

## ① Well Connected!

### THEMES

Diversity; 'youthfulness' of the Commonwealth; cultural heritage; our global links; getting connected with other young people; for example, the diversity of UK society is the result of its colonial heritage – young Britain is largely Commonwealth Britain and Britain is a reflection of the Commonwealth.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- As a group, discuss the connections you have with other parts of the world – through family and relatives, friends, pen-friends, culture, music and food tastes etc. You could chart these on a map of the world. Does anything surprise you? How many links are with Commonwealth countries? Why do you think this is?
- Think about the many different cultures, religions and traditions that make your country. What does it mean to be 'British' or 'Indian' or 'Nigerian' etc? What do you think people mean by a 'British' or 'Indian' or 'Nigerian' culture etc? Do you think it exists?

## ② Express Yourself!

### THEMES

The key values and principles of the Commonwealth, which are the 'glue' that binds the modern Commonwealth together (democracy, human rights, equality, justice, peace and security, sustainable development); the key global issues that are of concern to all countries in the Commonwealth (climate change, health, youth development, educational opportunities, social justice, conflict); the importance of communication for global peace and understanding; young people's communication and networking.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Hold a discussion/debate - what do you think are the main issues affecting young people across the Commonwealth/world at the present time?
- Create your own poster(s) to communicate a youth theme or concern.
- Find out about the Harare Declaration of Commonwealth Principles (you can download them from the Commonwealth Secretariat's website – [www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org)) and the United Nations' charter. What do you think are the core values

and principles that should govern the relationships between nations and peoples? Can you create your own Declaration of Commonwealth Principles or International Charter?

- Take part in the Commonwealth Essay Competition – [www.rcsint.org/essay](http://www.rcsint.org/essay) for more information

## ③ Make the Difference!

### THEMES

Young people being empowered to get involved and take action – locally, nationally and in the Commonwealth; ideas concerning how to get involved: campaigning, awareness raising, volunteering, networking via the internet, youth exchanges, GAP year, being an active member of a youth organisation, enjoying sport, music, dance, active citizenship etc.

### ACTIVITIES

- Find out about the work of a development charity/non-governmental organisation eg Oxfam, Save The Children, Red Cross/Crescent, Christian Aid, Muslim Aid, Action Aid etc – and their campaigns
- Consider holding a fundraising event to support a development charity/campaign
- Take part in a campaign – explore young people's involvement in awareness-raising/advocacy about HIV/AIDS for example
- Think about doing a youth exchange with your youth group ([www.cyec.org.uk](http://www.cyec.org.uk))
- Consider volunteering during a GAP year
- If you are a member of a youth organisation, find out about its links overseas – the major international youth organisations exist in many Commonwealth countries eg: the Guides, Scouts, Boys Brigade, YMCA, YWCA, Woodcraft Folk, Duke of Edinburgh's/ International Award Scheme etc
- Join an on-line community of interest and start networking and sharing views eg TakingITGlobal, the on-line community of interest for young people interested in making a difference: [www.takingitglobal.org](http://www.takingitglobal.org)

## ④ We are Family!

### THEMES

The role of the Commonwealth; membership of the Commonwealth; consensus building; the Commonwealth as a 'family' due to people-to-people links and historical connections via the former British Empire; the

Commonwealth and achieving the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals); the institutions of the Commonwealth (Commonwealth Secretariat); the role of civil society and Commonwealth associations in the Commonwealth.

### ACTIVITIES

- Look at the list of Commonwealth countries. Refer to a world map or atlas and find out where countries are located in the world.
- Discuss your ideas about 'poverty', 'social justice' and 'development' – what do you think they mean? Is the UK 'developed', or still 'developing'? How are Commonwealth countries progressing towards the MDGs? What is the Commonwealth doing for poverty reduction and climate change?
- Find out more about the Commonwealth – its history ([www.empiremuseum.co.uk](http://www.empiremuseum.co.uk)), the 'official' inter-governmental institutions and the 'unofficial' civil society associations - use the Internet and the websites suggested at the bottom of the posters.
- Download the Final Communiqué from the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) which is held every 2 years at the same time as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting ([www.cyec.org.uk](http://www.cyec.org.uk) or [www.thecommonwealth.org/cyp](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/cyp)) – what do you think about these recommendations? Use them as prompts for discussion and 'debate-to-action' – do you agree with them? How can you help achieve them?
- Take part in a youth CHOGM – a simulation of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting which is held biennially. Young people take on the role of specific Commonwealth countries, and debate from that country's standpoint. Find out more at [www.rcsint.org/youthchogm](http://www.rcsint.org/youthchogm). You could also run a simulation of a Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting or a Commonwealth Education Ministers' Meeting (or Health or Environment).
- Celebrate Commonwealth Day (the second Monday in March) – along with young people throughout the Commonwealth. You can get a poster from the Commonwealth Secretariat ([www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org)) and an activity pack from the Joint Commonwealth Societies - [www.rcsint.org/day](http://www.rcsint.org/day). There is a different theme every year.
- If you are interested in sport, find out more about the Commonwealth Games which are held every 4 years ([www.commonwealthgames.com](http://www.commonwealthgames.com)). These are also known as the 'Friendly Games', second only to the Olympic Games.

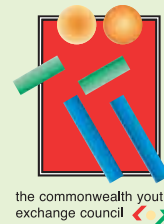
## Introduction - The Commonwealth

*The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and sovereign states. It is second only to the United Nations in size as an international organisation. Its members are from all continents and are at all stages of development and so it provides a bridge across many of the world's divides. Membership provides countries with a valuable network for co-operation – the Commonwealth has particular strengths in promoting peace, democracy, development and understanding. It is a good example of how countries can successfully work together via people-to-people links. Young people under 25 years make up over 50% of the populations of most countries - they are a vital resource for the Commonwealth and for the development of their societies.*

The Commonwealth provides young people with an interesting and relevant resource for exploring global citizenship, international and youth issues, interdependence and diversity - in both school and youth work settings. CYEC has produced the 'Our Commonwealth' 4 poster set as a colourful resource to prompt discussion and debate and the desire to find out more – as well as helping young people to explore more active involvement. This leaflet provides some ideas for active and participatory learning, including triggers for discussion and debate and activity ideas. The ideas will need to be adapted, depending on age range and setting. And don't forget to check out the 'want to find out more?' websites.



*common vision, shared future*



the commonwealth youth  
exchange council

### Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council

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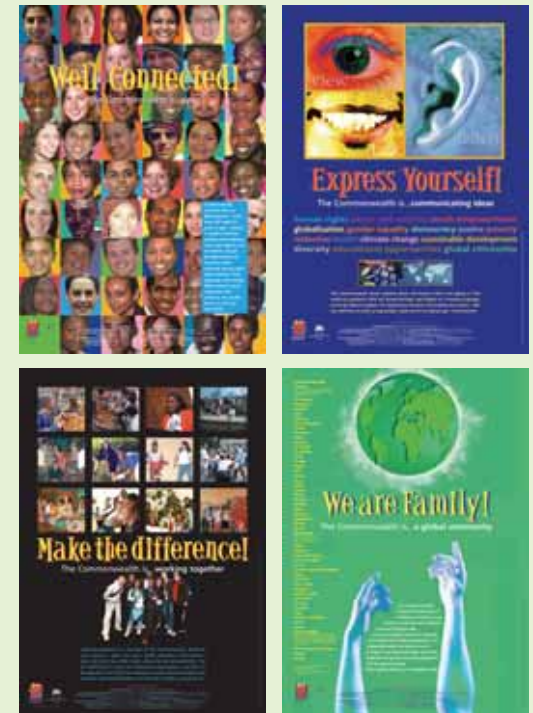
### Want to find out more?

[www.cyec.org.uk](http://www.cyec.org.uk) Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council  
[www.britishcouncil.org/globalschools](http://www.britishcouncil.org/globalschools) DFID Global Schools Partnership  
[www.commonwealthfoundation.com](http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com) Commonwealth Foundation  
[www.commonwealthgames.com](http://www.commonwealthgames.com) Commonwealth Games Federation  
[www.empiremuseum.co.uk](http://www.empiremuseum.co.uk) The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum  
[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
[www.oxfam.org.uk/generationwhy](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/generationwhy) Oxfam  
[www.rcsint.org/youthchogm](http://www.rcsint.org/youthchogm) Royal Commonwealth Society  
[www.rcsint.org/day](http://www.rcsint.org/day) Commonwealth Day  
[www.takingitglobal.org](http://www.takingitglobal.org) TakingITGlobal  
[www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org) Commonwealth Secretariat  
[www.thecommonwealth.org/cyp](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/cyp) Commonwealth Youth Programme  
[www.yocomm.com](http://www.yocomm.com) Commonwealth Youth Community  
[www.youngcommonwealth.org](http://www.youngcommonwealth.org) Young People's Commonwealth

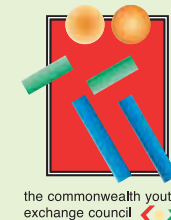
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# Our Commonwealth

## 4 Poster Set



# DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY IDEAS



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