



**ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY OF CANADA
YOUTH NEWSLETTER - April 2016 - Edition #2**

This regular newsletter is distributed by the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) Canada to highlight Commonwealth-related programs, events or initiatives occurring around the Commonwealth that have a youth aspect or may be of interest to youth or those who support youth. Please distribute freely within your networks.

RCS Canada is redistributing this information and is not held responsible for any errors that may be present in this digest; always refer to the sponsoring organization to confirm information and deadlines.

Commonwealth Day Celebrated Worldwide March 14th 2016!

Individuals, communities and organisations from 53 nations came together to promote the shared Commonwealth values of peace, democracy and equality, and to celebrate the association's rich diversity.

Read the Queen's Commonwealth Day message and happenings around the world here:
<http://thecommonwealth.org/commonwealthday>

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition (RCS)

Open to all Commonwealth citizens under the age of 18.

This year's essays' themes revolve around "An Inclusive Commonwealth."

Deadline: May 1st, 2016

<https://www.thercs.org/youth-and-education/the-queens-commonwealth-essay-competition/>

Commonwealth Photography Competition

Join the Commonwealth to showcase and celebrate the beauty and individuality exhibited by each person living in the Commonwealth! The Commonwealth Secretariat is hosting a photography competition to inspire people throughout the 53 member countries of the Commonwealth to use their photography skills to engage with this year's theme of 'An Inclusive Commonwealth'.

Open to Commonwealth citizens of all ages, and photographs must have been taken in a Commonwealth country.

Deadline for submissions: April 25th, 2016

<http://thecommonwealth.org/cwphotocomp2016>

National Student Commonwealth Forum (RCS - Ottawa)

Annual Forum for Canadian high school students where they learn and discuss the contemporary Commonwealth through a theme, this year being Immigration, Migration and Refugee Issues. Delegates travel to Canada's capital in early May to meet youth from across the country, and participate in a model Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to reach consensus on resolutions they build themselves.

Application still being accepted from certain regions, see website for details.

www.nscf-fnec.ca

Cameroonian named as Commonwealth Young Person of the Year 2016

The Commonwealth Young Person of the Year has been named as Achaleke Christian Leke from Cameroon - one of four outstanding young people aged under 30 who have been recognised in the 2016 Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work. The young peace activist established Action for Change Cameroon, a youth-led organisation promoting peace and countering violent extremism.

The Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development recognise outstanding young people from Commonwealth countries whose work has significantly contributed to local, national, regional or global development. Over 300 nominations were received this year and 17 finalists were named in January.

See the full list of 2016 winners and more details about the award at:

<http://thecommonwealth.org/media/press-release/cameroonian-named-commonwealth-young-person-year-2016>

Canadian Queen's Young Leader Winner, Gunjan Mhapankar

A British Columbia native, Gunjan was the recipient of a Queen's Young Leader Award in 2016 for her work in establishing the Digital Storytelling Project. Through her work in the community, Gunjan realised there was a significant barrier to accessing essential services, due to a lack of awareness about them. Realising that many people respond better to someone talking to them, she founded the Digital Storytelling Project, to increase public awareness about mental health, eating disorders, LGBTI+ rights and unemployment services, through video and digital content.

See a video of Gunjan explaining her project:

<https://www.facebook.com/queensyoungleaders/videos/1690233354589064/>

More information on the award: <https://queensyoungleaders.com>

2016 Commonwealth Master's Scholarships

Applications for Commonwealth Master's Scholarships in Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Sri Lanka and at the University of the South Pacific will open in April 2016. Check the Association of Commonwealth Universities website for updated information.

<https://www.acu.ac.uk/focus-areas/scholarships/commonwealth-scholarships/>

Commonwealth Asset Bank: Commonwealth e-Book for Children

A new digital book is available, called: *Our Story, Our World, Our Commonwealth* and teaches young children about the Commonwealth community and our shared values of peace, equality and democracy.

Available for free download:

<http://assets.thecommonwealth.org/assetbank-commonwealth/action/viewAsset?id=23974&index=0&total=17&view=viewSearchItem>

Information: Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network

The aim of CYGEN is to build a network of young people from across the Commonwealth who can collaborate and share good practice in their work. Youth voices on gender issues are not represented in formal Commonwealth youth structures, and this is a vacuum which urgently needs to be filled in order to create a more robust network of advocates, who can effectively push for policy change at local, national, regional and international levels.

Learn more at:

<https://www.thercs.org/youth-and-education/commonwealth-youth-gender-and-equality-network/>

Harry Hodson Memorial Prize (The Roundtable)

This is an annual award by *The Round Table* in memory of the journal's late Editor, Harry Hodson. It is awarded for a publishable article, contributed by anyone aged 30 years or younger. Applicants for the award should contribute an essay of between 1500 and 2000 words in length on a topic of relevance to the contemporary Commonwealth.

Deadline: December 31st 2016

<http://www.commonwealthroundtable.co.uk/journal/harry-hodson-memorial-prize/>

Farewell to Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma

During his eight-year tenure as Commonwealth Secretary-General, Kamalesh Sharma has focused on the empowerment of young people, the advancement of women's political and economic rights and raising international awareness of challenges facing small states as pressing priorities. Kamalesh Sharma has strengthened strategic relationships beyond the Commonwealth, notably with the G20 in association with La Francophonie, and modernised Commonwealth networking through contemporary information and communication technologies. He also oversaw the adoption of the Commonwealth Charter in 2012, which sets out the core values around which the Commonwealth unites.

April 1st marked Baroness Patricia Scotland's role as 6th Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. She is the first woman in the role and is a dual citizen of Dominic and the UK.

<http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/farewell-commonwealth-secretary-general-kamalesh-sharma>

Blog: Youth Perspectives on an "Inclusive Commonwealth"

Kishva Ambigapathy, the newly-elected Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth Council, talks on the youth perspective on the Commonwealth theme, an "Inclusive Commonwealth" and the role of this youth-led organisation in the international community.

<https://www.thercs.org/news/news-and-blog/youth-perspectives-on-an-inclusive-commonwealth>

Additional Resources:

<http://www.youngcommonwealth.org/>

<http://www.yourcommonwealth.org/>

<http://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/youth>

<https://www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net/>

<http://thecommonwealth.org/jobs>

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, email: prgm.advisor.nscf@gmail.com.

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