



COMMONWEALTH  
SCHOLARSHIPS

NEWS

Promoting learning, development and co-operation

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## Looking ahead: Education Ministers approve CSFP expansion

REPORT FROM 16TH CCEM • COUNTRY PROFILE – NEW ZEALAND • NEWS ROUND-UP • SCHOLARS' NEWS •  
ALUMNI IN ACTION • LAUNCH OF NEW GENDER NETWORK • CSC EVENTS

# THIS ISSUE EDITORIAL

**Cover Commonwealth Education Ministers at the 16th Conference in Cape Town, South Africa**

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**Commonwealth Scholarships News**  
(formerly *Omnes*)

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**Professor Trudy Harpham**

As many of you will be aware, Commonwealth Scholarships are approaching their fiftieth anniversary. The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) was set up at the first meeting of all the Education Ministers of the Commonwealth in 1959. Since then, Ministers have met every three years and scholarships have been a regular agenda item. We believe that this makes us probably the only scholarship scheme in the world with such an influential review mechanism.

The most recent of these meetings was in South Africa at the end of last year. The results are reported on pages 6-7. Both comments and the survey of activity over the past three years presented at the meeting demonstrated that the enthusiasm and commitment shown almost fifty years ago remains very much intact.

Before the main meeting we, the UK part of the Plan, held a meeting with our sister nominating agencies from nineteen other countries, ranging from small island states like Mauritius and the Falkland Islands to the 'big players' like Canada and Bangladesh. All of us agreed that a major resource was the 25,000 alumni of the Plan. We shared ideas on how to contact alumni, how to engage them, and how to promote them as a Commonwealth Resource. We also agreed to work together to involve alumni even more in our activities and future planning. Your ideas on how we might achieve this – both in anniversary year and more generally – would be welcome.

Alumni are important to us both as long-standing friends and as the ultimate evidence that our investment has made an impact. In May, we will be holding a major seminar to discuss how the achievements of the CSFP – and other international scholarship schemes – can be evaluated. Outcomes of this will appear in the next issue, but those with strong ideas on the topic, or who can present themselves as good examples of how scholarships have a real impact, are encouraged to get in touch with us – our contact details can be found on page 12.

In the meantime, I hope that you find this, the third edition of our new-look magazine, interesting and won't hesitate to let us have feedback and ideas for improvement.

**Professor Trudy Harpham**

Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

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# NEWS ROUND-UP

## NEW AWARD ADMINISTRATORS

We are delighted to welcome Sarah Fedorcio and Selina Hannaford to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission's Secretariat as Award Administrators. Sarah and Selina took up their posts in February 2007.



**Sarah Fedorcio**



**Selina Hannaford**

## NEW SELECTIONS FOR 2007

A total of 339 scholarships are being awarded for 2007 entry at UK universities. These can be broken down into the following categories of award:

209 **General Scholarships** for students to pursue Master's and PhD degrees.

60 **Commonwealth Fellowships**. These support the cost of up to six months' work in the United Kingdom for university staff in certain developing Commonwealth countries.

39 **Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholarships**. Candidates for this award are drawn from Higher Education institutions within certain developing countries.

31 **Split-site Doctorate Scholarships**. Available to those studying for a PhD in developing Commonwealth countries, these scholarships support attendance for one year at a UK university, under the joint supervision of a home country and a UK supervisor.

## EVALUATION SEMINAR AT CUMBERLAND LODGE

From 4th-6th May 2007 at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor, the Commission will be holding an event entitled 'Evaluating the impact of international scholarships'. The event, comprising presentations and discussion sessions, will feature a variety of speakers including Commissioners and representatives from the Institute of Development Studies, the World Bank Institute, the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC), the New Zealand Vice-Chancellor's Committee and the Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada

## CSC LAUNCHES NEW GENDER NETWORK

The Commission is pleased to announce the launch of the latest Professional Network – the Gender network. The aim of this network is to facilitate discussion amongst those connected with the CSC who are affected by issues of gender, particularly our female academic award holders, to enable them to share ideas and experiences and enhance career progression. The Gender newsletter covers current news and reports, forthcoming international events and conferences, as well as publications and education. The network was launched at the 'Gender and Career Development' event at Cumberland Lodge at the end of March 2007 (see page 10). To join the network, visit <http://www.csfp-online.org/alumni>

## FORTHCOMING ALUMNI EVENT IN KENYA

Professor Tim Unwin, one of our Commonwealth Scholarship Commissioners, will be visiting Kenya in May 2007. He is planning to hold an event for Kenyan alumni and Distance Learning Scholars on 28th May at the Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi. As well as former scholars, we are hoping to host representatives from the British High Commission, the Department for International Development, the British Council and key Kenyan figures. Further details will be made available shortly to Kenyan alumni and scholars.

## OBSERVANCE FOR COMMONWEALTH DAY, 12TH MARCH 2007

On a bright spring afternoon, Westminster Abbey hosted the thirtieth annual Commonwealth Day observance. In the presence of Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, dignitaries from all corners of the Commonwealth were treated to a colourful celebration of the values and principles laid out in the six affirmations central to the Commonwealth community.

This year's theme of 'Respecting difference, promoting understanding' aimed to cross religious boundaries by bringing together the Commonwealth

and fostering its distinctive character. Keynote speakers included Anne Gallagher, a nurse who has witnessed the Northern Ireland Troubles at first-hand, and Indian actress Shilpa Shetty. The South African tenor Sphiwo Ntsebe filled the Abbey with a medley of traditional African songs and all enjoyed a collaborative performance of 'A New Life' by Embaire International and the Asian Dance Group. Several Commonwealth Scholars and Secretariat staff attended the service.

## MEETING TO DISCUSS SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), in partnership with the CSC, is holding an evening discussion meeting considering the impact and the future of scholarships. The meeting, on Tuesday 3rd July at 6.30 pm, will have a panel of distinguished speakers from various fields, reflecting on the work of the Commission and other scholarship bodies. Attendance is free and open to all, and details of the event will be publicised on the RCS website: <http://www.rcsint.org/events>

## CANADA EXTENDS SUPPORT

Canada has confirmed continuing support for the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) until at least 2011. The announcement, in January, came following a period of review of several scholarship programmes by the Treasury Board. One of the most immediate implications of the new support was the introduction, on an experimental basis, of a new strand of postdoctoral Fellowships for UK citizens to work at Canadian universities. In another new initiative, Canada has announced support for a new history of the CSFP, to be published in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary in 2009.

## COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS XI V RHODES SCHOLARS XI CRICKET MATCH

The 5th Annual Commonwealth XI v Rhodes XI cricket match will be held in late June/early July at the Oxford University Graduate Club cricket ground, and we are currently looking for players for this year's squad. We want as many enthusiastic people as possible, so please get in touch even if you have limited experience or are a bit rusty! If you are interested, please email the captain, Tanzil Rahman, at [tanzil.rahman@hertford.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tanzil.rahman@hertford.ox.ac.uk). Players and spectators are welcome to bring partners, families and friends, to enjoy a spot of quintessentially English summer fun.

We are also keen to start up a women's cricket team. If you would be interested in playing, please contact Sarah Humphreys at [sarah.humphreys@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:sarah.humphreys@cscuk.org.uk) for further details.

# SCHOLARS' NEWS

## WELCOME DAY 2006

Over 250 new scholars and fellows attended the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) Welcome Programme at Westminster Central Hall on 13th November 2006. Laurence Haddad, Director of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, opened the morning session with a speech on the theme of capacity building. Afternoon sessions were on a variety of themes, including brain drain, corruption, and science and technology.



**Commonwealth Scholars** in one of the afternoon breakout sessions

The evening reception, held at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was attended by representatives from a wide range of Commonwealth organisations, High Commissions, governments and universities. Lord Triesman of Tottenham, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and Dr Kim Howells, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, both addressed the gathering.

Dr Sujit Dutta, a Commonwealth Fellow at the University of Nottingham, felt that the Welcome Day 'was a pleasant experience... which offered us opportunities to meet personally those important CSC and British Council people. It gave us a ready scope to come in contact with the scholars and fellows from different member countries of the Commonwealth. To me, it appeared to be a Commonwealth family get-together'.



(l-r) **Gladys Young** (Commonwealth Scholar), **Professor Trudy Harpham** (Chair of the CSC), **Ransford Smith** (Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General), and **Shaun DeSouza** (Commonwealth Scholar)

## SEASONAL SOCIAL EVENT

Around 30 London-based Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows joined members of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission's Secretariat at Woburn House on 13th December 2006 for an informal seasonal social gathering. The event was a chance for CSC Awards Administrators and award holders to celebrate the end of term – and the festive season – together. Scholars and fellows even had the opportunity to experience British Christmas traditions such as mince pies, mulled wine and the pulling of Christmas crackers!



**Ly Loong**, 2006 Commonwealth Scholar from Malaysia, enjoys a mince pie with Commonwealth Awards Administrator, **Sabina Ebbols**

## ANCIENT SPACES ONLINE

In addition to his doctoral studies, Michael Griffin (Commonwealth Scholar, DPhil in Classics, University of Oxford) has created a website which aims to bring his field of study to the attention of the public. [www.ancientspaces.com](http://www.ancientspaces.com) 'aims to create an interactive, accessible 3D simulation of ancient society and culture on the Internet, ratified by academia and open to the public.' Although Ancient Spaces is still in its early stages, the contributors aim to develop a software package which will allow interactive engagement with the Greek and Roman worlds and simultaneous interaction with other players, for educational applications. He feels that global media such as the internet and interactive entertainment 'offer an instrument for tackling global challenges' and are 'an avenue for reaching today's young people'. Michael hopes to combine his love of Classics with the use of digital media upon his return to Canada and feels

that other academics should consider this option, and 'embrace this medium's opportunities for student-driven education'.



**Michael Griffin**, 2006 Commonwealth Scholar from Canada

## ACADEMIC FELLOW TAKES UP ADVISORY POSITION

Professor Mangala De Zoysa (Commonwealth Fellow, University of Bangor) has been appointed as an Advisor to the Water Retention by Land Use (WaReLa) project, following an invitation to attend a workshop on 'Results and exchange of experiences of the WaReLa Project', held at the University of Trier, Germany, in November 2006. The WaReLa Project is a European Community initiative, which supports transnational cooperation among the member states of Germany, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Austria, and the UK. Professor De Zoysa, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka, comments that 'the WaReLa project is presently of the view that the implementation of the sustainable management of land, forest and water resources by the European Community should include initiatives within the EU as well as EU-sponsored activities in Third World countries through a mutually supportive approach for the sake of meeting new environmental needs and problems across the globe'.

## COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS RECEIVE RECOGNITION

M Asim Rehman Shaikh (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Power Electronics, Imperial College London) won the Best Research Poster award at the launch of the Energy Futures Lab at Imperial College. Many departments participated in this competition and the posters highlighted the institution's

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# IN YOUR OWN WORDS

research in a range of energy-related topics. The title of Asim's poster was 'Interface Technologies for Distributed Generation', which presented the future of electrical power networks; the emerging role of power electronics in interfacing the renewable energy technologies with main grids was



**Asim Rehman Shaikh,**  
2004 Commonwealth  
Scholar from Pakistan

underlined. Asim's research is in the application of smart power electronic devices to improve the quality and reliability in electric power networks; this technology will help fulfil the growing need for electric energy especially in the developing world.

Commonwealth Scholar Hukum Chandra (PhD in Social Statistics, University of Southampton) was awarded the prestigious Student

Paper Competition Award at the 2006 Joint Statistical Meetings in Seattle, USA in August 2006. The Joint Statistical Meetings are sponsored by the leading statistical societies of the United States and Canada and are considered the pre-eminent North American statistical meetings of the year. Hukum was awarded the prize for his research work on 'Small Area Estimation for Business Surveys'. His research is focused on the development of small area estimation techniques in survey sampling.



**Hukum Chandra,** 2004  
Commonwealth Scholar from India

## ASSESSING THE STATE OF THE WORLD

**Zinta Zommers,** (Commonwealth Scholar, DPhil in Virology of Wildlife, University of Oxford) has been working on the United Nations Global Environment Outlook (GEO-4)

Report. Here she describes the challenges and rewards of this invaluable experience.

2007 is an important year for the environment.

It is a year for reflection. It marks the 20th

anniversary of the

release of Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report, by the World Commission on Environment and Development.

This report is well known for popularising the term 'sustainable development'. The report challenges policymakers to acknowledge the needs of future generations, and to consider environmental, economic, and social factors when solving global problems.

Aptly, this year will see the release of a bevy of environmental reports. In September, the United Nations Environment Programme will release a major assessment of the world's environment: the Global Environment Outlook. This report reviews the state of the world's atmosphere, water, land and biodiversity. It will also be one of the first assessments to make predictions on the state of the environment and human development in the next hundred years. It is clear that while commitments to sustainable development have been made, to date real progress has been minimal. From climate to biodiversity, the situation is bleak. Human beings stand at a crossroads. Barely into the twenty-first century, our activities are on a collision course with the environment's ability to sustain us.

During the past two years, I have had the pleasure of working on the Global Environment Outlook. By chance, a former Commonwealth Scholar from India is one of my supervisors. Hundreds of scientists have participated in the writing of the report. As one of the youngest authors, my professionalism, research abilities and writing skills have all been tested. I have learned a great deal about the United Nations, and about the challenges of consensus. Before publication, the report must pass a series of expert reviews and must meet government approvals. While this process strengthens the report, authors tread a delicate tightrope.

**The 'environment' is where we live; and development is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable.**

**Gro Harlem Brundtland,**

*Our Common Future, 1987*

A government can object to statements that depict its country negatively. Our chapter included discussion of an illegal wildlife trade. The government in question responded that references to the trade should be removed. It stated that the trade was 'banned' and therefore did not occur.

Despite these challenges, I am still a firm believer in the United Nations, in the necessity of global environmental reports and in the ability of the UN to bring about change. The United Nations is also a wonderful mechanism to

generate dialogue between people from around the world. I remember hearing a woman from Kuwait describe water shortages before an audience in Nairobi, Kenya. She was followed by a delegate from Uruguay who described logging practices in South America. In an era when debate about global challenges is often polarised, or non-existent, such discussions are invaluable.

My generation grew up with countless satellite images of our planet. Embedded in our psyche is a picture of a single bright blue sphere, life in the dead expanse of space. During the past twenty years, we have been encouraged to look at Earth. Now we must learn to share the fruits of life among all the members of our collective community, and with future generations. One thing is clear: solutions to global environmental problems are difficult to find. I hope that other Commonwealth Scholars will contribute to the debate and shape a sustainable future. 2008 is the International Year of Planet Earth. Let's make it a year of change!



**Zinta Zommers,** 2005 Commonwealth Scholar from Canada, at a GEO-4 meeting

# COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS LOOK TO THE FUTURE



The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in two years' time – but how should the occasion be marked? **John Kirkland** reports on some positive proposals from Commonwealth Education Ministers.

Commonwealth Scholarships are gearing up to celebrate their fiftieth birthday in style – and Education Ministers are determined to play their part. These were the clear messages from the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CEEM), held in Cape Town from December 11th-14th 2006.

For those who are not aware of its history, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) was formally established at the first Education Ministers' Conference, held in Oxford in 1959, although the idea had been mooted at the Commonwealth Trade Ministers' Conference, held the previous year in Montreal, reflecting a strong Canadian influence. The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), which manages the United Kingdom's contribution to the international Plan, was also established in 1959. The first cohort of Commonwealth Scholars took up their awards the following year.



**Agency and CSC representatives** at the meeting in Stellenbosch, December 2006

Progress since that time has been spectacular. Almost 25,000 individuals to date have held Commonwealth Scholarships or Fellowships. Around 15,000 of these have held their awards in the United Kingdom, which undertook to be the largest contributor at the 1959 meeting, and has maintained its commitment ever since. In total, however, Commonwealth Awards have been held in over twenty countries, with funding from the hosts in each case.

As the fiftieth anniversary approaches, the level of these commitments shows no sign of declining. A report on CSFP activity over the past three years, presented to Ministers, showed that the number of new awards had averaged 677 during the period, representing a 47% increase on the average figure of 460 for the four years reported at the previous conference, in Edinburgh in 2003. The number of students on award showed a similar rise. The 1,560 reported for the past year was also 47% higher than that reported at Edinburgh, and represented the eighth highest in the Plan's history. Once again the United Kingdom was the largest single contributor, having diversified its provision through substantial increases in distance learning, and the introduction of professional fellowships. Contributions to the expansion of the Plan came from throughout the Commonwealth, however. New Zealand and India registered particularly significant increases. Ghana, Malta, Botswana and Mauritius were amongst those showing as host countries for the first time in many years, whilst the total number of hosts during the period reached fourteen – exactly in line with the ambitious target set in Edinburgh.

The positive indications were not confined to figures, with several countries actively confirming the value of the scholarships in the survey. Several commented on the capacity of former award holders to take up influential roles on their return home. Malawi, for example, spoke of alumni taking up key positions in the sectors where they work, and Ghana observed that former award holders have 'contributed immensely to the socio-economic needs of the country', noting that most were employed in the civil and public service. Others remarked that the awards were amongst the most prestigious available to their citizens.





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*South African schoolchildren sing the national anthem at **the opening of the Conference***

Against this background, the challenge facing Ministers was how to build on these achievements – to ensure not only that more individuals benefit from the Plan, but that it has maximum impact for their countries, and the wider Commonwealth. After a positive debate, a number of proposals were agreed to achieve this.

First, member governments agreed to strive to increase further the number of awards available, setting a target of 2009 students being on award by the 2009 anniversary year. Implementation of this proposal, as with all CSFP awards, will rest with individual host countries, but many made positive indications of intent, with South Africa announcing that it will start hosting awards. Since the conference too, there has been good news as Canada, whose government had been considering its future participation in the Plan as part of a general review of scholarship programs, has confirmed its budget for the next five years.

The conference also recognised that the governance of the CSFP could be improved. Since its establishment, the Plan has operated on a bilateral basis, with relationships existing primarily between individual home and host countries, and with relatively little central coordination. In some ways, this has been an outstanding success. It has enabled scholarships to develop with a minimum of administrative cost, and ensured that relationships have remained close to local needs. On the other hand, the lack of a central administration has perhaps led the scheme to lack coordination, and meant that no-one has been on hand to encourage new hosts to join the scheme, and promote the Commonwealth Scholarships 'brand' on a global scale. The international CSFP website, which was established by the United Kingdom with cooperation from other agencies four years ago but often lacks updates from some countries, and the future development of tracer studies were cited as other examples of activities that could be progressed through a central facility.

Ministers decided to recognise this need by requesting the Commonwealth Secretariat to facilitate the establishment of a small facility to give support to national agencies, and to assist them with the general promotion of the Plan.

It was stressed that these activities would not replace such agencies, but should provide additional support. An offer from the Association of Commonwealth Universities to contribute to the staffing of such a facility was also welcomed.

Perhaps the most significant proposal in the long term was that the fiftieth anniversary be marked by the creation of a new endowment, to support the establishment of Commonwealth Scholarships hosted by developing countries. This would be very much a 'first' for the CSFP – the first time it has sought to raise funds directly, and the first time that any resources have been held centrally.

Raising such a fund would be a challenge, and it was recognised that this should be a 'one-off' activity to mark the anniversary, rather than an ongoing one. The advantages, however, could be significant. Scholarships in developing countries are relatively cheap, and play an important role in developing the distinctive international character of the Plan. They will also be increasingly popular as those countries develop their range of courses, particularly on subjects that reflect local specialisations. The ability of the Plan to 'co-fund' awards with national hosts would be a significant encouragement.

Other proposals to be approved include a major conference to mark the anniversary, stronger collaboration over alumni activity and the development of Commonwealth-wide professional networks for the CSFP 'community', perhaps building on the networks already established by the United Kingdom. These latter proposals remind us that, although stronger central support will help the Plan make maximum impact, much can also be achieved through greater cooperation between the national agencies themselves. This potential was further seen when, in the days before the Ministers' conference, representatives from fifteen such countries met in nearby Stellenbosch to compare their own experiences. As well as endorsing proposals for Ministers, those attending the meeting agreed that more could be done to clarify administrative procedures, produce common materials and even exchange staff.

The overall impression of the CSFP to emerge from the meetings was that of a confident, prestigious and established scheme, well known and regarded by those at the highest levels of government. The question now is how far these strengths can be built on to make our anniversary year one to remember. By their decisions in Cape Town, Ministers have shown their willingness to lead the way.



**Commonwealth Education Ministers** in Cape Town

# ALUMNI IN ACTION

## Alumni News

### ALUMNUS HOSTS INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE CONFERENCE

Dr Jagtar Singh (Commonwealth Fellow, Loughborough University, 1992-1993) organised the 23rd International Conference of the Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science (IATLIS) from 23rd-25th November 2006. Seventy-five delegates from India, Pakistan, the UK and the USA participated in the conference, and a seminar on the theme 'Building curriculum with a difference: a Vision of LIS Education in the 21st Century' was also held. Dr Singh is a Professor in Library and Information Science at Punjabi University, Patiala, India, and has been elected as a Standing Committee Member of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) for the period 2006-2008.

### FORMER FELLOW ORGANISES MEDICAL HISTORY CONFERENCE



Dr Achintya Kumar Dutta (Commonwealth Fellow, SOAS, 2002-2003) is currently a Reader in the Department of History at the University of Burdwan, West Bengal, India and was involved in organising an international conference for his department. The

conference, on 'Epidemics in South Asian History: A Review of Medical, Political and Social Responses' took place from 7th-9th November 2006, in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust and the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London, and was well-received by students and faculty members.

### ALUMNUS ARRANGES RETREAT FOR COLLEAGUES

Dr Bavita Asthir (Commonwealth Fellow, Scottish Agricultural College, 1999-2000), currently working as a Biochemist at the Department of Biochemistry and Chemistry, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, India, is actively engaged in meditation programmes conducted by the Vishvas Foundation. In March 2006, Dr Asthir organised a meditation retreat, including a free camp and lectures, at her university for faculty, staff and others.

Through the Foundation, she has also been involved in providing free education to children aged 5 to 15 and supporting orphanages, girls' colleges, and a host of senior secondary schools.

## In Brief

### AWARDS AND CAREER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr H S Coperahewa (Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholarship, MA in Language Studies, Lancaster University, 2003-2004) was promoted to the grade of Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sinhala, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2005. At the same time, he applied to the University of Cambridge for his doctoral studies and was offered a Cambridge Commonwealth Trust scholarship and an Overseas Research Students award. Mr Coperahewa is currently studying at Cambridge for his PhD in South Asian Studies.

Dr Elizabeth Egbochuku (Commonwealth Fellow, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2002-2003) has been elected as a congregation representative to the University of Benin Senate, for an initial period of two academic sessions from October 2006. She was also appointed, by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, as Assistant Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies from July 2006.

Dr Kodira A Kushalapa (Commonwealth Scholar, MSc in Forestry, University of Edinburgh, 1970-72) has retired from his post as Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of India, and is now Chairman of the Kodagu Model Forest Trust, established for the sustainable management of forests.

Dr Peter D Maynard (Commonwealth Scholar, LL.M, University of Cambridge, 1976-1979) has been appointed Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of The Bahamas.

Professor Andrew T S Wee (Commonwealth Fellow, University of Oxford, 1996-1997) was appointed Head of Department of Physics, National University of Singapore, from July 2006 for 3 years.

Dr N T Yaduraju (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Agricultural Science, University of Reading, 1981-1984) is currently working as a National Coordinator for the World Bank-funded National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP). Previously, Dr Yaduraju worked as Director, National Research Centre for Weed Science (NRCWS) at Jabalpur, India, from 2000-2005.

## Alumni Events

### ALUMNI AND DISTANCE LEARNING EVENT AT THE ZAMBIAN HIGH COMMISSION

On 28th March 2007, Professor Ann Floyd (Commonwealth Scholarship Commissioner) and Alistair Harrison (British High Commissioner to Zambia) co-hosted a reception for Zambian alumni and Distance Learning Scholars studying Health Promotion and Environmental Health at Chainama College of Health Sciences, Zambia and Leeds Metropolitan University, UK. Representatives from the Department for International Development, the British Council and Zambian universities also attended.

Some alumni had travelled quite a distance to attend, keen to chat about their work. One alumnus, Professor Richard Siaciwena, has made a significant impact as Director of the Directorate of Distance Education at the University of Zambia.

The High Commissioner spoke about the importance of the Commonwealth and his personal experience of taking a distance learning course. Professor Floyd talked about the recent diversification of the Commission's schemes and how distance learning makes an immediate difference, as people study while in employment. Professor Floyd noted the impact this had upon the Chainama Scholars, who were buzzing with ideas!



**Ann Floyd and Alistair Harrison** (second from right) with guests at the event

### KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please keep us informed of your news, such as significant research, new senior appointment, major publication or national honour or award. We also welcome feedback on any aspect of this publication. You can get in touch by email: [comments@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:comments@cscuk.org.uk) or you can write to:

### **Sarah Humphreys,** **Alumni Development Officer**

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We appreciate all your feedback and contributions, although it may not always be possible for us to include all your news, due to the amount of space available on these pages.



# IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Two Kenyan alumni discuss how their Commonwealth Scholarships became life-changing experiences – one through spending time in the UK, and the other through distance learning.

## THE LONG ROAD TO A PHD: CHOICES, CHANGES OR CHANCES

**Geoffrey Mbugua Wango** (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Counselling and Policy, University of Birmingham, 2003-2006) describes how his experience of life and study in the UK set him on an unexpected career path in his home country of Kenya.

I arrived in the UK during the Iraq war, at a time when the media was preoccupied with issues between the British Government and the BBC. What could this battle tell me about the dangers of political influence and the independence of journalism? I watched parliamentary sessions and was fascinated by Tony Blair's convictions, rather than whether he was right or wrong on several issues. I was both surprised and fascinated by the demonstrations held during the visit of American President George Bush, to London.

I saw that democracy is not one-sided; you can agree to disagree and air your views independently. This was an inspiration, coming from a developing country like Kenya where political and free speech was only just gaining prominence.

**I was overwhelmed by the changes that I experienced in thought, learning and understanding.**

*Geoffrey Mbugua Wango*

As all this was going on, I was busy working on first year PhD assignments. But my focus in life had slowly changed and for the first time, I started seriously thinking about joining politics as a way of influencing policy. By the time I went to Kenya for fieldwork, the die was cast. I knew what I wanted to do in the near future – to go out and change the life of the people in my

home country. To me, politics does not have to be about 'haves' and 'have nots'; it can be about improving the lives of the people.

As I completed my PhD, I was overwhelmed by the changes that I experienced in thought, learning and understanding. I learnt a lot about counselling, education and administration, policy, research and the use of information technology in schools. I interacted with many students of different nationalities, learnt a lot about the diplomatic nature of the English language, and most of all I had a chance to reflect on my future career.

Someone reading this will ask, what is the road to acquiring a PhD? PhD study is not just about the immense information available in this age (though this should be a greater part of it); it is about how knowledge can effectively transform us as people, or enable us to improve the lives of others. It was a long road to freedom of the mind and it was worth the journey!

## OPENING UP NEW PATHS

**Lucy Mburu Waruguru** was a Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholar at the University of Sunderland, UK (2004-2007). Here, she discusses the inspiration for and the impact of her studies.

I was born and raised in Busia, a small town on the border of Kenya with Uganda. During my time at secondary school, computers were introduced and interested students had to pay additional fees to study the basics. I became fascinated by

computers but since my parents could not afford the fees I was forced to forego this particular 'luxury'. Instead I directed my interest in music and later studied for my Bachelor's degree in Music at Maseno University.

**I am now better placed to aid my students and my country as a whole.**

*Lucy Mburu Waruguru*

Upon graduation I began teaching music at a secondary school, where I also studied computer packages and began teaching lessons in computing. Despite attaining first class honours in my degree, I was unable to pursue a Master's degree in Music immediately, since I had to work full-time. I then learned of the Commonwealth Scholarships offered to students. I applied at once and was lucky enough to receive a scholarship to study for an MSc in Computer Based Information Systems through distance learning. I was glad to

learn that the lessons were offered on Saturdays at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) since I would be able to continue with my work during the week, then travel on Fridays to attend my classes.

During my studies I have observed that these scholarships have helped many bright and needy students to pursue further education and hence improve their careers and lives, and those of others. I myself would not have imagined, three years before, that my next graduation would be in a MSc in Computer Based Information Systems! I found the study challenges intriguing. The course has provided me with a lot of valuable computing knowledge and skills, and my approach to planning and teaching has also improved considerably. I now find myself effectively teaching concepts that I previously did not think my students would understand.

I have never once regretted taking the course, as I always knew how valuable it would be to my future. I am now aspiring to join the University as a Tutorial Fellow and possibly proceed to PhD study, so that I can become a lecturer. I am positive that the degree will advance my teaching career and I am now better placed to aid my students and my country as a whole.



*Lucy Mburu Waruguru*

# PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS AND EVENTS

## GOVERNANCE ALUMNI NETWORK CONFERENCE

**Justin Foxworthy** reports on the third annual conference, held at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICwS) in London.

In association with the ICwS and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission hosted the third annual conference for the Alumni Network on Governance. Central to this year's conference, entitled 'Governance in the Commonwealth: Respecting Difference, Promoting Understanding', was the contrast between the unprecedented exchange of commerce, culture and ideas binding us together and the increasing levels of inequality and poverty within and between nations that can give rise to tensions and conflicts.

Coinciding with Commonwealth Day, the conference brought together current Commonwealth Scholars and established professionals from the Commonwealth Secretariat, academia and civil society in order to celebrate the cultural, social and political uniqueness of the Commonwealth. The themes and issues discussed included human rights, tolerance and understanding, economic development, migration and identity, conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery, and good governance across the Commonwealth.

The conference opened with a panel discussion on advancing human rights in the Commonwealth. Following the panel, an evening reception marked the Commonwealth Secretariat's release of the Model Human Rights Curriculum for Commonwealth Universities and Law Schools. At the reception, Rabab Fatima and Jolyon Ford, from the Secretariat's Human Rights Unit, thanked the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) for its efforts in helping to

create the document and commented on the importance of mainstreaming human rights in education throughout the Commonwealth.

The event's second day covered a wide range of issues from a variety of perspectives. However, a loose consensus began to emerge around the importance of the need to build connections between people. Complex issues of identity, cultural difference, economic growth and equality are best dealt with through mutual understanding and respect among communities. That evening a second reception and dinner commemorated the third anniversary of the Governance Alumni Network.



A session at **the Governance conference**

The final day of the event included panels on peace and security and the need for balance between individual rights with collective action. Delegates discussed the need to strengthen structures, processes and mechanisms to enable the constructive management of differences and promote effective political and social engagement. This brought to the fore the real strengths of the Commonwealth: its ethos of equality and governance by deliberation and consensus, which are central to promoting understanding among people and advancing human rights.

## GENDER AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT EVENT

**Sarah Humphreys** describes the launch of the Gender network.

Over fifty Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, both current and former, attended the 'Gender and Career Development' seminar at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor from 23rd-25th March 2007. This event marked the launch of the newest CSC network – the Gender network.

Friday evening began with a presentation by Dorothy Garland of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, on the findings of the report *Still A Single Sex Profession*, which considered gender and career development issues within Commonwealth universities. Celia Brackenbridge gave an insight into Through the Glass Ceiling, an organisation which supports women working in higher education. This session provoked enthusiastic questions and debate, and set the tone for a lively weekend.

The programme on Saturday comprised of sessions led by different speakers. Peter Reader, Director of Marketing and Communications at the University of

Bath, guided students through the process of communicating their research to the media. Steff Hazlehurst, Deputy Chair of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA), gave practical advice on compiling successful funding applications.

Current Scholars Sohela Nazneen, Henrietta Abane and Betty Dlamini, along with Fellow Dr Kiran Prasad, spoke about gender issues in both their academic and personal experience. Faisal Notta, Deborah Madsen, Indu Grover, Audrey Benn and Samantha Naidu spoke from an alumni perspective, giving insights into gender issues they have encountered in the workplace and their strategies for dealing with them.

On Saturday evening, Angela Glasner, former Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Portsmouth and ex-Chair of Through the Glass Ceiling, joined a panel of Scholars and alumni to answer the question: 'What would I do if I were Minister for Equal Opportunities?' After an excellent session, which was entertaining but dealt with serious issues, a mock election was held and Angela Glasner won the day with her manifesto to champion equal rights.



Participants at **the Gender and Career Development seminar**

The weekend finished with Scholars attending a service at the Royal Chapel in Windsor, where HRH Queen Elizabeth II was also present. The event was a great success and could easily have continued long past Sunday, due to the enthusiasm of all participants. We are sure this enthusiasm will continue across the new Gender network.



# COUNTRY PROFILE – New Zealand

In the first of a series of articles on how the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) operates throughout the Commonwealth, **Kiri Manuera**, of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee, reviews recent developments in New Zealand.

New Zealand has supported Commonwealth Scholarships since their inception in 1959. At present, scholarships to Commonwealth developing countries are funded through the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZ Aid). Funding for scholarships to developed Commonwealth countries comes from New Zealand's universities themselves. Administration for both schemes is provided by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC), which also maintains regular contact with the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK and other national agencies.

Eligible developing countries are determined annually by NZ Aid, in accordance with current developmental objectives. These vary according to geographical region, but focus on areas such as leadership and governance, economics, environment, education, health, agriculture, human rights and gender, trade and development, and tourism. NZ Aid provides annual funding of NZ\$1.5 million to the scheme, in addition to the contribution from universities to scholarships for Canada and the United Kingdom.

The total number of Commonwealth Scholars that have studied in New Zealand now numbers over 650, including 61 students currently holding awards. The most recent Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers heard that New Zealand was one of the countries to have increased support in recent years. This reflects a doubling of the funding to the scheme, which was approved by ministers in 2004.

New Zealanders have also benefited from Commonwealth Scholarships abroad, and particularly in the United Kingdom. Amongst the many who have returned to develop successful careers in New Zealand are:

- The Hon Dr Michael Cullen (PhD in History, University of Edinburgh, 1968-1971), Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand; Minister of Finance; Minister of Tertiary Education
- Vincent O'Sullivan (BLitt in English, University of Oxford, 1960-1962), author
- Dr Eru Woodbine Pomare, d.1995 (MD in Bileacid Metabolism, University of Bristol, 1971-1975), former Dean of the Wellington School of Medicine; campaigner for improved Maori health
- Dr James Buwalda, (MPhil in Biological Science, Rothamsted Research (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council), 1980-1983), Chief Executive of Department of Labour; former Chief Executive of the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology
- Professor Jonathan Boston (DPhil in Government Studies, University of Oxford, 1980-1983), Professor of Public Policy; Deputy Director of the Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington

Commonwealth Scholarships for UK citizens wishing to study in New Zealand are normally advertised in January, with a closing date in March or April, for take-up at the start of the following year. Further details can be obtained from the New Zealand section of the CSFP website at <http://www.csfp-online.org>

## CURRENT SCHOLARS

**Jennifer Infanti**, from Canada:

I am a social anthropologist studying the various ways children make meaning or sense of their experiences of family violence in Palmerston



*Jennifer Infanti on right*

North, New Zealand. There seemed to be many opportunities to participate in research in New Zealand with exciting practical applications for social change. I also chose New Zealand because of its reputation for spectacular geography and friendly people; in both respects, I have not been disappointed. One of the greatest benefits of the Commonwealth Scholarship for me has been the opportunity to make friends with many students from around the world.

**Daan Steenkamp** from South Africa:

I have been pursuing a Master's degree in Economics at the University of Auckland. Auckland is an incredibly multicultural city and studying in New Zealand has exposed me to a diverse range of views on development economics and life in general. Apart from studying, I have worked as an intern at the NZ Reserve Bank, which provided me with practical experience of econometric modelling and the inner workings of a central bank. I have also done much travelling in Australasia.



*Daan Steenkamp*

**Manjula Weerasekera** from Sri Lanka

I am a lecturer attached to the Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. At present I am studying for a PhD in the Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, at the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Otago University. Our group is mainly working on dental caries and dental plaque microcosms. My research is on dental caries and the role of yeast on caries, which mostly includes molecular biology. New Zealand is a great place to live and study.

# ABOUT THE CSFP...

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) 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 at <http://www.csfp-online.org>

We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of Commonwealth Scholarships News. If you have any feedback, 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:

[comments@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:comments@cscuk.org.uk)

#### **Commonwealth Scholarships News**

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**The Association  
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