



Commonwealth Winners to receive young leadership award from Her Majesty The Queen announced

It is announced today that 60 young people from across the Commonwealth are being recognised as exceptional leaders in their community. These 60 young people are the first ever to receive a prestigious Queen's Young Leaders Award.

The Award, which will be presented in London by Her Majesty The Queen, in June, is part of The Queen's Young Leaders Programme and celebrates the achievements of young people who are taking the lead to transform the lives of others and make a lasting difference in their communities.

This year's Award winners, aged between 18 and 29, who come from all over the Commonwealth, are working to support others, raise awareness and inspire change on a variety of different issues including education, climate change, gender equality, mental health and disability equality.

The Queen's Young Leaders Programme is a new initiative established by The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in partnership with Comic Relief and the Royal Commonwealth Society in recognition of The Queen's lifetime of service to the Commonwealth. Over the next four years the Programme will support thousands of young people. In addition to the Queen's Young Leaders Awards, the Programme will provide grants to support organisations, in selected countries across the Commonwealth, that work with young people to transform their lives.

Aaron Hape from New Zealand, a member of the Advisory Panel of young people who advise the Queen's Young Leaders Programme said:

"It was a truly humbling experience to see the kind of work that young people are carrying out across the Commonwealth, and across a diverse range of issues. As a panel member I feel very proud to have been given the opportunity to work with the Programme and be part of selecting the very best from an already amazing pool of talented young people."

Dr Astrid Bonfield CBE, Chief Executive of The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust said:

"The leadership of talented young people in all spheres of life can transform communities and societies for the better. What the 60 young people announced today have achieved is remarkable and their plans for the future are truly inspiring. The Queen's Young Leaders Programme is poised to unlock the potential of this diverse and talented group of young people and we are delighted to be supporting them to go further and achieve more."

To see a full list of Award winners and Highly Commended runners up, and read more about their stories please visit www.queensyoungleaders.com.

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For a copy of a short film introducing the partnership and the Awards scheme please click on this link: <http://youtu.be/adN20LSQm-o>

Notes to editors**The Queen's Young Leaders Programme**

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, in partnership with Comic Relief and The Royal Commonwealth Society, has established The Queen's Young Leaders Programme in honour of Her Majesty The Queen's 60 years of service to the Commonwealth at the time of her Diamond Jubilee. Guided by the values of the Commonwealth Charter, the goal of the Programme is to enable young people to step up as leaders and improve the lives of people across the Commonwealth.

Award details

Each year from 2014 to 2018, 60 exceptional young people will be selected to receive a Queen's Young Leaders Award and become 'Queen's Young Leaders' – one for every year that The Queen had served as Head of the Commonwealth at the time of her Diamond Jubilee.

As part of the Award, winners will receive bespoke mentoring and online learning provided by the University of Cambridge. Award winners will attend a week-long residential programme in the UK in June, when they will receive their Award at Buckingham Palace from Her Majesty The Queen.

Criteria to win an award:

- ** Nominees will have proven experience of working to improve their communities locally, regionally or at a national level and will show evidence of their achievements
- ** Nominees will be aged between 18 and 29 for the year of the Award and be citizens of a Commonwealth country
- ** Nominees will demonstrate evidence of their leadership qualities
- ** Priority will be given to individuals who have overcome challenges to achieve their goals
- ** All nominees will need to be supported by a suitable referee.

The Partners**The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust**

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust is a charitable foundation, established in 2012, to mark and celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's 60-year contribution to the Commonwealth. The Trust has received donations from governments, corporate partners, trusts, foundations, community groups and individuals from across the Commonwealth, and its programmes work in alliance towards eliminating avoidable blindness and to empower a new generation of young leaders. With a five-year timeframe in which to deliver successful programmes, the Trust's aim is to leave a lasting legacy, owned by the whole Commonwealth, to honour Her Majesty The Queen. For more information go to: www.jubileetribute.org

Comic Relief

Established in 1985, Comic Relief is a major UK fundraising and grant making charity which uses the power of entertainment to create long-lasting change. Its vision is a just world, free from poverty. It strives to make this vision a reality by supporting poor, disadvantages and vulnerable people in the UK and across some of the world's poorest communities to change their own lives for the better. Discover more at: www.comicrelief.com

Royal Commonwealth Society

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), founded in 1868, is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Working through a range of educational, civil society, business and governmental networks, the RCS addresses issues that matter to the Commonwealth citizens. For more information go to: www.thercs.org