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**Youth employment and enterprise:
A Policy Proposal for Commonwealth Endeavour, A Commonwealth Apprenticeship and Academy
Scheme
(DRAFT)**

Policy paper produced by:

Alex Matchett, writer for Future Foreign Policy

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Contact details: info@futureforeignpolicy.com

Future Foreign Policy is a student and graduate led initiative that was set up to engage young people in a fresh and innovative forum for progressive policies, and allow them to promote their ideas on the future direction of UK foreign affairs. By communicating, contributing and cooperating with a variety of political decision makers and professionals in the field, students can shape the world they live in, become mobilised around key international issues, and fight for the policies and campaigns they believe in.

Background to the paper

This paper proposes the creation of Commonwealth Endeavour Academies, Apprenticeships and forums. The three tranche aim is to provide secondary education, eliminate youth unemployment and create new markets, growth and dialogue in developing spaces.

The Commonwealth is in a unique and privileged position. The current youth of the Commonwealth is more educated and better provided for than at any point in the past but there is much still to be done. Development initiatives have achieved much and it is telling how growth has provided for so many millions who previously would have been without even basic primary schooling. The next step must be to envisage how to utilise this growing pool of ambitious, resourceful and bright young people. Companies and institutions from the developed world have invested in enterprise schemes and programmes to install business and markets in struggling communities but more must be done to harness the potential and promote growth from within rather than imposing it from without.

The failures and successes of development initiatives worldwide over the last generations have proven the critical importance of economic growth to self-sustainability in the developing world. Creation and sustainment of markets and economies from micro community level to state wide macro economy is at the heart of moving from poverty to prosperity. The ability to engage with and profit from global markets will drive development and bring the benefits of international trade to every community. Following the global economic crisis the issue of youth unemployment has become more pronounced than ever. This policy proposal identifies the root of this problem being the deficit in demand for young skilled workers and the deficit of young people with secondary/skilled education. This policy looks to educate and create growth, providing jobs and employees.

Policy Outline

The UN development goal to provide primary education to all is a crucial step; however it can only be made as a commitment to the next crucial step which is providing secondary education. A Commonwealth Endeavour Academy and Apprenticeship scheme (CEAAS), in cooperation with major Commonwealth businesses, will provide the next step in educating individuals and giving them a role in developing spaces. Giving them the training, skills, knowledge and confidence to bring the prosperity of economic growth to their homes.

Secondary education is a substantial commitment, requiring significant investment in time, effort and finance. By combining investment, matched pound for pound, from the CDC and private enterprise, Commonwealth Endeavour Academies can be established as new standalone institutions or within existing secondary education facilities, depending on demand. Their role would be to provide secondary education to as many as possible, providing them with a curriculum agreed at state level within Commonwealth guidelines, as well as real skills and knowledge to apply as apprentices within the investing companies. These academies should look to place at least 50% (ideally 100%) of students on apprenticeship schemes seeing them take up full time employment within the respective company at the age of 18. Those without an apprenticeship should be provided with a place on a young enterprise scheme tasked with innovative business solutions. Employability should be the watchword of these institutions.

The establishment of academy education and apprenticeship positions, in conjunction with secondary and higher education will ensure not only that young people are given the tools to work in business but provide them with jobs and trust that employs and rewards their endeavour. The nations of the Commonwealth will see their young people take on leadership roles in the private and public sector and bring scope for growth from within their respective economies. On a supra state level the Commonwealth can provide intra state trade and education to identify and create new markets nurtured by the skills given these individuals through apprenticeship.

As an example, technology has evolved at an ever increasing pace. Utilising this in developing spaces can have real impact. The ability to manage micro finances from a mobile phone has allowed individuals to take on enterprise and has created the opportunity for small and medium enterprise throughout the Commonwealth. Now we must develop the markets. An individual working and learning in this sector under the apprenticeship scheme can foster new and innovative ideas to further the ability of this medium through business. One such SME could grow to provide a whole region or state, with the means to micro manage investments and business, furthering growth and building competitive markets. Within the framework of the Commonwealth this growth could create multinational markets, led by former apprentices working in new companies returning their profits to their respective economies, ultimately mitigating traditional reliance on heavy investment from developed nations.

Encouraging significant private investment by enforcing large companies to fund academies as a pre-requisite to expanding into developing and emerging markets will be substantially aided by the CDC's matching of that investment, securing mutual interest and the opportunity for those investing to gain substantially more than they put in initially but only by utilising the individuals they have funded through employment. Employing local Apprentices full time would reinvest company efforts and provide specific local

knowledge and expertise in developing markets. However, this is potentially the most challenging aspect of the CEAAS proposal, therefore initial political support from the Commonwealth through apt media management and business relations and guarantees will be crucial.

This proposal is ambitious but recognises the need to realise the potential of youth within the Commonwealth. Setting out a clear agenda for academies and apprenticeships, sponsored by private investment would provide many with the ability to start new Commonwealth companies and grow existing ones.

Process:

- 1) With Commonwealth and private funding set up Commonwealth Endeavour Academies in regions where the funding company(ies) operate and where there is a need to address youth unemployment
- 2) A) Those selected take up Commonwealth Endeavour Apprenticeships within respective companies between the ages of 16-18
B) Those not selected or who do not want to take up apprenticeships receive young enterprise tuition, identifying new business and employment avenues
- 3) Creation of a CEAAS Forum for all academy leavers. This should provide real liaison and communication between participants, relating experiences and knowledge as well as increasing civil participation and developing the concept of the academy leavers as stakeholders in the process. It should look to build realization of growing markets for further business through networking. Ideally this should be across participating states and could also serve as a monitoring tool for improvement of the scheme.

Comprehension through the Commonwealth YDI

The establishment of the Commonwealth's Youth Development Index (YDI) highlights not only the importance of youth development, education, employment, health and civic and political participation but correctly identifies the need to make these gaugeable and comprehensive within the Commonwealth. This data can be collected and used to rate the relative success of apprenticeships and how they can be improved as well as pooling knowledge on where and how success has been achieved. In this sense the Commonwealth will be able to provide a standard of best practice for respective member states to abide by and be checked on. A large data set from all participating states will also give comparative models a chance to develop and add to the standard.

This YDI will also help to identify the causes of high youth unemployment and show where the Commonwealth Endeavour Apprenticeship and Academies (CEAA) could be most effective.

Comprehension of the scheme's success will be crucial and so despite the commitment to objective integrity from investing companies and states, it will be recognised as the responsibility of the Commonwealth to check, maintain and act on the information it gathers independently through the YDI. Were the CEAA to receive funding matching that of private investors from a Commonwealth body, such as the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), then not only would this encourage investment in sharing cost and responsibility but would also mitigate the potential for conflicting private interests in educational agendas. Business funded academies should obviously look to place leavers in business but would be scrutinised appropriately by independent Commonwealth principles and rules of operation.

The third pillar in addressing youth unemployment, and expanding the program to translate it from the YDI into broader post 2015 development, should be the creation of civic and political forums. Virtually, online, and physically, the scheme should hope to join apprentices and young people through liaison at both a state and supra state level. Civil interaction can promote and define business interests and markets, thereby furthering potential for investment and growth. Parallel to this the democratic nature of the forums and the mutually beneficial aims of such liaison can promote political and social dialogue and understanding.

Apprenticeship Critique & Analysis

Much has been written on apprenticeship schemes over the last decade as both global labour markets and industry have changed considerably. Fuller & Unwin's focus on the role of apprenticeship within the UK in the report- 'Towards Expansive Apprenticeships' highlights the need for companies to be recognised and encouraged as stakeholders, giving their apprentices clearly defined roles that give clear linear progress. A greater sharing of the concept between organisations, individuals and society would ultimately mandate and legitimise greater public investment in the scheme mirroring private firm confidence and investment.

The 2009 Report on Re-Modelling India's Apprenticeship Scheme identifies the profound implications of a skill deficit for the individual and for the economy, stating on page 17: '*The skill deficit hurts more than the infrastructure deficit because it sabotages equality of opportunity and amplifies inequality while poor infrastructure maintains inequality.*' The report also further highlights the marked success of Germany's

apprenticeship schemes where 60% of those under 22 complete an apprenticeship and then take up full time long term employment.

In its cases the report concurs with UK apprenticeship aims, underlining:

- Apprenticeships improve business performance by making contributions to competitiveness, profitability, productivity and quality;
- The net costs of Apprenticeships training are frequently lower than those involved in training non-apprentices and the productivity of apprentices enables employers to recover much of the costs involved;
- Apprentices more easily adopt company values, are more likely to remain with the employer than non-apprentices, and become part of a wider pool of talent that can be drawn upon by all employers in the sector;
- Seeking to increase the diversity of the apprentice workforce will have significant business benefits, as will provide clear progression routes from Apprenticeship to higher levels in the organization

These readings on the importance of apprenticeship schemes strongly support the points established by the Commonwealth Plan for Youth Empowerment and the imperative of employment for young people. The complex nature of empowerment and development reveals the importance of income, job and livelihood in promoting the self standing of young people and giving them a stake in society. The ability to hold an economic, social and political role in society will give young people the direction and ambition to shape their own, their country's and the Commonwealth's future. This is recognised by point 1.7 of the PAYE report-

Establish national schemes and apprenticeship/ internship programmes to enable young men and women to acquire a range of skills they will need to be employable.

In other NGOs too, apprenticeships have been identified as a potential 'silver bullet' by both the ILO and the UNSDN (<http://unsdn.org/?p=2035>). Efforts made by some companies, such as Civil Engineering firm ICE, have already had an impact by taking apprentices from developing countries. This has been undertaken with direct reference to the UN MDGs. As well as these initial projects the UN's Apprenticeship Without Borders Program (http://www.asf-ge.org/?page_id=385&lang=en) reveals the very real scope for such projects within the developing world and how much potential backing there is for such initiatives internationally. However, success must be judged on action not gesture.

Commonwealth Business Benefits

The UN has correctly identified the pronounced challenges still faced in development. These challenges can all be met if economic growth and enterprise is pushed from within. Good business practice and real stakes of interest in transparent and competitive governance can address inherent problems such as corruption and mismanagement that so often thwart outside assistance.

Education is undoubtedly the bedrock for all development, including youth employment; we must now build on it. Providing the aim and reason for the next step in secondary education: working and learning within a business environment, will focus young individuals and give them new and promising horizons. Being able to achieve the skills of a professional whilst still young will provide the confidence to realise better results within their respective business. It will also provide the incentives for new enterprise and start-ups, furthering markets and ultimately give means for business and investment to access new markets and sectors, adding value to developing markets.

Placing apprenticeships in companies operating across the Commonwealth will give individuals experience of alternative business practices and cultures to benefit and contrast their own knowledge. This can, in turn, build a pool of knowledge and experience at apprenticeship level across Commonwealth states that define best business practice. Developing a multi-national consciousness further can increase innovation and help to identify and promote regional strengths as well as addressing regional market weaknesses by utilising alternative demands.

Context

Consistently reports on development have highlighted the need for education and stability of infrastructure and law. Allowing young educated individuals to work from within developing economies will mitigate problems of outside aid coming in and the corruption this so often leads to.

Bodies such as the Commonwealth Development Corporation could avoid concerns over high risk investments and plan long term to orchestrate private investment from firms in Commonwealth economies. This would allow regional, and or international, businesses to provide their investment, incentivising them to make the scheme work and utilise the talent sourced.

Education has been rightly identified as a core component of the UNDP's human development index (HDI). Gaining knowledge is useless if it is not applied, education must evolve with business experience, keeping the apprenticeship investment in country and using the learnt skills to foster growth and employability.

Recommendations- Immediate

- Identify interested business parties
- Identify regions and schools in need of Endeavour Academies
- Secure private investment, matching it pound for pound with investment from the Commonwealth (through the CDC or a similar body)
- Through the labelled Commonwealth Endeavour Education Fund the respective investments are implemented in providing impartial secondary education and specific apprenticeship trades and skills in partaking schools.

Recommendations- Secondary

(At the age of 16 apprentices selected by the scheme continue higher education whilst working as an intern at the company. This ratio should be as high as possible; those not selected can receive young enterprise training. By 18 they are able to take on a full time role with a degree of responsibility and expected to find innovative methods for growth. Their employers may also decide to fund university education.)

- Establish a Commonwealth wide Endeavour Forum online and potentially an annual conference for apprentices to meet at and share ideas, contacts and business plans.
- Promote success and highlight the benefits to businesses to grow the scheme throughout developing spaces
- Encourage a return from benefitting businesses to fund further Academies

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