



COMMONWEALTH  
SCHOLARSHIPS

NEWS

Promoting learning, development and co-operation

Issue 6  
May 2008



A hard-headed approach  
to the challenges of  
sustainable development

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE • COUNTRY PROFILE – INDIA • NEWS ROUND-UP  
SCHOLARS' NEWS • ALUMNI IN ACTION • 2008 SELECTIONS

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**Commonwealth Scholarships News**  
(formerly *Omnis*)

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The London International Development Centre (LIDC) opened in April 2008, and brings together expertise from six colleges of the University of London (Birkbeck College, Institute of Education, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Royal Veterinary College, School of Oriental and African Studies and School of Pharmacy) with development partners to address key challenges in international development.

While LIDC has a broad brief, it has taken an early and specific interest in postgraduate teaching for development. Current and former Commonwealth Scholars are already active and effective in addressing issues of sustainable development, as demonstrated in this issue of *Commonwealth Scholarships News*. LIDC aims to better integrate and direct at development goals its wide range of taught and distance courses in the field. It will place early emphasis on distance learning because of its special potential in international development and capacity building.

In April, LIDC organised with the University of London External Programme a conference on distance learning for development, or DL4D. Sharing experience across disciplines and degrees revealed several opportunities. For instance, there is a growing consensus to make course materials 'open source' and free to all, without a loss of quality or necessary income to providers. Quality of courses may be improved by blended learning (mixing distance and short, taught elements) or by linking students with each other and with tutors through the internet or mobile phones. Even science subjects such as molecular biology, which you might think would require laboratory-based teaching, can be delivered by distance, making use of computer graphics. Offering units as short courses for skill-based training, to which can be added further units to obtain a degree, will benefit both providers and students. It was striking to see how often innovation in distance learning could be traced to investment by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in new initiatives!

DL4D also faces many challenges. Too many courses today are supply- rather than demand-driven, and the student voice is too rarely heard in course design. Many distance teaching partnerships are more 'transmissive' than truly collaborative. Particularly good partnerships can be built on the back of existing research collaborations. The digital divide between north and south is narrowing only slowly, and distance learning must not plan to be wholly internet-based very soon – rather, it should plan on delivering training through the range of media appropriate to different local situations. Corporate degree sponsorship has enormous potential but is under-developed. LIDC will use these lessons to build a vision for DL4D, one that involves greater flexibility and integration of subjects, learning methods and technologies to enhance education.

**Professor Jeff Waage OBE**

Director, London International Development Centre

[www.lidc.org.uk](http://www.lidc.org.uk)



**Professor Jeff Waage** at the LIDC launch in April 2008

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# NEWS ROUND-UP

## New Commissioners

We are delighted to announce the appointment of six new Commissioners:

**Dr Mark Collins,**

Director, Commonwealth Foundation

**Professor Mark Cleary,**

Vice-Chancellor, University of Bradford

**Professor Christine Humfrey,**

Special Professor in International Higher Education,

University of Nottingham

**Dr Nyovani Madise,**

Reader in Social Statistics, University of Southampton

**Dr Rosemary Stevenson,**

former Head, DFID South East Asia

**Dr Jonathan Wastling,**

Reader in Infection Biology, University of Liverpool

### 2008 SELECTIONS

The Commission has now made selections for the 2008/2009 academic year. 389 candidates have been selected in total so far:

**256 DFID-funded Commonwealth Scholarships,** including General, Split-site and Academic Staff Scholarships.

**68 FCO-funded Commonwealth Scholarships,** awarded to students from developed Commonwealth countries.

**65 Commonwealth Fellowships,** awarded to university staff from developing countries.

Selections for Professional Fellowships and Distance Learning Scholarships will be made in the next few months.

### 50TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO

Some of our readers might have noticed our new logo on our website and other CSC materials. The new design is to mark the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, which falls in 2009. There will be a programme of events to celebrate the anniversary on a Commonwealth-wide basis, and you will be able to find out more in our next issue of *Commonwealth Scholarships News* and on our website, [www.cscuk.org.uk](http://www.cscuk.org.uk)



### COMMONWEALTH DAY

On Monday 10 March 2008, Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows were amongst those from Commonwealth nations who joined together at Westminster Abbey for the thirty-first Commonwealth Day observance. Attended by HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, the multifaith service summoned the dignity and wisdom of people in the Commonwealth to develop a commitment to reverse the trends of climate change.

A central focus of the ceremony was to collectively make six affirmations, including statements of the unique worth and dignity of every person and of respect for all living creatures. Finally, in keeping with the theme of the ceremony, all affirmed recognition that environmental degradation, including climate change, poses a grave threat to humanity and that it is each person's responsibility to work now and in the future to create a sustainable world.

THE ENVIRONMENT  
OUR FUTURE



### NEW AWARDS ADMINISTRATOR



**Fiona Groenhout,**  
new Awards Administrator

We are delighted to welcome Fiona Groenhout to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission's secretariat as an Awards Administrator. Fiona took up her post in March 2007, having completed her PhD in history at the University of Western Australia last year

### INTERFAITH RELATIONS EVENT

The Commission held an event at Cumberland Lodge in April for current Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows to discuss the important topic of interfaith relations. The opening session introduced the philosophy behind interfaith dialogue. Keynote speakers Professor Modjtaba Sadria, from the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations, and Revd Guy Wilkinson, the Church of England's Inter Faith Relations Adviser, examined why interreligious engagement is necessary and explored how it can be achieved. Attendees were asked to consider whether a dialogue can occur, given the diversity within

faiths, and to question the agenda of the language involved.

On Saturday, the debate was broadened into legal and public policy issues. Maleiha Malik, from King's College London, discussed the UK government's attempts to manage Muslims and Islam in Britain, highlighting postcolonial legacies and the developing self-identification of groups in Britain along religious as well as ethnic lines. Dr Adam Dinham, Director of the Faiths and Civil Society Unit, later introduced the UK government's current policy perspective, exploring the contradiction between faiths as a site of resources and faiths as the greatest threat to security. He suggested ways the policy could be improved, touching on the integrationism versus multiculturalism debate.



A session at the **CSC interfaith event**, April 2008

### FRIENDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Friends of the Commonwealth is a new initiative for people who share an interest in Commonwealth-related issues and who want to do something about them. Friends can express their own views and exchange them online with others. They can search for international development jobs and internships. They can offer their services as mentors, advisers or simply as 'Friends' to those seeking information or advice around the Commonwealth. They can volunteer and attend specific Friends events. And they can build their own networks and contacts through Friends.

If you have thoughts and views about Commonwealth issues and events, have skills and experience to offer or want to support our work, Friends of the Commonwealth will give you lots of interesting ways to do so.

Becoming a Friend couldn't be easier. Simply visit [www.commonwealthfoundation.com/friends](http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/friends) and register for the regular Friends e-update newsletter. It's free and open to everyone.

# SCHOLARS' NEWS

*The environment and sustainable development are issues at the centre of debates about the success of international development. In recent years, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission has shown its commitment to these issues by supporting programmes which have focussed on a wide range of areas, including environmental protection and preservation, ecology, water and waste management and broader aspects of sustainability.*

Since 2002, the CSC has offered over 30 Professional Fellowships to candidates nominated by the Environment Agency, giving mid-career environment officers in developing countries the opportunity to gain relevant skills and build links with organisations in the UK.



**Ruth Lugwisha**  
*Commonwealth Professional Fellow from Tanzania, participating in river sampling activities*

**Ruth Lugwisha**, a Senior Environmental Management Officer at the National Environment Management Council in Tanzania, was based at the Environment Agency from September-November 2007. During this time, she was able to acquire practical skills which have resulted in several benefits for her home country. 'As a result of this programme, my professional capabilities, skills and knowledge of environmental compliance and enforcement have been enhanced. I have enhanced my knowledge of regulatory frameworks for effective compliance and enforcement; developing and implementing environmental compliance and enforcement systems; tools and mechanisms; and operating institutional arrangements for effective and efficient collaboration and cooperation among actors. Other issues are waste management (wastewater and solid

waste); investigation and inspections for compliance gathering and admissible evidence; negotiation skills; conflict resolution and management and handling and managing complaints and incidences, as well as emergency preparedness.'

**Peter Odhengo**, a Principal Compliance Officer at the National Environment Management Agency in Kenya, was also based at the Environment Agency towards the end of 2007. During his Fellowship, Peter was able to meet several objectives, such as developing an understanding of how to harness the synergies of various stakeholders in environmental management, learning techniques for identifying polluting elements, and understanding environmental monitoring and incident management procedures.

**Michelle Brockley**, International Relations Coordinator at the Environment Agency, feels that the Fellowships have been a success and also a two-way process, enabling both Fellows and hosts to exchange knowledge and experience. 'The Environment Agency is delighted to be continuing its support of the Commonwealth Professional Fellowship programme. We are continuing to build upon the success of our previous participation as a host organisation. The experience has been mutually beneficial. With decades of experience, the Environment Agency has been able to transfer its vast experience in environmental management practices directly to the visiting Fellows and has had the opportunity to learn from the Fellows about the challenges they face in our sister organisations in developing countries.'

**While many awards in the fields of environment and sustainable development are held in the UK, the Commission has also supported around 1,000 Distance Learning Scholars since 2002, in line with DFID's commitment to exploring new methods of delivery. Staffordshire University's MA in Sustainable Development is one such course supported by the CSC. Delivered as a part-time course in online distance learning mode, it is wide-reaching in its scope and access, and allows students from over 20 countries to develop advanced knowledge, skills and understanding in vital fields of study for the 21st century.**

**Dr Louise Bonner**, Award Leader of the MA in Sustainable Development, feels that the issue of sustainability is one which must be addressed. 'From the global through to the local level, the challenge of sustainability is modifying political, economic, social and environmental agendas. Sustainability has



**Peter Odhengo**  
*Commonwealth Professional Fellow from Kenya, carrying out water sampling activities at a wastewater treatment facility*

become a central framework for government policy, organisational practice and community action today and there is a growing need for people who have insights into the complex issues involved.'

Dr Bonner feels that Staffordshire University's distance learning course is enabling many students around the Commonwealth to develop these insights in an informative, flexible and interactive way. 'Following a carefully structured set of online modules, students are encouraged to examine new strategies, evaluation and monitoring techniques and approaches to participation, education and policymaking, and to use case studies to analyse best practice for sustainability around the world. The distinctive format of this MA allows students to study



**Dr Hamish Main** (right), from Staffordshire University, at an introductory MA Sustainable Development workshop at Jadavpur University, India

at home while working full-time, so students from India and Indian Ocean states such as the Maldives and Seychelles are able to study the MA while working in various government departments, NGOs and private companies.'

One of these students is **Piyali Sengupta**, an Indian Scholar who is confident that the MA will help in her future career. 'After successful completion of my BSc in Physics, I wished to study energy management. Realising that sustainable development is a basic part of environmental problems, I undertook this MA to bridge my knowledge gaps. Staffordshire University is giving me the opportunity to extend my knowledge of different sustainability issues further and to pursue research in this area. Being born and brought up in a large urban city like Kolkata, I have become a victim of sustainability issues myself. Fast developing urban areas have alarmingly diminishing air and water quality and I passionately believe that this needs to be managed effectively. Also, learning in a cross-cultural environment is helping me develop the skills to work effectively within a global team while being

tolerant to different cultures. On a long-term basis, all the invaluable experience I have gathered here will act as building blocks in designing innovative, useful, high-quality, profitable and environment-friendly solutions for global issues, without compromising social acceptance and cultural viability.'

For **Mohamed Shumais**, a resident of the Maldives, a small island state, the opportunity to study a course via distance learning has been hugely beneficial. 'Ever since I majored in Economics and Internet Studies at undergraduate level in South Africa, I have believed that internet technology would be a valuable tool for promoting education. In the Maldives, providing quality higher education via conventional means is a challenge because of the vast number of islands and scattered nature of the small population in the archipelago. Though the Maldives does not have a university, taking a course from a reputed British university by e-learning is amazing because e-learning transcends time and space. The course made me realise the valuable educational resources that are available online and

the future prospects for research and educational development. As an e-learning student, I am able to apply what I have learned right away at work and also reflect back on my written tasks that were assessed in the course. In 2007, while working as a Project Coordinator to develop a national waste management policy in the Maldives, I was involved in coordinating public consultations at various levels ranging from senior government officials to grassroots community representatives. In this process, I was able to appreciate the importance of public involvement for promoting equity, which is one of the principles of sustainable development.'

Although many of the students undertake the MA via distance learning, Dr Bonner explains that 'some of the students who are awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship are able to spend a semester at Staffordshire University, where they can "fast-track" their studies, interact with other students and tutors and gain an insight into ways of approaching sustainability in the UK. Of course, these students also bring many of their own ideas and experiences to the UK, enriching the views and lives of everyone they meet here!'

**Jibok Chatterjee**, from India, is one such Scholar and has found the experience invaluable. 'The best part of the course has been the 12 weeks of intense academic study wherein I became abreast with the sustainability issues of the developed world. These 12 weeks not only removed the faceless interactions with professors but also revealed that sustainability is as important in the developed world as it is in developing world. The professors were like mirrors reflecting my ideas with more thoughts and insights. The knowledge of the course has helped me both professionally and personally to develop as an individual in a sustainable community. These 12 weeks have had a deep impact and taught me a single aspect: that we need to make more and more people aware of sustainable development and the best starting points are young children and students who are tomorrow's future political, social and business leaders. We need to start to speak about it more in every forum. Sustainability is the key to happy and healthy individuals and society, and more discussion will enable every individual to think how their act contributes to better society and a better world for today and tomorrow.'

# TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

*Climate change is the hot topic of the moment, and many of our Commonwealth Scholars and alumni are studying or working in areas that examine its impact. Commonwealth countries will be among those most affected by increases in global temperature and the consequences, and so our award holders' work is of the utmost relevance both to their home country and worldwide.*



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## PROTECTING SRI LANKA'S AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Iroja Caldera is a Commonwealth Split-site Scholar working on a PhD in Environmental Science (University of Sheffield and University of Colombo). Iroja's work is concerned with the effects of global warming on tea production in Sri Lanka. Environmental factors such as temperature and carbon dioxide concentration affect the productivity of the plant. So, future climate change could affect the quality of tea and indeed tea production as a whole. Sri Lanka is the world's second largest exporter of black tea and the third largest tea producer. The tea industry has a significant socio-economic impact on the country. It is the highest earning agricultural export and also provides employment to a large number of people as tea is a labour-intensive plantation crop.



**Iroja Caldera**  
Commonwealth  
Alumnus from  
Sri Lanka

Iroja hopes that her work will contribute to a better understanding of how tea plants may respond to

climate change. This may facilitate the development of adaptation measures to help lessen possible negative impacts on tea cultivation due to environmental change. As a lecturer attached to the University of Colombo, Iroja hopes that her experience as a researcher will lead to involvement in capacity building activities in her home country.

## THE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL WARMING ON OUR OCEANS

Dr Graham Hughes (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Geophysics, University of Cambridge, 1991-1994) is currently a Fellow in the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Group at the Australian National University. His research examines the impact of climate change on oceans. Oceans transport a vast amount of heat, so understanding changes to the earth's climate necessitates understanding ocean circulation.

The circulation of oceans is forced by winds blowing over the sea surface and fluxes of heat and water through the sea surface. Surface waters gain heat at lower latitudes and lose heat at high latitudes. Of particular significance for climate processes is the 'overturning' component of the circulation that allows the bulk of the ocean, below the surface, to exchange heat with the atmosphere.

Global warming is likely to increase the supply of freshwater to high latitudes. This effect, and warmer average surface conditions, will reduce high-latitude dense water formation, leading to a slowing of the overturning circulation. This is expected to lead to a cooler northern hemisphere, the extreme scenario following a (rapid) shutdown of the circulation being popularised in the Hollywood movie 'The Day After Tomorrow'!

Graham's research has concentrated on the circulation supported by surface fluxes of heat and water, addressing questions such as how the circulation is modified when these fluxes change. Results thus far show that the circulation is extremely sensitive to changes in the surface fluxes. The implications for earth's climate can be assessed with the help of numerical coupled ocean-atmosphere models.



*A weakened overturning ocean circulation is expected to lead to a cooler northern hemisphere*

## THE POTENTIAL OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Australian government has committed to increasing the supply of renewable electricity to 20% by 2020, in response to the challenge posed by climate change. Australia has traditionally relied on coal for electricity, making up around 70% of supply.

This potentially large increase in renewable energy will place new pressures on the transmission grid. Recognising this, the Ministerial Council on Energy is investigating the barriers to integrating this renewable energy into the electricity market. **Antara Mascarenhas** (Commonwealth Scholar, MPhil in Modern Society and Global Transformations, University of Cambridge, 2002-2003) is now an assistant manager in the federal government. She is leading this project, working with industry and state counterparts. As Australia's transmission grid was constructed around existing coal resources, there will be issues around the connection of remote renewable generation to the grid. Many wind and potential geothermal (hot-rock) resources are located remotely from the grid.

Antara was a visiting researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in July-August 2007, representing the Australian government. She led a comparison of the Australian electricity market with that of two American markets (the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland and New England markets) to determine how these markets attract new investment in electricity generation.

Antara feels that her studies provided her with some of the necessary skills to carry out her current work. 'The electricity sector is a real-world application of the academic work I carried out at Cambridge on how governments and the economy interact.'

## SOLAR-POWERED LIGHTING PROJECTS IN MALAWI

**Thomas Senganimalunje** (Commonwealth Scholar, MSc in Medical Physics, University of Leeds, 2004-2005) is now Head of the Physics Department at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. He is working on a project to design and install solar lighting in rural secondary schools, a collaboration between the Physics Departments of the University of Malawi and Malaspina University College in Canada.

The LED lighting systems consist of three basic components: LED-light desk lamps, rechargeable battery power packs, and a solar panel for each classroom. The system is envisaged for evening study of 3-hour periods. The final goal is to design a system that will be cost effective relative to the current costs incurred in the use of kerosene.

A prototype of such a system providing lighting for six students has already been tested at Msala Community Day Secondary School in 2007. The full classroom system for 40 students is being manufactured and will be installed in May 2008 at



*The entrance to the Mnajdra temple, one of the Megalithic Temples of Malta*

the same school. The cost of the full system is less than USD 1,000, and the break-even point is at around three years.

The use of the LED system will improve the teaching and learning environment of the students through provision of clean and reliable lighting. There will be a reduction of indoor pollution from the kerosene, whilst the lighting costs will be lower.

## PRESERVING MALTA'S HERITAGE

The impact of climate change on the world's cultural properties is an area of growing concern. Malta has one of the highest densities of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and important monuments include the Megalithic Temples of Malta, a series of buildings that are over 5,000 years old. These are amongst the earliest structures in the world to achieve a high level of architectural sophistication, and climate change poses a serious threat for such sites. The temples are built in sedimentary limestone, and are very vulnerable to erosion by the elements, sustaining severe damage over the past century. Climate change may contribute to an aggravation of these conservation problems. A major threat to the sites is prolonged and intense rainfall, which has previously led to the collapse of sections of the megalithic walls. If precipitation becomes more intense, this will have a direct effect on the conservation of the monuments.

**Dr Reuben Grima** (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Archaeological Site Management, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 2000-2003) is a Senior Curator of Prehistoric Sites at Heritage Malta, the national agency responsible for managing museums and archaeological sites. He is currently leading a project, funded by the European Commission, to install protective shelters over two of the temple sites. This is part of an intensive environmental monitoring programme, in collaboration with Italy's Institute for Atmospheric Sciences and Climate (ISAC).

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ECOHEALTH FRAMEWORK

Global ecological integrity and sustainable development are increasingly salient issues for the public health community, and it is commonly recognised that human health is enhanced within socially and ecologically intact environments.



**Maya Gislason**  
*Commonwealth Scholar  
from Canada*

**Maya Gislason** is a Commonwealth Scholar from Canada, studying for a DPhil in the Sociology of Health and Illness at the University of Sussex. As a medical sociologist,

her doctoral research explores how the effects of climate change are constructed and contested as health determinants within new public health policy and practice initiatives. Her research is premised on the EcoHealth observation that neoclassical economic approaches to sustainable development do not sufficiently promote practices that sustain the earth's life support systems.

The urgency of climate change may inspire the development of effective transnational environmental public health policies and healthy communities and cities in which people work to produce local and global ecological and social health and wellbeing. Practices such as buying local organic food, using sustainable modes of transportation and recycling are all concrete actions that individuals can take. Concretely, through these simple localised activities the overall anthropogenic stress on the planet is reduced and conceptually ideas about sustainable development and health are re-imagined. Understanding the links between global environmental change and human health risks creates a unique opportunity for people to create a new paradigm where meeting human goals involves maintaining the integrity of our life support systems.

# ALUMNI IN ACTION

## Alumni News

### ALUMNUS APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF CANADA



**Mark Carney**

former Commonwealth Scholar and the new Governor of the Bank of Canada

**Mark Carney** (Commonwealth Scholar, DPhil in Economics, University of Oxford, 1991-1994) took up the post of Governor of the Central Bank of Canada on 1 February 2008. Mark received his bachelor's degree in economics from Harvard University in 1988, and then started work at the investment bank Goldman Sachs before taking up his Commonwealth Scholarship at Oxford. Mark went on to become Managing Director at Goldman Sachs before joining the Bank of Canada as Deputy Governor in 2003. In 2004, he became Senior Associate Deputy Minister of Finance, and also served as Canada's Finance Deputy at the G7, G20 and the Financial Stability Forum.

Mark says of his new role, 'It is an honour and a privilege to have been chosen to serve Canadians as the eighth Governor of the Bank of Canada. I am particularly looking forward to leading the bank's talented and dedicated staff as we face the challenges of the years ahead.'

### KNIGHTHOOD FOR DISTINGUISHED PAEDIATRICIAN ALUMNUS

**Dr Albert Cecil Graham** (Commonwealth Scholar in Medicine, 1961-1962) received a knighthood in the New Year's Honours list for services to medicine and paediatric medicine in Barbados. He worked at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados for over thirty years, and took a special interest in children with disabilities during his career.

### INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

**Dr Vijay Janyani** (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, University of Nottingham, 2002-2005) is part of a research team that has recently been awarded a UKIERI (UK India



**Dr Vijay Janyani**

former Commonwealth Scholar from India

Education and Research Initiative) Major Award, for a collaborative research project on micro-structured optical fibres and applications. The project involves five UK universities and two Indian colleges, including Dr Janyani's home institution, Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur (MNIT Jaipur). The research focuses on the exploitation of the enormous potential of photonic crystal fibre for a wide range of potentially novel applications underpinning multi-billion pound industry.

## In Brief

### RECENT PUBLICATIONS

**Dr Rangaswamy Vedavalli** (Commonwealth Scholar, PG Diploma in Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1973-1975) is a former Principal Economist and Manager of Energy Operations of the World Bank and former Director of Energy Facilitation Program of the World Energy Council. At the World Bank, she worked in several countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East managing oil and gas power in various energy efficiency projects.

Dr Vedavalli's recent book *Energy for Development* provides comparative case studies of countries undergoing the energy reform process, evaluating the reform experience and identifying the challenges at the national and global level which these developing countries face.

**Dr M A Samad** (Commonwealth Fellow, Department of Veterinary Science, University of Liverpool, 1989-1990) is currently Professor and Head of the Department of Medicine at the Bangladesh Agricultural University. He has recently published a two-volume professional textbook *Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science*, a comprehensive book for veterinary undergraduate and postgraduate students and also a valuable easy-to-use reference book for practitioners.

### AWARDS AND CAREER ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Dr Abdullah Al Faruque** (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Energy Law, University of Dundee, 2002-2006) has been promoted to Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Law at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh.

**Dr Ridwanul Hoque** (Commonwealth Scholar, PhD in Law, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2003-

2007) has recently been promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Law at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh.

**Naadir Junaid** (Commonwealth Scholar, MA in Contemporary Cinema Cultures, King's College London, 2003-2004) has been awarded a 2008 Endeavour Postgraduate Award to study a PhD in Australia. Naadir will be working on Bengali political cinema at the School of History and Philosophy, University of New South Wales, starting in July 2008. Naadir is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka.

**Dr Busnur Manjunatha** (Commonwealth Fellow, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, 2005-2006) is presently working as a Reader in the Department of Marine Geology at Mangalore University, India. He was awarded an Honourable Mention in the CSA Sociological Abstracts Discovery Prize 2007. The prize was for his work 'Continuing Climate Curse on Africa Needs Greater Humanitarian Assistance'.

**Professor M S Mookiah** (Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholar, MSc in Town Planning, Cardiff University 1976-1979) has recently been appointed Head of the Department of Geography at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and is also currently serving as one of the nine Commissioners of the Public Service Commission (appointed by the President of Sri Lanka).

## 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

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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.



# ALUMNI PROFILE

*The Commission's aim is for Scholars' studies to benefit their home country or institution. Sometimes, due to a lack of available research facilities, this purpose is best served by our alumni continuing to work overseas. The subject of our profile this issue now works in the UK, but his research on solar energy has been of benefit to his native Sri Lanka as well as many other countries around the world.*

**Professor I M Dharmadasa (Dharme)** was a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Durham in 1977, studying for a PhD in Solid State Electronics.

Dharme started his academic career as a probationary assistant lecturer in physics at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, but he needed to complete a postgraduate degree to secure a full lecturer position. With no research facilities in physics available in Sri Lanka at that time, Dharme had to look for postgraduate opportunities outside the country, and applied for a Commonwealth Scholarship. He feels that he was 'fortunate to win a Scholarship through a very competitive selection process'.

## NEW SKILLS AND INTERESTS

Dharme believes that his award developed his networking ability as well as his academic interests. 'The scholarship gave me an excellent opportunity to develop academic, social and networking skills. Academic work carried out with supervision by the late Sir Professor Gareth Roberts and Professor Mike Petty gave me a kick start to enter into the electronic materials and devices field and solar energy conversion.'

Solar energy research has indeed gone onto form the major focus of Dharme's career. Solar energy has the potential to give countries greater independence in energy supplies, as well as providing a clean energy source that does not harm the environment. Access to reliable electricity supplies is also of pivotal importance in the developing world. As a result of worldwide research on photovoltaic solar energy conversion, large area solar panels made with silicon are more readily available but expensive. Researchers are working to produce alternative low-cost and high-efficiency solar panels based on other suitable materials. Greater production and increased demand due to the development of more diverse applications will also help reduce costs.

Dharme estimates that the greatest impact will be



**Professor I M Dharmadasa** (second from right) with one of his solar panels and members of his research team at SHU

**With millions of people struggling to find clean water for drinking, freely available sunlight can be utilised to drastically improve their standard of living.**

**Professor I M Dharmadasa**

from the use of solar energy in smaller-scale water pumping and drip irrigation systems. 'With millions of people struggling to find clean water for drinking, freely available sunlight can be utilised to increase water supplies and drastically improve their standard of living.' Clean water is vital for food production and small business requirements and so also facilitates economic development in these communities.

There are many other applications made possible by this new technology. Solar-powered home lighting systems, hot water systems, computers in remote schools, refrigeration, air conditioning of buildings, remote health centres, lanterns, ice cream carts, telephone booths, and sewing machines are to name just a few. While most of these small and standalone systems have immediate applications in developing countries, grid-connected solar roofs and large-scale power stations are also emerging in developed countries.

## CAREER WITH AN INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

After completing his award, Dharme returned to his university in Sri Lanka but, after four years as a lecturer, his research interests in solar energy

brought him back to the UK. After posts at University College Cardiff (now Cardiff University) and BP Research, Sunbury, he now works at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) as Professor of Electronic Materials and Devices. Dharme currently leads the solar energy group within the Materials and Engineering Research Institute at SHU. He has published widely and secured six new patents, while working with industrial partners on solar cell development and pioneering research in this field.

Although Dharme is primarily based in the UK, the nature of his work means that his career definitely has an international dimension. 'I have kept very close links with my native country and, after coordinating higher education links with several Sri Lankan universities for over ten years, helped form the South Asia Renewable Energy Programme (SAREP).'

SAREP is a renewable energy programme jointly initiated by the Commonwealth Science Council, the Applied Physics Division, School of Science and Mathematics, Sheffield Hallam University, the British Council and in-country counterparts to promote and accelerate the use of renewable energy technologies.

SAREP trains young scientists in renewable technology through postgraduate programmes and raises awareness of renewable energy applications amongst entrepreneurs and policymakers. It also enables entrepreneurs in Asia to develop trade and investment relations with partners in other parts of the world.

The work of SAREP has spread to many other countries outside the South Asia region. To continue this, the Solar Habitat Programme has been designed to develop the use of clean energy technologies in rural communities. Dharme takes great pride in this work, as it contributes to the Millennium Development Goals. 'My wish is to work with a large number of previous Commonwealth Scholars and other learned communities to help needy people around the globe.'

# THE ENVIRONMENT AND GOVERNANCE IN THE COMMONWEALTH

The CSC held its fourth annual Governance Network conference at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies on 8-10 March 2008. Co-organised and run by the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit (CPSU), the event brought together 30 current award holders from a diverse range of academic backgrounds to discuss this year's theme: the environment and governance in the Commonwealth.

Attendees were welcomed by **Homera Cheema** from the CPSU, who opened the first session entitled 'Environmental governance: who does what?' The first speaker, **Dr Vasannt Jogoo** from the Commonwealth Secretariat, gave an overview of how the Commonwealth facilitates environmental progress within the larger climate change debate. Some Scholars were also given the opportunity to showcase their current research, contributing ideas more closely linked with the policy issues surrounding environmental challenges.

The final session gave attendees the opportunity to summarise what they had gained from the



Attendees at the **Governance Network conference**, March 2008

conference and propose how they might act on their newly acquired knowledge. Participants identified a need to establish an exact relationship between governance and the environment and to develop adequate governance structures to facilitate reduction in environmental degradation. Local projects were proposed and suggestions to share contacts and engage with established organisations were put forward.

In closing, the CPSU put forward the idea of producing a collection of forward-looking essays. Attendees were invited to contribute to this publication, which aims to offer a multidisciplinary approach to environmental issues. Alongside this, the importance of the CSC's Governance and Environment Networks was highlighted as a means of making global connections and providing forums to further debate vital issues regarding the environment's future.

**Allan Mugisha – Commonwealth Scholar, MSc Petroleum Engineering, Heriot-Watt University**

"This was one of the few conferences where I have seen people speak so passionately about protecting the environment and this, for me, is a challenge to disseminate the knowledge gained to as many people as I interact with. Protection of the environment is every person's responsibility. The participants were not only knowledgeable but are actively involved in the war against climate change. I cannot overemphasise the need for these conferences."

## A SNAPSHOT IN TIME: COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS IN THE 1960s

The 1960s was an iconic decade, and also a time when the face of the Commonwealth was changing, as many countries became independent states. It seems appropriate that this decade of gathering momentum and idealism should also mark the birth of a new international awards programme – the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme (CSFP).

In 1959, Commonwealth Education Ministers agreed that the training of colonial-born academics to research and teach in domestic universities would empower new states in the process of independence. The CSFP objectives reflected many of the values of the time. The plan was to be based on mutual cooperation, be flexible to take account of the diverse and changing needs of Commonwealth countries, be available to both men and women, and promote the highest standards of intellectual achievement.

The first intake of Scholars was in 1960. Over the next ten years, UK institutions would host more than 1987 Commonwealth Scholars, of which 191 were female, from over 47 countries. Similarly, non-UK institutions hosted over 1690 Scholars who originated from and travelled to a wide range of Commonwealth states.

These Scholars left their own legacy. A Zimbabwean Scholar, **Sir Michael Berridge**, conducted

pioneering work in the relatively new field of cell signalling to go on to win the prestigious Shaw Prize in Life Science and Medicine. **William Valentine Herbert**, a 1960 Scholar from St Kitts and Nevis, became a constitutional advisor, ambassador, and eventually permanent representative to the United Nations on behalf of his country. Canadian Scholar **Dr Thomas John (Jock) Murray** conducted important work in the field of neurology, founded the Dalhousie Multiple Sclerosis Research Unit, and was honoured with the Order of Canada as well as admittance into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. Nigerian **Grace Nenna Nzeribe**, another 1960 Scholar, became the Principal/Deputy Chief/Chief Nursing Officer in the Nigerian Ministry of Health for eight years. Australian Scholar **Germaine Greer** went on to become an important contributor to the fields of broadcasting and writing.

While there are many stories of success and achievement from the 1960s' cohort, these Scholars also experienced many challenges that extended far beyond the realm of academia. Sexual and ethnic discrimination had a direct impact on Scholars' day-to-day living. Some Scholars describe with disappointment harassment by Caucasian British people.

Despite the challenges of the time, the exchange of ideas and experiences led to the formation of

important relationships for the Scholars in terms of professional links and personal networks. Recognition of the intellectual talent and creativity of individuals, rather than foreign stereotypes, led to the acclamation of Scholars from a wide spectrum of nationalities and colours. As we look back at the evolution of the CSFP, the 1960s marked a healthy and enthusiastic start to a fifty-year legacy.

*Suzanne Lawrence is the George Curtis Memorial Commonwealth Fellow, and is part of a research team based at the Von Hügel Institute, St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge, currently working on the CSFP's history, to be published for its 50th anniversary in 2009. The history will document the development of the Plan and its changes over a half century, examining its significance in terms of both its contribution to society, particularly higher education, and its place in the changing Commonwealth. The project is being led and authored by Dr Hilary Perraton, Deputy Chair of the CSC, whose career involves extensive experience in international education.*

Do you have an interesting story about your experience as a Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship holder?

Contact Suzanne Lawrence, CSFP Researcher, at [sal57@cam.ac.uk](mailto:sal57@cam.ac.uk) for more details.

# COUNTRY PROFILE – INDIA

*In this issue's country profile, Professor Surinder S Jodhka and Dhruv Raina, from the Sociology Department at Jawaharlal Nehru University, look at the impact of the CSFP in India.*

The first batch of 54 Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows left India in 1960 – 36 went to the UK, 14 to Canada, 2 to Australia and 2 to New Zealand. India was one of the first countries to actively participate in the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). Over the years, the number of Scholars destined for the UK has remained steady, and the number of Scholars opting for Canada, Australia and New Zealand has increased gradually.

Between 1960 and 2002, the flow of students from India was consistent and a total of 3304 Scholars and Fellows travelled to pursue higher studies in Commonwealth countries under the Plan, of which 81% went to the UK, 15% to Canada, 2% to Australia and 1% to New Zealand. A very small number of Indian Scholars chose other Commonwealth countries to pursue their studies or professional training. India has also been an important host country for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows. A total of 672 Scholars and Fellows pursued their higher studies in India between 1960 and 2002. The largest number of them came from Mauritius (109), followed by the UK (86) and Sri Lanka (66).

## **WHO WERE THEY AND HOW DID THEY GET SELECTED?**

In India, two agencies coordinate the selection process for the CSFP: the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the University Grants Commission (UGC). Over the last eight to ten years, the MHRD has received more than 3000 applications annually for some 60 nominations to the UK alone. The Scholarship and Fellowship applications sent to the UGC are routed through the universities where the applicants are employed. This accounts for an average of 350-400 applications annually to the UGC for 90-95 nominations.

An email survey of 106 CSFP alumni carried out during April-August 2007 provided interesting information. Most (85%) of the former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows were employed full-time at the time of selection. In terms of their religious backgrounds, the alumni represented the overall diversity of the Indian population. However, the percentage representation



*Himalayan glaciers*

of Muslims was far below their proportion in the Indian population. Similarly, the caste break-up reflected a substantial presence of the upper and middle caste groups.

Predictably, most alumni (84%) had middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Only 3% of the respondents described their family background as poor/working-class. Similarly, in terms of gender profile, 82% of the former award holders were male. However, the average age of the women respondents was lower than their male counterparts – half of them were below 30 at the time of their award, in contrast to only a third of the male award holders in a similar category. Gender differences also appeared in the disciplinary orientation of the alumni. 50% of female respondents pursued science, technology and medicine, while the proportion of men in the same categories was much larger (79%). The representation of women in the social sciences and humanities was higher.

## **MOTIVATIONS AND REWARDS**

The most obvious motivation for applying for a Commonwealth Scholarship is to enhance one's career options. A doctoral degree, postdoctoral research or training in the developed world is valued by Indian universities and other professional organisations. In addition, the tenure



*Indian Scholars preparing to take a group photo at the 2005 CSC Welcome Day*

abroad augments the social capital of an academic. As one of the respondents put it, the stint abroad added to 'one's stature in the community, socially and professionally. Even when there were no immediate promotions, it found mention in all the official documents'. Furthermore, 67.9% of the respondents felt that the experience improved their 'professional skills in terms of teaching and research', while as many respondents felt that they used the 'new skills to alter the way they organised their research and teaching'. Although some award holders faced resentment amongst colleagues at their home institution, the benefits far outweighed any difficulties encountered.

*The authors are grateful for the support of the Commonwealth Trust, Dr Hilary Perraton and Dr Jonathan Jenkins during their research on the CSFP.*



## 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 four discrete types of award:

- Commonwealth Scholarships
- Commonwealth Academic Fellowships
- Commonwealth Professional Fellowships
- Commonwealth 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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