

Press release: The Earl and Countess of Wessex met Sri Lankan volunteers making a difference in their communities

Kushil Gunasekera receiving his Commonwealth Point of Light Award from His Royal Highness The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex

Their Royal Highnesses spent time with those honoured by the Commonwealth Points of Light award, the Queen's Young Leaders Programme and the Commonwealth Young Person of the Year Award.

In conjunction with the UK hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London this April under the theme 'a Common Future for All', Her Majesty The Queen, as Head of the Commonwealth, is recognising individuals from across the 52 members of the Commonwealth who have made a difference in their communities and beyond.

Kushil Gunasekera was named the 3rd Commonwealth Point of Light in honour of his exceptional voluntary service through the Foundation of Goodness. The Earl and Countess heard of his selfless work providing rural communities across Sri Lanka with access to education and training.

CHOGM 2018 will recognise the importance of building a revitalised Commonwealth that delivers for the citizens of all member states. With 60% of the Commonwealth's population under 30, it is particularly important that the Commonwealth addresses the challenges faced by young people and answers their ambitions for a better life.

In line with this ambition, The Queen's Young Leaders Programme celebrates exceptional young people from across the Commonwealth. Thejitha Edirisinghe, Senel Wanniarachchi, Rakitha Malewana and Bhagya Wijayawardane (four of the six young Sri Lankans who have been recognised in this way) spoke to the Royal Couple of what they have done to make a lasting difference in their communities.

Krystle Reid, Commonwealth Young Person of the Year, explained how her work has helped disabled young people secure employment and become self-sufficient.