

REPORT

Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum 2023 Commonwealth Year of Youth

Wednesday 12 April
Online Forum

"Supporting young people for a safe, secure, happy and healthy future"



1. INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA) host a policy forum each year in conjunction with the annual Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting. The CHPA are committed to optimising civil society interaction with Commonwealth Health Ministers, which is an important forum for influencing health and wellbeing policy and practice on behalf of the practitioners CHPA represents and the citizens of the Commonwealth to whom CHPA members provide care.

Commonwealth Health Ministers meet annually prior to the commencement of the annual World Health Assembly of the World Health Organisation. Over many years, with the ongoing support of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth civil society has actively interacted with Commonwealth Health Ministers at their annual meeting. Civil society brings a unique perspective to the deliberations of Commonwealth Health Ministers and it is important that their voice is heard.

2. COMMONWEALTH CIVIL SOCIETY POLICY FORUM THEME

The theme chosen by the CHPA for the 2023 Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum (CCSPF) was "Supporting young people for a safe, secure, happy and healthy future". The CHPA welcomed the Commonwealth Year of Youth 2023 as an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of young people and dedicated the 2023 CCSPF to exploring issues of concern to young people and recommending actions to provide them with a safe, secure, happy and healthy future. Additionally, members of CHPA are planning individual activities to commemorate the Commonwealth Year of Youth.

The objectives of the 2022 CCSPF were:

- To raise awareness of identified issue of concern to young people across the Commonwealth which affect their health and wellbeing.
- To highlight effective strategies which promote the health and wellbeing of young people across the Commonwealth.
- To propose actionable recommendations for Commonwealth Health Ministers which will contribute to a safe, secure, happy and healthy future for young people across the Commonwealth.

Eminent speakers, including young people, addressed the forum on diverse issues of concern to young people. Two hundred and thirty-six participants from 31 Commonwealth countries and 8 other countries joined the forum online. The video link for the forum is: https://youtu.be/nHJAL2OXjPg

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The overriding message from the 2023 CCSPF was the capacity of young people to identify the issues of concern to them and to develop, with support, innovative solutions to address those issues. The young people of the Commonwealth are the future of the Commonwealth. They need and deserve our active support, physically and financially. The essence of the recommendation below from the forum was endorsed by every speaker:

RECOMMENDATION 1

That Commonwealth governments commemorate the Commonwealth Year of Youth 2023 by actively partnering with the young people of their country, and the organisations that represent young people, to:

- establish a program of work led by young people for young people,
- address issues identified by young people of concern to them, and
- work with the young people to develop innovative solutions, and
- support them physically and financially to implement, evaluate and replicate the innovations.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That Commonwealth governments adopt the Commonwealth Young Carer's Charter, recognizing that young carers with the additional responsibility of caring for a family member or household, are children and young people first, and should be supported to develop emotionally and physically and to take full advantage of opportunities for educational achievement and life success.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That Commonwealth governments act on the Briefing Paper from the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association on substandard and falsified medicines and the paper's recommendations for national action plans to be developed, regulation and policy to be strengthened, awareness and education of the impact of substandard and falsified medicines to be increased, particularly in relation to their effects on young people, and join the MediCrime Convention if not already a member.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That Commonwealth governments, given the increase in mental health issues for young people identified by the World Health Organisation since the COVID-19 pandemic, re-evaluate mental health service delivery to young people and, given the generally inadequate mental health workforce skilled in providing mental health care to children and young people in most countries, explore different models of service provision, using existing community based youth services, providing them with education on specific interventions, directly supported and supervised by mental health professionals. Further, that Commonwealth governments explore the option of online assessment and consultation for young people to increase access to services.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That Commonwealth governments formally engage young people in developing communication messages, education programs, and preventive activities to mitigate the effect of climate change.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That Commonwealth governments partner with civil society to collect evidence on the effects, both positive and negative, of commercial entities on the nutrition of children and young people, given the vulnerability of children and young people to advertising, and identify and implement strategies that minimize the negative impacts of Commercial Determinants of Health and which foster health promoting commercial practices.

4. COMMONWEALTH CIVIL SOCIETY POLICY FORUM PROGRAM



PROFESSOR VAJIRA DISSANAYAKE

The 2023 CCSPF was Chaired by Professor Vajira Dissanayake, Chairperson of the CHPA and Chair and Senior Professor in the Department of Anatomy, Genetics and Biomedical Informatics and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Professor Dissanayake welcomed the 235 participants who joined online for the CCSPF and thanked speakers for being a part of the program.



RT HON BARONESS PATRICIA SCOTLAND KC

The Commonwealth Secretary General provided a video message to the 2023 CCSPF. The Secretary General said that the CCSPF could not have a more important theme linked to the Commonwealth Year of Youth and the 1.5 billion young people in the Commonwealth. The Secretary General said the theme for the 2023 CCSPF was timely and that the annual CCSPF is a critical part of the work of the CHPA and is hugely influential.

The CHPA membership and its links with the wider civil society across the Commonwealth has an essential role and responsibility as we all work together toward providing a safe, secure, happy and healthy future for our young people. The Secretary General said health professionals across the Commonwealth have been fearless, dedicated and skillful in facing incredible challenges and their work feeds into and provides a direct link with the Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting. The Secretary General closed by saying the CHPA should have confidence in their impact, thanked them for their contribution to the health and wellbeing of Commonwealth citizens and wished the forum well in its deliberations.



DR ANNE GALLAGHER AO

Dr Gallagher, Director General of the Commonwealth Foundation, welcomed the opportunity to be a part of an exciting and timely program of central importance to the future of young people across the Commonwealth. Dr Gallagher shared with participants the critical conversations the Foundation had been holding with young people on the 10th Anniversary of the Commonwealth Charter.

Young people, Dr Gallagher said, needed to be leading the charge, owning and using the values in the Commonwealth Charter to move forward to a safe, secure, happy and healthy future. As part of the Commonwealth Foundation's *Critical Conversations*, young people representing civil society came together to reflect of what had been achieved by having a Commonwealth Charter and discuss practical steps and guiding principles to achieve universal health coverage. An overarching theme, Dr Gallagher said, was the policy failure of governments to address gender inequality and reflect in policy the unique interests and needs of women and girls. Dr Gallagher shared a video of the highlights of the *Critical Conversations* which is available on the Foundation's website. Some of the comments from the young people were:

- How do you transform the Charter's values into practical actions that show where we are going and how we are going to get there.
- There needs to be greater awareness of the Charter across the Commonwealth. For example, translation into other languages used in the Commonwealth.
- While the Charter outlines accountability and provides a benchmark it needs to be made clear how progress is measured.
- The provision of election monitoring was considered an important function of the Commonwealth to ensure safe and fair electoral processes.

- The establishment of regional Commonwealth offices was suggested to increase awareness of the Commonwealth and the Charter.
- An acknowledgement of the historical trauma of colonization was also highlighted as an issue that needed open and transparent dialogue.

Anne summarized by emphasizing three points: the need to measure progress; the need to challenge institutions to work for us; and the need for us to encourage each other to work harder to achieve our goals. https://commonwealthfoundation.com/about-us/the-commonwealth-charter/; https://commonwealthfoundation.com/events/a-decade-of-the-commonwealth-charter-young-leaders-dialogue/; https://commonwealthfoundation.com/events/advancing-universal-health-coverage-through-gender-equality/



MS DORCAS GWATA

Dorcas is a globally recognised, experienced and innovative mental health and public health nurse clinician, researcher, advisor and leader. She has the lived experiences of a hospital cleaner who became an award-winning nurse, a global health consultant, and climate change advocate. Dorcas' presentation was about innovation in tackling youth violence and innovation.

Dorcas said that innovation can come from the most unlikely places. She learned through her work with youth gangs in Westminster, London, that health and wellbeing professionals need to be open to, and become, more innovative to engage constructively with young people, particularly young people coming from a background of deep inequalities. Dorcas said when working in HIV services, they had to learn to work with what they had and not what they did not have. In the absence of psychiatrist, psychologists, doctors and nurses, the Friendship Bench project used grandmothers as trained lay workers, working with and supervised scarce professionals to successfully deliver moderately complex mental health interventions. Another innovation was the establishment of Global Health Cafés where young people could come together in a space of their own to discuss health and wellbeing issues of concern to them.

Dorcas also shared the success of health partnerships where there can be bidirectional cultural learning and a reciprocal exchange of skills, knowledge and experience on an equal footing. Governments and health and wellbeing professionals, Dorcas said, needed to be aware of and unpack unconscious bias about who owns knowledge, power and finances. Issues of engagement with young people need to empower young people to be involved in their own solutions, to take ownership. It is exciting, Dorcas said, to see what innovation looks like when young people lead and take care of their own vulnerabilities.



ORITSÉ WILLIAMS

Oritsé Williams is a musician, poet and founding member of the Band JLS. As a 12 year old, Oritsé was a young carer for his mother who has Multiple Sclerosis supporting also younger siblings. Oritsé is the Commonwealth Young Carer Champion working with Commonwealth Organisations to promote the Young Carers Charter developed by the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work. Oritsé's presentation is in conversation with Dr David Jones.

Oristsé spoke first about the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people and particularly young carers. He said the effect was devastating. In addition to their caring responsibilities, they couldn't leave the house for basic necessities or amenities and when they did leave the house, they were afraid of bringing infection into the house and complicating the ill health of the person they were caring for. There was next to no support for young carers: they felt isolated; they felt they were carrying an additional heavy load; they could not do any part-time work to supplement a limited income when the person they were caring for couldn't work; they had to be careful; they had to cope with home schooling as well as home caring; confined to the house there was no way to be children or to be carefree, so the mental and emotional impact was intense.

While he was pursuing his music career, Oritsé worked as a carer for children with disabilities so he has had quite a career journey. His appearances on X-Factor led to a successful music career, however even then he felt guilty that he was not around and support his younger siblings with their career responsibilities. Oritsé felt that his experience as a young career gave him the resilience, life skills and built his character to overcome adversities such grief, loss, pain, failure, fear of failure for example as a young adult. He has since founded a Young Carer's Charity to give young carers hope and encouragement. He would like to see legislation enacted around the Commonwealth to specifically support young carers.



DR DAVID JONES

Dr David Jones is a social worker with extensive international, national and local government, NGO and private sector experience. He is a Board Member of the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW), represents civil society on the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health, and is a Trustee of Children and Families Across Borders. Dr Jones shared with the CCSPF the development of the Commonwealth Young Carer's Charter by the COSW.

David explained that the development of the Commonwealth Young Carer's Charter has been a 20 year journey. While there are big differences in young carer's services across the Commonwealth there are also many similarities. Young carer's services are relevant to every country in the Commonwealth. An annual young carer's festival in the UK led to the establishment of young carer's festivals in other countries which then led to formal consultations based around the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* about a Commonwealth Young Carer's Charter. The consultation was widely supported by young carer groups and the Charter has been positively received by young carers. David said, carers are a group of young people who have very particular needs: they struggle with their own lives; to get support; with their schooling; and their own futures. COSW is working toward acceptance of the Commonwealth Young Carer's Charter by Commonwealth Heads of Government when next they meet.

Young Carers Charter: https://cosw.info/young-cares/

Webinar Thursday 8 June Friday 9 June: "Young Carers' Voices - International Perspectives" https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/young-carers-voices-international-perspectives-day-1-thursday-8-june-tickets-605741598427?aff=ebdsoporgprofile&keep_tld=1



STEPHEN OGWENO

Ogweno Stephen is the founder and CEO of the Stowelink Foundation based in Kenya and is a multi-award-winning global health practitioner and a non-communicable diseases (NCDs) advocate. Stowelink Inc develops and implements programs and innovations aimed at improving health literacy for young people and access to care for chronic diseases ten other countries in Africa.

Stephen's presentation focused on *Youth engagement and leveraging technology to reach young people with health messages*. Stowelink Inc was founded by Stephen in 2016. Their focus is on non-communicable diease, specifically mental health, drugs and substance abuse and nutrition and social behaviour change through health messaging, information and education.

The four steps include:

- 1. <u>Communication</u> simplify health messages and constantly adapt to and capitalise on changing technology.
- 2. Engagement which uses diverse modes and is creative and interesting such as:
 - Online via social media short, creative, captivating;
 - Community in person to create a connection; and
 - Online courses and apps to consolidate understanding using boardgames and anthologies (short stories, essays, poems, plays).
- 3. <u>Research and Innovation</u> preparation of research papers, policy briefs and quarterly reports and innovative strategies such as the NCD365 app; boardgames; NCD training module for schools and communities; Africa NCD Podcast.

4. Impact

- 2,019+ train the trainer online NCD course,
- 28 medical camps reaching 232,612 people,
- 1,360 books on NCDs distributed to schools,
- 67 schools and colleges engaged,
- 10 other African countries involved together with 56 partners.

Stephen concluded that young people are doing innovative and creative work and the Commonwealth governments should reach out to them to empower and support the organisations that young people are involved in.



PROFESSOR TONY NELSON

Professor Tony Nelson is Clinical Professional Consultant and Professor of Practice in Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, Chinese University of Hong Kong. Tony represents the Commonwealth Association for Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition (CAPGAN) on the CHPA and has been an active member of CHPA for many years. The theme for the 2022 CCSPF was "Commercial determinants of health: evidence, tools, dialogue and advocacy". It was recognized that commercial entities can have a significant impact of young people's nutrition.

Tony was asked to give some examples of the way that Commercial Determinants of Health impact young people's nutrition. Tony explained that the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of Commercial Determinants of Health is "the private sector activities that affect people's health positively or negatively". These influences, Tony pointed out, can be direct or indirect, positive or negative. The intensive marketing of beverages with a high sugar content or replacing breast feeding with infant formula are two examples. Tony reminded participants of the four recommendations to Commonwealth governments from the 2022 CCPSF which were:

- 1. Gather better evidence on how commercial determinants impact health.
- 2. Develop regulatory tools that minimize opportunities for commercial entities to influence policy development.
- 3. Convene partnerships with civil society to implement strategies what minimize negative impacts and highlight health promoting commercial practices.
- 4. Raise awareness of the impacts of the commercial determinants of health and establish independent monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

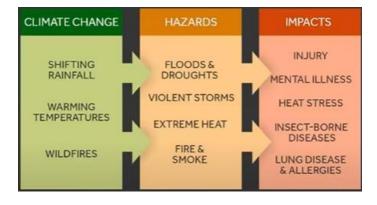
Tony said that while Commonwealth governments have a responsibility to limit the negative aspects of the commercial determinants of health and encourage the positive aspects it is not easy for them to find a way to reconcile commercial advertising with public health messages.



PROFESSOR DR J.A JAYALAL

Professor Dr J.A Jayalal is the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Medical Association 2022-2024 and was the National President of the Indian Medical Association 2020-2021. Dr Jayalal is Senior Consultant in Laparoscopic Surgery at Annammal Hospital, Kuzhithural Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India and Professor of Surgery Kanyakumari Government Medical College. Professor Jayalal has been working with young people responding to climate change.

Professor Jayalal said that 25% of the world's population consists of young people of whom 86% live in developing countries. Why is climate change of concern to young people? Young people are the future and their wellbeing is critically important to shaping a better future for the world. All countries know the issues and what needs to be done however at the moment, countries are not reaching their climate change goals. If these goals are not reached: low lying areas will become uninhabitable; species extinction will increase; economic loss will increase; and there will be more frequent extreme weather events.

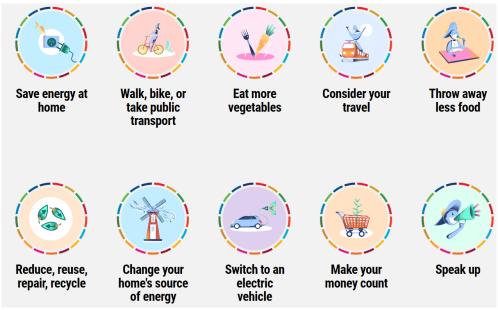


Professor Jayalal said that a new global survey illustrates the depth of anxiety many young people feel about climate change. Seven in ten young people are worried about the climate crisis – but they also want to make a difference. More than 45% of those questioned said feelings about the climate affected their daily lives. Three quarters thought the future was frightening. Over 50% say they think humanity is doomed. Even more distressing is the fact that young children, more than two thirds of children between the ages of 7 and 12 who were surveyed, are worried about climate change.

Professor Jayalal reported on findings from The Lancet that:

- Climate anxiety and dissatisfaction with government responses are widespread in children and young people.
- A perceived failure by governments to respond to the climate crisis is assocated with increased distress.
- There is an urgent need for further research into the emotional impact of climate change on children and young people and for governments to validate their distress by taking urgent action on climate change.

Professor Jayalal also advised that the UN Secretary General has established a Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, recognising that young people need to have input into the solutions on climate change that will shape their future. And finally, Professor Jayalal reminded participants about Act Now, the United Nations campaign for individual action on climate change and sustainability. The UN state that each of us can help limit global warming and take care of our planet by making choices that have less harmful effects on the environment and so be a part of the solution and influence change.



https://www.un.org/en/actnow

Professor Jayalal asked countries to consider how to turn around the feelings of anxiety young people are experiencing in relation to climate change. He said that young people the world over are taking the lead on the climate issue and that governments should be supporting them. The climate is changing, he said, are you?



GILLIAN NIGHTALL

Gillian Nightall is Clinical Director and Consultant Clinical Psychologist at Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust which delivers many physical, mental health and speciality services in the community, offering care to more than 700,000 people. Services are delivered from many sites including hospitals, GP surgeries, clinics and in homes. Gillian works with families, individuals and couples where at least one family member has experienced significant mental illness.

Gillian spoke in conversation with David Jones from the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work, initially to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental and physical health of young people. Gillian said the impact of the pandemic was variable. Some children continued on a projected developmental pathway while others were markedly affected in their physical health, development, behaviour, language, learning, and processing experiences. There were two identifiable cohorts. The first with autistic spectrum disorder and marked anxiety refusing to return to school, falling behind educationally and impacting their ability to socialise with peers. The second presented with eating disorders sometimes accompanied by self-harm, market anxiety, low mood, and drug use requiring intensive interventions. Often these two cohorts came from a non-optimal home environment.

Gillian said to respond to the increased demand they needed to improve access to population in need by taking shorter times to train people for specific interventions; upskilling existing workers already working with children such as youth workers and counsellors, working alongside specialist services who provided support. An online consultation line was also established to increase access to mental health practitioners together with regular reviews by phone.

The option of digital services also increased during the pandemic and have been maintained although now choice is given between online or face to face. Assessments are conducted online and there are a large number of online resources. Gillian has found that young people tend to prefer online access rather than face to face and early evidence suggests equivalent results are being achieved. Digital resources are provided to families who would not otherwise have access to computers or tablets.

So there has been a significant growth in demand with a change in the way services have been provided. Services needed to respond with new ways of working. Technology can be used to provide mental health services across the Commonwealth in countries where personnel may not be readily available.



ADAM ASPINALL

Adam Aspinall is Senior Director, Access and Product Management, at Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) in Geneva and in November 2020, he was elected as the first Chair of the Fight the Fakes Alliance, a new multi-stakeholder non-profit association dedicated to the fight against substandard and falsified medicines. Adam's presentation was titled *When the drugs don't work: impact on young people of substandard and falsified medicinal products.*

Adam used malaria as an example of the effect of substandard and falsified medicines on young people. Malaria is one of the biggest killer diseases; over 95% of malaria cases occur in Africa and three quarters of those who die are children under 5 years of age. Children are much more vulnerable as they do not have the immunity that develops with age. Morbidity is as much an issue as mortality affecting children and young people's long-term development: cognitive, neurological and behavioural. WHO data suggests that 42% of all substandard and falsified medicines are found in Africa however all countries are affected and anti-malarials are one of the most widely reported. There are horrendous consequences. Malaria kills. If people are given substandard and falsified medicines, they can die, particularly children and young people and the global progress toward malaria elimination can be reversed. Sometimes the medicines have no ingredients of value. Other times they have toxic ingredients. There is a loss of trust in the health system and health professionals.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation with substandard and falsified medicines. There was a shortage of medicines as resources were directed to making vaccines and medicines to fight the pandemic and a global supply chain crisis with countries in lockdown. This provided an opportunity for criminals to step in and meet the unmet need. To fight substandard and falsified medicines requires a global and multi sectoral government response. Increasing awareness is essential as well as education, detection, reporting, legislation, law enforcement, and collaboration across borders.

5. CCSPF CLOSE

In closing the forum, Professor Dissanayake asked three speakers for their recommendations to take forward to Commonwealth Health Ministers.

- Stephen Ogweno said that young people need to be actively engaged. They know the issues, have the solutions and innovations to lead. Governments need to fund capacity building and encourage young people's innovation and ideas.
- Tony Nelson said it was important that government recognize that Commercial Determinants of Health have a big impact on young people and recommended that governments collect evidence and publicly report on that evidence.
- Adam Aspinall said educating young people to make them aware of the impact and helping them to recognize and detect substandard and falsified medicines was the most important step. Young people are evangelists and will lead the way in educating family and friends.

6. COMMONWEALTH CHILDREN'S CHOIR AND YOUTH ORCHESTRA

The 2023 CCSPF was privileged to be given permission to share two performances by the Commonwealth Children's Choir and Youth Orchestra to remind us of the wonderful children and young people across the Commonwealth.

The link to the video URLs and the words to the two songs can be found below: A Song for the Commonwealth and Believe.

The mission of the Commonwealth Youth Orchestra and Choir (CYO) is to use music as a means of international dialogue, knowing no boundaries

The CYO is the first, and remains the only, full-time music organisation in the world, which works 24/7, 52 weeks a year, exclusively across 6 continents and throughout all 56 Commonwealth Nations. The CYO brings together communities across the Commonwealth through music, transcending all cultural, political, social and economic boundaries.

CYO delivers its mission through a three-point plan: "Engage-Educate-Empower". For many years, CYO has been making a positive impact on the welfare and development of many generations of young people across the Commonwealth and through the numerous CYO workshops, performances and recordings, thousands of Commonwealth youth have benefitted from the opportunities created for them by the CYO. CYO's pan-Commonwealth music activities and its unique education initiative - the Commonwealth Music Partnership, which is linking all the choirs, orchestras and music schools in The Commonwealth – enables possibilities for education, engagement and collaboration.

As part of Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, CYO established the Commonwealth Children's Orchestra & Choir and the Commonwealth Orchestra, which creates platforms and employment for musicians in all 56 countries of the Commonwealth.

Sally Shebe
Director-General and Executive Producer
Commonwealth Youth Orchestra and Choir
Commonwealth Music Academy

A SONG FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Commonwealth Children's Choir and Youth Orchestra words and music by Simon Haw MBE first performed to commemorate the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth II





https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9s6G3TWdho

In all we say and all we do,
We seek for harmony.
A family of nations,
Is what we strive to be.
All our hopes and fears shared as one,
Each voice heard equally.
In all we say and all we do,
A worldwide family,
A worldwide family.

The richness of the Commonwealth, Strength in each we share. In changing times we stand together, Each we hold dear. The richness of our Commonwealth, Strength we share, With every step we take together, Our path is clear.

The richness of our Commonwealth, Strength we share, Every step take together, Every step, all together, Our path is clear.

All our hopes and fears shared as one, Each voice heard equally. In all we say and all we do, A worldwide family. A worldwide family. Worldwide family.

© Commonwealth Youth Orchestra and Choir

BELIEVE

Commonwealth Children's Choir and Youth Orchestra

Believe is a song written for all children of the Commonwealth to inspire them to aspire to greatness in whatever path in life they wish to take. The songs central message is that from wherever a child starts in life, with a little help, opportunity and encouragement, and through discipline, focus and a determination to succeed, anything is possible. Words and music by Simon Haw MBE, sung by Mica Paris and first performed on Commonwealth Day 2019 in honor of the 70th anniversary of the Commonwealth.





https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVQwMVZcWOc

Run seek and find who you are.

Run seek and find who you are.

There's nothing you can't do, believe it could be you.

There's nothing you can't do, believe it can be you.

From the shoreline to the mountains,

from the foothills to the top;

from the vast horizon calling, calling you to never stop.

You must search your deep ambition, you must summon all you may,

Your life's greatness lies before you,

And be-fore you lies the way.

Follow your dreams don't give up.

Follow your dreams don't give up.

It's time to find out how, your life's before you now.

It's time to find out how, your life's before you now.

From the smallest seed grows greatness,

It don't matter where you start;

Your long journey is a calling, calling you to make your mark.

You must search your deep ambition, you must summon all you may,

Your life's greatness lies before you

And before you lies the way.

© Commonwealth Youth Orchestra and Choir