

Commonwealth Year of Youth



The 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM), declared 2023 as the *Commonwealth Year of Youth*: a year dedicated to youth-led action for sustainable and inclusive development. Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, will act as a Year of Youth Champion, responsible for promoting and raising the profile of issues facing young people across the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth defines a young person as one between the ages of 15 and 29 years of age. The Commonwealth's 56 member countries have a combined population of 2.5 billion people of which more than 60% are aged 29 or younger: 1.5 billion young people live in the Commonwealth; that means one in three people in the Commonwealth is a young person.

The Year of Youth has four major aims:

1. **Energise:** the inclusive participation of young people and youth partners throughout the Commonwealth to celebrate their contributions and deliver a wide-ranging program of activities.
2. **Engage:** decision makers and partners to increase investment in creating an enabling environment for youth empowerment through a revitalised Commonwealth Youth program and youth led networks and initiatives.
3. **Empower:** Commonwealth youth by building their capacities for leadership, collaboration and co-creation of inclusive solutions to address challenges in development, democracy, diversity and peace.
4. **Envision:** a renewed Commonwealth that is championed by young people of all backgrounds from the 56 Commonwealth member countries, working together to create a common agenda.

On 6 February 2023, the Commonwealth released the 2020 Youth Development Index (YDI). The global index monitors changes in the situation for young people over the period 2011 to 2018 in six areas:

- education;
- employment and opportunity;
- health and wellbeing;
- equality and inclusion;
- political and civic participation; and
- peace and security.

One hundred and eighty-one countries were scored based on the progress made in those six areas.

The YDI score is a number between 0 and 1, with 1 representing the highest possible level of youth development attainable across all indicators, and 0 representing little to no youth development. Countries have been grouped into categories of 'very high', 'high', 'medium', and 'low' levels of youth development.

YDI CATEGORY	SCORE RANGE
Low	0.000 – 0.595
Medium	0.595 – 0.691
High	0.691 – 0.780
Very high	0.780 – 1.000

In relation to the Commonwealth, more than 60% of the Commonwealth's population of over 2 billion, are under the age of 30, underscoring the importance of the Commonwealth countries having high levels of youth development.

The Commonwealth however, showed less progress over the period than the world at large. Over the eight-year period from 2010 to 2018, the Commonwealth recorded an average improvement in youth development of 2.8 per cent, compared with a 3.1 per cent improvement in the global average.

Of the 48 Commonwealth countries included in the 2020 YDI, 83 per cent, improved their YDI score. Seven countries deteriorated, while one country stayed the same. On average, the Commonwealth has made progress in all six YDI domains, with the largest improvement seen in the Health and Wellbeing and Peace and Security domains.

<https://thecommonwealth.org/innovation/youth-development-index#results> (p.32)

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDEX

<https://thecommonwealth.org/innovation/youth-development-index#results>

COUNTRY	SCORE	COUNTRY	SCORE
Singapore	0.875	Kiribati	0.635
Malta	0.859	Namibia	0.632
Cyprus	0.825	Vanuatu	0.628
New Zealand	0.824	India	0.626
Australia	0.807	Belize	0.619
Canada	0.798	Guyana	0.617
Maldives	0.794	Bangladesh	0.616
United Kingdom	0.793	South Africa	0.608
Barbados	0.779	Ghana	0.608
Brunei Darussalam	0.777	Sierra Leone	0.580
Malaysia	0.775	Gambia	0.577
Mauritius	0.766	Kenya	0.577
Fiji	0.748	Togo	0.575
Sri Lanka	0.747	Rwanda	0.574
Grenada	0.736	Papua New Guinea	0.572
Samoa	0.728	Tanzania	0.559
Seychelles	0.725	Swaziland	0.553
Jamaica	0.724	Zambia	0.548
Tonga	0.724	Uganda	0.534
St Lucia	0.716	Zimbabwe	0.528
Trinidad and Tobago	0.674	Cameroon	0.527
Bahamas	0.670	Nigeria	0.520
Botswana	0.659	Pakistan	0.517
Solomon Islands	0.656	Lesotho	0.511
Gabon	0.645		

Figure 2.13 Change in the Commonwealth's average YDI score and domain scores, 2010–2018

