



THE QUEEN'S  
YOUNG LEADERS

# AWARD WINNERS of 2015



THE QUEEN ELIZABETH  
DIAMOND JUBILEE TRUST

COMIC  
RELIEF



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, 128 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SA  
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## INTRODUCTION

### The Programme

The Queen's Young Leaders Programme was launched in July 2014 in honour of Her Majesty The Queen's 60 years of service to the Commonwealth, at the time of her Diamond Jubilee. The Programme, which aims to discover, celebrate and support young people across the Commonwealth, has been met with a phenomenal response. Since the launch, over 1800 inspirational young people across all 53 Commonwealth countries have applied for a Queen's Young Leaders Award. At the beginning of 2015, the first 60 Queen's Young Leaders Award winners were announced. The Award winners receive a year-long programme, offering online learning by the University of Cambridge, bespoke mentoring and a week-long residential programme to help them make their visions for the future a reality.

### Grants

The Queen's Young Leaders Programme awards grants to eligible organisations in selected countries across the Commonwealth. These projects are led by or focused on young people, and provide opportunities for them to learn new skills, secure employment, create enterprises or have a say in decisions affecting their future.

Grants will be available to organisations working with young people in the UK, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Solomon Islands.

Our grants aim to ensure that young people are better qualified and able to articulate their needs, so they can influence key decision makers and create lasting positive change in their communities.



## FOREWORD

**Foreword by The Rt Hon Sir John Major**  
Chairman of The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.

The Queen's Young Leaders Programme was launched just under a year ago at Buckingham Palace by Their Royal Highnesses The Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry. Its aim is to discover, celebrate, inspire and nurture the talent of exceptional young people from all spheres of life across the Commonwealth, whose leadership qualities have the potential

to transform communities and societies for the better.

The Trust was heartened by the overwhelmingly positive response following the launch, and by the exceptional standard of all applicants. This evening, we honour the award winners, the first of the Queen's Young Leaders. Not only are we enormously impressed by what they have already accomplished, but we are inspired by their plans for the future.

As they receive their awards from Her Majesty The Queen, we celebrate their achievements of today, and look forward to their energy, enthusiasm and spirit being deployed to help shape the Commonwealth of tomorrow.

## THE QUEEN'S YOUNG LEADERS

# 2015 AWARD WINNERS BIOGRAPHIES

## ALAIN NTEFF (22)



.....CAMEROON

Alain is a co-founder of GiftedMom, which helps to reduce maternal and infant mortality in rural Cameroon. In this country a pregnant woman or newborn dies each hour from a preventable cause. The project uses SMS alerts to notify pregnant women about antenatal care and vaccinations for newborns. Alain wants the service to help up to 5 million people in central Africa.

## MALLAH ENOW TABOT (27)



.....CAMEROON

Mallah has worked hard to improve the lives of many young women in Cameroon including those at risk of early and forced marriages. Her organisation, United Vision for Women, uses theatre and art to engage communities and change attitudes. Now Mallah also wants to achieve better sexual and reproductive health for teenage girls.

## JOANNES PAULUS YIMBESALU (27)



.....CAMEROON

When he was growing up Joannes saw the many sacrifices his mother made to allow him to go to school. To honour her legacy, he set up a foundation to help underprivileged children. The Hope for Children Cameroon project has helped more than 300 young people to get an education.

## ABDIKADIR ADEN HASSAN (27)



.....KENYA

Abdikadir works with young people to educate and engage them on the issue of climate change. His green initiatives have had a positive effect on his community, creating job opportunities in areas such as environmental protection and conservation. He is currently leading an effort to plant one million trees.

## SAMUEL KARUITA (28)



.....KENYA

After 2007's post-election violence in Kenya, Samuel established Peace Clubs in higher learning institutes to reach out to the 'lost generation' of young people, who could be vulnerable to a culture of violence. His Peace Ambassadors Kenya project now has 3000 members, all dedicated to community outreach, conflict management and providing educational opportunities for marginalised young people.

## CAREN NELIMA ODANGA (21)



.....KENYA

Caren founded the Sisari Women Initiative to support and educate women in rural Kenya. Having grown up in a community where domestic violence, forced marriage, FGM and teenage pregnancy were the norm and having suffered a traumatic childhood herself, she was supported by the Yaya Education Trust to return to school after becoming a mother. These experiences inspired her to set up the Sisari Women Initiative.

## MOHAMMAD YAASEEN EDOO (28)



.....MAURITIUS

Mohammad Yaaseen Edoo was born with spina bifida and uses a wheelchair. He was denied a place at primary school because he is disabled. However a kind-hearted teacher taught him for free and he eventually went on to university. Today Mohammad Yaaseen Edoo is the leader of Leonard Cheshire Disability's Young Voices in Mauritius. He advocates with other young disabled people for equal rights.

## BARKHA MOSSAE (26)



.....MAURITIUS

Raised on the island of Mauritius, Barkha is a keen promoter of sustainable development and an advocate for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). As an active member of the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community, she has helped to set up #Seeingblue, an initiative that encourages young people to take a greater interest in the state of the oceans.

## KARUNA RANA (27)



MAURITIUS

Born in Mauritius, Karuna is acutely aware of the environmental vulnerabilities faced by small island developing nations like her own. She attended the Rio+20 summit, where she promoted sustainable development. Karuna also co-founded an NGO that enables young people from small islands across Africa and Asia to work together in support of this cause.

## TANYARADZWA DARINGO (23)



NAMIBIA

Tanyaradzwa is a co-founder of Her Liberty Namibia, which focuses on giving young women confidence in all aspects of their lives. She is also launching the MiChange project to give girls a second chance of resitting their final-year exams. Tanyaradzwa's goal is to build self-confidence in young women and give them a greater voice in Namibia and Southern Africa.

## OLADIPUPO AJIROBA (28)



NIGERIA

Growing up with bronchitis made Oladipupo very conscious of pollution. He set up The Environmental Advocacy and Management Initiative, which has engaged more than 10,000 volunteers in campaigns and workshops. Oladipupo intends to use The Queen's Young Leaders Award to encourage greater respect for the environment and to create green jobs.

## NKECHIKWU AZINGE (26)



NIGERIA

Nkechikwu grew up with close family members who have the hereditary blood disorder sickle cell anaemia. After witnessing the physical, mental and emotional challenges it can lead to, she set up The Sickle Cell Aid Foundation. The organisation encourages people to get tested to know their haemoglobin genotype, and has set up sickle cell clubs in schools to inform and educate young people about the condition.

## KELVIN OGHOLI (25)



NIGERIA

After seeing livestock farmers – including his father – struggle to pay for feed, Kelvin co-founded UNFIRE. This social enterprise has found a way to produce poultry feeds from organic waste such as mango seeds, seaweeds etc. It costs half the price of normal feed, and so far it has helped more than 70 farmers.

## ISAIAH OWOLABI (27)



NIGERIA

Isaiah co-founded HACEY Health Initiative, which helps disadvantaged women and children to lead healthy lives. In 2012 HACEY launched Hands Up For Her, which promotes the rights of African girls. The award will help HACEY develop its Women's Health and Productivity project, ensuring women in rural areas have access to health services and training.

## NADIA HITIMANA (26)



RWANDA

Nadia is the health and hygiene manager for Sustainable Health Enterprise. The organisation tackles the issues surrounding menstrual health by establishing businesses that produce affordable menstrual pads. The programme also provides education to change attitudes and improve the lives of women in Rwanda.

## JEAN D'AMOUR MUTONI (29)



RWANDA

Despite losing all of his family in the genocide, Jean d'Amour succeeded in his studies and after graduating from university, he launched Acts Of Gratitude to encourage young people to give back to their communities in Rwanda. He is now establishing a career centre offering employment-readiness workshops with a focus on social responsibility.



## PHILIP COLE (29)



SIERRA LEONE

Philip (known as PJ) moved from Sierra Leone to the UK to study law, where he joined LifeLine Community Projects, supporting vulnerable young people. In 2012 he was asked to restructure the school and home for ex-child soldiers that was established by his father in Sierra Leone. PJ now works in Sierra Leone where he directs a safe-home, four schools and a vocational skills programme that helps young people to be community leaders.

## NOSIPHO BELE (25)



SOUTH AFRICA

Nosipho is determined to help other young women. During her training to become a teacher she set up a programme called Mentor Me to Success, which provides one-to-one support to school pupils, especially girls. She wants to develop this service, prioritising under-privileged schools and communities.

## EMMA DICKS (26)



SOUTH AFRICA

Emma co-leads Innovate South Africa, which runs an innovation challenge that asks high school students to identify a problem in their community and propose a solution to it. Emma also launched Code for Cape Town, which introduces girls to web-building skills.

## PATRICE MADURAI (23)



SOUTH AFRICA

Many township residents in South Africa are not registered citizens and without identification documents it is difficult for them to work or sit school exams. Wanting to help these residents, Patrice founded the project Cupcake reSolution. The project hosts mobile offices to enable people to register as citizens. As another way to reach out to the community, Cupcake reSolution also takes cupcakes into schools for children who have never celebrated birthdays.

## NONDUMISO HLOPHE (28)



..... SWAZILAND

Nondumiso has been a dedicated volunteer in schools and hospitals for many years and in 2012 she founded a Global Shapers Community Hub. This youth-led hub supports the local community in a number of ways, including providing weekly bilingual reading and comprehension groups at the National Library. Nondumiso is planning to provide training and skills workshops to help close the gender gap in education and employment.

## GIVEN EDWARD (21)



..... TANZANIA

Given realised that gridlock on the roads was cutting into valuable lesson time for students. So he created MyElimu.com, an online discussion forum where commuting pupils can continue discussing subjects. More than 500 students have registered so far and Given wants to carry on making education accessible for as many young people as possible in his country.

## ANGELA BENEDICTO MNAGOZA (28)



..... TANZANIA

Following the death of her mother and her aunt, Angela worked in domestic service where she was abused and exploited by her employer. She now promotes the rights of child domestic workers, educating this marginalised workforce and attempting to change attitudes towards them.

## DIANA NAKAWEESA (25)



..... UGANDA

Since the age of 17, Diana has strived to help vulnerable women and children in her community. Three years ago she launched Young Mothers' Support Group, which mentors women aged 14 to 30. She has gained funding for projects to train women and children in skills ranging from knitting to shoe making.

## DEO SEKANDI (27)



UGANDA

Deo did not know what was affecting his speech and mobility until he won a university scholarship and learnt that he had cerebral palsy. He now works for the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda and is very active in supporting young people with cerebral palsy. He aims to change negative attitudes towards disabled people.

## BRIGHTON KAOMA (21)



ZAMBIA

Brighton believes in using radio and low-cost communication technologies to educate young people. He is the co-founder of Agents of Change, which equips participants with leadership and radio skills. He also co-designed the Zambia U-report SMS platform, which allows young people to text counsellors with questions about HIV, AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections.

## REGINA MTONGA (28)



ZAMBIA

Regina is co-founder of Asikana Network, an organisation that trains Zambian girls and young women in information and communications technology skills, so that they can find better jobs and realise their potential. Regina is planning to link Network members to mentors in order to develop their skills further in the future.

## ALICIA WALLACE (28)



.....BAHAMAS

Alicia supports other women to reach their potential and play a full role in society. She plans to launch a programme that equips students with vital life skills, and matches them with mentors who will support them and help them to develop. Alicia is now director of Hollaback! Bahamas, a global movement to end street harassment.

## DONNYA PIGGOTT (25)



.....BARBADOS

Donnya had to overcome prejudice and personal challenges when she decided to set up an advocacy group for sexual minorities. Barbados – Gays and Lesbians and All-sexuals Against Discrimination (B-Glad) is a lone lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) human rights organisation on the island. Donnya has engaged with the Prime Minister about issues facing the LGBT community and hopes to continue supporting marginalised young people in her country.

## DENIELLE NEAL (19)



.....BELIZE

Since the age of 14 Denielle has worked hard to help better the lives of disadvantaged young girls and teenage mothers. She seeks to improve their opportunities and to help more girls into education, so that they will not be at risk of sexual exploitation or human trafficking.

## MELISSA KARGIANNAKIS (25)



.....CANADA

Melissa grew up in a household where she experienced domestic violence. She spent her childhood supporting her mother and siblings. This equipped her with leadership skills which she used to become president of her faculty at university. Melissa now works on a project mentoring schoolchildren and wants to use the internet to make education more accessible.

## ROSIMAY VENANCIO (25)



CANADA

After moving to Canada from Angola at the age of nine, Rosimay is now studying health policy at university on a full scholarship. She wants to run a programme to support young people in foster care to pursue a higher education in order to break out of the cycle of poverty.

## AARON JOSHUA PINTO (24)



CANADA

Aaron and his family moved to Canada from Bahrain after the 1991 Gulf War. Since then, he has travelled the world working on projects supporting disadvantaged communities. Aaron has also co-founded a scheme to help people in Canada who are living below the breadline. The project delivers food hampers to migrants, the elderly and survivors of abuse.

## KELLYN GEORGE (28)



DOMINICA

Kellyn was born with sickle cell anaemia and has endured many complications with her health. Her experiences motivated her to establish The Sickle Cell Cares Foundation. The organisation raises awareness of the disease and aims to help those who are affected to manage their healthcare as well as possible.

## LEROY PHILLIPS (24)



GUYANA

Leroy became blind at the age of six and faced intense discrimination at school. He now works hard to improve access to education for all. Leroy's achievements include speaking about this issue at a conference in Brussels, where he shared the platform with former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

## JEROME COWANS (25)



JAMAICA

Raised in one of Jamaica's most disadvantaged communities, Jerome feared he was heading in the wrong direction. Realising problems in his community stemmed from a lack of youth support, he co-founded Leaders Endeavouring for Adolescent Development. The project provides personal development opportunities for young people, so they will go on to better futures.

## NICOLE NATION (23)



JAMAICA

Nicole is a medical student who is committed to tackling the stigma surrounding disability. Her interest began after she was told she had glaucoma and could lose her sight. Nicole was an ambassador for disability in Jamaica, and has raised funds for projects including a school for the hearing-impaired.

## JAVON LIBURD (25)



SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Javon was raised single-handedly by his mother. Despite facing financial hardship, she instilled in him the value of education. This inspired Javon to set up J3H, a project that helps young people in his community. J3H has raised funds to give prizes to outstanding students from village schools.

## KENVILLE HORNE (29)



SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Kenville is a young father who turned his back on a life of gangs. After completing his education, he started a sports programme for disadvantaged children. He helps them to reach their potential and raises awareness of the danger of drugs.

## TEOCAH DOVE (26)



.....TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Teocah has ten years of experience in the voluntary sector and has worked on projects which focus on gender, vulnerable women, HIV/AIDS and youth development. She hopes winning a Queen's Young Leaders Award will help her to raise the profile of her work.

## MUHAMMED SHAMIR SHEHAB (27)



.....BANGLADESH

Muhammed set up the Bangladesh Youth Environmental Initiative when he became concerned about the effect of climate change on his country. Since 2009 it has trained more than 500 young environmental leaders and set up 30 environmental school clubs. The initiative runs the National Earth Olympiad, which educates students about climate change.

## KHAIRUNNISA ASH'ARI (27)



.....BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Khairunnisa hopes to encourage the next generation of eco-conscious adults in Brunei. She is the founder of Green Brunei, an organisation that arranges camps and talks for young people to educate them in conservation, waste management and a green lifestyle. She has also taken part in Green Xchange, a project that enables low-income families to trade recyclable materials for basic commodities.

## ASHWINI ANGADI (26)



INDIA

Ashwini is visually impaired and faced many challenges finding accessible learning materials at her college. Committed to making her country more inclusive, Ashwini lobbied her college to provide braille and audio books and later formed a disability committee to support others. She now runs the Belaku Academy, offering education for disabled students from rural areas who face exclusion and discrimination.

## AKSHAY JADHAO (27)



INDIA

Akshay grew up in the rural farming region of Vidarbha. Here, transport, basic education and access to the internet are not readily available and unemployment amongst the young is rife. Akshay launched education and skills courses in a bid to improve the job opportunities and future prospects of hundreds of young people.

## DEVIKA MALIK (25)



INDIA

Devika was born with hemiplegia, which causes paralysis to half of the body. She has overcome the challenges of her disability to become an international para-athlete, counsellor and co-founder of the Wheeling Happiness Foundation. The foundation promotes inclusion, raises funds for disabled people and promotes better access and equality for those facing physical, emotional and social challenges.

## SALMAN AHMAD (27)



PAKISTAN

Salman has refused to let his mobility problems, caused by childhood polio, hold him back. He co-founded the GADE Foundation, which aims to encourage young men and women to become more involved in enterprise. It has so far established groups at 26 universities to organise its activities at a grassroots level. Salman hopes to change attitudes towards disabled people.



## THEJITHA SAUBHAGYA EDIRISINGHE (27)



.....SRI LANKA

After experiencing his country's civil war, Thejitha wanted to find a way to encourage future peace. Recognising the importance of culture, arts and languages in creating cohesive communities, he set up the Human Wing International. Thejitha believes that by enabling people to learn and communicate in different languages, it will break down the barriers between them and help them live more peacefully as one community.

## KAVINDYA THENNAKON (20)



.....SRI LANKA

Kavindya was raised by her mother after her police officer father died while fighting the country's drug trade. Realising education would be the key to her success, Kavindya studied hard while volunteering for organisations including the Girl Guides. She recently founded Without Borders, which aims to tackle the lack of quality education and employment.

## NICOLA BYROM (28)



.....UNITED KINGDOM

In her teens Nicola fought mental health difficulties. While studying for a PhD in Psychology at Oxford University she founded Student Minds, to provide peer support for students experiencing mental health difficulties. Today the charity has hundreds of volunteers at more than 30 universities in the UK.

## ZOË JACKSON (26)



.....UNITED KINGDOM

Zoë set up Living the Dream Performing Arts Company aged 16, to inspire young people and subsidise her own education. The organisation now includes a performing arts school, a dance company and a charity. The charity, the Dream Foundation, engages, mentors, trains and inspires disadvantaged young people, as well as making the arts more affordable and accessible to them.

## EDMUND PAGE (29)



UNITED KINGDOM

Edmund left life in the UK to start the Xavier Project, a charity that aims to improve the lives of urban refugees in Kenya and Uganda by enabling them to participate in education. With many children currently out of school in both countries, the charity offers both child sponsorship and adult education opportunities.

## KATE ROW (22)



AUSTRALIA

Kate's life experiences have made her determined to raise awareness and understanding of disabilities among children and young people. She encourages strong social inclusion and works on various projects to promote disability awareness and mental health.

## EMILY SMITH (23)



AUSTRALIA

Emily is a community and Girl Guide leader, and works on various projects that focus on gender-based issues. She has helped to deliver a campaign called Free Being Me, which encourages body confidence and self-esteem, and was also chosen to attend the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women. She is now working to run the Stop the Violence Campaign and its Voices Against Violence curriculum.

## ALZIMA ELISHA BANO (28)



.....FIJI

Having been involved in youth work for a number of years, Alzima set up Advocacy (through) Creative Techniques in June 2014. The organisation uses the arts to make young people more aware of local issues that affect their community. Alzima is planning to hold workshops to encourage young people to become positive role models.

## TABITHA BESLEY (23)



.....NEW ZEALAND

When Tabitha came out at 15, she was helped by a school support group, for both gay and straight students. Despite being bullied, she became leader of the group and expanded it to include people in the wider community. In 2012 she set up InsideOUT, which aims to make schools more inclusive places for young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

## CHRISTINA GIWE (24)



.....PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Christina has been active in her community for many years, volunteering with the Salvation Army, Oxfam and the women's NGO Soroptimist International. She plans to set up an organisation to inspire young people to take a leading role in their community. Christina believes young people who are more engaged in their community will go on to find employment and take control of their future.

## JOHN TAKA (27)



.....PAPUA NEW GUINEA

John set up Seeds of Hope to help his rural community tackle some of the challenges it faced. So far the programme has enabled villagers to build new roads and start a potato-selling project to help pay for students' school fees. John is also president of Spark\*PNG, which supports founders of social start-ups.

## ERNA TAKAZAWA (26)



SAMOA

After finding out that her sister was short-sighted, Erna discovered how expensive it was to buy glasses in Samoa. She studied optometry in New Zealand and became Samoa's first and only optometrist. Her efforts in promoting the need for affordable eye care have led to free eye care for under-16s and over-65s, free glasses for children and more affordable glasses for adults.

## CHRISTINA HOUAISUTA (29)



SOLOMON ISLANDS

Christina works with women in Solomon Islands to help tackle domestic violence. She set up a community group that makes women aware of their rights and helps them to receive training and education. Christina hopes that helping women to acquire new skills will enable them to find employment.

## WILLY MISSACK (26)



VANUATU

Willy studies Life Science and Earth and Environmental Science at the University of New Caledonia. As well as playing an active role in his university as a student representative, Willy has most recently been working with his home community to create a vital, sustainable water supply.



THE QUEEN ELIZABETH  
DIAMOND JUBILEE TRUST

## THE PARTNERS

Each partner brings unique strengths, networks and expertise to The Queen's Young Leaders Programme. Together, they are committed to creating change for the young people the Programme supports and the lives of those around them.

## 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. Its mission is to enrich the lives of people from all backgrounds within 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](http://www.jubileetribute.org)

Adi Karimona presenting The Queen with a bouquet of Fijian flowers (1953/54). Photo: ©Tara Moore / The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.





## 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, disadvantaged 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](http://www.comicrelief.com)



## THE 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 Commonwealth citizens.

For more information go to: [www.thercs.org](http://www.thercs.org)

Commonwealth Observance 2014. Courtesy Royal Commonwealth Society




## FIND OUT MORE

For more information please visit:

[www.queensyoungleaders.com](http://www.queensyoungleaders.com)

#QUEENSYOUNGLEADERS



Discovering,  
celebrating  
and supporting  
young people  
from every corner of  
the Commonwealth  
to transform their  
own lives and the  
lives of those  
around them