MODULE 3: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

UNIT 1: History and Traditions
The central purpose of youth development work is to empower young people to play an assertive and constructive role in the strengthening and regeneration of their communities.

What is youth development?
Youth development is a process of coordinated and collective effort to nurture and support activities that prepare young people to meet the challenges of adolescence to adulthood and achieve their full potential. Youth development is promoted through activities and experiences that help young people to develop their social, ethical, emotional, physical, moral, cultural and cognitive competencies.

The 3 distinct roles of the youth development worker
- Working face-to-face with young people in a variety of settings, eg. Clubs, projects and outreach work
- Managing and supporting other paid and volunteer workers
- Formulating and developing community policies for governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

The Commonwealth youth programme
CYP embodies 3 main principles of the Commonwealth Harare Declaration (1991) that should be central to the practice of all youth development work. Some organisations use Services, Opportunities and Support approach (SOS), while CYP uses the Enabling, Ensuring and Empowerment approach to youth development.

Enabling: - approach is about creating conditions that help young people to become more independent rather than relying on others to do things for them. Using this approach, the role of the youth worker is to encourage young people to – develop new skills, - develop self-confidence and self-esteem, speak for themselves.

Ensuring: - approach promotes the core Commonwealth values and principles (democracy, liberty, justice and equity) because these give a sense of meaning, moral and social purpose to the ways in which young people can use their skills and knowledge. Using this approach, the role of the youth worker is to help young people regardless of their social backgrounds to – secure opportunities for developing their learning abilities, - acquire ways of making themselves valuable members of the community and – express their needs to the people with power in the society.

Empowering: - approach encourages young people to think about democratic principles and practices and to have the insight and skills to influence the decisions that affect them and their communities. Using this approach, the role of the youth worker is to encourage young people to – gain access to resources, - practice commonwealth values and principles, - participate in democratic process, and – become creative in social change.
There are six main international traditions of youth development work

Youth worker in the development of families and communities: is the earliest tradition of youth development work which relates to the role of family and community members who care for, supported, educated and controlled young people. As family and community structures change, traditional methods may be supplemented by professional advice or help.

Youth worker as social and leisure provision: was established initially in developed countries, because their rapid industrialisation and urbanisation created a lot of free time for young people. This free time brought about rising crime rates, mental illness, loneliness, stress and drug abuse, etc, especially among the poor who cannot afford their own space and leisure. This youth work is aimed at promoting social interaction between young people and protect them from the dangers of society.

Pastoral work and out-of-school education: are superficially similar to and overlap the leisure tradition, but they are more deeply committed to ideologies of a social and spiritual nature. Religious, sporting and international organisations established extensive structures and activities for youth development work in many developing countries worldwide. These organisations include missionaries, benevolent groups and churches. Ie: YMCA and YWCA.

Uniformed and military style youth movement: started with military cadet forces and evolved into the scout movement. While scouting has moved away from its origins in both values and activities, totalitarian regimes used the idea as a basis for national youth movements to control the minds of young people. This has been unsuccessful and very few of them still exist. Boys scout and girls guide.

Youth work for development: has played an important role in official national development efforts. It has been used to promote national fitness, political mobilisation, democracy struggles, community development and citizenship education. This work helps the youth to understand the entrenched nature of oppression and also to take an active role in politics and development through community activities with political parties, national or international organisations, unions, JICA, OECD, CIDA.

Youth welfare work: has its roots in the notion of ‘rescuing’, and sees young people in need of saving from the dangers of society and needing moral and usually religious instruction. Welfare workers assist young people to identify their problems and then to act on them within the law. A further development of the welfare tradition has been the emergence of organisations that provide information to young people and act as advocates with legal expertise, on their behalf.

Who is a professional?
A professional is an individual who does quality work, bound by standards and values of the profession they belong to.

Professional are supposed to:
- Update themselves regularly on professional development
- Work in an ethical way (guided by standards, values and ethics)
- Guarantee their work is of the highest quality

**Key features of a professional youth worker**
- See themselves as knowledgeable partners rather than mere experts in their work with young people
- Distinguish between the necessary professional objectivity and sheer indifference
- Avoiding control of access to information and control of people by jargons
- Working co-operatively with other professional and other agents rather than competing with them.
- Having a commitment to lifelong learning
- Taking on the role of active, reflective practitioner

**Unit 2: Models and Approaches**
The four models of youth development work, based on the article “Models of Youth Work Intervention” by Trudi Cooper and Rob White (1994), describes the range of models or approaches within which youth workers operate.

**The Treatment Model**
Is based on the functionalist view of society and sees non-conforming behaviour of young people as a threat to social stability. Non-conformist in society who commit crimes such as robbery, drug dealing, prostitution, etc are either deviants (who must be made to conform by being controlled or temporarily removed from society), mad (who must be treated to help them become normal and productive members of society) or deficient (who must be treated by education or counselling so as not to be a threat to society). The treatment model recognises societal problems as normal and useful indicators of the need to make social adjustments to ensure integration and order.

The treatment model values competition and ignores social justice. There is a societal consensus about acceptable values and standards of behaviour, and the cause of problematic behaviour lies within the individual. The interventions involved in this model require counselling, structured discipline and programs to limit anti-social behaviour and promote acceptable values and standards.
(Mental hospitals, juvenile detention centres, etc)

**The Reform Model**
Is also based on the functionalist view of society and defines young people as being socially disadvantaged by their social environment and upbringing, and not their individual weaknesses. Their disadvantage makes them act in ways which are harmful to themselves and others in society. The reform model maintains that the values of society are acceptable and desirable but minor changes (reforms) may be necessary to improve conditions for disadvantaged groups.
The motivation and intervention for this model is to ensure social stability by providing support, education and training, and encourage the process of equal participation of young people in the community. The youth worker under the reform model requires skills in motivation, rapport building and ability to help young people identify their own needs.

**The Advocacy Model**
is based on a both pluralist and conflict interactionist model of society. The advocacy model define young people as being marginalised by society through inequitable distribution of power and resources. And that Society has failed to protect the rights of young people, or they are not fully aware or do not have the skills to use their rights. This is a human rights and social justice model which says, fundamental societal laws are unjust (designed to benefit the elite) and bureaucratic (prevents the youth from accessing the rights entitled to them), and the role of the youth worker is to expose inequality and get rid of bureaucracy and legal biases with disempower young people.

Interventions include group campaigns to promote and advocate the reform of institutional inequality. The youth worker needs skills in campaigning, media, negotiating, networking with bureaucracies, lobbying to provide interventions of welfare rights and support, counselling, legal aid support, education, training, work skills and employment to young people.

**The Conscientisation Model**
or consciousness-raising model is based on the conflict structuralist/Marxist view of society and the work of Paulo Freire (1972), where the dominant class in society structurally disadvantage(exploit) young people worldwide through their control of social resources and institutions (businesses, property, banking, public education, culture, etc).

Young people must be conscientised to know their right, values and identify oppressive factors so they can overcome inequality. To address these power imbalances in society, Paulo Freire (1972) advocates peaceful revolution through education.

Youth workers must have skills in campaigning, negotiating, social research, community education, community development and motivation. Intervention includes using consciousness-raising as a community education approach to:

- assist young people explore the reasons for their political, social and economic disadvantages and powerlessness.
- Empower young people and build self confidence
- Develop knowledge and skills
- Take action in ways not to oppress other social groups.
Unit 3: Worker roles and methods (settings)

**Detached youth work:** can also be called street work, is where youth workers go out to public places where young people congregate, such as discos, beaches, pool halls, shopping malls, town centres, streets, etc to empower them with knowledge, skills and resources.

**Outreach youth work:** is the delivery of mobile interventions to young people in various settings and communities, rather than spend time with young people in public places. Example could be visiting of young cowherds in remote locations to educate them on the importance of good hygiene.

**Activity-based youth work:** usually involve locating and working with young people based on peculiar activities they undertake, eg, identifying young people who are into carving, shoe-making, sporting and boxing.

**Vocational youth work:** offers vocational programmes to young people to help them develop life and work skills such as bee-keeping, cooking, carpentry, weaving clothes, etc. based on resources available in their community.

**Centre-based youth work:** are youth centres that may collaborate with other organisation to provide after school skills to young people. Example, a school can be aligned to a centre where young people go to acquire additional skills, ie, Kristo Asafo mission has a centre where students from KNUST engineering students go to get practical technical skills.

**Crisis intervention youth work:** are provided by charity organisations run by churches, philanthropic societies, missionaries and international aid organisations during or after crises like war, epidemic, etc. They provide material relief such as used-clothing, furniture, shoes, emergency food, medicines and or cultural orientation. Example, when Liberian refugees arrived in Ghana, many foreign charity organisation offered crisis intervention to them.

**Policy development and social planning:** involves the youth workers developing and or influencing government policies that affect young people such as juvenile justice, youth employment, youth education, legal rights, etc. For example, influencing policy makers that, free compulsory education for young people will not be sustainable without school feeding programmes.

**Social action youth work:** is mostly concerned with supporting powerless and disadvantaged groups in society by bringing about change in policies and decisions that have negative effect on underprivileged communities.

**Health care youth work:** is where youth worker educate young people on prevention of diseases and also offer counselling on family conflict, pregnancy, drug use, sexual assault, etc

**Government youth work:** youth worker in Government settings can occur at different levels (national, regional, local, etc). Government agencies that provide child protection work, forster care, family counselling through orphanages, children homes, etc. Governments can also provide financial support to unemployed young people, single-parents, or fund youth services. They can also provide housing for single-parents, sick benefits for sick people and family-allowances to poor families.
Unit 4: Face-to-face skills

The youth worker must adhere to these basic principles of working with individuals:

**Non-judgemental** — do not communicate any judgement about the individual as a person, but point out that the misguided behaviour is unethical or illegal and may have negative consequences for the young person.

**Non-directive** — do not direct or command young people to take a particular course of action.

How to talk to young people: The basic framework for conversation with young people may depend on culture. Some points to consider when talking to young people are:

- Take care not to make it an interrogation
- Don’t take refuge in safe or irrelevant topics
- Don’t reduce conversations to your own personal issues, so set priorities on your conversations.

Working with groups: A group is a collection of people coming together to interact to achieve a common goal. The stages of group development:

- **Forming stage** — where group comes together and members get to know each other
- **Storming stage** — where roles and processes are disputed and leadership contested
- **Norming stage** — where members define behaviour and establish routines
- **Performing stage** — where the groups begin to achieve its goals
- **Mourning stage** — where the group comes to an end

Effective groups: are groups that achieve its goals, maintain itself internally and change to improve its effectiveness.
Module 3: Principles and Practice of Youth Development Work

Unit 5: Social change or social action
Social change is about the arrangement and reorder in the processes and structure of the society. Social change occurs at three levels:

a. **Policy change:** where the youth development worker plays an active role in policy changes by becoming involved in the social planning process. Example, contribute or advocate that the National Service Personnel must be identified in the workforce by giving them uniforms, and their service must be extended to two years due to job unavailability.

b. **Social relations:** is the way of influencing social change by developing a network of relationships among groups of people in order to strengthen the role of the group in local community life. Example is to setup life coach organisation to teach people how to build and keep relationships in marriages, families, businesses, etc.

c. **Political change:** involves protests, pressure groups and community politics. Support must be sought from political groups with presentation of requests that must be aligned towards the ideology of the political party.

Paulo Freire and Social change

Freire’s ideas:
- Oppression is the basis of most people’s lives
- Education or literacy is the first tool the third-world needs
- All education is political
- Dialogue can be used to get to the heart of the oppressed.

Implications: The youth development worker must be aware of their own unconscious capacity to oppress young people by the way we relate to them.

Role of the youth worker or educator, is to raise consciousness of young people so they can:
- investigate their situation (investigation)
- organise the information into themes (thematisation)
- work out limits to resolve the situation (problematisation)
- take action to change the situation (praxis)

The youth worker must apply Paulo Freir’s 3 methods of working with young people:
  a) **Listening:** to young people and learn about their culture and values.
  b) **Dialogue:** with young people to share their experiences through stories
  c) **Action:** to help young people to act on their decisions and reflect on their actions.