

grammes and services for young people a research project was organised by the CYP. After visits to the British Virgin Islands, Kiribati, Maldives and Namibia, an in-depth analysis of the health status of young people in these countries, a policy document and training materials for young people associated with health programmes were produced.

## Environment and Health

Environmental health impact assessment (EHIA) manuals, developed in collaboration with Australia, have been piloted in Tonga and Solomon Islands. At the same time as the Australian team was developing the draft training materials, it became clear, through consultation with WHO and other experts, that health impact assessment

(HIA), as an integral part of environmental impact assessment (EIA), was being addressed in a number of places. Accordingly, the Secretariat arranged for a small expert group to meet in Aberdeen, hosted by the Centre for Environmental Management and Planning (CEMP), to identify core HIA in EIA material and develop proposals for training applications of the core material. The framework developed by the group is being used in Asia and the Pacific for the preparation of training materials.

In Africa, a regional survey of urban sanitation led to a pilot project for developing an integrated strategic plan in Zambia. A report describing the process is being prepared for distribution in the region. WHO joined the pilot project in 1994.

# EMPOWERING YOUTH

**Y**oung people represent a third or more of the population in many countries and this proportion is expected to increase. Meeting the needs of this distinct population group has major implications for the futures of their countries and the Commonwealth believes that efforts towards social and economic growth should be coupled with strategic policies which address their special problems.

At their second meeting in May 1995 at Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Youth Affairs underscored this belief by approving a three-pronged strategy for action in youth empowerment, development of youth policy and the promotion of activities to help youth achieve their full potential as a separate, and at the same time integrated, human resource. Empowerment would involve equity, access to resources to achieve that equity, and participation in policy formulation and decision-making.

In the past two years, Secretariat activities in

youth affairs, delivered through the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), have been directed at supporting national efforts to develop appropriate strategies for priority issues such as enterprise and youth employment, young women and development, youth health and welfare, environment and literacy. These activities are delivered at pan-Commonwealth level and through the CYP's Regional Centres in Africa (Lusaka, Zambia), Asia (Chandigarh, India), the Caribbean (Georgetown, Guyana) and the South Pacific (Honiara, Solomon Islands).

## Training and Related Activities

A 1993 review of the CYP's popular diploma and certificate courses for youth workers recommended the use of distance training as a major means of delivering training in order to meet growing demand within the CYP's limited resources.

The CYP's Caribbean Centre has already used distance education as the main mode of delivering its



*1995 Youth Service Award winners Music House Too from London*

diploma course where it trained 170 people, as compared to the usual 40 in a residential course. Participants also used teleconferencing to speak with each other, a facility which was arranged in collaboration with the University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experience. The Asia and South Pacific Centres have also conducted diploma courses through a mix of distance education and residential training and the Regional Centres use distance education for their certificate courses for field workers.

In developing training materials suitable for distance education, the CYP will collaborate with the Commonwealth of Learning and other appropriate agencies. A range of training materials that are aimed at helping to build the capacity of local training institutions and agencies has also been developed and widely distributed to member governments, regional and international agencies, training institutions and NGOs.

The CYP has initiated a new pan-Commonwealth project which will train young women and men in conflict prevention and resolution. It aims to iden-

tify and work with young leaders whose exposure to war, community or ethnic violence, inequality or injustice will have given them experiences and skills which can be used for training a large number of young people across the Commonwealth in conflict resolution and prevention. These young leaders have been trained as trainers to enable them to train their peers in their home countries or regions.

## **Enterprise and Employment**

A disproportionate number of young people are unemployed, with young women, school-leavers and school drop-outs being especially vulnerable. Where governments find it difficult to create the required number of new jobs, an alternative may lie in expanding opportunities for self-employment, especially among young people.

Towards this end, in 1995, Ministers Responsible for Youth Affairs launched a Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative which, through the establishment of revolving funds and the provision of small loans, will attempt to relax constraints on young people

securing loans and to promote enterprise development. The package of assistance offered would include credit and savings components, vocational skills and enterprise management training, and peer counselling services. The project will be implemented through NGOs.

A framework for the Initiative has been developed in consultation with various experts, including representatives from youth NGOs, the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and Women's World Banking. While the initial seed-funding has been provided by the CYP, the Initiative hopes to mobilise resources from other sources, including international agencies. Four pilot projects have been set up in each of the four Regional Centres.

Assistance continues in helping to set up youth enterprises and income-generating projects. Among the projects funded were: training young musicians to enable them to become self-employed; developing the skills of young people in gem-cutting and related work; supporting the training of disabled young people in relevant vocational skills; and financial assistance to a church youth group to purchase a bus for hiring out. In the future, the CYP will only provide seed money for innovative projects which could be developed as models for replication.

A series of leaflets entitled *In Practice*, featuring examples of good practice in youth enterprise development in Guyana, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Zambia, has been produced to help the exchange of information and experience and promote enterprise among young people. A training video, *Risk It! The Movie*, which follows the fortunes of three small-scale enterprises run by young people in Dominica, Malaysia and Zimbabwe, was also produced. *Try It! The Youth Enterprise Workbook* offers a range of exercises which can be used by trainers to encourage the development of enterprise skills among young people.

## **Young Women and Development**

Young women's participation in society is severely restricted in many member countries because of a

combination of social and cultural factors. The CYP is committed to implementing the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development which focuses on the dual objectives of increasing women's participation as well as integrating gender concerns in all Commonwealth activities, and at Trinidad and Tobago, Ministers Responsible for Youth Affairs pointed out that young women would only gain equitable access to resources and full, effective participation in decision-making when gender issues were made explicit in national youth policies and programmes.

A key aspect of the CYP's work has therefore been to enhance the participation of young women in national development processes through the promotion of specially targeted enterprises and income-generating projects. For example, 35 young women from remote communities in Australia and 12 other countries in the South Pacific came together for a workshop, run by the South Pacific Centre, Australia's Department of Employment, Education and Training, and an Australian private firm, which focused on small business development for women in indigenous communities.

Three major projects in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia, set up by young women entrepreneurs with assistance from the Africa Centre, have increased productivity to meet the growing demand for their goods and products. Among the projects which were provided with financial support by the Asia and Caribbean Centres were a project to revive traditional weaving skills among young tribal women; training to improve vocational skills of poor young women in rural areas; income-generation projects in paddy-husking, poultry rearing, dressmaking and embroidery; and providing employment for young women in processing and preserving agricultural produce.

A pan-Commonwealth research project is under way which will inform decision-makers of the changes in the gender roles, values, attitudes and relationships of three generations of young women and men in Commonwealth countries from the

middle of this century to the year 2000. The project, *Three Generations, Two Genders, One World*, will enhance understanding of the cultural and attitudinal barriers to women's equality which is essential to the formulation of policies and the development of strategies. A guide on gender issues, *Investing in Young Women*, has been produced for policy-makers and officials.

### Youth Health

The focus of CYP work in health has been to support efforts of member governments and NGOs to raise HIV/AIDS awareness among young people through the production of appropriate materials and to identify strategies for incorporating AIDS prevention activities into youth programmes. Activities in this area are described with other HIV/AIDS awareness projects elsewhere in this Report.

### Youth and the Environment

The theme of the 1994 Youth Exchange Programme, organised by the Caribbean Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, Guyana, was 'Environment', together with fostering regional integration. About 100 young women and men from 16 countries in the region participated in the two-week programme which focused on environment protection.

The CYP collaborated with the International Youth Development and Environment Network, a worldwide network of young environmentalists based in Kenya, on the development of a series of materials to enable young people who were involved in the 1992 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro to talk about their experiences, air their views and present ideas for action. The series, entitled *Voices of the Rainbow*, focuses on post-summit action and includes the national policies of member countries relating to young people and environmental action.

### Literacy

The CYP supports, through direct funding, small-scale projects in the four regions using the family, or a cluster of four or five families, as the prime

place for promoting literacy, whereby adults learn from their children. Pilot projects are being run in all the four regions, in collaboration with NGOs.

### Youth Policy Development

A number of member governments have been helped in formulating or reviewing national youth policies. CYP assistance in this area ranged from actual policy formulation, through consultancies, to the running of policy workshops, providing advice and drafting policy documents on special development sectors. Only 17 member countries have formulated youth policies and, therefore, CYP will give special emphasis to youth policy development. Further, it is increasingly recognised that it is important for youth needs and concerns to be mainstreamed in the policies and programmes of youth-related ministries and departments.



*Environment clean-up by the Hong Kong youth project Green Express*