



COMMONWEALTH
SCHOLARSHIPS

NEWS

Promoting learning, development and co-operation

Issue 11
January 2010

Common ground, different shores: Commonwealth Scholarships set to expand



COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS GO GLOBAL! · COUNTRY PROFILE – SINGAPORE · NEWS ROUND-UP
SCHOLARS' NEWS · ALUMNI IN ACTION · NETWORKS AND EVENTS

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Commonwealth Scholarships News

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This issue of *Commonwealth Scholarships News* focuses on new destinations for Commonwealth Scholarships. The broadening of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), to embrace more south-south collaboration and attract the best international talent to newly-emerging centres of higher education, is a trend that I very much support.

Although not a Commonwealth Scholar myself, I benefited from scholarships at every stage of my own education. Scholarships transformed my life. They opened my eyes to a wider and more exciting world – intellectual as well as geographical – and made possible my own career in the UK diplomatic service. During that career, I had the privilege to live and work on four continents and saw at first hand how education is the key to development and the quality of life – regardless of country or culture. That awareness led me to my present role as a Commonwealth Scholarship Commissioner. Naturally, my principal focus, and that of my colleagues on the UK Commission, is on helping Commonwealth students study at UK universities and UK students study in other Commonwealth countries. Some of the UK's outward Scholars are profiled in this edition, on page 9.

But we are all very conscious that the UK effort is but part of the wider CSFP, under which many other Commonwealth countries also offer awards. This global reach is one of the factors that make Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships unique and so prestigious. We have been glad to offer support and encouragement to other countries and to the Commonwealth Secretariat in their efforts to develop further this dimension of the scheme.

The endowment fund set up to mark the 50th anniversary of the CSFP has already attracted over £1.7 million in donations and pledges, and the first awards are expected to be made in late 2010. The fund is aimed exclusively at encouraging awards in low and middle income Commonwealth countries and it means that some countries will be able to host Commonwealth Scholars for the first time. You will see from pages 6-7 that the anniversary has also led to Botswana, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago offering Scholarships. There is a real prospect that 15 countries will host awards in 2011 – the highest ever figure in a single year.

I am sure that this would be welcome news to the far-sighted women and men who set up the CSFP in 1959. The many success stories that can be found in the *Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1959-2009* (www.cscuk.org.uk/alumni/directory.asp) are testimony to the success of their original vision. But the more countries and institutions that are committed to the CSFP and feel that they have a direct interest in its success, the greater confidence we can all have that Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships will continue to grow and prosper over the next 50 years.

Sir Brian Donnelly

Deputy Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK
Former UK High Commissioner to Zimbabwe

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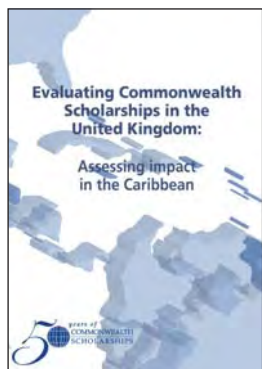


Sir Brian Donnelly,
Deputy Chair of the Commonwealth
Scholarship Commission in the UK

NEWS ROUND-UP

REPORT SHOWS IMPACT OF CARIBBEAN ALUMNI

Evaluating Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom: Assessing impact in the Caribbean, the latest report of the CSC Evaluation and Monitoring Programme, was launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November 2009.



The report looks at the impact of Caribbean alumni on the region. 75% of those surveyed have returned to work in their home countries, with a further 12% working in other Caribbean countries. 99% gained knowledge and skills through their

Scholarship or Fellowship, and 95% reported that they use these in their employment. Examples include micro-financing to encourage entrepreneurship across the Caribbean, education on climate change in Trinidad and Tobago, and establishing a DNA database in Jamaica. The report is available online at www.cscuk.org.uk/docs/Assessing_impact_Caribbean.pdf

FRIENDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Friends of the Commonwealth is for those individuals around the Commonwealth who want to do more for their communities. It brings individuals together and enables them to make a real difference. Friends has over 2,200 individual members and chapters in three Commonwealth countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, and the UK. It has helped support a number of projects, including a women's livelihoods project in Zanzibar and a hospital in St Lucia, as well as helping disadvantaged children around the Commonwealth.

Membership is free and open to everyone. By joining Friends, you will receive regular e-newsletters, opportunities to network and share ideas, and also the chance to take part in events and to 'give something back' to communities around the Commonwealth. For more information, visit www.commonwealthfoundation.com/friends

ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH STUDIES

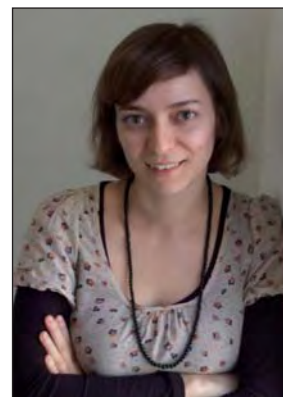
Occasional conferences on Commonwealth themes, involving academics, officials, media and public figures, have been held for many years under the leadership of Professor Tom Symons of Trent University, Canada. Exploratory discussions have been taking place to see whether this informal

Association of Commonwealth Studies could be linked with the Commonwealth Scholars alumni association.

The idea is that a biennial conference could be an attractive means of stimulating former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows to participate, both as participants and presenters, and through distributed publication of papers and outcomes, as well as providing alumni with a link to a wider network of Commonwealth aficionados.

The Commonwealth Foundation has shown interest in supporting this venture, and Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, is keen to be a venue for UK gatherings. *The Round Table* would publish a special issue of conference proceedings, and the Royal Commonwealth Society is also taking part in discussions. Comments and suggestions at this formative stage would be welcomed by Dr John Kirkland at john.kirkland@cscuk.org.uk

NEW AWARDS ADMINISTRATOR



Ana Pereira, new Awards Administrator

We are delighted to welcome Ana Pereira as Awards Administrator at the CSC's secretariat. Ana started in October 2009, having previously been Team Assistant, and she recently completed an MA in Russian Studies at University College London.

AUT OFFERS SCHOLARSHIP

Erin Hill from Canada will be the first Commonwealth Scholar to be hosted by the Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand, from February 2010. Erin will be undertaking doctoral research on the 'quality of life'. Canadian citizens are currently eligible for Commonwealth Scholarships in India, New Zealand and the UK.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

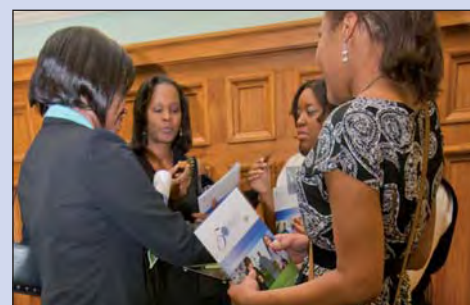
A reception celebrating the 50th anniversary of Commonwealth Scholarships was held on 4 September 2009 at Parliament Buildings in Wellington, New Zealand, hosted by the Speaker, Hon Dr Lockwood Smith (a former Commonwealth Scholar) in association with NZVCC. More than 150 guests attended, including Commonwealth Scholars, CSFP alumni, Commonwealth diplomatic representatives, staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and NZAID, as well as representatives from universities and scholarship organisations. A special anniversary publication was launched at the reception – it is available online at www.nzvcc.ac.nz/50Commonwealth

A CSFP 50th anniversary reception was held at the National University of Singapore (NUS) on 2 October 2009. The event was attended by His Royal Highness, Prince Andrew, together with around 100 CSFP alumni, representatives and friends, who gathered at NUS to celebrate the CSFP's longstanding tradition of recognising and



promoting the highest level of intellectual development (see page 11 for more details).

On 29 October 2009, a reception marking the 50th anniversary of the CSFP was held at Fairmont Château Laurier Hotel in Ottawa, Canada. The event was co-hosted by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT), which funds Canadian Commonwealth Scholarships, and the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) which currently administers them. Speeches were given by the celebration's Patron, The Rt Hon Madam Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, and by two alumni, Mark Carney (Governor of the Bank of Canada) and Dr Basil Alexander (Senior Lecturer at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka)



Commonwealth Scholars at the New Zealand anniversary reception

SCHOLARS' NEWS

Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows represent a diverse community, studying a wide range of subjects in various ways. What they all have in common, however, is their desire to make a positive impact on their home countries and beyond.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN SOUTH AFRICA



Kevin Mearns interviewing a community member in Lesotho

South African Commonwealth Scholar Kevin Mearns is currently working towards a PhD at the University of Portsmouth, focusing on the impact of sustainability on nature-based tourism, which is 'often vulnerable, and the conservation of the resource itself is dependent on the wise development and implementation of the tourism initiative. Tourism can be seen as the key to the survival of protected areas, but may, however, be the very factor that threatens the protected area. It is therefore of fundamental importance that tourism activities in and around pristine natural areas be managed in a sustainable way'.

In an attempt both to set a baseline for future investigations and to establish its status quo, Kevin conducted an investigation into the sustainability of community-based ecotourism in Southern Africa, using a number of environmental, economic and social indicators. The findings were presented at three academic conferences this year which, aside from 'eliciting valuable feedback and suggestions for the research', also proved to be 'very valuable networking and scholarly activities which assisted in guiding the research. An article has also just appeared on some of the preliminary findings of the research. My time in the UK has been really productive and has been a wonderful learning experience that I intend to build on in the future, upon my return to South Africa and in my career as an academic and researcher.'

TAXATION, GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE

During his time as a DPhil student at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, Wilson Prichard, Commonwealth Anniversary Scholar from Canada, has had many

opportunities to work directly with international organisations and civil society to begin to transform research into practice. His research deals with the 'centrality of taxation to the emergence of responsive and accountable governance', and fieldwork carried out in Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia has allowed him to develop a rich understanding of the practical context of taxation in these countries and to build an important network of professional contacts.

'While the relative success of my research alone has been hugely rewarding, I have also had opportunities to link my research into networks of policy advocacy and practice. I initially partnered with a civil society consortium in Ghana to publish the Tax Justice in Ghana Report, which provides the foundation for public advocacy on questions of equity, transparency and engagement around tax issues. Since then, I have continued to act as a primary resource person for a variety of civil society



Wilson Prichard,
Commonwealth Scholar from Canada

initiatives in the UK and across Africa, primarily with the Tax Justice Network-Africa, Christian Aid, ISODEC, Panos and ActionAid. I was also able to publish an initial working paper through IDS, and additional papers are on the way, along with hopes for a book in the not-too-distant future.'

Wilson's work has opened doors for equally practical collaboration with DFID and the OECD. 'Both have taken an interest in how to make tax issues more central to their aid agendas, and particularly to their efforts to foster public engagement and accountability. In doing so, they have drawn explicitly on my work, while inviting me to make presentations and feed into their policy processes. Collectively, these experiences have dramatically enriched my experience, for which I am deeply grateful, and have, I hope, begun to contribute to the broader developmental objectives of the Commonwealth Scholarship scheme.'

JOINT DENTAL RESEARCH IN INDIA AND THE UK

Dr Neeraj Gugnani, Commonwealth Scholar from India, is currently researching diagnostic tools for



Dr Neeraj Gugnani,
Commonwealth Scholar from India

novel dental caries at the University of Manchester. 'It was indeed a very enriching experience to be trained at one of the premier institutions in the UK. During my Scholarship, I was trained in the latest caries diagnostic methodology, which helps to detect dental decay in its early stages, and in turn helps us to motivate patients to take appropriate steps toward remineralisation. Such advanced technological tools are not usually available in developing countries, and the fact that now I am not only trained to use them, but am also doing so among my home population, is a source of real satisfaction.'

'I am working on two joint clinical projects between the Dental Health Unit at the University of Manchester and my home institution, DAV Centenary Dental College. Both projects involve clinical fieldwork at my home institution, and this kind of joint venture truly upholds the spirit of Commonwealth Scholarships, by ensuring that the home population benefits.' Dr Gugnani adds that 'it was a moment of extreme happiness when my supervisor, Prof Roger Ellwood, visited my dental school and participated in the joint clinical study. Prof Ellwood's visit was an encouraging experience, and I was able to work under his direct supervision and benefit from his direct participation. I feel that this continued collaboration has helped to develop my perspective on caries research, and that my present research will help us understand better ways to detect caries in their incipient stages.'

REGIONAL NETWORK FOR DISTANCE LEARNING SCHOLARS IN EAST AFRICA

When Kenyans Nelson Ndegwa Gichora and Mtakai Ngara both received Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships in 2007 to study MSc Bioinformatics at the University of Manchester, they saw an opportunity to exchange knowledge at a regional level. Nelson explains that 'a total of eight

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

David Picking is a Commonwealth Scholar from the UK, and is currently undertaking doctoral research into Jamaican medicinal herbs at the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica.



Nelson Gichora (left) with fellow members of the **Regional Student Group of Eastern Africa**

students from East Africa were awarded Commonwealth Scholarships for the course that year, and this prompted us to establish a network. We all joined the Regional Student Group of Africa (an affiliate of the International Society for Computational Biology Student Council) and actively participated in its various activities, eventually taking up leadership positions. Due to rapid growth in its membership across the continent, it was split into five groups and we were left with the Regional Student Group of Eastern Africa.'

This group then established an active mailing list and a Facebook group to facilitate networking between members, so that they could share ideas on how to tackle various bioinformatics problems, as well as study and job opportunities. 'We have so far organised six workshops on bioinformatics and, in collaboration with other organisations, hosted the first African Virtual Conference on Bioinformatics in 2009, bringing together over 100 students from various countries in Africa and scientists from Africa and abroad. The virtual conference was a convenient event, as we were able cut down on the huge sums of money required to organise conferences, not to mention the travel fellowships that lock out many participants from Africa.' The success of the virtual conference resulted in a report in the European Molecular Biology Network newsletter and an article in the *PLoS Computational Biology* journal. 'As a consequence of these activities, interest in the field amongst our members has increased and, to complement these, we are inviting partnership and collaboration between our student group and any organisation or individual who might want to offer our members internship or study opportunities or virtual projects in bioinformatics.'

The primary aim of my research is to shortlist and screen a number of commonly-used Jamaican medicinal plants for chemoprevention and anticancer properties through the modulation of human cytochrome P450 enzymes. Initially, this has involved completing a broad representative survey of the Jamaican population to identify contemporary medicinal plant use and to shortlist ten key medicinal plants. These plants are now being screened as crude extracts for inhibition of cytochrome P450 enzymes, in particular the enzymes known to be involved in carcinogenesis. In addition, I am screening for inhibition of key drug metabolizing enzymes, an area of research that increases the understanding of potential herb drug interactions.

To date, I have completed the survey, with over 400 household interviews in both rural and urban communities, shortlisted ten key plants, and completed nearly 50% of the initial P450 screening.

The survey has been both a challenging and extremely rewarding experience. As a visitor to Jamaica, I have been shown incredible warmth and hospitality by the people I have worked with and interviewed. In a number of cases, we have undertaken interviews with people living in very challenging circumstances, both in inner city Kingston communities, such as Rose Town, and rural communities, such as Flagstaff in St James and Dallas in St Andrew.

Rose Town is one of the poorest communities in Kingston and until very recently suffered from brutal inter-community and gang violence. The area is currently in the planning stages for a development project with the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment. Flagstaff is located within an area known as the Cockpit Country, one of the most biodiverse areas in the world and a proposed World Heritage Site; it also boasts a rich Maroon history and saw the recent launch of an exciting new visitor centre and ecotourist trail.

Undertaking research in a developing country can and does present a number of practical challenges. I was pre-warned that I would need to plan ahead and be willing to take a flexible approach to managing my

project goals and timelines. When equipment breaks down and replacement parts and chemicals need ordering, it can take weeks or even months rather than days for orders to arrive and clear customs. Things certainly can take a lot longer, but part of the

learning for me has and continues to be about being adaptable, not becoming too frustrated, and finding alternative and often creative solutions.

My return to the UK is just over a year away, but I'm already starting to think about ways to incorporate my experiences here in Jamaica into practical

opportunities on my return. Jamaica has an almost untapped wealth of plant-based medicines and high levels of rural unemployment. The government is pushing to increase agricultural output, currently at just 5% of GDP. There are significant export opportunities for Jamaican medicinals into both the European and American markets, which would contribute significantly to the development of alternative livelihoods. Future collaborations with both the Natural Products Institute and the Medicinal Plant Research Unit at the university will, I am sure, open up some very interesting opportunities.

On a final note, I should say that the experience for my family in coming to Jamaica has been immeasurable. Relocating here has not been without its challenges, such as finding schools for both my children, a job for my wife and a safe place to live. But the cultural experience and the growth that comes with meeting these challenges has greatly enriched all our lives. And not least of which my 13-year old daughter gets to be coached in track and field by the uncle of the fastest man in the world!



The survey team pressing plant samples in Dallas, Jamaica



David Picking (right) completing a questionnaire in Dallas, Jamaica

THE WORLD'S MOST *INTERNATIONAL* SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME?

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS GO GLOBAL!

Dr John Kirkland on plans for expansion of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

What makes a Commonwealth Scholarship scheme? In recent years, the emphasis has been on providing opportunities for students from throughout the Commonwealth to study in a relatively small number of countries with advanced higher education systems. However, the founders of the scheme had a very different vision 50 years ago.

Unlike most scholarship schemes, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) was intended to provide a genuine sharing of educational opportunities between developed and developing countries. Of course, this involved students from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific studying in the UK, Canada and New Zealand. But it also involved UK students studying in Africa and Asia – not to mention Africans studying in Asia and Asians studying in the Pacific.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the model worked well. The UK was always the biggest contributor of Scholarships – as it promised from the outset – but it was far from the only one. In fact, no less than 24 countries have hosted Commonwealth Scholarships at some stage. UK students were also beneficiaries of the scheme, studying in locations as varied as Ghana, India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. Most returned to distinctively international careers, in diplomacy, development or academia.

Some even stayed and made the development of their host countries a lifetime's vocation. Above all, Commonwealth Scholarships were a perfect example of a sharing process in which all countries had something to contribute, and all had something to gain.

Countries such as India, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have preserved this tradition. However, the 1980s and 1990s saw a decline in many countries' higher education provision. Others, such as Hong Kong and Nigeria, left or were temporarily suspended from the Commonwealth. Although the impact of Commonwealth Scholarships was as high as ever, the number of countries offering them declined.

In recent years, the Commonwealth-wide nature of the Plan has been restored. Countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Botswana, Ghana, Malaysia and South Africa have resumed offering Commonwealth Scholarships in recent years. The first ever CSFP endowment fund (see right) will complete this process. By 2011, there should be more countries offering Commonwealth Scholarships than ever before.

As a taster of what we can expect, here are some examples of countries that are boosting their commitment to the CSFP.

NIGERIA

The CSFP is about Fellowships, as well as Scholarships. Thanks to a donation from the Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust, the CSFP endowment fund will establish a new Commonwealth Fellowship for a visiting academic at the University of Ibadan.

Historically the most prestigious university in Nigeria, Ibadan is seeking to re-establish its international reputation, and particularly its commitment to postgraduate work. Vice-Chancellor Prof Olufemi Bamiro, himself a former Commonwealth Scholar to Canada, views the new Fellowship as an important element of this strategy. Chair of the Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust, Derek Reeves, said that the Fellowship is part of their work to make a permanent and noticeable impact on Nigerian education.

KENYA

Kenya was one of the first donors to the CSFP endowment fund, having never hosted Commonwealth Scholarships in the past. It is hoped that the first awards will be announced there in early 2010.

Announcing his country's support to Commonwealth education ministers at their conference in June, Assistant Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology Dr Kilemi Mwiria noted that Kenya had received almost 1,000 Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships over the 50-year history of the CSFP, and that it was keen to demonstrate areas of expertise in its universities that could attract international students. Permanent Secretary Professor Crispus Kiamba, formerly a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Reading, UK and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, will also serve on the management committee of the endowment fund.

SINGAPORE

Singapore will offer its first Commonwealth Scholarships in 2010, following an announcement made by the President of the National University of Singapore (NUS), Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, in October 2009. NUS will offer two Commonwealth



University of Nairobi, Kenya

CSFP endowment fund: an update

Since the last issue of *Commonwealth Scholarships News*, the CSFP endowment fund has made great progress. To add to commitments already made by governments and other organisations before and at June's Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, we have received 70 individual donations, including 62 from alumni. The Government of Mauritius has also contributed £25,000 – all of which means that we have raised nearly £1.75 million. More information, including details of how to donate, is available at www.csfp-online.org/fund.html

DONORS

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Sir George Bain	Richard Ehlers
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Scholarships each year for doctoral study; the first two will be four-year awards in an area of science and technology, open to applicants from any Commonwealth country. The Scholarships fit in with NUS's strategy to become a leading global institution, having already reached the top 30 in the Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings 2009.

Professor Tan is himself an alumnus – he held a Commonwealth Fellowship at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, UK – as are several other senior staff at the university.

MAURITIUS

Another donor to the new CSFP endowment fund, the Government of Mauritius regards Commonwealth Scholarships as a means of attracting international talent. It is likely that at least one Scholarship at the University of Mauritius will form part of the first batch of awards supported by the fund. Former Commonwealth Scholars in Mauritius include the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Dr Rajesh Jeetah, and the Minister of Industry, Science and Research, Dharam Gokhool.

SOUTH PACIFIC

Discussions are taking place with the University of the South Pacific (USP), which covers 12 Pacific island countries, about hosting the first ever Commonwealth Scholarship in the region. The new Scholarship would be jointly funded by the CSFP endowment fund and the university itself, which would waive tuition fees and make some contribution to living costs. USP Vice-Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra was himself a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of British Columbia, Canada.

And this could be just the start! As the endowment fund continues to grow, opportunities for partnership will develop with an even wider range of countries. Over the next two years, Commonwealth Scholarships are on course to become one of the most international, as well as one of the most prestigious, scholarship schemes in the world.



University of the South Pacific, Fiji

ALUMNI IN ACTION

Alumni News

ALUMNUS WINS NOBEL PRIZE



Professor Elizabeth Blackburn,
Commonwealth Scholar from Australia and 2009 Nobel Prize winner

Professor Elizabeth Blackburn (Commonwealth Scholar from Australia, PhD Molecular Biology, University of Cambridge, 1973-1974) has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2009.

Elizabeth, currently professor of biology and physiology at the University of California, San Francisco, shares the award with Carol W Greider, of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and Jack W Szostak, of Harvard Medical School. The trio won the Prize for their discovery of an enzyme that plays a key role in normal cell function, as well as in cell aging and most cancers.

The enzyme, called telomerase, produces tiny units of DNA that seal off the ends of chromosomes, which contain the body's genes. These DNA units – named telomeres – protect the integrity of the genes and maintain chromosomal stability and accurate cell division. Their work has inspired research into the possibility that telomerase could be reactivated to treat such age-related diseases as blindness, cardiovascular disease and neurodegenerative diseases, and deactivated to treat cancer.

STRENGTHENING TEACHING CAPACITY

Dr Catherine Ade (Commonwealth Fellow, Faculty of Law, Sheffield University, 2004) established a private teacher training college in Kumba, Cameroon, which celebrated its tenth anniversary in June 2009. The college carries out valuable work in training teachers at nursery, primary and lower secondary levels of education, with little state funding for either the college or its students. Catherine would welcome any donations, such as books, instructional materials, computers, or multimedia projectors. More detailed information on materials needed and how to donate are available at www.cscuk.org.uk/alumni/alumni_general.asp

ALUMNI AWARDED AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Dr Sewandi Jayakody (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD

Conservation Biology, University of Aberdeen, 2002-2005) was awarded the 2009 Endeavour Executive Award from the Government of Australia, and is currently conducting postdoctoral research on invasive species management at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Australia. Professor Mangala De Zoysa (Commonwealth Fellow, School of Agricultural and Forest Science, Bangor University, 2006) will be a 2010 recipient of the award.

E-WASTE UNESCO GRANT

Simon Maina Karume (Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholar, MSc Computer Based Information Systems, University of Sunderland, 2004-2007) has received a KES 2 million grant from UNESCO for an e-waste management policy for Kenya. The project will boost the capacity of e-waste handlers in Kenya through online and offline training and will foster collaborative learning among students through information exchange. A web-based bulletin board will educate the general public about the effects and management of e-waste.

ALUMNUS WINS NATIONAL RESEARCH GRANT



Professor Samina Bano, *Commonwealth Scholar from Pakistan*

Professor Samina Bano (Commonwealth Fellow, School of Health Sciences, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, 2008) has been awarded a grant of PKR 2.67 million by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, under the National Research Programme for Universities. Samina's two-year project will look at pharmacological interventions in alcohol dependence and subsequent withdrawal syndrome in rats.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Books recently published by alumni include *On the Benches of the Eastern Caribbean*, by Justice Albert N J Matthew (Commonwealth Scholar, LL.M, London School of Economic and Political Science, 1966-1967); *Salman Rushdie*, by Professor D C R A Goonetilleke (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD English Literature, Lancaster University, 1966-1969); and *A Textbook on Criminology and Penology*, by Dr Catherine Ade (Commonwealth Fellow, Faculty of Law, Sheffield University, 2004).

Alumni events

COMMISSIONER HOSTS DINNER IN ST LUCIA

Commonwealth Scholarship Commissioner Kathy Mansfield hosted an informal dinner for a small group of alumni in Rodney Bay, St Lucia on 27 October 2009.

In brief

AWARDS AND CAREER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Professor Leslie Holborow (Commonwealth Scholar, BPhil Philosophy, University of Oxford, 1963-1965) has been awarded the Companion of the Queen's Service Order in the New Zealand Queen's Birthday Honours List in June 2009.

Professor Sumaiya Khair (Commonwealth Fellow, School of Law, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2007) has been appointed Head of the Department of Law at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Dr Pratap K Mohanty (Commonwealth Fellow, Centre for Global Atmospheric Modelling, University of Reading, 2006) has been appointed Head of the Department of Marine Sciences at Berhampur University, India.

Dr Shafikuddin Mollah (Commonwealth Fellow, School of Electrical and Physical Sciences, University of Surrey, 2007) has been appointed as a Professor in physics at Aligarh Muslim University, India.

Dr Poonam Piplani (Commonwealth Fellow, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Strathclyde, 2006) received a travel award from the Department of Science and Technology, India, to give an invited talk at BIT's 7th Annual Congress of International Drug Discovery Science and Technology in Shanghai, China, in October 2009.

Allan Seckel (Commonwealth Scholar, LL.M, University of Cambridge, 1985-1986) has been appointed Deputy Minister to the Premier, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Public Service of British Columbia, Canada.

Professor Narpinder Singh (Commonwealth Fellow, Institute of Food Research, John Innes Centre, Norwich, 1995) has been elected a Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy.

Professor Alexandra Walsham (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD History, University of Cambridge, 1990-1993) has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy and has been appointed Chair of Modern History at the University of Cambridge, UK.

ALUMNI PROFILE

This issue, we focus on UK alumni and the often life-changing impact of holding a Commonwealth Scholarship in another Commonwealth country.

Dr Colin Pritchard was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to study for a PhD in Chemical Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi from 1964-1967. During his previous degree at the University of Cambridge, Colin had corresponded with Professor Frank Rumford, who was establishing a department at the newly-founded IIT Delhi and encouraged Colin to join him.



Dr Colin Pritchard, former Commonwealth Scholar to India

Colin relished the unique academic and mountaineering opportunities, and remembers his first Himalayan ascent prior to an eventful end to his PhD. 'The first draft of my thesis "disappeared" and had to be reconstructed in a nail-biting finish to my three years' hard labour.' Following the award of his PhD, Colin has returned to India frequently 'for research collaboration, mountain climbing, cultural visits and most of all to cement friendships'. After working in both industry and academia, Colin is now a Senior Research Fellow steering a DFID-funded research consortium on bioenergy.

Professor Robin Cohen was a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, studying for a PhD in Politics from 1967-1970. Robin and his wife arrived in Nigeria just as civil war broke out: 'It was tough to live in Ibadan at that time, though...we felt, by comparison, relatively privileged'. As political events depleted staffing in the department, Robin found himself both studying for his PhD and teaching five courses, an experience which he credits with providing him with the confidence necessary for his future career.

Robin's eventful doctorate, during which his first child was born, has had a profound effect. 'We grew up, learnt how to take responsibility and remained warm friends with many students and staff on the Ibadan campus. The Commonwealth is not only a prestigious award; it can lead to lots of adventures.'

Robin is currently Professor of Development Studies and Director of the International Migration Institute at the University of Oxford.

Janet Ridge held a Commonwealth Scholarship to study a Master's of Environmental Studies (MEnvSt) at the University of Adelaide, Australia, from 1980-1981. She values the impact that her award has had on her career. 'Professionally, I had a number of articles published in



Janet Ridge, former Commonwealth Scholar to Australia

Australian journals on the differences in countryside management between the UK and Australia. This opportunity, together with the experience of studying abroad, helped my employment prospects hugely on return to the UK.'

Janet has been Chief Executive of the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity since 1989. 'The variety of subjects covered in my studies was invaluable in enabling me to develop a successful, broad-based organisation, for which I was awarded an MBE in 2006.'

Dr Victoria Edwards was a Commonwealth Scholar to New Zealand, studying MSc Resource Management at the University of Canterbury from 1987-1989. Victoria had been a rural chartered surveyor prior to her Scholarship. Her MSc focused on the public policy and management of natural resources and, as the university was involved in advising on new legislation, the course attracted many people who are now leading environmental managers.

The course had an enormous impact on Victoria, who subsequently began an academic career at the University of Portsmouth; she is currently Principal Lecturer in Land Management. She was appointed to the Countryside Agency board in 1998, made a GB Forestry Commissioner in 1999, and awarded an OBE for services to the environment in 2004. Victoria says that she is 'forever indebted to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for the numerous opportunities opened up by my Scholarship'.

Dr Deborah Sutton held a Commonwealth Scholarship to study for a PhD in History at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), India, from 1996-2001. She says that, 'Looking back, from a post in a British university, I think I barely appreciated the intellectual vibrancy which I encountered at JNU. As an academic, intellectual and social environment, it remains, in my experience, unparalleled.'

She particularly values the university fostering her critical appreciation of the colonial archive, with students expected to engage carefully and expansively with records of the colonial state. 'I loved, and miss terribly, the rhythm of life on campus, from chai in the morning, through the historian's pilgrimage on the 615 bus to the National Archives of India on Janpath.' Deborah was appointed as a Lecturer in History at Lancaster University in 2002.

Emma Broadbent was a Commonwealth Scholar to Ghana, where she studied MA Religious Studies at the University of the Cape Coast from 2006-2007. Her research focused upon the relationship between religion and politics on the African continent. Emma gained many benefits from her Scholarship, such as an appreciation of the similarities and differences between UK and African student life, and an understanding of the links between Ghanaian culture and the values which underpin socioeconomic organisation and the policy process, which have been useful when undertaking subsequent research in Africa.

After working at the Overseas Development Institute, Emma is now a consultant on aid effectiveness and governance in Africa, with a particular emphasis on Anglophone West Africa.



Emma Broadbent (right), during her Commonwealth Scholarship in Ghana

NETWORKS AND EVENTS

For full reports on recent events, visit www.cscuk.org.uk/news/eventreports.asp



The 50 years of Commonwealth Scholarships celebration

50 YEARS OF COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

Around 70 alumni, current Scholars, Commissioners and external guests from a wide range of Commonwealth countries gathered at Cumberland Lodge on 11-13 November 2009 for a celebration of 50 years of Commonwealth Scholarships.

The event explored themes arising out of the Department for International Development (DFID)'s recent White Paper on *Eliminating World Poverty: Building our Common Future*, and discussed how scholarships can best advance international relations, meet development objectives, and continue to attract candidates of the highest academic standard in the future.

David Hallam, Head of the United Nations, Conflict and Humanitarian Division at DFID, provided the keynote speech on the first evening, emphasising the importance of gender equality and of working with fragile states to the UK's contribution to international development. He went on to praise the work of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission over the past 50 years, and the role it would have in facing future global challenges.

Many of these themes were revisited in subsequent discussion groups on the second day, drawing connections between the work of the CSC and the priorities outlined in the White Paper. Sessions included 'economic recovery and greener growth', 'sustaining our common future', and 'building peaceful states and societies'. Further sessions developed these themes within the context of today's global economy, with Commissioners and alumni chairing discussion groups on 'acting together through the international system', 'keeping our promises in a downturn', and 'ensuring value for money'.

Following sessions looked more specifically at the challenges facing international scholarships – notably, 'ensuring access', 'finding the best candidates' and 'evaluating our effectiveness'.

The next session explored the 'Commonwealth Dimension', and discussed the important and unique role of the Commonwealth in 'soft diplomacy'. Following this, a panel of alumni and current Scholars spoke of their experiences of receiving an award, and its impact on their lives and careers.

However, the event was primarily a celebration, and Professor Myles Wickstead, former UK Ambassador to Ethiopia, Head of the Secretariat to the Commission for Africa, and coordinator of the 1997 DFID White Paper, commended the achievements of Commonwealth Scholarships in a keynote speech at the anniversary dinner on the second evening.

The final sessions on the third day considered the future of and alternative perspectives on development. A stimulating discussion highlighted how broad the field of development can be, and the role that international scholarships can play within it.

Dr John Kirkland, Executive Secretary of the CSC, and Professor Tim Unwin, Chair of the CSC, concluded the conference by discussing the development of the CSC community, and ways we can move forward. It can be hard to condense a conference that encompassed so many themes, ideas and discussions into a few key outcomes. However, it became clear how important strong branding and working with alumni is to the next 50 years of Commonwealth Scholarships, as is building upon the important work evaluating the high impact of our awards – and that the role that Commonwealth Scholarships have had for 50 years in the Commonwealth and in development really is something to celebrate.



Scholars in a discussion session at the 2009 Welcome Day for new Scholars and Fellows. The event was held at Central Hall Westminster, and speakers included Prof Tim Unwin (Chair of the CSC), Kamalesh Sharma (Commonwealth Secretary-General) and Dr Danny Sriskandarajah (Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society). The Welcome Day was followed by an evening reception at Lancaster House.

COUNTRY PROFILE – SINGAPORE



AWARDS OFFERED

Singapore is one of the newest hosts of Commonwealth Scholarships. At the CSFP 50th anniversary reception held in October 2009, it was announced that two Commonwealth Scholarships would be hosted at the National University of Singapore (NUS) from 2010 (see pages 6-7 for further information). This is a welcome addition to the CSFP community of institutions, and it is hoped that numbers will expand further in the future.

Singapore will certainly be a popular destination. NUS is a leading international university, and offers a global approach to education and research with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. It has 14 faculties and schools across three campus locations in Singapore – Kent Ridge, Bukit Timah and Outram – providing a broad-based curriculum underscored by multidisciplinary courses and cross-faculty collaboration. NUS promotes programmes that provide students with both opportunities and challenges, and facilitates student exchanges, entrepreneurial internships at NUS Overseas Colleges, and double/joint degree programmes with some of the world's top universities.

NUS provides a rich cultural environment, having hosted 30,000 students from 100 countries. NUS is also actively involved in international academic and research networks, such as the Association of Pacific Rim Universities and International Alliance of Research Universities. This global networking further emphasises NUS's international presence.

Higher education is expanding fast in Singapore, with university provision from both the private and public sector. SIM University is the country's first and only privately-funded university, focusing on the learning needs of working professionals and adult learners. Other tertiary institutions include Nanyang University, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University, and the Singapore University of Technology and Design.

ALUMNI

Singapore has a long and distinguished history of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows. 369 Singaporean nationals have held Commonwealth Scholarships over the past 50 years, travelling to Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand and the UK.

On their return to Singapore, these alumni have reached positions of prominence across a range of sectors. Professor Walter Woon, currently Attorney-General of Singapore, spoke at the anniversary reception in October, describing his own Commonwealth Scholarship at the University of Cambridge as a significant period in his life. Other prominent alumni in public service include Dr Natatajan Varaprasad, Chief Executive of the National Library Board; Abdullah Tarmugi, Speaker of Parliament; and Eddie Teo Chan Seng, Chair of the Public Services Commission.

Commonwealth Scholars have also been particularly prominent in expanding Singapore's higher education provision. Professor Cham Tao Soon was Founding President of Nanyang Technological University, and is currently Chair of the Board of Trustees of SIM University. Professor Pang Yang Hoong is Vice Provost (Undergraduate) and Dean of Accountancy at the Singapore Management University.

At NUS, Commonwealth Scholars are well represented across senior management, from the President,

Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, down. Professor Tan was a Commonwealth Fellow at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, in 1989. Other alumni include Professor Lily Kong, Vice President (University and Global Relations); Professor Seeram Ramakrishna, Vice President (Research Strategy); Professor Tan Thiam Soon, Vice Provost (Education); Professor Tan Tai Yong, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; and Professor Andrew Wee, Dean of the Faculty of Science.

Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows play important roles in a variety of areas of Singapore life. Satish Appoo is Director, Environmental Health of the National Environment Agency, and Dr Chin Kian Keong is Group Director of the Land Transport Authority. In the diplomatic sphere, Chay Wai Chuen is non-resident High Commissioner to Sri Lanka. In the private sector, Lim Chuan Poh is Chief Executive of Singapore Telecommunications Ltd.

The administration of awards for Singapore citizens to study in the UK has changed in recent years. These are still advertised publicly by the Prime Minister's Office, and are open to citizens in all areas. Reflecting increasing demand, however, there have been experiments in recent years with a system through which final nominations are made by a panel of eminent alumni – the first country in the CSFP to use such a process.

Although a new host country, the quality of Singapore's universities, their desire to reach a global audience, and the very high profile of Singaporean Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows offer huge potential for the country to play an important role in the future development of the CSFP.



Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, President of the National University of Singapore and former Commonwealth Fellow, with **HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York**, at the recent CSFP 50th anniversary reception



The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC) is responsible for managing Britain's contribution to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP).

The CSC supports around 750 awards annually. Awards are funded by the Department for International Development (for developing Commonwealth countries) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Scottish Government in partnership with UK universities (for developed Commonwealth countries). The CSC also nominates UK citizens for scholarships to study in other Commonwealth countries under the CSFP.

The CSC makes available seven types of award:

- Scholarships for PhD research
- Scholarships for Master's study
- Shared Scholarships with UK universities in support of Master's programmes
- Academic Fellowships for staff serving in developing country universities
- Split-site Scholarships for PhD students to spend up to one year in the UK
- Professional Fellowships for mid-career professionals in developing countries
- Distance Learning Scholarships for developing country students to study UK Master's degree courses while living in their own countries

The CSC is a non-departmental public body in its own right, and members are appointed in line with the Code of Practice of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commission's secretariat is provided by the Association of Commonwealth Universities; financial management and welfare support for scholars is provided by the British Council.

The CSFP is an international programme under which member governments offer scholarships and fellowships to citizens of other Commonwealth countries. The Plan was established at the first Commonwealth education conference in 1959 and is reviewed by ministers at their triennial meetings – the only scholarship scheme in the world to receive such high-level recognition.

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