

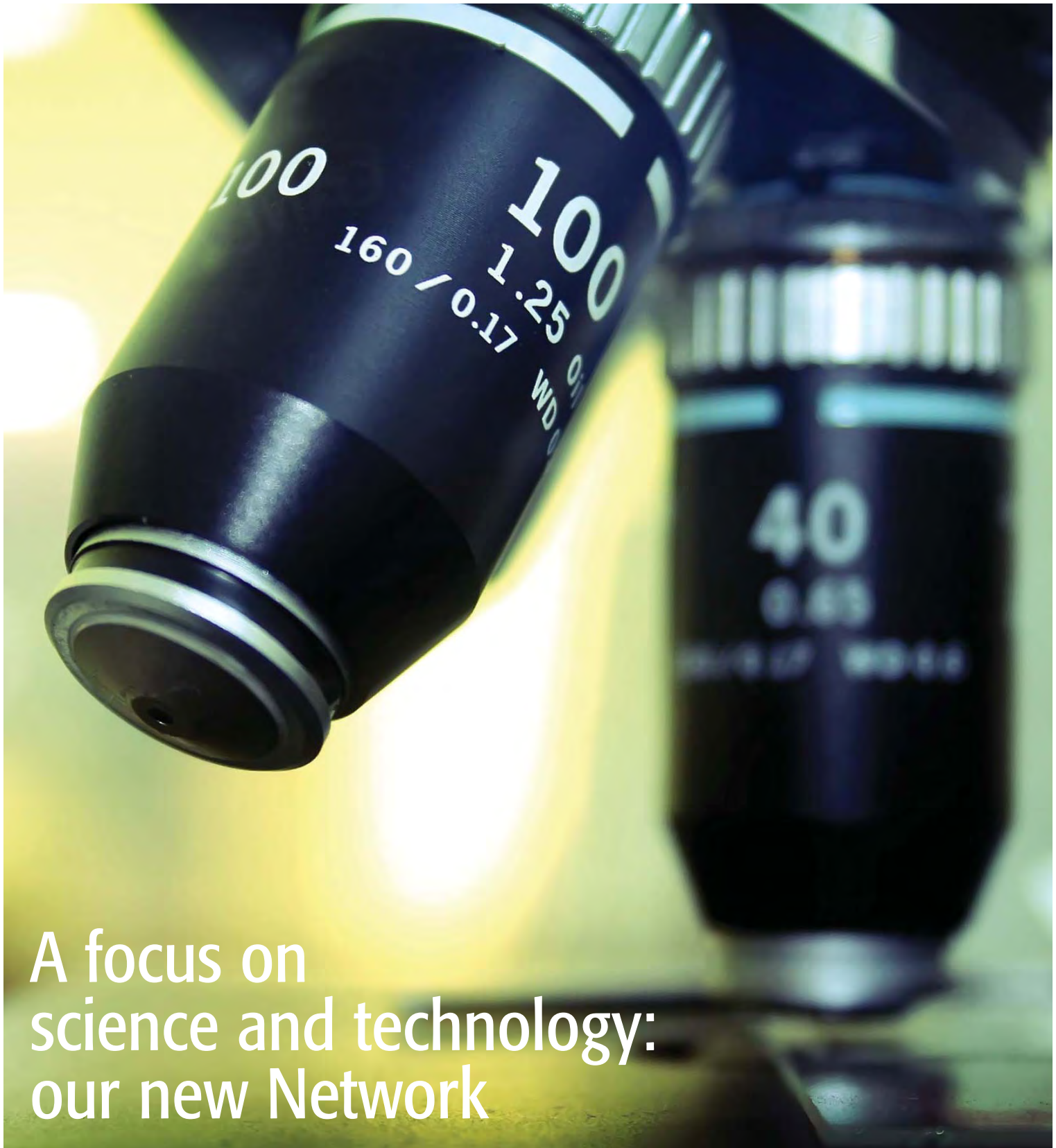


COMMONWEALTH  
SCHOLARSHIPS

# NEWS

Promoting learning, development and co-operation

Issue 5  
January 2008



A focus on  
science and technology:  
our new Network

LAUNCH OF NEW S&T NETWORK • COUNTRY PROFILE - UGANDA • NEWS ROUND-UP  
SCHOLARS' NEWS • ALUMNI IN ACTION • WELCOME DAY 2007

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I am very pleased to be given the chance to launch our new Professional Network on science and technology. The words 'science and technology' cover a very wide remit of different subject areas such as those underpinning sciences of biotechnology to therapeutic drug development through fundamental physics to engineering. Coupled with these are the core capabilities provided by the information technology era which have enabled so much of the development in S&T in recent years. All these areas have the potential to contribute to solving difficult and complex issues, including poverty reduction, either by developing cures to disease, finding more economical and greener ways to generate power or providing early warning of potentially devastating events such as storms, floods or even tsunamis. S&T also supports economic growth through bringing new solutions to the marketplace leading to the creation of local industries and associated employment.

This issue of *Commonwealth Scholarships News* provides insight into a diverse range of activities funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission which tackle these aims. These include improving food safety, modelling diabetes risks, utilising internet techniques to aid in controlling disease, providing geographical data on HIV occurrences and the more fundamental aspects of studying cellular mechanisms using novel luminescence techniques. It is very important, however, that those people who can innovate such new techniques interact and network with industries, government and those people who can finance S&T development, in order that such technologies and techniques can be turned into solutions to today's and tomorrow's problems. The full impact of advances in S&T can only be realised by disseminating results and putting them into practice – we hope that the new Science and Technology Network will assist these efforts.

**Dr Norman Geddes**  
Commonwealth Scholarship Commissioner

Commonwealth Scholarships News  
(formerly *Omnes*)

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# NEWS ROUND-UP

## Prime Minister announces boost for UK Commonwealth Scholarships

Funding for Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships for developing Commonwealth countries will receive a significant increase over the next three years, following an announcement by Gordon Brown, the British Prime Minister, at the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kampala.

The Prime Minister announced that funding would increase to £50.8 million in the three years from April 2008, a like-for-like increase of £6 million on the previous years. The funding, which will continue to come from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), includes provision for a new

programme of evaluation and continues the new strand of Distance Learning Scholarships announced by DFID in 2006.

The funding increase is to be phased over three years, with annual budgets of £15.93, £17.43 and £17.5 million respectively, which will allow the Commission time to phase in new initiatives. While much of the additional funding for 2008-2009 will be used to expand existing programmes, a strategic planning exercise will take place during the first six months of 2008 to examine the wider direction of our provision. Readers of Commonwealth Scholarship News are welcome to feed their own views into this process, and can do so by emailing [comments@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:comments@cscuk.org.uk)

Professor Trudy Harpham, Chair of the Commission, said that the new funding reflected increased recognition of the role that higher education and high-level training could play in achieving international development objectives. She said that Commissioners were pleased that DFID had found the additional funds, which in part reflected the

positive findings of an independent review of the Commission's work in early 2007. The fact that the funding had been announced by the Prime Minister personally was also welcome confirmation of the wider prestige and importance of the scheme, which it was hoped will be built on in the run up to its fiftieth anniversary in 2009.

In addition to support for Commonwealth Scholarships in developing countries, the Commission also receives support from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office for awards to citizens of those Commonwealth countries that do not qualify for assistance from DFID. It has recently been confirmed that this will remain stable at £2.05 million in the coming year, reflecting Britain's long-standing commitment that Commonwealth Scholarships should be available to citizens of all member states.

At the time of writing, decisions are still taking place on the precise allocation of budgets for the coming year. A full feature on this, and the background to the funding increase, will appear in the next issue.

## COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS FACEBOOK GROUP



Commonwealth Scholarships are now on Facebook! Michael Griffin, a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Oxford, has created a group on the Facebook networking website, with news, boards, and events for Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship holders and alumni. To join the group or to get more details about Facebook and register, visit the site [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for 'Commonwealth Scholars'.

Michael has also started an unofficial blog – 'Commonwealth Scholars Online' – inviting submissions, comments, and conversation from current and former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in the UK and across the world. To access the blog, visit <http://commonwealthscholars.wordpress.com>

## CURTIS FELLOW APPOINTMENT

Suzanne Lawrence has arrived in the UK from Canada on an 18-month assignment as the George Curtis Memorial Commonwealth Fellow. George



**Suzanne Lawrence,**  
*George Curtis Memorial Commonwealth Fellow*

Curtis established the Faculty of Law at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and was one of the founding fathers of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. Suzanne studied at UBC and Simon Fraser University and has come to Cambridge to work with

Dr Hilary Perraton, Deputy Chair of the Commission, on a history of the Plan. The work is based at the Von Hügel Institute of St Edmund's College, Cambridge and the intention is to produce the history in time for the Plan's 50th anniversary in 2009.

## WELCOME DAY 2007

Around 250 new Scholars and Fellows attended the 2007 Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Welcome Programme, held at Central Hall Westminster on 12 November. Professor Malcolm Gillies, Vice-Chancellor of City University and former Commonwealth Scholar, shared his experiences in his keynote speech on 'Britain, education and you'. Commissioners led themed sessions in the afternoon considering issues such as science and technology realisation and the role of universities in international development. In the evening, a reception was hosted at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by Jim Murphy MP, Minister for Europe and Public Diplomacy.



**Professor Trudy Harpham,** *Chair of the Commission, Jim Murphy, FCO Minister, and Scholars at the 2007 Welcome Day reception*

# SCHOLARS' NEWS

The fields of science and technology are becoming increasingly important as the need for significant new research to help turn existing knowledge into practical solutions becomes ever greater. Science and technology help to facilitate research in many subject areas, including agriculture, health and the environment. Here, some of our Commonwealth Scholars describe the work they are doing and the impact they hope it will have in their home countries.

## IMPROVING ANIMAL FOOD SAFETY

Aziwo Niba, a Commonwealth Scholar based at the University of Plymouth, is entering into the third year of his PhD in 'Fermented feed technology as a means of improving animal food safety in developing country animal agriculture'. This topic is particularly pertinent for Aziwo's native Cameroon, which is heavily dependent on its agricultural sector.

'For animal agriculture in developing countries, the implications of fermented feed technology as a means of improving animal food safety are only too obvious. It is biologically safe and simple to adopt, can fit into the small-scale animal production prevalent in such economies and more importantly it is affordable.' Upon his return to Cameroon, Aziwo will be heavily



**Aziwo Niba,**  
Commonwealth Scholar  
from Cameroon

involved in capacity building and training at the University of Dschang. He hopes to improve public awareness of science by helping target groups to understand the scientific basis of food safety, healthy animal foods and production methods. Aziwo wishes to focus on the ever-increasing 'need for bridging the knowledge gap as one of the key variables underpinning human health and development. Obviously, forming a network of stakeholders who can effectively reflect on ways and means of communicating health-promoting agricultural science and products to the public in a way that will be understood and appreciated will be very vital to this goal'.

## INTERNET TOOLS TO HELP CONTROL INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Canadian Commonwealth Scholar Andrea Wang is currently working towards a DPhil in International Relations at the University of Oxford, with a focus on the role of internet monitoring technologies in relation to the International Health Regulations (IHR), a legally binding set of rules governing the international community's efforts to control the spread of infectious diseases. Andrea has been examining the role of the World Health Organisation (WHO), which has developed innovative internet tools that have fundamentally changed international disease surveillance. Two such mechanisms are the Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases

(ProMED-mail), which enables people to exchange information about outbreaks of infectious disease, and the Global Public Health Information Network (GPHIN), which detects early warnings of disease outbreaks by monitoring, filtering and publishing



**Andrea Wang,**  
Commonwealth Scholar  
from Canada

relevant items from global media sources on a system accessible to fee-paying organisations with an established public health mandate. 'These new technologies significantly reduced the time it took for disease outbreaks to become public knowledge, and made it virtually impossible for governments to hide serious outbreaks within their borders. Such changes were critical in pushing forward the process of revising the IHR.'

## IMPROVING BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Liz New, a Chemistry PhD Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Durham, is working with her supervisor, Professor David Parker, on a project investigating lanthanide complexes as probes of cellular activity. 'The progress of biological research requires more sophisticated techniques for studying cells. My research group uses lanthanide metal



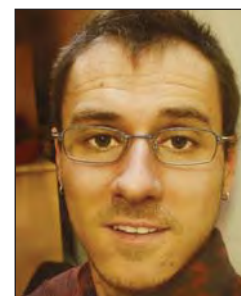
**Liz New,** Commonwealth  
Scholar from Australia

complexes which are luminescent – they emit light. When we look under a fluorescence microscope at cells treated with these chemicals, we can see their luminescence.' Liz hopes to make some important discoveries through the project, which is 'focussed on gaining an understanding of the ways in which these complexes interact with cells; for example, how they enter cells and move to various cellular locations. This should assist in designing chemicals with useful properties and applications'. In addition to her work at Durham, Liz has been able to further her knowledge of the interaction of metal complexes with cells by attending various

conferences, such as the International Conference on Biological Inorganic Chemistry in Vienna in July 2007, presenting a poster at the RSC Metals in Medicine conference in Durham in September 2007, and contributing to two papers which were published in Organic and Biomolecular Chemistry this year. In the future, Liz hopes to work in academia, continuing with research in biological chemistry; as a second year PhD student, she is excited about the challenges ahead: 'I look forward to the coming two years – and hopefully finding some answers to my questions!'

## LEADING THE WAY IN BIOMEDICINE

Having gained degrees in medicine, human genetics, applied mathematics and computational biology, Commonwealth Scholar Quin Wills decided to combine his areas of expertise when embarking upon his doctoral research. He is currently working with the Mathematical Genetics and Bioinformatics group at the University of Oxford, to 'better model type 2 diabetes risk using genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics and metabonomics (gene, protein and metabolic data)', using 'data derived from the largest



**Quin Wills,**  
Commonwealth Scholar  
from South Africa

such study done to date'. In line with his academic interests, Quin co-founded a D T I - f u n d e d biotechnology company which uses gene expression models developed from human cell cultures as alternatives to animal toxicity testing, the impact of which could hugely decrease the cost of drug development. Quin is grateful for the opportunities afforded to him by his Commonwealth Scholarship and, upon his return to South Africa, he hopes to be part of a world-class centre of excellence in the study of complex biomedicine, participate in the South African government's current strategy of infusing money into the biotechnology sector and improve international collaboration at an industrial and academic level. 'I see no reason why South Africa cannot have a reputation for leading biomedicine, and would like to be a part of it.'

You can send your feedback, news and views for inclusion in *Commonwealth Scholarships News* by email: [comments@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:comments@cscuk.org.uk)

# IN YOUR OWN WORDS

## THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) FOR HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE

**Peter Adebayo Idowu** (Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholar, PhD in Computer Science, Aston University) describes the motivations for his research into the topical issue of GIS for disease monitoring and the impact this will have on his home country, Nigeria.

The advent of information technology has changed almost everything we do in life. A Geographical Information System (GIS) is a computer-based information system that is used to capture, model, store, retrieve, share, process, manipulate, analyse and present geospatial data for the purpose of decision-making. GIS is a powerful tool in the management of geospatial referenced data and it has become a more common part of everyday life which is of interest to almost everybody – businessmen, engineers, government officers, and public health officers. GIS has been used by public health officers in developed nations (Europe, the United States and Canada) for disease surveillance, analysis, monitoring, and modelling, but Africa, which has high incidences of AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, has yet to employ GIS widely in the public health sector.

AIDS has become one of the most destructive epidemics both in developed and developing nations. Public health researchers, especially epidemiologists, are currently battling with this deadly disease. Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most affected regions in the world; however, computer-based information systems are not currently used across the region for controlling, monitoring and management of this epidemic.

My impetus for this research originated from a conference I attended sometime ago, where one of the presenters gave a statistical analysis of HIV/AIDS globally and in my country, Nigeria. A few months later, I was watching a programme on a popular television station in my country when the chairman of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) talked about AIDS. Since that time I have been thinking about how information technology can be used to manage, monitor and control the spread of this epidemic. Eventually, I came up with the idea of a web-based GIS capable system for HIV/AIDS epidemiological surveillance, which I am researching as my PhD topic.

As I was searching and reviewing literature in order to define the state of the art in the area of disease surveillance and modelling, I was fortunate to be awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship, which has given me this opportunity to research and undergo academic training at a world class university under the supervision of experts in computer science, GIS and statistics.

My research focuses on developing a web-based GIS epidemiological surveillance for monitoring, controlling and management of HIV/AIDS. One of the aims of this research is to develop a GIS web service which will allow interoperability with other systems and includes a novel inbuilt forecasting capacity. The system will be able to capture, analyse, manipulate and present geospatial referenced HIV/AIDS data for the purpose of monitoring and managing HIV/AIDS. When fully implemented, the system will assist authorised



*Peter Idowu, Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholar from Nigeria*

policymakers, government representatives and stakeholders in visualising, analysing, and forecasting the state of HIV/AIDS in any state in Nigeria. Due to some of the problems facing developing nations (most especially sub-Saharan Africa) in the deployment of ICT in the health sector, open source software will be used to minimise the cost of using the application. A particular challenge that needs to be addressed is how the design of the system can be optimised to ensure take-up in Nigeria.

**I was fortunate to be awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship, which has given me this opportunity to research and undergo academic training at a world class university under the supervision of experts in computer science, GIS and statistics.**

I am sure that the result of this research will be a useful tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa and Africa as a whole. With the application that will come out of this research, electronic monitoring and management of HIV/AIDS will be possible and HIV/AIDS data will be easily available, stored and maintained for research, public enquiries and decision-making. After the completion of my PhD, I hope to get a postdoctoral position to broaden my skills and knowledge in the fields of GIS, computing and health informatics.

## Have you joined one of our Professional Networks yet?

So far we have launched six Networks, in the following areas:

- Gender
- Health
- Education
- Governance, Civil Society and Community Development
- Environment
- Agriculture/Rural Development

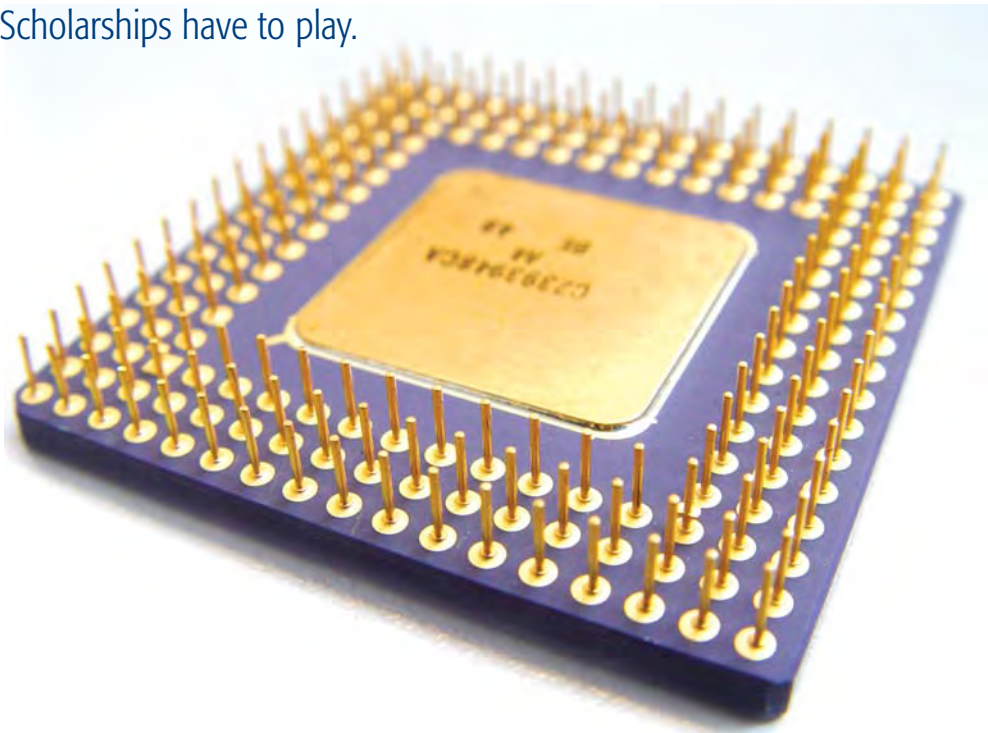
Our seventh Network on Science and Technology has just been launched (see page 10). We have forthcoming Networks planned on:

- Infrastructure and Urban Development
- Legal/Human Rights and Conflict Resolution
- Management, Communications and Business
- Economics and Public Finance

To sign up to any of the Professional Networks, visit [www.cscuk.org.uk/news/csc\\_prof\\_networks.asp](http://www.cscuk.org.uk/news/csc_prof_networks.asp)

# COMMONWEALTH COLLABORATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

The benefits of science and technology are well documented. **Dr Monica Darnbrough CBE**, Commonwealth Scholarship Commissioner, considers the role that Commonwealth Scholarships have to play.



All countries need science, and everyone benefits from its applications in medicine, agriculture and through technology and engineering. However, no individual country can afford to carry out all the scientific research it would like to do, so it is a field in which international collaboration is natural and necessary.

In the UK we have a big science community but we carry out only 5% of the world's research. Many countries are investing in new laboratories and science parks and in training more scientists and engineers. I have seen, first hand, fantastic facilities for bioscience research in India, Singapore, Canada and Australia and I know that there are many projects, there and elsewhere, in which British scientists are working with colleagues overseas. The UK Medical Research Council with the Department for International Development runs a laboratory in Gambia – a centre of excellence in Africa working on HIV, TB and malaria research. The Royal Society of Chemistry is just setting up a pan-Africa chemistry network, starting in Kenya, to provide teachers and researchers with access to research reports and data.

While there is competition between teams of scientists to be the first to make discoveries, there is collaboration too between research teams who are working in the same field, and they share experiences and techniques. Some countries have joined together to share enormous, expensive scientific equipment like telescopes and the accelerators used to explore the fundamental particles that make up atoms.

Scientists read about the work of researchers in other countries in scientific journals – some of which now cover very narrow specialisms. The availability of journals in libraries has been vital but we are now beginning to use online journals. Nothing

beats the opportunity to talk with other researchers who you know well. Commonwealth Scholars keep in touch with people they have met while studying. It can be so helpful to talk to someone else who uses the same equipment or research methods when something odd is happening in your own laboratory. I hope that the new Science and Technology Network we are launching will enable Commonwealth Scholars to find contacts who can help them. I also hope that the Network will stimulate new ideas – I would love to see some collaborative research come about as a result of contacts made through the Network.

The benefits of scientific research range from electricity to medicines, from aeroplanes to anaesthetics, from pesticides to computers. Life expectancy in England increased when scientists understood how diseases came from bacteria in dirty water and that hygiene improved when clean water was made available. I believe clean water should be available throughout the world, for everyone, with the help of hydrologists and engineers – and politicians. Technologists and engineers bring us the equipment and infrastructure we need – from water pumps and power stations to dams and bridges. Medicines and vaccines have further increased life expectancy – but public health improvements have had the greatest effect. Public health was the subject of our September issue and there is already a Network for scholars working in that field. Some scientists may also be interested in joining our Professional Networks on agriculture, environment, health or gender, depending on the fields they are now working in.

There are inequalities between countries in terms of facilities for research in different disciplines and in the numbers of qualified scientists. Commonwealth Scholarships enable some scientists to come to the UK to undertake a Master's course or to carry out original research for a PhD.

# SCIDEV.NET – A S&T RESOURCE

Some will be able to use analytical and other equipment which is not available in their own countries – access to equipment is a valuable aspect of split-site awards. We hope that scholars will go back to strengthen colleges and universities in their own countries and that their experience in the UK will add to their enthusiasm for science which they will pass on to young people. Others may be entrepreneurs who build businesses on science or technology and go on to create jobs for other people.

Scientific advances and novel research techniques frequently raise ethical and social questions. The use of scientific knowledge brings with it huge responsibilities for individual researchers, for companies and for society. We can all rejoice when we see science and technology used in life-saving medical advances or to increase crop yields. However, there are also risks associated with science and technology. The debate about the pros and cons of using genetically modified plants still continues – even though there are some very positive case studies where we can see real societal and economic benefits in communities who no longer have to use toxic sprays, where women are freed to do more profitable work and children can go to school instead of working in the fields. Refineries and factories which make plastics, fertilisers, pesticides and other products need careful design and must have built-in safety devices. Managers and staff must have a safety culture which requires genuine understanding of the processes and procedures and extensive training.

Unfortunately, some examples have made people think of science and technology as dangerous and harmful rather than beneficial. Regrettably, not all companies have given high priority to safety or environmental issues. My heart breaks when I hear about the long-term suffering of those affected by disasters like that of Union Carbide (now Dow) at Bhopal in India. But lessons have been learned and companies now take safety and environmental issues seriously.

It is always exciting to read the application forms for scientific studies from prospective Commonwealth Scholars and to hear about research projects from Scholars at the Welcome Day. The Commissioners are keen to ensure that the quality of science and engineering applications in all disciplines remains high because science and technology can contribute so much to health, agriculture, the environment and wealth generation in all Commonwealth countries.

Readers might be interested to know of a free online science resource - SciDev.Net. SciDev.Net (the Science and Development Network) was set up in 2001 with the support of the science journals *Nature* and *Science*, as well as the Academy of Science of the Developing World (TWAS). It provides news, views and information about science, technology and the developing world, and has a circulation of around 5,000 individuals throughout the Commonwealth, and mostly in developing countries.

The past few years have seen renewed interest in the role of science and technology in helping developing countries achieve sustainable economic growth. To achieve this potential, however, policymakers – at all levels of society – need accurate and reliable information about how science and technology can help to meet their objectives.

At the same time, broad public understanding and engagement is required to ensure open and democratic debate about the best way of achieving the promises of science and technology, and handling their potentially negative consequences.

SciDev.Net addresses these needs primarily through [www.scidev.net](http://www.scidev.net), its free-access website which contains news, views and analysis about science and technology in the developing world, much of it written by members of a wide network of professional science journalists and other contributors from these regions.

The website aims to meet the information needs, around the interface between science and public policy, of a wide range of readers, including

researchers, policy analysts, government officials, journalists and those working for both aid agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Its content is divided into a number of regional gateways, each gateway covering a particular part of the developing world. In addition, individual topics, ranging from climate change to intellectual property rights, are given in-depth coverage that includes opinion articles from expert authorities, background briefing papers, and links to key documents giving the scientific basis of the issue being addressed.

SciDev.Net is also directly engaged directly in enhancing the capacity of science communicators and others (including researchers) to provide reliable and authoritative information on such issues by organising regional workshops, internships in its London office, and other activities.

SciDev.Net is a not-for-profit company and registered educational charity in the UK. To receive a free weekly email alert listing the latest postings on the website, available in a choice of four languages, or to post notices about jobs, events, grants and announcements distributed to over 30,000 users worldwide every week, Scholars and alumni should visit the SciDev.Net website directly at [www.scidev.net/sign-up](http://www.scidev.net/sign-up)



**Mun-Keat Looi**,  
*SciDev.Net's news editor,*  
and **Talent N'gandwe**,  
*Zambian science*  
*journalist*

# ALUMNI IN ACTION

## Alumni News

### FURTHER STUDY IN REDUCING INDUSTRIAL WASTE

Clement Musa Gonah was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to study MSc Ceramic Science and Engineering at the University of Sheffield in 2003. On returning to Nigeria, he



**Clement Gonah,**  
Commonwealth alumnus,  
working on the machine that  
earned him his Merit Award

headed the glass technology work in the Department of Industrial Design at Ahmadu Bello University, and was awarded the Kaduna State Government's Merit Award in October 2005 for a research project on the design and fabrication of a machine for glass waste processing.

The project aimed to curb waste resulting from glass materials. Currently, Clement is undertaking a PhD in Chemical Engineering at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria, working on the use of composite cement systems for resins waste immobilisation. In this research, at the Centre for Energy, Research and Training, he is applying skills and knowledge gained from his time on award at the University of Sheffield.

### THE FUTURE OF COAL IN BANGLADESH

Professor Rafiqul Islam held a Commonwealth Fellowship at the School of Chemical, Environmental and Mining Engineering at the University of Nottingham in 2005-2006, and carried out research on the utilisation of coal and environmental issues. This is a very relevant issue in Bangladesh, due to the recent discovery of further coal resources. Professor Islam also worked on CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration in clean coal technology, which would reduce coal's contribution to global warming. He has now returned to his work



**Professor Rafiqul Islam,** former Commonwealth Fellow, with **Professor Sir Colin Campbell,** Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham

as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Applied Chemistry and Chemical Technology at the University of Dhaka, but is confident that the work he undertook will lead to future collaborative work of benefit to Bangladesh and beyond. Professor Islam has also recently appeared in the US Who's Who in Science and Engineering.

### ALUMNUS CONDUCTING LIVER DISEASE RESEARCH

Dr Brij K Sharma (Commonwealth Fellow, Dept of Medicine, Centre for Hepatology, Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, 2003-2004) is Head of the Department of Zoology at RL Saharia Government PG College, India. He is currently spending a year in the UK as a Royal Society Fellow at the Wolfson Centre for Stem Cells, Tissue Engineering and Modelling (STEM) at the University of Nottingham's Centre for Biomolecular Science. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of liver tissue engineering,



**Dr Brij K Sharma,**  
Commonwealth alumnus

bio-artificial liver and subsequent use of hepatocytes (liver cells) for cell therapy in various chronic liver diseases. Dr Sharma was also the organising secretary of a national conference on 'Conservation and Management of Faunal Diversity of Rajasthan', held in 2006 at the

University of Rajasthan, India under the auspices of the Department of Zoology at the University of Rajasthan, the Department of Higher Education and the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of Rajasthan, and the Eco-Ethics International Union (EEIU), Germany

### RESEARCHING APPLICATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY

Professor Abhijit Mukherji (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Biochemical Engineering, University of Southampton, 1975-1979) has over 20 years experience of many varied projects, including industrial control systems and medical electronics, research and development of specialised electro-medical instrumentation design and computer-based diagnosis, computerisation and networking in hospital projects, telemedicine, e-health, and e-commerce security. Professor Mukherji's particular areas of interest and research include cybernetics and man-machine interaction, speech analysis in Indian languages, applications in biometrics for speaker identification and speech-to-text conversions, communication and control applications for disabled people, and alternative

technologies. He is finalising a collaborative project on fuel cell-powered electric vehicles with the Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute in Durgapur, India, as well as studying technological innovations for intelligent smart-card readers for medical, commercial and civilian applications. At present, he is a Life Member of the Biomedical Engineering Society of India, Institutional Member of the Computer Society of India, Member of the Board of Studies of St Xavier's College, Kolkata, and President of the Bharat Vikash Parishad (India Development Society), Durgapur.

## In Brief

### AWARDS AND CAREER ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Dr Pramod Godbole** (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Civil Engineering, University of Swansea 1971-1974) has been awarded the prestigious UGC Emeritus Fellowship by the Indian Government. Dr Godbole has most recently been Emeritus Professor at Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, following his retirement in 2000.

**Dr Amru Nasrulhaq Boyce** (Commonwealth Fellow, University of Bristol, 1984-1985) was Head of the Institute of Biological Sciences at the University of Malaya from 2000-2006 and is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Science, University of Malaya.

**Dr Harold Munnings** (Commonwealth Medical Fellow, University of Bristol, 1988-1990) was made a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology in February 2007, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in May 2007.

## 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 emailing [comments@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:comments@cscuk.org.uk) or you can write to:

**Jocelyn Law,**  
**Alumni Development Officer**

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom

c/o

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London WC1H 9HF, UK

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.



# ALUMNI PROFILE

Commonwealth Scholarships provide students with scope for research that might otherwise be unavailable to them in their home country, whether developed or developing. Here, two New Zealander alumni, both of whom have recently won distinguished awards, explain how their time on award has inspired them in their future research endeavours.

**Professor Margaret Brimble** MNZM, FRSNZ was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship in 1983, to study for a PhD in Chemistry at the University of Southampton, UK, following her studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

After her award, Margaret held posts at Massey University, New Zealand and the University of Sydney, Australia, as well as the University of Auckland. She was also Visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, USA. During her career, she has served on a number of advisory panels in New Zealand and internationally, and has been a consultant to a number of pharmaceutical companies. From 2004-2007 she was a member of the Academy Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand, and she served as President of the International Society of Heterocyclic Chemistry in 2006 and 2007.

Margaret is also a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (Queen's Honour for Service to Science), was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2001, and was a James Cook Research Fellow in 2003-2004. She currently holds the Chair of Organic and Medicinal Chemistry at the



*Margaret Brimble, Commonwealth alumna*

University of Auckland, and is Head of Medicinal Chemistry, Neuren Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

Margaret's current research is concerned with chemically synthesising naturally occurring compounds with the potential to be developed into drugs for treating human diseases. Her research focuses on shellfish toxins, harmful chemicals produced by shellfish through ingestion of algae, and developing these as potential drugs for pain, epilepsy, hypertension, cancer and strokes. Working in partnership with Neuren Pharmaceuticals Ltd. her research group have developed two drug candidates that are in human clinical trials for the treatment of traumatic brain injury and Parkinson's disease.

In recognition of the importance of her work, Margaret was named Asia-Pacific Laureate in Materials Science at the L'Oreal UNESCO For Women in Science awards in February 2007, the first New Zealander ever to receive this Laureate. The awards, now in their tenth year, are to recognise and encourage women scientists, and overcome the gender gap within the field of science. Margaret hopes that this award will stimulate further interest in science amongst women, as well as gaining further recognition for scientific excellence in New Zealand.

**Dr Lianne Woodward** was a Commonwealth Scholar from 1988-1992, studying for a PhD in Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London, UK.

During her undergraduate and MA studies at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, Lianne developed a keen interest in working with children and, in particular, with children at risk and children with special needs. At the time, opportunities for this kind of training, especially involving research, were very limited in New Zealand, and so she applied for a Commonwealth Scholarship to study at the Institute of Psychiatry in the UK.

Lianne felt well looked after by the Commission during her time in the UK, and found living and studying in London an amazing experience. On returning to New Zealand, she lived and worked in Dunedin and Auckland for nearly six years before returning to her hometown of Christchurch. For ten years she worked as a research fellow on the Dunedin and then the Christchurch longitudinal study before taking up a tenured academic position at the University of Canterbury. She became Associate Professor, in Developmental Psychology, in the Department of Psychology in 2005.

During her time at Canterbury, she has established the Canterbury Child Development Research Group (CCDRG), which provides an umbrella for a series of multidisciplinary studies concerned with early developmental risk, brain development, parenting, and parent-child relations. The CCDRG's current research projects are concerned with the neurological and developmental, and the neuropsychological, impacts of being born very preterm, the effects of prenatal drug exposure, and intergenerational cycles of family psychosocial disadvantage.



*Lianne Woodward, Commonwealth alumna*

In 2006, Lianne was awarded the Liley Medal for Health Research for her work in predicting neurodevelopmental risk in children born very premature, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The prestigious Liley Medal is awarded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and recognises an individual whose research has made an outstanding contribution to the health and medical sciences.

In addition to the projects she is currently working on, to which she is strongly committed and believes will help make a difference to the lives of many children, she is also pleased that the new research group offers opportunities for postgraduate research that did not exist during her time at Canterbury.

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: INCREASING THE BENEFIT TO WIDER SOCIETY

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission launched the new Science and Technology Network in December with an event for current Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows at Cumberland Lodge in Great Windsor Park, UK. Focussing on the issue of 'Science and technology: increasing the benefit to wider society', the conference offered award holders an opportunity to come together to debate vital issues and to develop academic networks.

Commissioners **Dr Monica Darnbrough** and **Professor David Johns** opened the event with an overview of current issues in British science and technology policy. The importance of attracting young people to the hard sciences, measuring the outcomes of research and encouraging knowledge transfer partnerships were all introduced as issues to be considered.

Over the course of the weekend, various Scholars offered presentations which explained the benefits of their research beyond the scientific community. In many cases, their studies were shown to have societal impact, both in their national economies and in terms of the Millennium Development Goals. Participants were keen to show how their work could benefit their home country, and to encourage scientists to share their research and create international networks.

The need to communicate research effectively was identified and **Peter Reader**, Director of Marketing and Communication at the University of Bath, UK, was on hand to provide an insight into the world of public relations, explaining why scientists and technologists should share their research with the media, how best to go about doing so and what challenges they may face.

Questions regarding research funding and knowledge transfer were central to the event. A particular highlight was a presentation by **Professor David Delpy**, Executive Director of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, which examined how research councils work and what criteria are used to set their priorities. Ideas on how to measure the impact of research were raised with the development of human capital, industry benefits, governmental policy changes and quality of life outcomes all discussed as possible gauges.

The needs of scientists and technologists were also examined. A particularly lively debate entitled 'What I would do if I were Minister for Science' saw three Commonwealth Fellows campaigning for votes from the other participants for their science and technology policy ideas. Would-be ministers put forward policies including financial investment by both government and industry, the use of local resources to develop technology appropriate to the national context, and encouraging collaboration between professional bodies. However, by far the most popular ideas involved investing in and recognising the contributions of science; sustainability of research funding, development of scientific education and offering greater freedom to explore new ideas were proposed.

In closing, Dr Darnbrough investigated how the newly launched Network could be taken forward to benefit its members. She proposed that the greatest value to be had was in the contacts the Network could provide amongst alumni and current award holders. It was proposed that it could be a forum for advice, enabling



Participants at the **Science and Technology Network launch event**, Cumberland Lodge, December 2007

individuals to disseminate knowledge regarding their research and institutions, to develop collaborations internationally and to share information on funding opportunities. Ensuring award holders and alumni sign up and contribute to the newsletters was identified as being vital to its success.

The conference gave award holders the opportunity to step back from their research and reflect on how to measure its value and communicate this with the wider society. It is hoped that the Science and Technology Network will continue to offer a forum to debate these vital issues.

## AWARD HOLDERS' VIEWS

**Quin Wills – Commonwealth Scholar, University of Oxford**

“The Cumberland Lodge weekend provided a rare opportunity to meet specifically with Commonwealth scientists who are out in the UK, advancing their research. I believe that I speak for many who attended the weekend when I say that it is a personally rewarding experience to spend some time with a group of individuals facing common issues, and who are truly passionate about the role they would like to play in science. That, combined with the extremely knowledgeable input from the Commissioners, definitely gave me a few points to think about after the weekend. My personal highlight was the ample time made available to network, share and argue over issues from basic science to science policy with fellow scholars.”

**Dr Anshu – Commonwealth Fellow, Guy's, King's and St Thomas' Schools of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences**

“The event at Cumberland Lodge was a chance for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows of varied disciplines to interact and share their thoughts. Led by our Commissioners, Professor David Johns and Dr Monica Darnbrough, we discussed the impact of scientific research, the issues of funding and the challenge of sharing our excitement of scientific discovery with the layperson through the media. The event was an opportunity to widen our horizons as we got a chance to look beyond our own narrow specialities. Talking to the other participants gave us an insight into the fact that the issues we faced were quite similar and how small the world is. The viewpoints exchanged and the resources shared through this forum will make looking ahead in our careers a lot easier. I carried back in my heart memorable moments of camaraderie shared with new friends made from all over the globe.”

# COUNTRY PROFILE – UGANDA

Our latest country report, looking at the work of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan internationally, focuses on Uganda, which recently hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala in November 2007.

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa containing several large inland lakes, including Lake Victoria, the world's second largest freshwater lake.

Since 1960, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) has awarded around 400 Scholarships and Fellowships to Ugandans, across a wide range of fields of study. Most applicants obtain information and make applications through the nominating agency in Uganda, the Central Scholarship Committee at the Ministry of Education and Sports. For Scholarships for academic staff and for Academic Fellowships, applicants are nominated by certain Ugandan universities. In addition, the 1960s saw a handful of Scholarships awarded to UK citizens to study at Makerere University, Uganda.

The CSC recently published a report looking at the career paths of Ugandans who have held Commonwealth Scholarships or Fellowships in the United Kingdom since the inception of the scheme. It draws on evidence from 45% of the 296 individuals to have completed their awards – an exceptionally high trace rate for a survey of this nature.

This report – which forms the basis of the first in a series of country studies to be published by the CSC



*Current Ugandan Scholars at the 2007 Welcome Day*

– was published to coincide with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Kampala in November 2007. CHOGM is held every two years, and 'brings together Commonwealth leaders to discuss global and Commonwealth issues, and to agree upon collective policies and initiatives' ([www.chogm2007.ug](http://www.chogm2007.ug)).



Strong evidence that international scholarship holders return to their home country, and reach positions of seniority that influence future development, emerged from the report. Of the 134 individuals traced, 114 (85%) were still working in Uganda. Just over half of those for whom data was available were working in education, with a particular concentration in higher education. Other concentrations were found in public administration, health and social work. 99% had reached the level of professionals, managers, senior officials or legislators. Of those

not working in Uganda, several were working in other developing countries or for international organisations with a strong development focus.

## ALUMNI PROFILES

'Currently, I am the National Information Officer, UN Officer for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs... being on the Commonwealth Scholarship scheme opened doors for me and enabled me to contribute in many ways to the development of Uganda. I think that the scholarship

scheme is one of the greatest things that ever happened to Uganda and it should continue, so that it supports many other citizens of Uganda to acquire the necessary education and skills to enable them to contribute to national development.' – **Lydia Mirembe**, Commonwealth Scholar, MA in International Communications, University of Leeds, 2003

**Hon Justice Prof George Wilson Kanyeihamba** (Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholar, PhD in Law, University of Warwick, 1974) has served in all three branches of government as Cabinet Minister, Member of Parliament and Judge of the Courts of Judicature. He has been Minister of Commerce, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Uganda, and a Member of Parliament for over ten years. He currently holds positions as Justice of the Supreme Court, Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Review, Chancellor of Kampala International University, Chancellor of Kabale University, and Judge at the African Court on Human and People's Rights. He was also a founding member of the Faculty of Law at Makerere University.

'During my award, I carried out social anthropological doctoral research on an area in eastern Kampala, describing city life among relatively new migrants. The research was the basis of a PhD and also published in revised form as a book, *Neighbours and Nationals in an African City Ward...* On returning to the UK, I took up a post as lecturer in social anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where I became Professor of African Anthropology in 1981. I became Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford in 1996, the post which I currently hold. I can only say that the Commonwealth Scholarship was invaluable as a basis for my career and I shall always remain grateful to those who awarded it.' – **Dr David Parkin**, Commonwealth Scholar (Outward), Social Anthropology, Uganda, 1962



*Sunset on Lake Victoria*

# 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 CSC website at [www.cscuk.org.uk](http://www.cscuk.org.uk)

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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