



**BRIGHT IDEAS**

from a Young Commonwealth

**A GUIDE**

**TO**

**INSPIRING**

**OTHERS**

An initiative of



**The Commonwealth  
Youth Programme**





# Bright Ideas from a Young Commonwealth

A Guide to Inspiring Others

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## Hello

Welcome to the Bright Ideas community! Thank you for choosing to be a part of this exciting project, whether you are a young speaker, interested in organising or attending an event, or helping to spread the word about Bright Ideas from a Young Commonwealth.

Young people know they have a key role to play in solving many of the world's most complex problems, but it takes consistent engagement and support, and the creation of better spaces for innovative thinking and sustainable practices.

Bright Ideas from a Young Commonwealth is an initiative created by the Commonwealth Secretariat to encourage this innovative thinking, and showcase brilliant ideas from young Commonwealth citizens who are transforming the world in positive, sustainable ways.

We celebrate these young change-makers and want to see their ideas promoted in every regional and international forum. And we would like you to help make that happen, by organising your own Bright Ideas talk or event.

This toolkit contains information about the Bright Ideas concept, and guidance on hosting a successful Bright Ideas talk.

Your ongoing suggestions and feedback will help to improve and grow Bright Ideas, so all comments and suggestions are welcome.

**Email: [youth@commonwealth.int](mailto:youth@commonwealth.int)**

## About the Commonwealth Youth Programme

The Commonwealth Youth Programme focuses on the social, political and economic empowerment of the Commonwealth's 1.2 billion young people.

We have been supporting the development of strong youth development policies and programmes in the 53 countries of the Commonwealth for over 40 years.

We also unite and amplify young people's voices through youth networks and youth forums, engaging and empowering young leaders and promoting their participation in government processes. On our youth blog website called **[YourCommonwealth.org](http://YourCommonwealth.org)**, young writers and aspiring journalists can share their opinions and ideas about local, regional or international events or issues through articles or film.

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How Bright Ideas works</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Hosting a Bright Ideas event</b>	<b>4</b>
Resources	4
Making your event cost-effective	4
Venue	5
Co-hosting with another event	5
Sponsorship guidelines	6
Event Programme	6
Communicating about your event	7
<b>Presentation tips for speakers</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Recording your Bright Idea</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sending us your Bright Idea presentation</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Disclaimers</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Event checklist</b>	<b>14</b>



# Introduction

Bright Ideas from a Young Commonwealth is a movement, a statement, an ambition to amplify young people's voice and inspire their peers across the Commonwealth, a community of 53 nations.

Bright Ideas showcases the ideas and activities of young people aged 15-29 from Commonwealth countries who are leading positive change in their community, country or region with innovative solutions to challenges large and small.

Bright Ideas was created by the Commonwealth Secretariat, to recognise and showcase such outstanding young leaders, and inspire and motivate other young people to put their ideas into action to make a better world.

A Bright Idea could relate to any theme, such as climate change, education, employment, human rights, health, culture or sport – we want to hear about the problem or opportunity you saw, and the way you have addressed it with your clever innovation.

# How Bright Ideas works

Are you aged 15-29 and want to share your Bright Idea with your local community and across the Commonwealth? Here is a quick guide on how to go about it.



## 1. Identify your Bright Idea

- Have you seen a problem or opportunity in your community, and developed an innovative solution to address it? Or do you know a young person who has?
- Have you implemented your solution and has it had a positive impact?



## 2. Choose how you would like to showcase your Bright Idea

- Identify your audience and think about how to make the Bright Idea interesting to them.
- Design an event or activity based on available resources. You might build it into an event you already have planned.
- Work out the timing and plan the logistics.
- Promote your event and ensure your messages are clear.
- Create an inspiring presentation.



## 3. Film your Bright Idea presentation using a video recorder or camera phone, or a microphone.

- Organise someone to film or record the talk
- Make sure the visual and sound quality are ok.



## 4. Send it to the Commonwealth Secretariat for uploading to the Bright Ideas webpage



## Bright Ideas events

Bright Ideas events are a great way to generate discussion about challenges and opportunities faced by people and countries across the Commonwealth and the innovations young people are bringing to fruition.

We hosted the first Bright Ideas event in London in March 2015, as part of celebrations for our annual Commonwealth Day. Speakers included the winners of the Commonwealth Youth Awards 2015, who showcased their own Bright Ideas. You can watch all the Bright Ideas to date at: [yourcommonwealth.org/brightideas](http://yourcommonwealth.org/brightideas)

Live talks from young speakers are the focal point of any Bright Ideas talk or event, but otherwise what happens is up to you - each event can have its own structure and personality. Events can last an hour or extend to a full day and can include as many attendees as you wish to invite (or can safely fit in the venue!).

We will put your Bright Ideas talk online, in video or as a podcast, on the [YourCommonwealth.org](http://YourCommonwealth.org) site, and promote it to a global audience, including leaders of Commonwealth countries.

# Hosting a Bright Ideas event

When thinking about organising a Bright Ideas event, you should consider the resources available. You can host a standalone Bright Ideas talk, or event featuring one or more inspirational speakers, or you can integrate a Bright Ideas presentation into an already established event - it's up to you.

Bright Ideas talks can be hosted by an individual or organisation, but each event must have a Master of Ceremonies aged between 15 and 29, who is responsible for introducing the speakers and chairing any subsequent discussion.

Each speaker, also aged 15-29, will showcase their Bright Idea - which addresses a particular social, political or economic challenge or opportunity.

While the Commonwealth Secretariat would like to hear about your Bright Ideas event, it is important for you to 'own' it yourself - so, independent planning, organisation, coordination. Have a clear idea of the audience you expect; this is important so the speaker can tailor their presentation to, and connect with, the audience.

It's important to keep people engaged while making the event relevant, accessible, inclusive and enjoyable - think about what people will get out of it.

## Resources

A suite of helpful products is available on the YourCommonwealth website at: [www.yourcommonwealth.org/brightideas](http://www.yourcommonwealth.org/brightideas) to assist with hosting your Bright Ideas event. These include:

- Digital and print invitation templates
- Facebook and Twitter digital banners
- Poster
- PowerPoint presentation template

## Making your event cost-effective

Seek help from your friends and organisation, use existing networks and make contact with other groups to find out what resources might be available. It is worth doing some research to see if other Bright Ideas or relevant community events are planned in your area and see if you can join in.

Ask around to see if community groups or organisations might be able to host your event, or provide a venue and equipment such as tables, chairs, sound equipment, projectors and screens.

Make the most of online social networks to gain free publicity, find ideas and generate interest.

## Venue

With your audience in mind, choose your location. Bright Ideas events can take place in homes, workplaces, schools, universities, at a function or public space.

Choose a stage or area where the speaker is able to move around naturally and the audience is not sitting too far away from the speaking area.

University, corporate and community auditoriums tend to work best; most of these will have some built-in infrastructure. Ideally, the venue should have:

- Ability to project slideshows and videos
- Easy access to the stage - keep in mind the talk will need to be recorded.
- Location for food and beverages (if you are planning to provide food)
- Conveniently located bathrooms

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct permissions to host your Bright Ideas event in whichever venue you choose.

## Co-hosting with another event

You could co-host or piggyback your Bright Ideas talk as part of an existing event. In this way you can promote your inspiring idea or activity to a broader audience, and your talk can add value to an existing event.

Youth forums, employment workshops, conferences, award ceremonies and community events could in some way include a Bright Ideas talk to inspire others to think about ways of improving their community.

Key international days, such as World Environment Day or International Youth Day, provide an opportunity to host an event showcasing ideas about helping the environment or young people, for example. There may already be planned events taking place in your local community on these key international days where you can participate in and host your own Bright Ideas talk.

## Sponsorship guidelines

You might choose to find a sponsor for your Bright Ideas event, to assist with the event organisation or underwrite some of the costs. One sponsor is probably easier than multiple sponsors, and we recommend that you seek a sponsor in your local community first - particularly an organisation committed to supporting young people.

It is also worth familiarising yourself with Commonwealth values, such as peace, democracy, freedom and equality. Any organisation whose own values or actions conflict with Commonwealth values, or which could be perceived as detrimental to young people, must not be a Bright Ideas sponsor. In particular, you must not approach tobacco, alcohol or weapons companies.

Bright Ideas from a Young Commonwealth is a non-commercial initiative, so funds should only go to covering the cost of the event itself. To get the most benefit from your sponsorship, we recommend that you look for in-kind sponsors who can help meet your venue, catering and audiovisual needs.

### Sponsorship rules:

- Sponsors do not feature in Bright Ideas videos.
- Sponsors do not have editorial control or veto power over the choice of speaker or the content of a presentation.
- All communications with sponsors should make clear that the event is a Bright Ideas event.

## Event programme

Here are some helpful hints and ideas for your Bright Ideas event programme:

- The Master of Ceremonies (aged 15-29) should keep introductions short.
- Speakers should stay on time - a Bright Ideas presentation should be no longer than seven (7) minutes.
- Consider including a Q&A session, a panel discussion or another activity after the talk to keep the audience engaged on the topic.
- Avoid the use of a podium, which puts a barrier between the audience and the speaker.
- If you are hosting several talks, consider providing breaks between sessions so your audience can think and discuss the idea among themselves.

## Communicating about your Bright Ideas event

Good publicity is necessary to run a successful event or engage an audience online. Publicise your event or activity in advance with simple, attention-grabbing text and Bright Ideas imagery available from the resources kit at [www.yourcommonwealth.org/brightideas](http://www.yourcommonwealth.org/brightideas).

Try to summarise your Bright Idea in one sentence - think about it as a headline.

It is important to explain what the event is about clearly in all communication with speakers and attendees. This will set the tone and expectations for your event and avoid any confusion.

### Social media

Social media is a great place to start for free advertising. You can set up an event page and promote your event on Facebook. Other options are noticeboards, local papers and community centres.

When using social media to engage your future audience:

- Be clear about the date and time of the event
- Announce speakers/venues as you confirm them, and post any photos you have of them.
- Post information about you, the host (if you are different from the speaker)
- Use the hashtag #CWBrightIdeas in all social media communications about your event, so you can track the Bright Ideas conversation.
- Related hashtags include:

**#Commonwealth #YoungCommonwealth #YouthTalks**

**#YouthEngage #CreativeYouth #YouthIdeas**

We encourage social media users to be part of the Bright Ideas conversation about inspiring ideas in the Commonwealth that affect positive social change.

### Media guidelines

Consider inviting local journalists to your event to gain extra publicity - they will be attracted if your event or activity stands out or relates to issues recently covered in the news.

Organise photos and/or video of the event.

# Presentation tips for speakers

A Bright Ideas talk is a short seven (7) minute presentation. It should focus on how the speaker identified a problem or opportunity, came up with an innovative or inspiring Bright Idea to address it, and put that idea into action.

Messages should must be short and sharp, as the audience will only remain engaged for a short time. The presentation should also:

- Reflect on key challenges experienced along the way and how these were overcome.
- Explain the results and impact of the Bright Idea, and who was affected.
- Identify what could help the Bright Idea become even more successful and achieve wider transformational change.

Your presentation should be a clear, easy-to-follow narrative about your Bright Idea. The following structure will assist you to repeat and reinforce key points throughout your talk. Repeating yourself isn't necessarily a taboo in public speaking as you want your audience to remember some key messages.

## Structure:

1. Introduce yourself
2. Explain the problem or opportunity
3. Describe your Bright Idea
4. How did you put it into action?
5. Challenges overcome
6. Impact achieved
7. What's next?

## Top tips for a Bright Ideas presentation

### 1. Take your audience on a journey.

Use the easy-to-follow structure above to share your own story of your Bright Idea. Be emotive and passionate, but remember to tell the whole story - the failures in life often teach us more than the successes.

### 2. Have a consistent look and feel.

If you follow the guidance in the Bright Ideas PowerPoint template available online, you can't go wrong.

### 3. Do not overload any presentation slides.

Less is more - particularly with respect to the amount of text you have on each slide. Show more pictures and use less text. No more than three lines of text per slide. Avoid using effects and transitions where possible, as too many can look unprofessional.

**4. Do not sell yourself or your organisation.**

You should focus on ensuring the audience will benefit from what you say. When you inspire with your actions, and help people improve their professional or personal lives, you've done all the selling you'll need to do.

**5. Watch your body language.**

Do not read notes if you can avoid it, and make eye contact with the audience. Gestures can help emphasise or convey a message, but repetitive gestures can be distracting. Try to vary your gestures, but let them come in a natural way.

**6. Speak slowly and clearly.**

Your voice is a powerful tool. Find the right volume and tone, emphasise important words and articulate your words and ideas clearly. If you are talking about a complex idea, break it down into simpler concepts or relate it to a story. If you do this, people will understand you and naturally follow what you are saying.

**7. Talk like a thought leader.**

Great speakers are thought leaders who teach their audiences something about the world. Be confident, and inspire confidence in your audience.

**8. Practise, then practise again.**

It's normal to be nervous, but remember the audience likes you and wants to hear about your idea. Practice builds confidence in your speaking ability.

**9. Be yourself and have fun.**

Your Bright Idea is your product, your idea and your story; nobody in the world is better placed to tell it than you.

# Recording your Bright Idea

To share your Bright Idea with the wider world, we recommend that you organise for someone to record your presentation as a video, or at least as an audio file. We can then feature it online with the rest of the Bright Ideas on the YourCommonwealth.org website.

You don't need a professional film-maker to record a Bright Ideas talk. The Bright Ideas website will accept even videos filmed on a camera phone. However, with a little investment, for example by using multiple cameras, you can really improve the viewing experience for a web audience, which has a short attention span.

Framing a speaker's words with multiple camera angles is more dynamic and interesting than holding one camera angle for a long period of time.

Here are some recommendations for filming:

1. Choose the best camera angles for each moment
2. Use more close-ups and medium shots than wide shots
3. Ensure the sound quality is clear - people need to clearly understand what you're saying and it is difficult to enhance this in the editing process.
4. Ensure everyone featured in the recording has offered their permission or had the opportunity to opt out.

The last point is especially important. If you intend to record an event, you should inform those who may be recorded in advance, to give them the opportunity to opt out. If you do not inform them in advance, all persons recorded should be asked to sign a form acknowledging that they have given permission for their image and voice to be recorded and published.



# Sending us your Bright Idea presentation

Email the recording of your Bright Ideas presentation to [youth@commonwealth.int](mailto:youth@commonwealth.int) and we will add Bright Ideas branding, upload it and promote it for you.

Sites such as [Dropbox](#) or [Google Drive](#) allow you to share large video files easily by sending a link to download the file, rather than sending the entire file through email. It's good to email us before you send the download link through so we can expect it and know who it is coming from.

Only those videos which comply with the Code of Conduct and Commonwealth values will be uploaded.

We will accept entries filmed on any device, provided they are subject to the following:

- Subjects in shot must be clearly visible and well lit;
- Audio should be clear and free from distortion;
- Filming must be steady and shake free (we recommend the use of a tripod or a similar stabilizer)

The videos will be hosted on the Commonwealth Secretariat's YouTube channel.

When exporting your finished video we recommend the following settings:

- Container: MP4
- Audio codec: AAC-LC
- Video codec: H.264
- The minimum resolution (video size) should be 480 pixels widescreen (854x480)

Content must be encoded and uploaded using the same frame rate that was used during recording. For instance, If the video was filmed at 24 FPS (frames per second) then it should be exported with the same frame rate. Most video editing software have a setting for YouTube so feel free to use those settings in exporting your finished product.

# Code of Conduct

Being a Bright Ideas event organiser and speaker has certain responsibilities and requirements attached.

All contributors to YourCommonwealth.org, including Bright Ideas presenters and event organisers, are expected to adhere to the following Code:

## **Contributors:**

- Will respect the Commonwealth's principles and values, including those of tolerance and understanding.
- Will not use the YourCommonwealth.org website to make accusations against any named individuals or organisations, or otherwise make defamatory allegations.
- Will take a balanced approach in all reporting and strive to put across alternative views and counter arguments.
- Will not plagiarise, or copy, the work of others.
- Will obtain, if they are under 18 years of age, the permission of a parent or guardian to contribute.
- Will take good care and never put themselves or anyone else in danger.
- By submitting any content (such as articles, pictures and videos), give the Commonwealth Secretariat copyright to distribute or republish said content on its websites or other platforms (refer to the YourCommonwealth.org copyright permissions for more information).
- Give permission for content (such as articles, pictures and videos) to be offered by the Commonwealth Secretariat to other media outlets and platforms free-of-payment. Re-publication will not entail commercial benefit, but will give added exposure to contributors' work, YourCommonwealth.org and the Commonwealth Youth Programme.
- Will not claim to represent the Commonwealth Youth Programme or Commonwealth Secretariat unless employed as such.

# Disclaimers

## Venue permissions

The Commonwealth Secretariat accepts no responsibility or liability for events or activities organised by external organisations or individuals under the name of Bright Ideas from a Young Commonwealth.

Any organisation or individual participating in, or supporting, a Bright Ideas event should not be deemed to have been endorsed by, be an agent or employee of, or be associated with the Commonwealth Secretariat in any way. Any views expressed by the event organiser/s, sponsor/s and/or speakers are theirs alone.

It is the sole responsibility of the event organiser/s to ensure relevant permissions are sought and approved for venues, and to safeguard the safety and reputations of all those connected with, or invited to, a Bright Ideas talk.

## Image consent

By providing a Bright Ideas video you consent to the Commonwealth Secretariat, its agents, and employees all rights to exhibit this work in print and electronic form publicly or privately to promote the Bright Ideas initiative.

By providing a Bright Ideas video you further consent that your name and identity may be revealed through descriptive text or commentary, and that all persons depicted have given their consent for their image and speech to be used in this way.

## Funding

The Commonwealth Secretariat does not provide funding to individuals or organisations to host Bright Ideas events.

The Bright Ideas initiative is non-commercial and attendees should not be charged to attend a Bright Ideas event. Speakers should not be paid for speaking.

## Discretionary publishing rights

The Commonwealth Secretariat reserves the right to not publish content on YourCommonwealth.org which does not adhere to the Code of Conduct or views and values not endorsed by Secretariat. The Commonwealth's values and aspirations are enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

# Event checklist

<b>1. The Bright Idea</b>	
Are you aged 15-29 years of age and are you a national of a Commonwealth member country?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you seen a problem or opportunity in your community, and developed an innovative solution to address it? Or do you know a young person who has?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you implemented your solution and has it had a positive impact?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Pre-event</b>	
Identify your audience and think about how to make the Bright Idea interesting to them	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design an event or activity based on available resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work out the timing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote your event and ensure your messages are clear	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an inspiring presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise someone to film the presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. During the event</b>	
Organise someone to film the presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage discussion about your Bright Idea through social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
Run a Q&A or panel discussion to explore the ideas presented	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. After the event</b>	
Send the recording of your presentation to the Commonwealth Secretariat for uploading to the Bright Ideas webpage	<input type="checkbox"/>



