3 billion people the Commonwealth’s combined population would fall to less than 15%.

But India means much more to the association than that stark demographic statistic. In it, the Commonwealth also claims the world’s largest democracy. It is the Commonwealth’s largest financial contributor from the developing world, alternating between the fourth and fifth largest overall. It is a major emerging economy, currently ranked by the World Economic Forum as the seventh largest in the world, with predictions that it will climb to the second position (after China) by 2050. It has hosted a CHOGM (in 1983) and the Commonwealth Games (in 2010). It is a major provider of technical assistance to other developing countries, primarily through its bilateral aid programme but also via the Commonwealth. And it has provided one of the six Secretaries-General of the Commonwealth in Kamallesh Sharma.

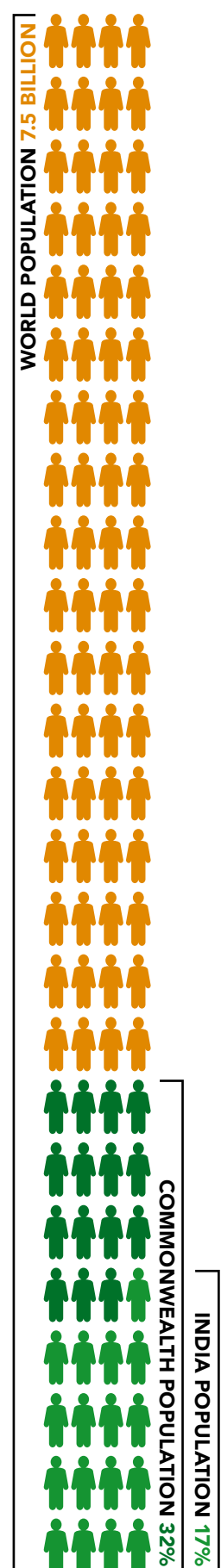
Yet the Indian engagement with the Commonwealth has been of varying intensity and there are many who call for more consistent and full-hearted support. Policy makers in Delhi have always been divided on what priority to attach to the Commonwealth. Some have argued that the Commonwealth is a relic of empire and that India’s multilateral energies must be concentrated on organisations with greater clout: such the UN Security Council, where India aspires to secure a permanent seat, or the G20. Others maintain that the Commonwealth is a natural, anglophone constituency for India, especially as a multilateral vehicle for South-South co-operation and with a plethora of small states in which India does not have a diplomatic presence. This dichotomy has resulted in varying degrees of attention at both the political and official levels, especially in recent years.

It has not escaped notice that no Indian Prime Minister has attended CHOGM since 2009, ironically during a period when the Commonwealth Secretariat was headed by an Indian. Many eagerly hope that Prime Minister Modi, who was not in Malta in 2015, will attend the 2018 London summit, especially with the UK looking actively to leverage its Commonwealth connections to economic and political advantage in a post-Brexit world – and the Indian economy growing at over 6% a year.

There is no doubt that the Commonwealth needs India and could benefit from more energetic and sustained Indian attention. What is less clear is how much India needs the Commonwealth. That can be the subject of another essay, but if India considers itself a global player, then it must surely create niches in all global organisations that can serve its interests. And Nehru’s logic of seven decades ago remains of abiding relevance in a world characterised by new alignments and uncertainties.

THE AUTHOR

A former Indian diplomat and senior Commonwealth civil servant, Amitav Banerji now works as Projects Director at the Global Leadership Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation consisting of 40 retired leaders from around the world. The views expressed in this article are entirely personal.





UK-INDIA YEAR OF CULTURE

Marking 70 Years of Indian Independence the UK-India Year of Culture celebrates cultural exchange between the two countries with initiatives and events being held in both countries throughout the year.

With a historic breadth and significance which is hard to adequately define, we reached out across the RCS' networks for a range of comments on the UK-India Year of Culture. Here figures from diplomacy, industry, academia and cultural relations give their views on the UK-India relationship today.

↑ Buckingham Palace © James Gifford-Mead



Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG

British High
Commissioner
to India

India and the UK have a long and rich history. In 2017 we are celebrating the UK – India year of Culture. Launched in February 2017 by Her Majesty the Queen at a reception at Buckingham palace, the year of culture will see an incredible programme of cultural events and activities in India and the UK. Organised by the British Council, together with the Indian High Commission in London, UK institutions and their Indian counterparts, the UK-India Year of Culture aims to connect and inspire people to celebrate the long-standing relationship and vibrant cultural history.

A number of new digital initiatives, aimed specifically at engaging young people in

both countries, encouraging collaboration and interactivity, is expected to reach about 50 million people across India. We believe that by experiencing the most innovative and exciting creative work from both countries and exploring our joint history, people will want to know more about each other's countries and build deeper connections.

There will be a fantastic range of cultural exchanges and events programmed over the year, from the BFI India on film, to Mix in the City – a global interactive digital music platform.

 uk-india.britishcouncil.in



Shreyashi Dasgupta

PhD student

Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge and Chair of Cambridge Commonwealth Society (CUCS).

Studying in the UK as a PhD student and to top it up with a full scholarship from the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Trust and Cambridge Trust, gave me an opportunity to observe the close-knit cultural ties shared by two great nations. I was in awe of the intermingling of cultures manifesting in various forms, sometimes subtle and sometimes exotic, like a 'cultural mural' on the wall of UK-India relationship. On this backdrop, the 'UK-India Year of Culture' appears to be an important bilateral initiative to deepen the cultural ties on the eve of the 70th anniversary of India's Independence.

To mark this occasion, the University of Cambridge has launched several interesting events, discussions,

installations and exhibitions, especially the rarely-seen collection of Indian miniature paintings and the ongoing exhibition of artifacts highlighting the lives of India's Indigenous and Adivasi people. I also enjoyed reading the Cambridge Life series where scholars have narrated their stories of affiliation between UK and India. This cultural camaraderie is visible in several walks of life with Indian Diaspora embellishing the cosmopolitan UK culture with its distinct ethnic flavour. It is this spirit of cultural exchange and assimilation through people-to-people contact that would further strengthen our cultural ties for posterity.

 www.india.cam.ac.uk



Shuchita Sonalika

UK Director

Confederation of Indian Industry

The UK-India economic relationship underpins two centuries of shared history, strong democracy and cultural heritage. The vibrant Indian Diaspora in the UK, the 'living bridge' between our two countries, further strengthens these links.

While our business ties remain strong, bilateral trade has been falling slightly over the last 3 years. The UK is now the 4th largest investor in India, though until recently, it was 3rd. India retains its position as the UK's 3rd largest investor, pumping in more FDI in the UK than the rest of EU combined. It is also remarkable to note that India has emerged as the 2nd largest international job creator in the UK.

We need to pragmatically consider our post-Brexit trading arrangements at this critical time. Collaboration across technology verticals, including IT and telecom, smart cities, manufacturing and defence, healthcare and education, presents huge opportunities. Food, fashion and tourism bring business and culture together with an exciting scope for commercial ventures. Easing access to markets and capital, encouraging small business engagement and facilitating top global talent mobility will be crucial in cementing this relationship further.

 www.cii.in



Hari Om Dahiya

President & Youth Chairman

The Commonwealth Students' Welfare Group of India (CSWGI) and RCS Regional Youth Co-ordinator, India

A perfect blend of a joint progressive and developmental approach in the field of international relations can truly be found between India and the UK. One is the world's largest democracy the other, the world's oldest! For many India is a continent masquerading as a country!

The historical disparities have never been a hindrance in bilateral collaborations and people to people contact. Indians look up to Britons as classy, elegant and cultured; and vice-versa,, with an add-on for India being populous. In the wake of the 2017 India-UK Year of Culture, a lot of potential is hidden, to be explored and realised in bilateral relations and enhanced cultural and educational exchanges. Post Brexit, one of the most prominent organisations UK could

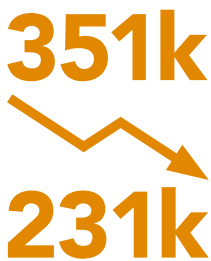
look to, would be the Commonwealth, and of course, India sustains half of the Commonwealth's total population.

India is the world's fastest-growing, large economy. It is a global powerhouse and also the UK's 'Partner of Choice'. Language and culture meld in all spheres of life, including the economic. Leaders should try taking post Brexit relations between the two countries to new heights as befitting partners. Suggestions to improve the already strong bilateral relationship would be the reconsideration of visa regulations and privileges as a starter for the UK and more IT-driven investments in the UK for India.

 www.thercs.org/assets/Research-/India-Visa-Report-online-copy.pdf

VISA REFORM CAMPAIGN

The RCS, with its supporting partners, were delighted to submit a petition for restoring UK visa-free travel for South Africans, to 10 Downing Street.



South African nationals visiting the UK declined significantly from 351,000 in 2006 to 231,000 in 2015

↓ Tim Hewish with representatives of SA Diaspora UK and the South African Chambers of Commerce UK hand in the petition to 10 Downing Street

Since 2008, South Africans visiting the UK have been subject to expensive visa requirements which discourage people from making the trip. The cost of such a visa has upset many South Africans that need to visit the UK for business, to see family, or even for a holiday.

The 12,000-plus signatories came from South Africans in the UK as well as those at home. We would like to thank them for doing so and encouraging others to sign up. Our efforts to gain signatures took us to a rainy Twickenham, where England played South Africa at rugby last November, where we met hundreds of South Africans who had come for the game and who highlighted the challenge of visa costs and the paperwork.

We also received hundreds of comments in favour of the restoration of visa-free travel. Nick from Johannesburg said: "I own multiple businesses in the UK.

Having to send my staff over for meetings and business training has become a hassle. It is unreasonable that a modern South Africa, that is part of the Commonwealth, has these restrictions."

The Society's former Director of Policy & Research, Tim Hewish, said: "The hand-in was a symbolic moment for our campaign outside what is regarded as the most famous door in the world."

After our Downing Street visit we had the opportunity to submit a copy of the petition to the South African High Commission in London. Representatives from the Commission welcomed the petition and said such initiatives will help forward stronger UK-SA relations.

The Home Office replied on behalf of No10 acknowledging the campaign and said that at this time it had no plans to make changes to the UK's visa regime for South African nationals.

This disappointing view is compounded by the significant downward trend in annual South Africa to UK visitor numbers and total spend. 351,000 South Africans visited the UK in 2006 spending £236m. This dropped to 231,000 visitors when we started our campaign. The most recent data shows that figure dropped further in one year to 188,000 visits and £187m in spend. So in just a ten year period with the costly visa requirements numbers have almost halved while spend from last year has fallen nearly £60m.

That is why this year's UK-South Africa Bilateral Forum of Foreign Ministers in South Africa is crucial. This is a prime opportunity for both sides to acknowledge the campaign's strength of support and to discuss workable solutions for a return to visa-free travel that is safe and secure. The RCS will continue to advocate for this much needed restoration for South Africans.



MORE INFORMATION

The campaign was run in partnership with South African Chamber of Commerce UK, The South African, Sable International, Philip Gamble & Partners, the South African Diaspora United, and with support and endorsement from the Democratic Alliance Abroad-UK.

COMMONWEALTH SCIENCE CONFERENCE 2017

The 2017 Commonwealth Science Conference, held in Singapore on 13th-16th of June, was attended by some 450 scientists at different stages in their careers. **Dr. Anthony Yee**, Chair of RCS Singapore branch reports.

Each year, the conference brings together leading scientists to showcase the best of science from across the Commonwealth, celebrating excellence. It aims to provide opportunities for co-operation between researchers in different Commonwealth countries; inspire young scientists, students and pupils; build understanding about policy issues of common interest and encourage scientific capacity-building in Commonwealth countries. The conference provides a unique opportunity for attendees to meet scientists from around the Commonwealth to discuss and share their research.

The 2017 CSC was jointly organised by the Royal Society and the National Research Foundation, Prime Minister's Office, Singapore and supported by the Global Challenges Research Fund and The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.

The RCS was involved in organising the outreach segment of the conference,

inviting the plenary speakers to visit universities and schools to give talks to aspiring young scientists.

The programme included talks from some of the most eminent Commonwealth scientists who discussed common challenges including Emerging Infectious Diseases, Low Carbon Energy, The Future of the Oceans, and Sustainable Cities. There were talks on emerging new technologies and the implications for policy.

The Conference also aimed to inspire delegates to continue to think about and develop research to address some of the issues raised, to facilitate which a range of funding options is available.

The Opening ceremony was held at the Marina Bay Sands Complex. The Opening address was jointly delivered by HRH Prince Andrew and Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister, Teo Chee Hean. Both stressed the need for more emphasis to be placed on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) education and continued funding for innovation and research.

Highlights included a keynote lecture from Sir Venki Ramakrishnan, President of the Royal Society, plenary lectures from leading scientists across the Commonwealth and sessions on a range of topical issues affecting the Commonwealth.

Singapore's President Tony Tan hosted a dinner for HRH Prince Andrew and selected delegates at the ISTANA, the official residence of the President of Singapore.

The closing ceremony was a grand affair; the conference was considered an outstanding success and Commonwealth science lives on!

↓ **Sir David King**
HonFREng FRS
giving the opening
ceremony plenary

© National Research
Foundation Singapore



 **MORE INFORMATION**
www.royalsociety.org/news

WHO'S NEXT?

EMPOWERING COMMONWEALTH YOUNG ATHLETES

Ryan Brathwaite from RCS Barbados, Regional Youth Co-ordinator for The Royal Commonwealth Society and an Associate Fellow, looks back at the recent Commonwealth Youth Games and the successful Athlete Impact Labs initiative.



During 18-23 July 2017, nearly 1,000 athletes from 63 nations united in Commonwealth pride to compete in a record breaking sixth edition of the Commonwealth Youth Games (CYG), which took place in the Caribbean island nation of The Bahamas. The event saw young athletes aged 14 to 18 compete across nine sporting disciplines during six days of competition. This major international sporting event for the youth of the Commonwealth has played a significant part in nurturing young talent, and given young people the opportunity to compete for their home country in an international arena.

Featuring the theme 'Who's Next?!', the Bahamas Commonwealth Youth Games 2017 delivered on its overarching goal of providing a platform for excellent sportsmanship and friendship for young athletes, while enabling this small island state to showcase its hospitality, tourism,

organisation and other legacy benefits arising from hosting a major international sporting event. Underlining all of this was the unique opportunity to promote the Commonwealth Games Federation's values of Humanity – Equality – Destiny, with young people from across the Commonwealth sharing their ideas and cultures to help promote respect and tolerance.

One of the high profile outcomes of the Games, which embraced the values of Humanity, Equality and Destiny, were the 'Athlete Impact Labs'. These workshops were created through a collaborative partnership between the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group (CYSDP), The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) and UNICEF UK, working with the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) and The Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games Organising Committee.

Developed as an official part of the Bahamas 2017 Cultural and Personal Development Programme, the Athlete Impact Labs helped fulfil the Games' core ambition of strengthening the link between sporting competition, personal development and Commonwealth awareness and peace-building.

↓ Athlete Impact Labs team

↘ Athletes in the Impact labs share their team tweet



The Labs were designed to deliver a series of interactive, exciting workshops, covering topics including youth empowerment, integrity, Commonwealth and personal values, youth participation in sports governance and how young role models can contribute to human rights and sustainable development through using their platforms to effect change within their communities and in and around sport.

Building on the foundation set by the Samoa 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games, the Labs saw a total of 241 athletes and officials from 20 countries attend, representing a fifty percent increase on the last edition. They were facilitated by enthusiastic youth leaders and experts from Australia, Barbados, The Bahamas, Trinidad and the UK, recruited from the CYSDP network, the RCS and UNICEF UK.

Being asked to be part of the facilitation team on behalf of the RCS was a prestigious, life-changing opportunity that I was blessed to experience. Not only was it a personally rewarding moment, but it allowed me to become an advocate for the Commonwealth movement and champion the causes of the RCS in advocating for positive social change among the youth of the Commonwealth. Moreover, the opportunity to connect, share and learn with budding young future leaders of the Commonwealth presented a unique opportunity to empower our youth and encourage them to be youth leaders within their communities.

The current generation of youth under 30 years of age is the largest in history, comprising 60% of the 2.4 billion total population of the Commonwealth. Young people's inclusion in the dialogue of Commonwealth peace-building and sustainable development is an important part of building better and more peaceful societies, and the Athlete Impact Labs are certainly one antidote in changing hearts and providing the opportunity for young athletes to share in building and sustaining peace, both in sport and in their communities.

I believe many of the Commonwealth young athletes participating in The Bahamas will undoubtedly become role models within their communities as they



“

The Bahamas provided a spectacular sporting stage and cultural platform for the Commonwealth's finest young athletes to shine. All Bahamians welcomed our athletes, teams and officials with open hearts and open arms. In return, they will forever credit The Bahamas for helping nurture them as athletes and global sporting citizens.

The Commonwealth Youth Games are an unparalleled opportunity for nations to promote an inclusive and positive youth and sports development agenda. Through this shared focus on youth, I passionately believe that we shape the future together – developing and empowering the sporting stars and leaders of tomorrow.”

CGF President Louise Martin CBE commenting on the success of the VIth Commonwealth Youth Games

go on to inspire others, on and off the field of play. Their commitment in taking a lead in their communities and using their skills and influence can serve to transform lives and be a motivation to young people around the Commonwealth.

As the curtains close on the sixth edition of the Commonwealth Youth Games, attention now turns to Belfast and the summer of 2021. The Athlete Impact Labs look forward with great ambition to inspiring the next generation of Commonwealth sports stars and leaders. Who's Next?!



↑ © 2017 Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation, all rights reserved.

 **MORE INFORMATION**
www.thecgf.com/cyg

CYPRUS JOINS THE QUEEN'S COMMONWEALTH CANOPY

Recent commitment to The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) by the Republic of Cyprus saw all three of the Commonwealth's European member states (Cyprus, Malta and the United Kingdom) join the QCC family.



Growth in the number of involved QCC countries continues to increase with 27 countries now committed to this important project and a number of additional countries working towards commitment in the coming months.

Mr Nicos Kouyialis, Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment for the Republic of Cyprus visited Buckingham Palace in June to convey his government's decision to commit to the QCC. He writes:

'The Queens Commonwealth Canopy aims to foster intra-Commonwealth co-operation for promoting forest and environmental protection and conservation. I was therefore particularly pleased to announce the

Republic of Cyprus' decision to participate in the QCC by dedicating an area within the Troodos National Forest Park to this contemporary project.

The Park covers approximately 90km² and was designated a National Forest Park in 1992. Managed by the Department of Forests, the Park plays an important recreational role for the local community, providing numerous picnic and camping sites, as well as nature trails, two visitor interpretation centres and a botanical garden. In recognition of the Park's place within the community, the Department pursues the co-operation of local communities for the sound management and the formulation of the actions implemented within the Park.

About 750 of flora species have been recorded within the Park, of which, 72 are endemic to Cyprus and twelve are exclusive to the Park itself. Animal life is also rich and with high conservational value. Of particular interest are the rare and protected Griffon Vulture, Raven, Bonelli's Eagle, the



Treecreeper and the Cyprus Wheather. The various rock types belong to the ophiolitic complex, which is one of the best developed worldwide and has become the object of international scientific interest and study. Additionally, UNESCO has included a number of the Park’s historic sites and byzantine churches in its list of monuments of cultural significance.

Various conservation projects and actions are taking place within the Park, however the most important is the ongoing effort to restore the Amiantos Asbestos Mine site with sustainable landscaping that safeguards the site’s biodiversity and conservation. The old asbestos mine is an area with enormous historical value that now hosts a popular botanical garden with information about the flora of the area, a seed bank of endemic species and also a plethora of evidence for the past mining activity and the community which once flourished there.

The overall objective of the project is to restore the forest ecosystems that existed in the mine area (330 ha), contribute to halting loss of biodiversity through improvement of restoration and management practices in the old mine, taking into account that the area is part of a National Forest Park and a major part of the most valuable mountain landscape of Cyprus. The ultimate aim is to improve restoration practices, to sufficiently address biodiversity conservation and landscape improvement. The main project’s actions are the creation of an artificial pond to meet irrigation, aesthetic and wildlife needs, the installation of artificial bird nests, provision of water and feeding points, improvement of bat refuges and construction of stonewalls, and the gradual restoration of the total mine area including

stabilization of wastes, ground preparation, planting and sowing, hydro-seeding, thatching and tending. The project is expected to end around 2035 giving a long term commitment by Cyprus to the aims and objectives of the QCC.

We stand ready to co-operate with other Commonwealth countries for the exchange of best practices and shared learning as well as the sharing of expertise and knowledge. Commonwealth countries must co-operate both bilaterally and in multilateral forums to promote environmental protection and conservation. The recent UN Oceans Conference that was held in New York was another testament to the huge potential that exists for intra-Commonwealth co-operation around issues related to the protection of our environment and natural resources.

I would like to express my gratitude to The Royal Commonwealth Society for its leadership in the advancement of this project. We hope that by next year’s Commonwealth Summit in London all member states of the Commonwealth will have committed to this inspiring and empowering initiative.’

 **MORE INFORMATION**
 www.queenscommonwealthcanopy.org

- ↑ Artificial pond creation to meet irrigation, aesthetic and wildlife needs
- ↶ Hydro-seeding activity
- ← Early results of hydro-seeding



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nicos Kouyialis was born in Nicosia on the 30th March 1967. He studied in the USA and he holds a BSc and MSc in Electrical Engineering from the North Carolina State University (NCSU). Mr Kouyialis took office as Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment for the Republic of Cyprus on 1st March 2013.

RCS REGIONAL CO-ORDINATORS

The role of volunteer Regional Co-ordinators was introduced in 2014 (*Commonwealth Voices* December 2014). Along the way the role has developed, enabling volunteers to shape their work while supporting the small team in London in liaising with the 60+ RCS branches around the world.

Today, with the benefit of feedback from those who carried out that early role with enthusiasm and energy, the RCS is pleased to expand the remit to incorporate Youth Co-ordinators drawn from the extensive networks of RCS Associate Fellows and CYGEN. A new model has been introduced, which enables large countries such as Australia, Canada and India to have their own Co-ordinators while working with the Regional Co-ordinator and staff in London.

 **MORE INFORMATION**
www.thercs.org/international-network

AFRICA

Regional Co-ordinator, Africa: John Apea, remains in post, working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator, Africa Gideon Commey



John Apea

John is a Ghanaian national, and Chairman of a respected television station in Ghana. A former judge of the RCS Commonwealth Essay, Film and Photography competitions, John is an alumnus of the UK Universities of Oxford and York.



Gideon Commey

An RCS Associate Fellow and a climate reality leader, Gideon runs the company, Solar People. He serves as a campaign strategist for the youth-led Ghana Youth Environmental Movement (GYEM) and is working with John to re-focus RCS Ghana branch.

AMERICAS

Regional Co-ordinator, Canada: Judith Elson, formerly President of Canada National Branch working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator, Jenny Stodola



Judith Elson

Former Chair of both the Canada National and the Montreal branches of the RCS, Judith has for many years been involved with The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition and currently serves as a judge.



Jenny Stodola

Jenny is an RCS Associate Fellow and Vice-Chair Youth at RCS Canada. She supports the 9 Canada RCS Branches in developing their local youth portfolios. With an MSc in Immunology and Virology she works in online education.

Regional Co-ordinator, Americas: Cheryll Belle, President of RCS Barbados Branch working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator, Ryan Brathwaite



Cheryll Belle

A former SRN in the UK. Cheryll went on to specialise in Psychology and Counselling in Barbados where she has held positions in a number of civil society organisations. She works closely with Judith for an RCS pan-Americas representation.



Ryan Brathwaite

Ryan represented the RCS Barbados Branch at the 2018 Queen's Baton Relay visit in June. At the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games in the Bahamas, he served as a facilitator in the Games' Athlete Impact Labs on behalf of the RCS (ps 14-15).

ASIA

Regional Co-ordinator, India: Shivani Wazir-Pasrich, Chair of RCS Branch, the CSOI (p1) working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator, India, Hari Om Dahiya

**Shivani Wazir-Pasrich**

Shivani is the recipient of the Build India Award 2017 and has directed documentaries on Education, Dance and The Girl Child. Her company works to raise awareness on environmental and social concerns through performance, art and sport.

**Hari Om Dahiya**

President & Youth Chair of The Commonwealth Students' Welfare Group of India (CSWGI), Hari Om has worked in National and International Youth Organisations and government bodies, on youth participation and leadership development.

Regional Co-ordinator, Asia: Peter Mann, Chair of RCS Hong Kong Branch working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator, Asia 'Potter' Ka Kai Fong

**Peter Mann**

Born in England, Peter read English at Exeter College, Oxford. He served in the Hong Kong Administrative Service for 25 years in the fields of transport, housing, security, environment and tourism. He is a published author and accomplished networker.

**'Potter' Ka Kai Fong**

RCS Associate Fellow Potter works with government and non-government organisations in Malaysia and internationally (Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong, India) assisting in organising their youth engagement and motivation initiatives.

EUROPE

Regional Co-ordinator, Europe: Angela Jeune, working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator Europe, Hillary Briffa

**Angela Jeune**

Angela has a long association with RCS Jersey Branch and was President from 2014–2017. Having retired from a senior management career in the NHS she has held Ministerial roles in the Jersey States Assembly.

**Hilary Briffa**

Hilary is reading for a doctorate at King's College London. She is an RCS Associate Fellow and in 2016 was awarded the U.S. State Department's inaugural Emerging Young Leaders award for her extensive efforts in counter-radicalisation.

PACIFIC

Regional Co-ordinator, Australia: Libby Ellis, President of RCS South Australia Branch working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator, Jack Milne

**Libby Ellis**

After a career as a State Library and Local Government Archivist, Libby formalised the RCS support of young musicians to form the RCS Ensemble, touring in Australia and Asia. She received the Order of Australia Medal in 2009.

**Jack Milne**

Jack is an RCS Associate Fellow, working with the Commonwealth Youth Council and with International Disability Alliance. Having completed his Masters, he represented Australian youth at the Common Purpose leadership programme in 2016.

Regional Co-ordinator, Pacific: Darryl Stevens, remains in post working with Regional Youth Co-ordinator, Amber Kale

**Darryl Stevens**

President of RCS Wellington Branch, Darryl has been involved in the promotion of Commonwealth Day for 30 years. He has organised National Student CHOGMs and chairs the Board of CYNZ. In 2013, he was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit.

**Amber Kale**

Amber, is a New Zealand geographer, portrait artist, and refugee rights advocate, currently undertaking her PhD. She as a participant in the Successor Generation Initiative (SGI), Britain's youth leadership programme and is an RCS Associate Fellow.

COMING UP IN THE COMMONWEALTH

11–13 SEPTEMBER

Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation ICT Forum, Maputo, Mozambique

12–25 SEPTEMBER

72nd Session of The UN General Assembly, New York, USA

24–28 SEPTEMBER

Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA), Dar Es Salaam Tanzania

TBC SEPTEMBER

Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM), New York

TBC SEPTEMBER

Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), New York

21 SEPTEMBER

International Day of Peace (United Nations)

5 OCTOBER

World Teachers Day (United Nations)

TBC OCTOBER

Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting (CFMM), Washington DC

8–12 OCTOBER

9th Commonwealth Youth Parliament, British Virgin Islands/CPA

OCTOBER 10–12

2nd Commonwealth Digital Health Conference and the 2nd Commonwealth Digital Health Awards Ceremony 2017
Cinnamon Grand, Colombo, Sri Lanka

16–18 OCTOBER

Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting, Bahamas

25–27 OCT

Commonwealth Spectrum Management Forum (CSMF), London, UK/ Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation

1–8 NOVEMBER

63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Dhaka Bangladesh

6–10 NOVEMBER (TBC)

Commonwealth Youth Work Week

21–24 NOVEMBER 2017

Commonwealth Local Government Conference, Valetta, Malta (CLGF)

21–22 NOVEMBER

Commonwealth Digital Broadcasting Caribbean Forum (CDBCF), Kingston, Jamaica / Broadcasting Commission, Jamaica

4–6 DECEMBER

3rd Meeting of UN Environmental Assembly, Nairobi, Kenya

6–7 DECEMBER TBC

Commonwealth Cybersecurity Roundtable Europe, Valletta, Malta

KEEP IN THE CONVERSATION

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Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2017

Local governments throughout the world face major challenges in planning, delivery and maintaining services and infrastructure in local communities.

Join 600 plus decision makers, practitioners, research pioneers and private sector stakeholders at the **Commonwealth Local Government Forum's flagship conference** to discuss innovative ways to boost local government's resources and capacity to ensure it is fit for purpose to meet the demands of the future.

You must register in advance and all details can be found on the website.

www.clgc2017.org



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One world. And it's local



2017

Commonwealth Local Government Conference

Fit for the future:
resources and capacity for
effective local government

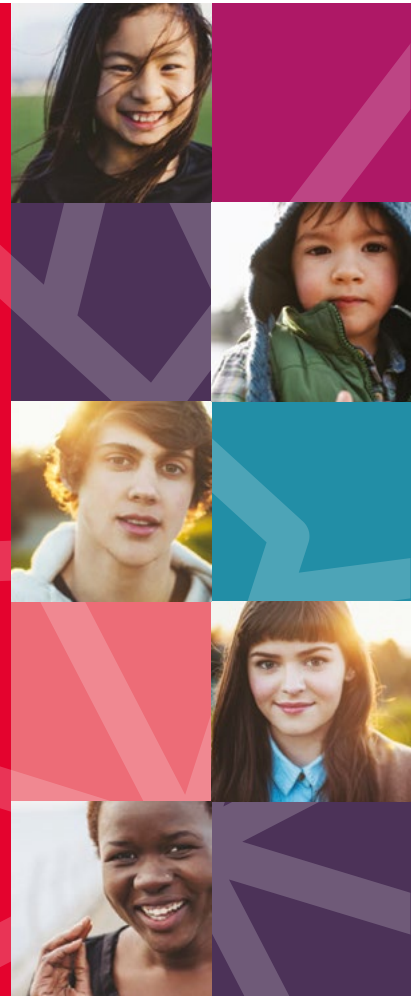
VALLETTA MALTA
21-24 NOVEMBER 2017

CANADA 150

Canada is proud to share the Commonwealth's vision for a mutually respectful, resilient, peaceful and prosperous family of nations that cherishes equality, diversity and pluralism. In this year of celebration of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, one of our key themes is recognizing that our diversity is our strength.

This year, Canada has adopted a Feminist International Assistance Policy to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as the most effective way to reduce poverty and build a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world. Together with the Commonwealth and our fellow member states we are working to achieve Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, including efforts to support gender equality.

Canada



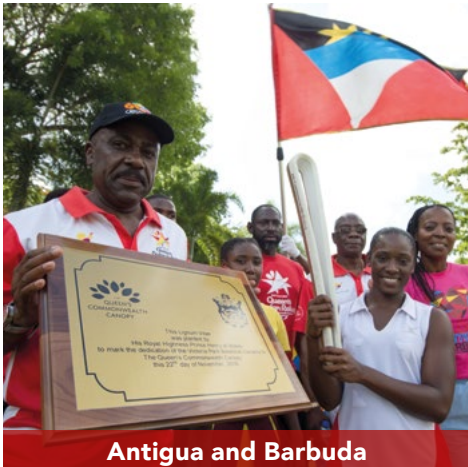
The Queen's Baton, on its relay, visits Commonwealth cities and QCC sites with RCS Branch personnel and Associate Fellows.



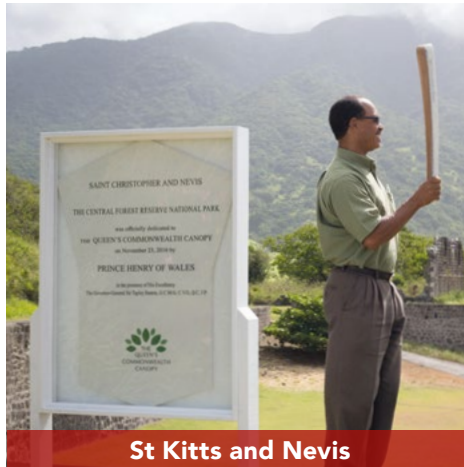
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Barbados



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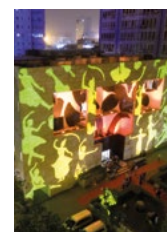


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