



COMMONWEALTH
SCHOLARSHIPS

NEWS

Promoting learning, development and co-operation

Issue 2
December 2006



Reaching New Communities: A closer look at Distance Learning

REPORT FROM PCF4, JAMAICA • FUNDING BOOST FOR DISTANCE LEARNING • COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS IN THE COMMUNITY
NEWS FROM OUR SCHOLARS AND ALUMNI • ALUMNI IN ACTION • ALUMNI PROFILE • CSC EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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Commonwealth Scholarships News
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Professor Ann Floyd

Distance learning has become a significant strand of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission's activity in the last five years, and is a particular focus of this issue. In 2005, 139 of the 501 scholars who took up awards in 2005 were distance learners. Through our distance learning schemes, scholars have been able to study a range of Masters programmes offered by UK universities whilst living and working in their own countries, and this has opened up opportunities to many people who would have otherwise been unable to come to the UK for full-time study. We are delighted that one of our alumni to have studied in distance learning mode, Edward Bwengye-Kahororo, is contributing to this issue (Alumni Profile, page 9).

Probably the most important characteristic that 'distance learning' courses share is that students can study for most of the time wherever they happen to be. In many cases this means that they can study part-time, and fit their studies around their work and family commitments.

Some courses expect regular attendance for lectures/seminars on most weekends, with private study completed during the week. One course has a requirement to spend a term in the UK when students study full-time. Other courses have no attendance requirement at all, but offer scope for face-to-face tutorials for those who are interested. Likewise there is a huge variety in the technologies used, with some courses relying on print materials, online media, CDs or a combination of these elements in different proportions. E-learning is a useful component in many systems. This illustrates that distance learning can be achieved through many different approaches and technologies.

This is not a mode of study that suits everyone, any more than full-time campus based study does, which is why the Commission has maintained its current awards and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. However, it has one special strength that we can see our scholars taking advantage of, namely its capacity for supported professional development. Our distance learning scholars are nearly all working professionals, studying to improve their skills and apply their knowledge in their workplaces. They experience a constant interaction between their work and their study, and are able to discuss the relevance of their studies to their work with fellow students and tutors as they progress. Thus their professional development is supported by the course in a particularly effective way.

In developing distance learning scholarship schemes the Commission has benefited from the strong history of open/distance learning in the Commonwealth. Many of the world's open universities are in the Commonwealth, and many other universities offer campus based and external programmes. This issue contains an account of the fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum recently held in Jamaica, whose purpose is to celebrate and share that Commonwealth expertise. Distance learning, when done well, bears comparison with any other mode of study, and the Commission is delighted to be offering scholarships in this mode alongside its more established routes.

Professor Ann Floyd, Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Distance Learning Committee

NEWS ROUND-UP

£1.8 MILLION BOOST FOR INNOVATIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

The CSC's distance learning scholarships programme has been boosted by £1.8 million of extra funding that will support up to 200 new scholarships in the fields of education and health. British universities are now being asked to bid for their share of the scholarships, which will all be based in Africa.

Funding for the new awards was announced by Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn, as part of the Government's continued support for education and training initiatives in Africa following last year's G8 summit. It represents a significant expansion of the CSC's distance learning programme. Since it began in 2003 the programme has already supported over 500



Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development

students, accounting for over a third of current CSC award holders. Further information is available from the UK section of the Commission's website at <http://www.csfp-online.org>

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWSHIPS 2007

The Professional Fellowships Scheme is now in its fifth year with a number of the 69 fellows selected this year currently on award in the UK. To date, 259 Fellows have taken up awards from 33 different Commonwealth countries and the Commission is now preparing to advertise the Scheme for its sixth year in 2007. The Scheme provides a valuable opportunity for professionals to spend three months in the UK working with a UK organisation operating in their specialist area in order to update and share their skills and knowledge.

Applications are invited from UK organisations in the public, private or voluntary sectors who would like to host a Professional Fellowship in 2007. The deadline for applications to reach us is 30th April 2007 and results will be announced by mid-June at the latest, for awards to start in September 2007 or January 2008. Further information about the Scheme and how it works is available on our Website at <http://www.csfp-online.org/hostcountries/gb.html>. Guidance notes and an application form will be available on the website from January.

DISTANCE LEARNING WORKSHOP

In September representatives from all 17 of the universities involved in the CSC's distance learning schemes were invited to London for a workshop. The aim of the workshop was to share experiences and ideas on distance learning, and to contribute to the ongoing evaluation of the commission's distance learning programmes.

The workshop focussed on the experience of the UK providers in delivering distance learning courses to CSC funded scholars, and covered the challenges and successes that UK providers have had in terms of the recruitment, retention and monitoring of scholars. The majority of providers agreed that distance learning is a valuable tool in reaching students who would be otherwise unable to access postgraduate study in the UK or elsewhere. They also agreed that distance learning is not always offered the same level of support and prestige that conventional face-to-face teaching receives, and they welcomed the opportunity to meet and debate with fellow professionals working within the distance learning sector.

CSC SECRETARIAT ATTEND BRITISH COUNCIL WELCOME RECEPTIONS



Vandana Upadhyay, Commonwealth Academic Fellow, with the Lord Mayor of Oxford

Receptions for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows were recently held by the British Council in locations all over the UK. The North-West of England reception, held in the Manchester Art Gallery on 19th October 2006, brought together scholars and fellows from Manchester, Lancaster and Liverpool.

The reception for Hampshire and Dorset scholars and fellows took place on 2nd November 2006 at the University of Southampton, and was attended not only by newly arrived scholars and fellows but also by current scholars and their families.

A reception was held at the Oxford Town Hall on Wednesday 25th October 2006 to welcome scholars who had just commenced their studies at the Universities of Oxford, Oxford Brookes and Reading.

There were two British Council welcome receptions in London, both hosted by International Students House, on 25th and 26th October 2006. Commonwealth scholars mixed with British Council scholars from China, Iran, France and Kazakhstan.

ACADEMIC ADVISERS: RECRUITMENT UPDATE

CSCUK has been recruiting new academic advisers throughout Autumn 2006. Advisers perform a highly valuable role, providing impartial and expert advice which contributes towards the final selection process for many awards in the UK. We are extremely grateful to all those who have recently agreed to join the panel, as well as those who are continuing their tenure in the coming year(s).

Newly Recruited Advisers

(as at 8 November 2006):

Applied Mathematics:

Prof. Peter Haynes (Cambridge); Prof. Richard Ward (Durham)

Drama, Dance and Performing Arts:

Prof. Richard Boon (Hull); Prof. Jim Davis (Warwick); Prof. Helen Gilbert (Royal Holloway); Prof. Katherine Newey (Birmingham)

Epidemiology:

Prof. Kay-tee Khaw (Addenbrooke's Hospital)

Geography:

Prof. Mike Barnsley (Swansea); Prof. Ian Reid (Loughborough); Prof. Ian Shennan (Durham); Prof. Bruce Webb (Exeter)

Linguistics:

Prof. Miriam Meyerhoff (Edinburgh); Prof. Suzanne Romaine (Oxford)

Materials:

Prof. Chris Carr (Manchester)

Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering:

Prof. Srinivasan Raghunathan (Queen's, Belfast); Prof. C. Sheppard (Leeds)

Nutrition:

Prof. Garry Duthie (Rowett Research Institute, Aberdeen)

Ophthalmology:

Prof. Puvana Chandra (H M Stanley Hospital); Prof. Philip Murray (Birmingham Medical School)

Psychiatry:

Prof. Peter Tyrer (Imperial, Charing Cross Hospital)

Pure Mathematics:

Prof. Caroline Series (Warwick)

Statistics:

Prof. Alison Etheridge (Oxford)

CSC will be continuing to recruit academic advisers to the panel. Anyone interested in learning more about the role of academic adviser should contact Tim Vanderpump (tim.vanderpump@cscuk.org.uk)

SCHOLARS' NEWS

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS IN THE COMMUNITY

Aside from completing coursework and carrying out research, it seems that Commonwealth scholars have been getting actively involved in their local communities! Through their colleges, universities and the British Council, scholars have been volunteering themselves for activities which they have found rewarding, as well as deepening their understanding of local people.

JACARI HOME TEACHING SCHEME

Simon Ho, an Australian scholar (Commonwealth Scholarship DPhil student in Zoology, University of Oxford), participated in the Jacari Home Teaching Scheme, which involves pairing up volunteers from the University of Oxford with students from non-English speaking backgrounds. As a volunteer, Simon visited a student who was studying for her GCSEs to help her with schoolwork and her adjustment to life in the UK. As well as feeling that the scheme has "enormous benefits for the community", Simon also admits that "it is certainly rewarding to see the positive impact that I can have on a young student's life." He would also recommend the scheme to other Commonwealth Scholars, pointing out that "The Commonwealth Scholar community is very culturally diverse, and we all recognise the importance and benefits of cross-cultural communication."



Simon Ho, 2003
Commonwealth Scholar from Australia

WORKING FOR SUE RYDER CARE

Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholar, Eureka Adomako (PhD Ecological Restoration of Abandoned Gold Mines, University of Aberdeen) decided on a voluntary role at the Sue Ryder Care shop in Aberdeen. Her tasks involve preparing stock, arranging clothes on the rails and serving customers. Eureka said, "The atmosphere is very friendly and the job is very interesting – a refreshing break from the stress of scientific research. I would recommend volunteering to scholars who can find the time for it because it's amazing how much you can learn about the culture of a people in a place like the Sue Ryder shop."



Eureka Adomako
volunteering in the Sue Ryder Care Shop

KEEN SCHOLAR AT OXFORD!

Commonwealth Scholar, Ingrid Boxall (DPhil Experimental Economics, University of Oxford) decided to volunteer for KEEN (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now), a registered UK charity which aims to provide a wide range of activities for individuals with special needs. Ingrid acted as a 'coach' to the KEEN 'athletes', which involved going along to weekly activities such as drama and music workshops, as well as sport sessions, and she also helped to advertise events within her college. "I became involved with KEEN primarily as a way to become more involved in the local community and not just participate in university and college-related activities." Ingrid said, clearly valuing the opportunity to take part in projects such as KEEN: "Often we, as students, become very wrapped up in our academic studies and individual pursuits and we forget we are part of the larger Oxford community. KEEN offers the opportunity to give something back to the local community while at the same time benefiting from a rewarding and enjoyable experience."

VOLUNTEERING IN LONDON

Shortly after arriving in the UK, Patience Orukpe (Commonwealth Scholarship PhD student in Control Systems, Imperial College London) decided to register at the Imperial College Volunteer Centre, which helps to promote interaction between the university and the wider community. Through the centre, she became involved in WLAC (West London Action for Children), an independent charity which provides services for over 300 local children and families in West London. In her role as a toy librarian, she organises and keeps records of play materials which are loaned out to families. Patience also became involved with a finance literacy project of SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise), an NGO which is active in 1800 universities and 46 countries. The project involved organising workshops in schools to improve business awareness and entrepreneurial skills among 14 to 19 year old students by giving them practical insights into the business and economic world. As well as finding these experiences rewarding, Patience hopes to utilise what she has learnt from them upon her return to Nigeria: "I intend to set up a toy library for kids in Nigeria, where many low-income families are not able to provide their children with adequate learning opportunities," she said. "I also intend to set up a SIFE team at the University of Benin upon return to my country."

SCHOLARS IN2 SCHOOLS



Robert Bennin,
demonstrating traditional Ghanaian costume



James Njihia,
2004 Commonwealth Scholar from Kenya

Two Commonwealth Scholars currently studying at the University of Warwick, Robert Marshall Bennin (MSc Economics and Finance student) and James Njihia (PhD E-governance in developing countries), participated in the British Council's Scholars in2 Schools programme. This scheme, a collaboration between the British Council and the West Midlands LEA Network, aims to forge links between scholars and local school children and add an 'international dimension' to the school curriculum.

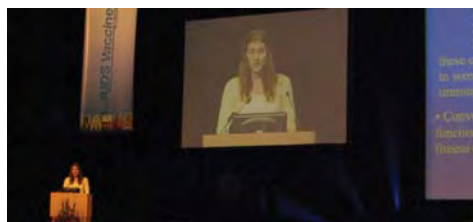
During the 12 months he spent in the UK, Robert visited two local primary schools and gave presentations about his native Ghana to children aged 2-11 years old. As can be seen from the photograph, Robert was able to talk about various aspects of Ghanaian culture, including the national dress! James also had the opportunity to visit a local primary school to participate in their annual fun day, for which the theme was Africa, with particular emphasis on South Africa, Ethiopia and James' native Kenya. After giving a presentation on Kenya to the whole group in the morning, James then moved around the different workshops to share experiences with the pupils. James clearly found the experience enjoyable, saying that he would encourage other Commonwealth Scholars to take advantage of such opportunities whilst in the UK: "They will be surprised at how even a 10 minute interaction can inform and change perspectives for the better, especially with children. They also get a chance to better understand British people and culture beyond the University."

You can send your news and views for inclusion in Commonwealth Scholarships News by email: scholarnews@cscuk.org.uk

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

A.I.D.S. VACCINE 2006

South African scholar, Hayley Crawford (Commonwealth Scholarship DPhil student in Immunology of H.I.V. Infection, University of Oxford) was asked to present her research at A.I.D.S. Vaccine 2006, an international conference in Amsterdam, which took place between 29th August and 1st September 2006 (<http://www.aidsvaccine06.org>). At the conference, which was attended by 1,000 of the world's top H.I.V. researchers, Hayley spoke about "Infrequent reversion of a B*5703-restricted CTL HIV-Gag epitope." "It was the scariest thing I've ever had to do, but I'm so glad that I did it. It was also great to meet H.I.V. scientists that I've read about and studied for my degree, and ask them questions and get their input into my own work."



Hayley Crawford, speaking at the A.I.D.S. Vaccine 2006 Conference

SCHOLAR ORGANISES CONFERENCE

Maltese Commonwealth Scholarship holder, Steve Gingell (LLM, Queen Mary, University of London), helped to organise a one-day conference entitled "There's more to 'M & S' than Marks and Spencers", which took place at the Centre for Commercial and Legal Studies in London on 17th May 2006. The conference was organised by the LLM students of QMUL who were specialising in EC Tax Law (and the module's coordinator, Mr. Tom O'Shea, LLM). Presentations were given on various aspects of EC Tax Law and were discussed by the students, interested professionals, tax authority officials and other experts in the field. As Steve plans to continue working in EC tax, he feels that the conference has been a valuable experience which will undoubtedly help him in his career. Moreover, he would encourage others to get involved in similar projects: "Being a student is not just about reading and studying from a book. A student must learn through a variety of ways and such experiences provide the opportunity to learn things that are not possible through books and notes."



Steve Gingell, speaking at "There's more to 'M & S' than Marks and Spencers" Conference

ENDANGERED INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES FOR THE SOAS STUDENT RADIO STATION

Louise Ashmore, (MA Language Documentation and Description, School of Oriental and African Studies) produced a radio documentary programme about Endangered Indigenous Languages for the SOAS student radio station. Here she describes her involvement in this project and how this experience will help her in the future.

Predictions of a significant reduction in the numbers of languages around the world have led to a renewed interest within linguistics in language diversity and the study of minority or lesser-known languages. Within Australia, the loss of Aboriginal languages is extensive. My previous studies and travels have fostered an interest in the factors contributing to language endangerment and in the possibilities for language maintenance and revitalisation. The Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP), housed at SOAS, includes the Endangered Languages Academic Programme, which offers an MA course in Language Documentation and Description and a PhD in Field Linguistics. The course offered a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the issues of language endangerment through a combination of practical and theoretical approaches to language documentation. The development of the skills necessary to carry out language documentation work with endangered language communities in Australia was the primary reason I applied for the Commonwealth Scholarship to attend SOAS.

In the first term of my studies OpenAir Radio, a community radio project based at SOAS and focussed on world music, culture and current affairs, was granted a Restricted Service Licence (RSL). The RSL was a short-term licence which allowed OpenAir to broadcast on an FM signal within a 3-mile radius from SOAS, located in Central London in late 2005 (See OpenAir Radio website, <http://www.openair.org.uk>) The radio station asked for volunteers from all areas of the University who were interested in producing a wide-range of programmes and different formats (e.g. music programmes, current affairs and documentary programmes) to broadcast during the RSL. In return the radio station would provide training in radio production and management and connections with community projects.

The topic of endangered languages is still relatively unknown outside of the linguistics community so linguistic diversity and threats to it is often underestimated. Producing a radio programme on this topic was a good

opportunity to raise awareness of the issue by broadcasting to a wider audience and to clarify our own understanding of what we were currently studying. With a fellow student on the course, Kay Johnson, I attended training and developed a one hour radio programme drawing on the help of other students on our course. An emphasis at the radio station was live interviews and community involvement, so we interviewed local residents, asking them how many languages they thought existed in the world and what languages they spoke. We used these wide-ranging answers to introduce the topic of language diversity. We also interviewed some staff members about their experience of language documentation work and obtained permission to edit and use an interview of the Director of HRELP, Professor Peter Austin, which had been recorded by the sound artist John Wynne. John Wynne also generously let us include a sound portrait from the Kalahari that had featured in the exhibition Hearing Voices held at the Brunei Gallery, earlier in 2005.

Compiling the different segments into a one hour programme (that included music sourced from another fellow student's multilingual music collection) and presenting it in the studio was interesting, challenging and very enjoyable. When the RSL broadcast there was a frenetic three weeks of live radio with a huge variety of different interests represented in programmes and formats. Along with the regular meetings and training the entire radio project was really sociable. Rather than detracting from the course, the involvement in the radio show, although fairly time-consuming, contributed to and complemented my studies. I even based my major research paper at the end of Term 1 on the use of radio for language revitalisation. During the training I learned a number of technical skills, such as audio editing, running a radio desk and package making, that can be directly applied to aspects of language documentation and the development of language revitalisation resources. Media has an important role to play in language endangerment issues, both by contributing to language shift and by having the potential to slow or halt language shift through local media production in minority languages. As a result of my involvement with SOAS OpenAir Radio I have become particularly interested in the role of radio and television for these aims. Importantly, it also made me think about how we can communicate about the work we are involved in to a wider audience beyond the academic community. For all these reasons, and because it was so much fun, I'm really glad I got involved with the radio project and hope to produce further programmes this year.

THE PCF4 EXPERIENCE:

Achieving Development Goals



The three Distance Learning student representatives participating in a session.

The Fourth Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF4) took place at Ocho Rios, Jamaica, between 30th October and 3rd November 2006. Over 500 delegates took part, representing nearly every country in the Commonwealth and several non-Commonwealth countries, and a range of institutions from universities and government ministries to non-governmental organisations and development banks.

The theme of the 2006 Forum was 'Achieving Development Goals: Innovation, Learning, Collaboration and Foundations' and not surprisingly many of the conference sessions dealt with the mechanics of delivering distance learning. It became clear that, for many, access to new technology was still far from easy and that the assumptions made a few years ago that the internet would sweep all before it are now being questioned more closely. It was evident from a number of sessions that exciting work is being carried out in the development of new means of access, for example in the use of multi-purpose mobile phones, but the clear message from many delegates was that the printed word and face-to-face tutorials still had major roles to play particularly in more remote parts of the developing Commonwealth. Other themes emerging from individual sessions were centred around the need to make sure that qualifications being offered by one country would be recognised by another; and that some cultures could feel threatened by the fact that distance learning delivery laid such emphasis on a student having access to the internet.

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission was represented at the conference by two members of its Distance Learning Committee, Professor Ann Floyd and Dr Hilary Perraton, and two members of the Commission's secretariat, Dr Jonathan Jenkins and Mrs Teresa Anderson. The Commission's delegation co-hosted two sessions based on the paper it presented to the Conference on the progress of its Distance Learning programme which now has nearly 600 students on award (copies available on request). We were joined by representatives of the Indira Gandhi Open University, and the Commonwealth of Learning and it was instructive to compare the different experiences each organisation had faced with its distance learning programmes.

Specific issues arising from our debates included: the importance of involving students' employers as stakeholders in the learning process; the potential for conflict between a UK-based scheme seeking to meet the Millennium Development Goals and a developing country's perception of its own

development objectives; and the emphasis that should be placed on providing new distance learning scholars with appropriate training in the study skills required by this method of learning. Several of the UK institutions offering degrees under the CSC programme were presenting papers at PCF4 and we were lucky to have at our sessions Dr Anne Tholen of the London School of Hygiene, Jon Gregson of Imperial College Wye, and Rachael Dixey and Dr Mary Green from Leeds Metropolitan University. It was interesting to learn how their courses had evolved, which in origin were the same as those taught face to face in the United Kingdom, so that they reflected more closely the strategic regional needs of their students.

We were delighted that, due to the generosity of the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning, we were able to arrange the participation at PCF4 of three of our Distance Learning students who acted as representatives for all those on our programme. Mr T.V. Jeevaraj, Ms Francinah Nkani and Ms Mwamba Nayame, from India, Botswana and Zambia respectively, were able to provide our sessions with vivid descriptions of how they managed their work and home lives and also carried out their studies.

Of particular interest was the direct impact their studies (in sustainable development and public health) are having on their professional lives. The developmental potential of distance learning was another major theme at PCF4 and the Commission's scholars were potent examples of what could be achieved.

After four extremely busy days, the conference was brought to a close by Sir John Daniel, President of the Commonwealth of Learning. In a lively address, he summarised the major points coming out of the sessions and directed the attention of participants to the next Pan Commonwealth Forum which will be taking place in London in 2008.

Ms Mwamba Nayame is a Mental Health Nurse at Chainama Hills Hospital near Lusaka, Zambia. She is studying for a Masters degree in Public Health Promotion offered by Leeds Metropolitan University.

At PCF4, I was able to exchange ideas and experiences, about my job as a mental health nurse, the HIV/AIDS work I am involved in and as a distance learner. I spent a lot of time with the other student representatives, and it was interesting and reassuring to note that, despite coming from different parts of the world, as students we shared a lot in common.

I enjoyed most of the sessions I attended for different reasons. The sessions on Health Services and Research in ODL and Cross Border Education gave me a chance to learn from others and the audience was able to get both the positive and negative aspects of distance learning from the students' viewpoint. In the sessions on Civil Society and Gender, and Gender and ODL, many issues regarding gender equality in education were discussed. As a woman from a developing country, it made me appreciate the work that is being done in order to provide education to all. It was interesting for me to learn how advanced technology is helping distance learners, in the E-Learning and Digital Divide workshops.

Ms Francinah Nkani is a Lecturer at the Institute of Health Sciences in Francistown, Botswana. She is studying for a Masters degree in Environmental Management offered by Imperial College Wye.

Attending PCF4 has enabled me to appreciate the contribution that open and distance learning (ODL) makes to overcoming poverty and enabling development through the utilisation of available technology.

I most enjoyed the sessions on: Gender and ODL, as case studies were presented and solutions suggested to improve the status of women and empower them; Rural and Community Development, where I learnt that access to appropriate information and education is fundamental to development; E-Learning, because the institution that I work for has just started offering some topics online and by attending these sessions, I learnt what challenges were faced by those already doing so and the solutions they developed to integrate online learning into the wider institution; and Health Services and Research in ODL, which was of interest to me because in Botswana the health sector is faced with many challenges such as the shortage and brain drain of health professionals and HIV/AIDS. All these issues make it difficult for the sector to engage its staff in conventional learning processes, but ODL is an option.

Mr Thazhath Veetil Jeevaraj is an Agricultural Officer at a District Agricultural Farm in southern India. He is studying for a Masters degree in Sustainable Development offered by Staffordshire University.

While studying for an MA in Sustainable Development has broadened my understanding of complex development issues of the 21st century through a process of e-learning, PCF4 has complemented this understanding by deliberating on the process itself. It has also enabled me to interact with other development professionals and educators.

On 2nd November, the other two student representatives and myself had a panel discussion with Professor Ann Floyd on how the Commonwealth Scholarship Award has enabled us to study our respective postgraduate programmes. The feedback from other participants was quite informative.

Apart from the session on cross border education chaired by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, I was able to attend six other sessions which were interesting to me. These included 'UK Open University open content programme' by Professor Andy Lane, 'Writing for Publication: The value of writing collaboratively' by Jean Mitchell and 'ODL for agricultural development and rural poverty reduction' by Surabhi Banerjee.

ALUMNI EVENT

A reception for Jamaican Alumni was held on Saturday 4th November 2006 at the University of the West Indies (UWI). The host for the event was Dr Hilary Perraton, Deputy Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and one-time member of staff at UWI's Barbados campus. We were also honoured by the attendance of Senator Burchell Whiteman, previously Minister of Education in the Jamaican Government.

A particularly pleasing aspect of the reception was that attendees represented the span of the Scholarship programme, from the first award holders from Jamaica (taking up their scholarships in 1961 and 1962) to the most recent alumnus who had only been back in the country for a few months.

It was also good to see the delight shown by old friends meeting again, in some cases after many years. Our comprehensive list of all those from Jamaica who had studied in the UK was scanned with great attention and we were provided with useful information allowing us to update our Alumni Database.

Dr Perraton explained the working of the alumni chapters and our reception ended with firm commitments that a chapter would be established in Jamaica.

We are grateful to Keri-Ann March and her colleagues at the University's Conference Centre for their help and for the delicious buffet.



Alumni with Dr Hilary Perraton at the University of the West Indies

ALUMNI IN ACTION

Alumni Events

ALUMNI MEETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

The Chair of the Commission, Professor Trudy Harpham, hosted an alumni event at the University of Johannesburg on 19th July 2006. The Vice Chancellor, Dr Ihron Rensburg, kindly loaned his Council Chambers for the event and Louis de Koker, a Professor of Law at the University and an alumnus (Academic Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, 2004), gathered together 20 alumni and newly selected scholars for a lively exchange of experiences, along with guests from the international department at the South African Department of Education and the British Council.

A predominant research theme among the newly selected scholars was the 'environment', and scholars on their way to the UK were able to gain tips from the alumni. The 14 Commissioners often hold alumni events when they travel to Commonwealth countries for additional business. Keep an eye out for an event in your country and we hope to see you soon!

RECEPTION AT THE HIGH COMMISSION IN TANZANIA



Dr Monica Darnborough
addressing the gathering

The Chapter is active and holds regular meetings; Monica Darnborough, Commissioner, writes about co-

hosting a reception for alumni and distance learning scholars in Tanzania with the British High Commissioner, Philip Parham, on 28th August 2006.

Nearly a hundred scholars, 35 of whom had been Commonwealth Scholars, were greeted with a warm speech of welcome in Swahili by the High Commissioner, Philip Parham. Everyone I met had stories to tell about their time in the UK – not only about their studies – and everyone was keen to expand links through further scholarships and alumni networks. Some scholars have amazing jobs in Tanzania especially in academia and in utilities, including electricity supply - Dar es Salaam has few hours of electricity each day at the moment, so this was a hot topic! Two alumni are now Ministers but

they had to attend a meeting with the Prime Minister and so were unable to come to the reception. I was glad to have the chance to tell a scholar who was about to come to Aberdeen that he would need wool pullovers and a thick overcoat and hat - something it was hard to imagine on the pleasantly hot evening under the African stars. Meeting such enthusiastic, lively scholars added to my store of special memories (cheetahs and elephants particularly) from my first visit to Tanzania.

Alumni News

ALUMNUS WORKING AS UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEER PHYSICIAN

Cornelia Osim Ndifon (Commonwealth Scholar, Masters in Public Health at the University of Leeds, 2003 – 2004) is currently working as a United Nations Volunteer Physician and HIV/AIDS Specialist in Georgetown, Guyana, South America. Cornelia graduated from the University of Calabar, Nigeria, and then worked as an intern in the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital. Cornelia then started residency training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, working as a registrar between 1998 and 2003. She has also served as a Volunteer on Nigeria's Technical AID Corps Programme, working as a Volunteer Medical Officer in Mozambique.

Cornelia says, "I hope to become an expert and an international consultant in the areas of reproductive health and safe motherhood. In the meantime providing optimal and quality HIV care and treatment to HIV infected families is my priority."

IN BRIEF - AWARDS AND CAREER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr Asmatullah Khan (Academic Fellow, Macroeconomics, University of Strathclyde 2003) has been appointed as Vice Chancellor of a newly established institution, the University of Science and Technology, Bannu, Pakistan.

Professor Lutful Hassan (Commonwealth Scholar in the Department of Agriculture, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1986 - 1989) has been awarded the Norman E. Borlaug Award from the United States Department of Agriculture, for his contribution to increasing agricultural productivity and reducing food insecurity in Bangladesh.

Professor B K Sharma (Academic Fellow, Molecular Biology at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, 2003 - 2004) was the Organising Secretary for the "National Conference on Conservation and Management of Faunal Diversity of Rajasthan" which took place between 11th –

13th August 2006 at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. He is currently the recipient of a fellowship from the Indian National Science Academy - DFG bilateral exchange programme at the University of Heidelberg in Germany (October 2006 - January 2007), and has also been awarded a one-year fellowship by the Royal Society at the University of Nottingham from January 2007.

Dr Arnaud Malan (Commonwealth Scholar, Mechanical Engineering at the University of Wales, Swansea, 1999-2002) and now an Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering, University of Pretoria, has been awarded an Association of Commonwealth Universities Titular Fellowship (The University of Wales, Swansea Fulton Fellowship). Dr Malan plans to spend 5 months doing collaborative research with Dr P. Nithiarasu at the University of Swansea. The intended research will be a considerable aid in placing the University of Pretoria at the forefront in a new and exciting field of computational mechanics, as well as strengthening research ties with one of the leading computational institutions.

Dr. Mohamed Saleem Badat (Commonwealth Scholar, Southern African Studies, University of York, 1996 – 1997), previously the Chief Executive Officer of the Council on Higher Education, has recently been appointed Vice-Chancellor at Rhodes University, South Africa. Upon his inauguration, Dr. Badat, one of the first South African scholars to study in the UK on a Commonwealth Scholarship, launched the Jakes Gerwel Rhodes University Scholarship Fund, which will provide five full scholarships per annum to Eastern Cape students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please keep us informed of your news, such as significant research, new senior appointment, major publication or national honour or award. You can get in touch by email: alumni@cscuk.ac.uk or you can write to:

Sarah Humphreys, Alumni Development Officer*

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for the United Kingdom
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*Sarah Humphreys replaces Jocelyn Law, our permanent Alumni Development Officer, who is currently on maternity leave.

ALUMNI PROFILE

In this issue of *Commonwealth Scholarships News*, our ALUMNI PROFILE feature focuses on one of our Distance Learning alumni, Edward Bwengye-Kahororo, who works for UNICEF in Uganda as a Project Officer, covering areas such as water and environmental sanitation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER SANITATION

Following a BA in Social Work and Social Administration and a Masters of Public Health, Edward Bwengye-Kahororo has been working in the water and environmental sanitation sector since 1997. With water and environmental sanitation still proving to be key health issues in Uganda, he says that his work is driven by his personal motivation to work in the sector and promote its importance.

Since January 2001, prior to and during his CSC-funded course, Edward has worked as a Project Officer Districts for the UNICEF Uganda Country Office, working in areas such as water and environmental sanitation for primary schools and communities, health and nutrition, reproductive health, malaria control, children and AIDS, and child protection.

When insurgency broke out in north-east Uganda in 2003, he was reassigned to work on emergency interventions in the region. Approximately 400,000 people sought refuge in Internally Displaced People's camps (IDPs). IDP inhabitants faced a range of problems, such as scarcity of water, inadequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, and poor living conditions. One project Edward worked on promoted education on hygiene amongst some 35,000 women living in 7 IDP camps, which led to improvement in the health and social circumstances of these women.

THE FLEXIBILITY OF A DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE

Edward's Commonwealth Scholarship award has enabled him to study for an MSc in Water and Environmental Management at the Loughborough University Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC), 2003 - 2006.

Without his scholarship Edward would have found it impossible to take such a course in Uganda, as there is no similar part-time course available in the field of water and environmental management. It would also have proved difficult to fund the training that could provide the flexibility to cater for his training requirements and the demands of his work schedule for UNICEF.

Edward comments, "Working full-time and going to the UK for the same course would have meant taking leave without pay. I would probably have run into financial difficulties. I would probably fail to maintain my children in school. The CSC Distance Learning programme enabled me to remain employed and able to take care of my family, whilst studying at the same time."

At the beginning of his course, Edward had concerns about combining work and family life with the demands of a distance learning course. Taking a systematic and organised approach to his family and working lives enabled him to structure his study programme satisfactorily. He says, "I had to prepare and discuss with my family and adhere to some kind of timetable for study." Preparing a written flexi-time agreement with UNICEF enabled him to start his work an hour earlier each day. "Travelling an hour earlier than normal saved me being caught up in traffic jams, and I was able to reach home early and do some reading."

Studying on his own also presented Edward with some challenges, despite the high quality of the teaching materials that were supplied to him. "I had to read systematically and work a little bit harder. Some difficult sections of the module notes and chapters in accompanying materials would be read 10 times!"



The inherent flexibility of the course meant that Edward found it easy to study from home, and to fit it in around his full-time job. He found the wide choice of course

Edward Bwengye-Kahororo

content enabled him to devise a tailored programme of study to suit his specific needs. "It allowed me to control the rate at which I studied, and to concentrate on particular areas of interest. In other words, as a distance learner with WEDC, I, the learner, was in more control over what I learnt, and where and how I learnt it."

WORKING FOR UNICEF

Edward has been nominated to participate in the UNICEF Eastern and southern Africa Region initiative known as "The Middle Management Leadership Development Programme 2006", which aims to identify and prepare staff members with potential to replace those in more senior leadership positions, such as Representatives and Senior Programme Officers, who will be retiring over the next 10 years. The process involves training in leadership/management skills. At the end of this training (in May 2007) there is scope for Edward to move to a more senior position with greater responsibility.

He has found that his course has helped prepare him for the challenges of his current post, and future career. It has equipped him to work independently as well as to lead teams in the planning and implementation of the management and monitoring systems relating to all types of sanitation technologies (ranging from simple pit latrines to medium complex piped sanitation schemes). He has also been able to make a contribution to rainwater harvesting, negotiating an inclusion of "first flush assembly", which enables the first rain water (possibly carrying bird droppings, leaves, dust) to be washed away before the relatively cleaner water enters the water tank. This technique was quickly adopted by the manufacturers of plastic (HDPE) rain water tanks in Kampala.

Edward has also found benefits in his work with multi-sectoral teams that are working on environmental assessment – such as environmental impact assessment, strategic impact assessment, and integrated water resource management (flood control, wetland reservation etc.) He was able to contribute to the chapter on environmental impact assessment when UNICEF and the Ugandan government were developing the country programme of co-operation for 2006 - 2010, and has provided some input for the in-service training for water development staff and professional extension workers in the Uganda Management Institute, Kampala.

A WIDER CONTRIBUTION

The Distance Learning award has enabled Edward to make a wider contribution beyond his normal professional remit. "UNICEF, as part of United Nations, is cluster leader in water and environmental sanitation and therefore expected to advise central and lower local government, NGOs and other partners. I am therefore in a position to contribute to this cluster leadership." He believes that the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission's distance learning scholarships are vital for professionals in the developing world. "There are people who cannot afford to meet the costs of training and such scholarships can help. The scholarships enable one to get high quality training whilst on the job."

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS AND EVENTS

POVERTY REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE SEMINAR



Participants at the Poverty Reduction and Environmental Change Seminar, July 2006

The weekend of 28th - 30th July 2006 saw nearly 60 Commonwealth Scholars attend the Poverty Reduction and Environmental Change seminar at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park. The Friday night keynote address, given by Commissioner Professor Tim Unwin, was entitled 'No End to Poverty'; a critique of Jeffrey Sachs' work of 2005, *The End of Poverty*.

Many scholars presented their research to their peers, provoking lively discussion and debate. Abdullah Makame (Commonwealth Scholarship PhD student in Microfinance, University of Birmingham) and Juliana Siwale (Commonwealth Scholarship PhD student at the Business School, University of Durham) spoke about microfinance in their respective countries of Tanzania and Zambia, emphasising that this is a key factor in the area of poverty

reduction. The Environmental Change seminar presentations touched on issues of conservation, environmental management and eco-tourism. Adetoun Mustapha (Commonwealth PhD student in Environmental Epidemiology, Imperial College) closed the session by reporting back from her fieldwork trip to Nigeria to study the link between air pollution and respiratory complaints amongst children.

Clare Twelvetrees, International Relations Manager at the Environment Agency, described the organisation's international programmes, particularly the involvement of Commonwealth Professional Fellows. There was input over the weekend from several other Commissioners, and an evening debate where scholars put forward their manifestos for development strategy. This enabled some timely feedback, following the recent publication of DFID's White Paper, *Making Governance Work for the Poor*.

MAKING UNIVERSITY RESEARCH WORK FOR THE POOR

A seminar held at the University of the West of England, Bristol over the weekend of 16th - 17th September 2006 sought to identify the barriers which developing universities face in transferring their knowledge to the benefit of the poorest elements in society. The event was hosted jointly by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Bristol Business School, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and the Economics and Social Research Council. Several Commonwealth scholars attended the weekend, and two Commissioners gave presentations. Professor David Johns spoke about technology knowledge transfer partnerships, and Dr Monica Darnbrough talked about the economic importance of technology transfer.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL

Divakar Singh Yadav, a Commonwealth Scholarship PhD student in Computer Science at the University of Southampton, spoke at the Knowledge Transfer seminar about agriculture extension work at G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, India.

Following a disastrous Bengal Famine in 1943, and a shortfall in the supply of agriculture products due to an increasing population, food security was a paramount issue for the Indian government in the early 1950s. One of the government's initiatives to achieve food self-sufficiency was to establish state agriculture universities to generate skilled manpower in agriculture, research, and dissemination of knowledge to the farmers. They played a significant role during the green revolution in the

70s, transforming a starved nation into an exporter of food grain. The G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, established in 1960, set an example of knowledge transfer at grass roots level. Through its agricultural extension work, it has successfully reached farmers and enabled them to adapt to modern agricultural practices.

The agricultural extension work focussed on educating the farmers and demonstrating new practices at their place/village in their own language. After identification of the farmers' needs, the university has successfully transferred the knowledge through agriculture science centres, agriculture knowledge centres and farmers' fairs. Areas covered include agricultural crop issues, farm machinery, irrigation and drainage, harvesting technology, veterinary care, plant pathology and soil testing. This model is

still very successful in the dissemination of knowledge and in feeding back input from the farmers to the scientists working in the laboratory. With many developing countries having huge populations living in rural areas, the same model could be viable for the transfer of knowledge and education to the masses, especially in ICT skills, health, environment and other issues specific to regions in these countries.

Divakar said of the weekend: "I enjoyed various talks and group discussions...and got lots of information on the models and practices adopted by the universities in developing countries for the dissemination of knowledge at the grass roots level. I am sure information gathered from participation in these seminars will help when I return to India upon completion of my studies here."

VICTORY TO THE COMMIES!

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS XI VS RHODES SCHOLARS XI, OXFORD UNIVERSITY CLUB, 16TH JULY 2006



The victorious Commonwealth Scholars!

Before the game, pristine new shirts were presented to each member of the Commonwealth Scholars' team. However, within minutes of the match starting it seemed that these shirts might be the most professional aspect of the 'Commies' performance. With the temperature in the 30s there was nowhere for the fielders to hide, so it was no surprise that the Rhodes scholars chose to bat.

Despite some miserly swing bowling from Australian PhD scholar Peter Munro, the Rhodes openers cruised passed 50, with Herman Swart looking especially strong. However, Phil Killicoat missed a straight ball and the Commonwealth Scholars' spirits were lifted; when Punniamoorthy 'Ravi' Ravirajan bowled Swart soon after, there was a sense that the fielding side could take control. Ravi, an alumnus of the CSFP, completed his PhD at Imperial College in 2004 and was in the UK for a short fellowship at his old college. Unfortunately, Ravi's bowling spell was even shorter, as an injury to his shoulder meant he could only complete two overs.

This twist caused problems for the Commonwealth Scholars, allowing John Good and David Winterton to attack some less experienced bowling, and the game once again ebbed in favour of the 'Rhodies'. However, with captain Tanzil Rahman's mantra – "get your body behind the ball!" – ringing in their ears, the 'Commies' fielded with huge commitment throughout. Rahman, a research scholar at Oxford,

bowled 5 overs of accurate wrist-spin, and Munro's second spell was an impressive display of reverse swing bowling.

With Good dismissed by Munroe, and Winterton retiring on passing 50, the Rhodes team finished on 185 for three. A daunting target, which meant scoring at more than 7 runs per over, but the opening batsmen never let their opponents dominate and kept the score moving well. When Munro was out, caught off Winterton for 13, the total had already passed 50 and a solid platform had been laid.

Vanderpump, who was assisted by some unconventional boundary fielding, soon retired and Ravi was out cheaply. This briefly gave the initiative to Rhodes, but it was once again seized back by Rahman and Iqbal. Both men mixed sensible shot selection with aggressive hitting to compile a healthy partnership, which was only ended when Iqbal was run out by a brilliant throw from Solomon. When Martyn Moore was bowled by the same scholar shortly after, the target of 186 still looked a long way off.

Until, that is, Paul Bonnitcha proved that Australians do not know when they are beaten. Bonnitcha, studying Chemistry at Oxford, had kept a relatively low profile in the match up to this point, but he now stroked 5 crisp boundaries in a vital cameo of 26. His dismissal, bowled by Good, left the Commonwealth

Scholars needing a further 15 runs off the last three overs.

Kim Farrant, an Australian MSc. scholar, was brilliantly caught first ball, and Adam Creighton, also of Australia and Oxford, followed soon after. The tension was building as Timothy Phakathi, a South African Sociologist studying at Green College, Oxford, made his way out to join his captain. It was Phakathi's first cricket match, and supporters of the Commonwealth side were disconcerted to see him receiving coaching as he prepared to take strike. However, with the tension mounting, Phakathi got enough bat on ball to score a run, and it was left to Rahman to finish the job. Rahman, keeping cool while others melted with heat and nerves, had played a captain's innings of 45 not out; it was fitting that he should strike a boundary to seal a cherished victory.

Despite the closeness of the contest, the Corinthian spirit prevailed, and it was an event to savour for both sets of scholars. Musings on 'what might have been' were shared over a welcome barbecue and drinks at Linacre College, with certain participants immediately looking forward to next year's fixture.

Special thanks should go to the match umpires, Francis King and Andrew Bell, as well as all those who helped organise proceedings on and off the field (particularly Tanzil, and Anna O'Flynn of the CSC Secretariat). As one scholar commented, "it was a beautiful day for all of us". Here's to many more!

Have you joined one of our Professional Networks yet? So far we have launched five networks - to sign up simply go to the website address below (or follow the links on <http://www.csfp-online.org>) and enter your email, your name and your award reference number and a password.

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VETERINARY - <https://secure.acu.ac.uk/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/agriculture>
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ABOUT THE CSFP...

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan is one of the oldest and most prestigious schemes of its kind in the world. It was established at the first Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in 1959. Since, over 24,000 individuals have held awards, hosted by over twenty countries.

From the outset, the United Kingdom has been the largest single contributor, and over half of the awards have been held here. CSFP awards in the United Kingdom are managed by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, a public body established by Act of Parliament. Two government departments fund the Commission; the Department for International Development, which supports awards to developing Commonwealth countries, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which supports awards to the remainder of the Commonwealth.

Day to day administration of the Commission is handled by its secretariat, which is based at The Association of Commonwealth Universities. The British Council handles welfare and financial administration, and provides pre-departure advice through its local offices.

At present, the Commission offers six discrete types of award:

- General Scholarships
- Academic Staff Scholarships
- Academic Fellowships
- Split-Site Scholarships
- Professional Fellowships
- Distance Learning Scholarships

Further details of current provision and selection procedures can be found on the UK section of the CSFP web site: <http://www.csfp-online.org>

We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of *Commonwealth Scholarships News*. If you have any comments or views on the magazine, or you have a suggestion for a future article (indeed you may be interested in writing one yourself!) please get in touch with the Editorial Team at:

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