**Commonwealth History Education Network**

**Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, Australia**

**Curriculum Partnership Enrichment Scheme for Schools**

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| **REGISTRATION OF INTEREST FORM**  **Commonwealth Partnership Curriculum Enrichment Scheme for Schools**  ***(please expand as required)*** | |
| Rationale behind registration  The key pieces of information here are:   1. the ages of the students, 2. the name of the other jurisdiction, and 3. the content area.   Once a sufficient number of schools around the Commonwealth have registered, it will be more likely that an effective partnership will be identifiable using this data. It is hoped that dissemination of forms to schools might be assisted by History Teacher Associations across the Commonwealth | |
| Date |  |
| Name and postal address of your school/college |  |
| Telephone number of school/college including national and if appropriate local codes |  |
| Name of Headteacher/Principal |  |
| Email address of Headteacher/Principal or Head/Principal’s Office |  |
| Name of Head of Subject Area (e.g. History or Humanities or Social Studies) |  |
| Email address of Head of Subject |  |
| Name and position of link teacher |  |
| Email address of link teacher |  |
| Commonwealth jurisdiction with which partnership is sought (please indicate state/territory/province or region if the jurisdiction is large) |  |
| Year group and age of students |  |
| Content area, subject or theme for which a shared approach or shared resourcing might be planned |  |
| If appropriate, preferred pedagogical approach |  |
| Has the school given permission for you as link teacher to be involved in this project? |  |
| Does the school agree to let its identity, and the identity and email address of the link teacher be shared with the link teacher in the partner school? |  |
| Would you be willing to share any resources (across other participants in this enrichment scheme) that have been developed and used in this by both parties? |  |
| Would you be willing to write a brief description and evaluation of your shared project? (Please note: these reports will not be published without your permission, and anonymity of teacher/s and school/s will be respected if requested.) |  |
| Any comments you may wish to add |  |
| Please copy this form and return it to Dr Robert Guyver [Robert.Guyver@utas.edu.au](mailto:Robert.Guyver@utas.edu.au)  **Note**: when the required permissions are in place, every effort will be made to put you in touch with a similarly registered teacher of history/humanities/social studies in a school in the chosen Commonwealth region with students in a similar age group and with a link teacher who has the same or a similar content interest/focus. | |

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| **Commonwealth jurisdictions by region** | | | | |
| **Africa** | **Asia** | **Caribbean and the Americas** | **Europe** | **Pacific** |
| Botswana | Bangladesh | \*Antigua and Barbuda | Cyprus | \*Australia |
| Cameroon | Brunei Darussalam | \*Bahamas (The …) | Malta | Fiji |
| Ghana | India | \*Barbados | \*UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) | Kiribati |
| Kenya | Malaysia | \*Belize |  | Nauru |
| Lesotho | Pakistan | \*Canada |  | \*New Zealand |
| Malawi | Singapore | Dominica (Commonwealth of …) |  | \*Papua New Guinea |
| Mauritius | Sri Lanka | \*Grenada |  | Samoa |
| Mozambique |  | Guyana |  | \*Solomon Islands |
| Namibia |  | \*Jamaica |  | Tonga |
| Nigeria |  | \*St Kitts and Nevis |  | \*Tuvalu |
| Rwanda |  | \*St Lucia |  | Vanuatu |
| Seychelles |  | \*St Vincent and the Grenadines |  |  |
| Sierra Leone |  | Trinidad and Tobago |  |  |
| South Africa |  |  |  |  |
| Swaziland |  |  |  |  |
| Tanzania (United Republic of) |  |  |  |  |
| Uganda |  |  |  |  |
| Zambia |  |  |  |  |
| \*Indicates Commonwealth realm (where currently Queen Elizabeth II is Head of State) | | | | |

**Commonwealth History Education Network: Project Rationale**

This project seeks to promote history education for mutual understanding in the context of exploring shared historical themes and good teaching and learning practices in schools across the different regions and jurisdictions of the Commonwealth. In partnership with teachers (and in some cases teacher educators) in both developing and established Commonwealth jurisdictions it seeks to foster the creation of negotiated units of work exploring trans-national themes on some cases with shared methodologies such as an inquiry-based approach. An aim is to create a research centre with an accompanying website to co-ordinate, evaluate, and (with permission) disseminate this work.

**Theoretical underpinning**

In recent years the debate over history education has been dominated by contributions from the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa, with European elements. This has included curriculum developments originating in the School History Project (UK), imaginative approaches to primary and secondary history education (e.g. from Hilary Cooper and Christine Counsell), through to work on historical thinking in North America (Wineburg, 2001; Lévesque, 2009; and Seixas and Morton, 2012), with the closely linked concepts of historical consciousness (e.g. see <http://www.cshc.ubc.ca/about/>), and historical literacy (an Australian initiative) (e.g. Taylor, 2004), which would include the element of contestedness (later incorporated into Australia’s history curriculum).

History education wherever it is undertaken can be viewed as contributing to a global community of practice, especially when it is recorded, evaluated and shared. In a free association as large as the Commonwealth, using its jurisdictions, schools (and where appropriate universities) as a basis for a systematic, inclusive, trans-national but collaborative approach to history education has much to recommend it. One of the aims of this would be to bring teachers and schools in smaller member states actively into this community, widening a body of practice-based research, and building the capacity of schools and students (and again, if appropriate universities) to form lasting history discipline-based networks, and to formulate new perspectives on history education.

Within this are opportunities for citizenship education along the lines reported in the Parekh Report (2000). Although ‘Britain’ is used in the quote below, it could apply to any of the Commonwealth’s fifty-two members states, especially as it uses the term ‘community of communities’:

A country’s education system is a gateway to employment and to participation in political, social and cultural affairs. Also, it equips children and young people – or fails to equip them – with the essential understandings, skills and values which they need to play a substantial role in the building and maintenance of [*name of jurisdiction, in this case:* Britain] as a community of citizens and a community of communities. (Runnymede Trust, 2000)

The involvement of the University of Tasmania as the initiator of this project reflects its distinctive, if occasionally dark, colonial heritage. The project team have a long experience in history education and of working within and across culturally sensitive areas. The team members are willing to share their expertise to help participants develop online distance learning materials

**Specific aims and purposes**

* To explore and interrogate, across the existing five regions and fifty-two jurisdictions of the Commonwealth of Nations, shared past historical experiences and shared pedagogical approaches; this would use the original sense of ‘Commonwealth’ as the ‘Common Weal’, i.e. the mutual good of an extended international community;
* To invite partners in the Commonwealth regions (Caribbean and the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Pacific, South Asia) to join a network to undertake a series of trans-national active teaching pilot studies involving shared teaching;
* To collaborate and build curriculum development capacity with partners from smaller and developing Commonwealth jurisdictions;
* To recognise the role of teachers of history (and where appropriate history teacher educators who in some cases may support them in this project/network) as having agency in the construction of democratic, open, reflective, and (in this case) trans-national, communities of learners (Codd, 2005; Guyver, 2016)
* To deploy an action research model of professional development, where history teachers are exercising agency as intrinsically-motivated extended professionals (Stenhouse, 1975; Codd, 2005); this would be undertaken respectfully, and in a spirit of partnership and education for mutual understanding;
* To encourage schools to develop and pilot resource units focusing upon agreed trans-national themes with network partners in other schools;
* Ultimately to use grant (or other) funding to support the development work of pilot groups, as well as (with the agreements of partner schools) to monitor and to evaluate teaching and learning within these units;
* To seek to establish permanent structures, including a website, to enable and support the sustainability of the network;
* (Where possible and where participants are willing) to disseminate shared learning and project findings via publication of research findings in relevant educational journal outlets or in a book or books.

**Why the Commonwealth?**

The Commonwealth of Nations is a major global body representing a large number of jurisdictions (fifty-two) in five different regions of the world (Caribbean and the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific) with common or shared histories, often of colonisation, decolonisation, and moves towards independence. Two new members of the Commonwealth (Rwanda and Mozambique) were part of other empires (not British). It is a non-military organisation which through the Charter of the Commonwealth promotes core governance and social justice values and principles:

1. Democracy

2. Human rights

3. International peace and security

4. Tolerance, respect and understanding

5. Freedom of Expression

6. Separation of Powers

7. Rule of Law

8. Good Governance

9. Sustainable Development

10. Protecting the Environment

11. Access to Health, Education, Food and Shelter

12. Gender Equality

13. Importance of Young People in the Commonwealth

14. Recognition of the Needs of Small States

15. Recognition of the Needs of Vulnerable States

16. The Role of Civil Society.

Frank Field (MP) (UK) (2014) recently challenged discourses of negativity around the Commonwealth arguing that it was potentially a vibrant force for global good albeit an organization that would benefit from rejuvenation:

The Commonwealth is the largest free association of individuals and nations the world has ever seen ... The Commonwealth has over a third of the world’s population and that population inhabits every continent. The nations themselves come in every size, ranging from a mere 10,000 souls in Nauru to a simply astonishing 1.2 billion in India. It is not therefore a cartel of big boys who are in the business of dominating the playground. It is an organization that is held together by a much more subtle means of association, where common interest and shared understanding, not force, is the link binding them together (p.376).

We see value in ‘trying to refashion the unfashionable’ (Bourne, 2015) via a collaborative exploration of history education across a fascinating global canvas.

**Examples of trans-national themes**

Here are some examples of possible trans-national themes which schools in different regions of the Commonwealth could share:

Early histories, early cultures: comparative studies of river settlements (e.g. across South Asia; in the Caribbean and the Americas; in the Pacific; in Africa) (looking at archaeological evidence and local museums);

Pre-colonial histories (pre-British Empire, e.g. the movement and settlement of peoples in the Caribbean and Americas, in Africa, Asia and the Pacific (could include Europe); also the Mughal Empire as a South Asia trans-national unit);

Economic history: the impact of industrialization (and improvements in agriculture) and trade on the world;

Immigration and Transportation (free and unfree movement of peoples, to include histories of slavery and the slave trade and convict histories) (Europe, Africa, Caribbean and the Americas, the Pacific);

The Impact of settlement on Indigenous Peoples and shared experience over land-related conflicts (missionaries, Treaties, wars) (Caribbean and the Americas, and the Pacific);

Narratives of peace and war (women, men and children from different parts of the Commonwealth undertaking work, education or military service in the same place and at the same time) (e.g. World War I [including Gallipoli], World War II, other wars since);

Comparative and distinctive experiences of decolonization and independence struggles (South Asia; East and West Africa; Caribbean; Pacific);

Protest and dissent (e.g. the story of the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester 1945) (delegates from West, East and South Africa, Caribbean and the Americas, the UK [leading to the independence of many former British Empire colonies]); the Mau Movement in Samoa;

Development of governmental institutions (before, during and after colonization) (the whole Commonwealth) (e.g. how the Charter of the Commonwealth came to be);

The history of the Commonwealth Games (the whole Commonwealth);

The history of specific sports across the Commonwealth or in specific jurisdictions (e.g. cricket, rugby, football, etc).

**Finding an organic/living structure for the thematic teaching units, for example:**

* Trans-national context/s;
* Inquiry: questions, inquiries and opportunities for explanations;
* Exploration of trans-national significance, including identity-based historical dimensions;
* Source-work: use of pictures, maps, text, stories/narratives, and artefacts where possible;
* Work (if any) based on sites or museums;
* Treatment of different perspectives;
* Opportunities for dialogue and discussion with partner groups (ICT-based interactive exchanges, e.g. Skype or blogging in secure environments; sharing of data, e.g. about contexts, visits);
* Opportunities for role-play and drama.

**References**

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