COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

COMMONWEALTH KNOWLEDGE

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TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE

Sustainability, fairness, security, prosperity

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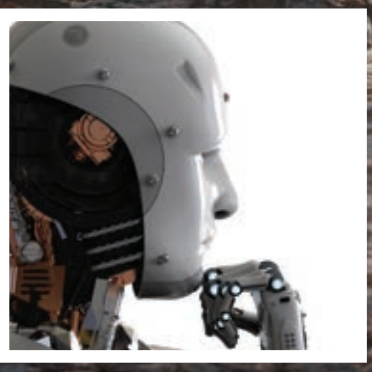

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Cornelia Ndifon explains the inspiration behind her work on HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy.

THE FIRST WORD

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the latest issue of *Common Knowledge* – as well as myself! As the CSC's new Senior Alumni Engagement Officer, it's been a pleasure to work on this edition, which features Commonwealth Scholars and alumni working on issues as varied as the Rohingya refugee crisis, global tax reform, and artificial intelligence in Africa. Each of the articles in this issue embodies this year's Commonwealth theme – 'Towards a common future' – as they strive to bring citizens of the Commonwealth closer together.

This April, the UK will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), when leaders from all the member countries are expected to gather in London and Windsor. They will come together to discuss the global challenges facing all citizens, and the key role of youth in building a better future. This event provides an excellent opportunity for Commonwealth Scholars across the globe to get involved in discussions and showcase the impact of their efforts to improve the lives of others.

The Commonwealth Scholarship scheme is about change and renewal – both as a result of the endeavours of our alumni, and also through the inherent nature of Scholars starting and finishing their awards. This is also true of the CSC Secretariat itself. In September 2017, we bade goodbye to Dr John Kirkland OBE, who left his position as Executive Secretary after 18 years of service. Under John's leadership and guidance, this scheme cemented its status as one of the most prestigious scholarships in the world. On behalf of the CSC and all our Scholars and alumni, we wish him all the best for the future. We are delighted to announce that Dr Joanna Newman MBE is the new Executive Secretary of the CSC, and she is looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible across the globe.

Another development was our announcement in October 2017 of a new programme of Commonwealth Rutherford Fellowships, funded by the UK government. These fellowships will enable talented researchers to collaborate with UK universities on world-class research and innovation. Our thanks to all alumni who promoted this opportunity to their networks; our Fellows will start their awards in March.

We look forward to hearing more about the impact and achievements of all our Scholars and Fellows, and welcome ideas for future articles and the alumni network more widely. Please do get in touch with me at **alumni@cscuk.org.uk**

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ISLAM, STATELESSNESS AND THE ROHINGYA CRISIS

Ishrat Hossain *is a 2016 Commonwealth Scholar from Bangladesh – she is studying for a PhD in International Relations at the University of Oxford.*

***Ishrat Hossain** looks at the complex dynamics behind the current Rohingya refugee crisis.*

WHERE BUDDHISM MEETS ISLAM

The erstwhile forgotten borderland between Bangladesh and Myanmar has recently become the scene of one of the most devastating humanitarian crises of our time. It is through these muddy terrains and hilly paths that more than 600,000 destitute and traumatised people from the Burmese Muslim minority who identify themselves as Rohingya have crossed over from the northern Rakhine State to southeastern Bangladesh. This latest influx is the result of a large-scale military crackdown on a newly emerged Rohingya insurgent group which had earlier launched a coordinated attack on Burmese security out posts in Rakhine State.

The heavy-handed military measures are complemented by popular worries in Myanmar that Muslims are on a mission to overtake Rakhine State and, eventually, the entire country. Adding to this fear is the threat narrative propagated by members of Buddhist nationalist movements, such as MaBaTha (the Organisation for the Protection of Race and Religion), which staunchly advocate for an active fortification of Buddhism against foreign elements – mainly Muslims in general, and Rohingyas in particular. As a consequence of these tense interactions, anti-Muslim violence has become a recurrent feature of Myanmar's politics since the country embarked upon its political and social transformation in 2011.

The resurgence of communal conflict in Myanmar has produced inevitable repercussions for its largest Muslim neighbour Bangladesh, such as an influx of refugees, sporadic border incursions by security forces, and an overall deterioration of communal relations between Buddhists and Muslims on the Bangladesh side. Over the last few years, contemporary Myanmar scholars have studied Buddhist-Muslim conflicts in the country, analysing how the resurgence of religious nationalism could entrench divisions and potentially jeopardise its nascent democratisation process. Less attention and analysis has been dedicated to the dynamics on the Bangladesh side, where complex historical, communal, political, and geopolitical factors are at play.

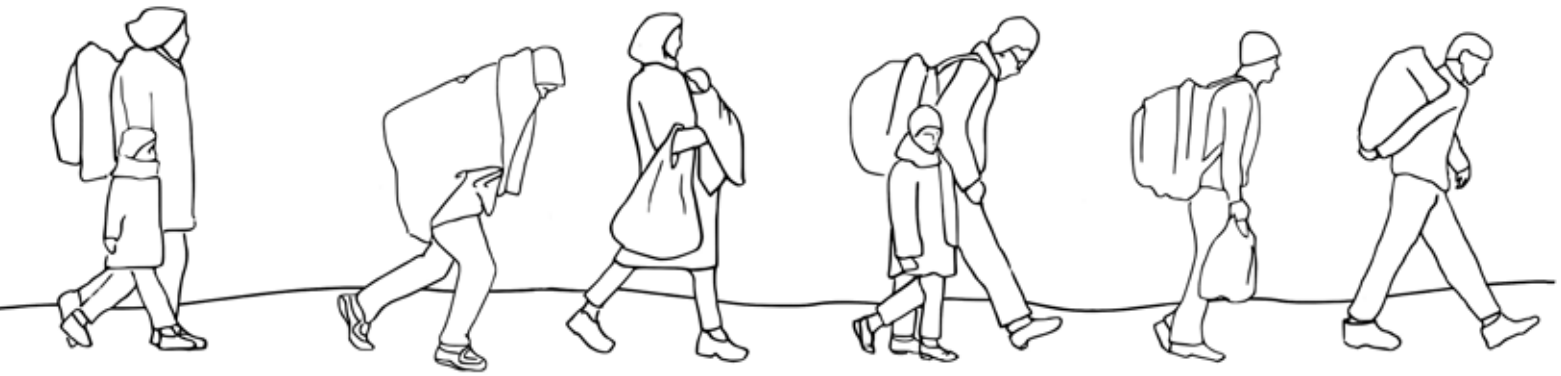
I aim to contribute to filling in this gap. My research is situated at the crossroads of this geopolitical fault line, seeking to explore the implications of Buddhist-Muslim violence on the political and security landscape of south and southeast Asia. Here, I map out some key dynamics of Buddhist-Muslim communalism – bigotry between the two communities, otherwise known as sectarianism – along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, in an attempt to re-imagine this contested and troublesome landscape.

CONFLICT IN RAKHINE STATE AND ITS AFTERMATH

An important flashpoint in the deterioration of Buddhist-Muslim relations on both sides of the border is the 2012 communal (sectarian) conflict in Rakhine State. In September 2012, the Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh adjacent to Myanmar experienced the first major conflict between Muslims and Buddhists in decades. 12 Buddhist religious sites and scores of Buddhist neighbourhoods were attacked and razed by a Muslim mob. The town of Ramu, with a significant Theravada Buddhist population, was particularly affected.

The Ramu attacks took place at the same time as two bouts of deadly communal conflicts between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State, which left 192 people dead, properties destroyed, and tens of thousands of people (mostly Muslims) displaced. The Rakhine conflict was not only extreme, but it also set a course for subsequent violent episodes in other towns in Myanmar, including Sittwe, Meiktila, and Lashio. With the simultaneous attack on the Buddhist community on the Bangladesh side of the border, the spillover effect of the communal conflict was felt for the first time. Some observers made an immediate connection between these separate conflicts and described it as a tit-for-tat dynamic. It is, however, deeper and more complex than that.

A cursory historical overview of the Bangladesh-Myanmar borderlands points to the hybrid nature of this region where Buddhism meets Islam. Communities on both sides of this hybrid zone have a long and multifaceted history of interactions. During the first decades after independence, bilateral relations were characterised by detachment and disinterest. However, the border region has long been the centre of diplomatic and political deliberation due to the cross-border movements (forced or voluntary) of Myanmar's disenfranchised Rohingya population and incursions between border forces.



Myanmar's political opening in 2011 ushered in new optimism on the Bangladesh side. Conversations about ending the stalemate of negotiations on the repatriation of Rohingya refugees started featuring prominently in Bangladeshi strategic and security circles. Unfortunately, since then the Bangladesh-Myanmar border region has become even more unstable, with the spillover of Buddhist-Muslim communal conflict and the subsequent allegation from local Buddhist communities that local politicians are inciting the Rohingya population to violence.

Buddhists in Bangladesh constitute a much smaller minority (0.6%) than Muslims in Myanmar (4%), and are largely considered to be well integrated. Needless to say, Buddhists in the borderland area, who are culturally similar to the Buddhist Rakhine population in Myanmar, were deeply shocked and traumatised by the 2012 attack in Ramu. The shock also reverberated all over Bangladesh, as it grappled with this new chapter of communal violence. The attack on Buddhist temples was also a blow to the ruling government and its dominant secularist approach. As damage control, the government launched an immediate and desperate attempt to reconstruct the shattered trust of the Buddhist population. It commissioned a large-scale rebuilding effort, directly supervised by the engineering division of the army, and within a year 19 sites had been restored at a cost of around US$ 2.5 million. The heavy securitisation of the rebuilding effort also sent a clear message that this matter was of high importance on the national agenda.

In Myanmar, however, no such effort was made to reinstate the destroyed neighbourhoods or reconstruct the broken ties between communities. Consequently, since the 2012 violence, social division between Muslims and Buddhists has intensified much further, with a marked increase in the circulation of misinformation, loathing, and distrust of Muslims in general. In these circumstances, even the term 'Rohingya' is a contested word – 'Bengali' is almost always the preferred term for the Muslim 'foreign interlopers'. Outspoken elements of the MaBaTha movement even claim that a 'Bengali' conspiracy is at the root of the region's instability and that there are long-term plans for Muslim colonisation of Myanmar.

This crisis is further exacerbated because these remote border regions are rarely given the attention they deserve.

A CHANGED LANDSCAPE

To make matters more complex, a new Muslim insurgency emerged in Rakhine State, launching its first operation in October 2016: a coordinated attack on three border police bases in the north. The retaliation from the Myanmar army sent over 87,000 Rohingya refugees over the border to Bangladesh and amounted to a large-scale human rights violation. A second, more deadly operation conducted by the same group in August 2017 led to further military retaliation, culminating in the disastrous Rohingya refugee crisis. The nature of these attacks and the military responses are decidedly different from those in the past, and pose a serious threat to the stability and development of the entire region.

I argue that this crisis is further exacerbated because these remote border regions are rarely given the attention they deserve. It is only during moments of particular crisis, such as the one unravelling currently, that metropolitan elites – in Dhaka or Chittagong, Yangon or Nay Pyi Taw – are forced to pay attention to their borderlands and the people who live there. Moreover, while the most immediate victims in any crisis are the Rohingya, on either side of the border, other minorities such as Hindus in Rakhine State and Buddhists in Bangladesh are equally affected. In Bangladesh, the 2012 attacks on Buddhist temples have already scarred communal relations and changed the security landscape. With the latest Burmese military pogrom against the Rohingyas, which sent thousands of refugees to join the half a million already languishing in the greater Chittagong region, an anti-Buddhist backlash from the locals against minority Buddhists is not entirely unimaginable.

In a more general sense, the challenges of the Myanmar-Bangladesh borderlands suggest that current attitudes and political engagement leave little room for joint management of this complex and volatile region. Yet it may only be through such radical collaboration that the Buddhist-Muslim hybrid zone can be governed in ways that improve the lives of the different communities. For those in Bangladesh who hope to purge their towns and villages of Buddhists, there is ample warning about the consequences from across the border in Myanmar. Such communal conflict only leads to poverty and resentment. It also primes the time bomb of counterattack; its explosion could damage anybody in the vicinity. CK

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY

Justice Hassan Bubacar Jallow *is a 1978 Commonwealth Scholar from the Gambia – he studied LLM Law at University College London.*

Democracy has recently returned to the Gambia, following more than 20 years of dictatorship. The country is now focused on rebuilding its institutions and moving forward – and one key figure leading this work is ***Hassan Bubacar Jallow****, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. A Director of the World Justice Project, Hassan has had a long and illustrious career in international law and justice. Here – in conversation with Richard Middleton, Chair of the CSC – he discusses his personal and professional experiences, as well as his hopes for the future.*

Looking all the way back to the 1970s, how did you find out about Commonwealth Scholarships?

It was through an advertisement in the Gambian news bulletin by the Ministry of Education, inviting applications for scholarships. I had other options but I preferred the Commonwealth Scholarship and thought that University College London [UCL] would be a better choice.

What are your memories of your Commonwealth Scholarship and your time in London?

What stands out – apart from the fact that the course was excellent – are the connections. I had many colleagues from all over the Commonwealth, and also from America and Europe. The scholarship provided the opportunity to develop these links and it was the first occasion I had met an international group like that.

Is that still a network of colleagues, acquaintances, and friends?

Many of them, yes. It was my first stay in Europe and in the UK. London has become my favourite city since then. I always look forward to going back and visiting UCL and the old places. I used to enjoy going to Hyde Park Corner on a Sunday morning and listening to the speakers.

Did you return to the Gambia after completing your award?

Yes, I returned immediately to the Gambia and continued working. I was already employed as a State Law Officer, so I just went straight back to work. My studies at UCL shaped my career afterwards. I studied courses in public international law – areas that I focused on throughout the rest of my life.

And very soon after – at the age of 33 – you were promoted to Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Yes, that was at quite a young age. But before that, when I had just returned from the UK, I had the opportunity to join a team of experts set up by the Organisation of African Unity [the forerunner of the African Union] to draft a human rights charter. So I started working in international law and human rights in Africa immediately after my UCL degree. The work of this committee led to the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1981, and the establishment of a commission to oversee the charter as well.

You were also involved with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, following the genocide in 1994. What was your role there?

I was the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda [ICTR] from 2003-2015, in charge of carrying out investigations, indicting the accused, and conducting trials. It was a big responsibility. The tribunal closed at the end of 2015. It is not really finished – there is still some work left to do – but we finished the bulk of it.

I was also appointed as the first Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals from 2012-2016, with responsibility for the residual work of the Rwanda tribunal and the Yugoslav tribunal as well – overseeing the tracking of those fugitives who had not yet been arrested.

How would you summarise the achievements of the ICTR?

By the time it closed in 2015, the tribunal had been able to prosecute the leading figures in the genocide: people who planned and oversaw

its execution, people who were in leadership positions – from the prime minister to members of the cabinet, to heads of the military and security services, to heads of administration. In total, 93 people were indicted. We secured the arrest of all but nine and prosecuted them. I think that was a big achievement.

We were also, I believe, able to leave something of a legacy in Rwanda itself. Although we conducted our hearings in Arusha, Tanzania, the tribunal helped to restore the Rwandan legal system through various measures: providing training, capacity building, lawyers, prosecutors, investigators, defence counsel. We assisted with law reform in Rwanda to ensure that the criminal justice system has fair trial standards, as well as international ones.

What were the challenges to achieving justice?

There were many challenges. We did a lot, but there were still things we were not able to achieve. We could not arrest everybody whom we had indicted. Three of the targets who are still at large include the former Commander of the Presidential Guard, the former Minister of Defence, and a major businessman. The mechanism will continue to look for these fugitives.

Did people come forward as witnesses?

Yes, people did come forward as witnesses, though many of them did not feel safe enough to testify, so we had witness security issues. We took measures, including witness protection through anonymity and sometimes through relocation to other jurisdictions for their safety.

Did the international community provide enough resource for this work?

Yes, the United Nations funded us adequately. They gave us a two-yearly budget from their resources, so we did not always get what we asked for, but we had enough to get going and to do the job. At times, there was a major challenge in securing the cooperation of states that were harbouring fugitives. Sometimes these states were reluctant to assist, or they simply denied the presence of these fugitives on their territory when we knew they were there.

What is the role and legacy of international courts in strengthening and improving national justice systems?

One of the lessons from our work is that international criminal justice is necessary if you want to prosecute people in leadership positions, as national systems sometimes find it difficult to reach them, because either they are outside the country or, if they are in the country, they are in positions of authority and influence, so they may not be easily prosecuted.

This is an advantage of the international system, but we also recognise that national systems have the primary responsibility to deal with these cases, so we must develop their capacity. We tried to do this in Rwanda, through the capacity-building measures already mentioned. The International Criminal Court is the court of last resort, and that is the way it should be.

Your extraordinary international career was perhaps to some extent provoked by the 1994 Gambian coup d'état. What impact did the coup have on you as Attorney General at the time?

The coup took place on 22 July 1994 – that very day I was arrested. I was among the first arrestees from the government, and for eight weeks thereafter I was in detention at military headquarters and then eventually under house arrest in my own residence. What it meant for me personally and immediately was that I was no longer Attorney General. I spent another two years doing a bit of private practice at home. I did not want to leave the country; I wanted to stay and see how I could help.

Did you feel safe?

There was always anxiety about safety and security, particularly when violence started occurring, but I chose to stay. After we had the first elections under a new constitution, I was invited to join the Supreme Court. I accepted the offer and became a Justice of the Supreme Court in 1998, because I thought I would be able to help restore the rule of law. But I eventually had to leave this position because I was not allowed to be independent and there was much dissatisfaction with some of my decisions. I thought it was best that I just left.

Did you leave the country as well at that point?

A few weeks after I left the Supreme Court, I received the offer from the UN Security Council to go to Rwanda as Prosecutor, and so I left the Gambia for the next 12 years.

Would you have left if you had not received that invitation from the UN?

I probably would have stayed. I would have wanted to stay, if the security situation was all right. It was a very difficult and challenging period. There was an attempt to have me removed from the Supreme Court, which would have been unconstitutional, of course. But in the end I resigned my own position. It was a military government, and traditional respect for the rule of law in the country had been eroded significantly by the new regime. It got much worse after the late 1990s, with draconian laws and reports of disappearances, killings, and torture.

International criminal justice is necessary if you want to prosecute people in leadership positions.

Do you think you and others like you could have been a bulwark against the worst excesses and abuses of the judicial system, if you had stayed on the Supreme Court?

We would have tried. I am not sure we would have succeeded, looking at what happened after I left. Many of the judges lost their jobs and were removed unconstitutionally because they also tried to resist these invasions of the judiciary. They tried to apply the law to protect human rights, but in the end they were removed from the bench. It was a difficult period.

How does it feel to return as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Gambia?

I am very happy to be back, although after Arusha I had looked forward to retirement! As fate would have it, I was asked to come back again. I am happy to be able to help for a short while, to help restore the rule of law and the independence and efficiency of the judiciary that is so central to the democratic system, and I will give it all that I can.

What are your key priorities in the coming year?

I want to see the judiciary Gambianised to stop it being too dependent on foreign judges. I want the conditions of service of judicial officers to be improved, and for them to have greater security of tenure, so that they can actually be independent. I also want the judicial system to be more efficient, so that it can deliver justice quickly and fairly. I would like to see a new constitution in the Gambia that provides for greater security and independence of the judiciary, and greater public participation and control of public administration.

Are there Gambians who can fulfil those judicial roles at the moment?

Yes, there are many of us who can. Many have been abroad and are coming back. A lot stayed in the country, even though they were unable to act according to their wishes and their conscience. I think we can rely on all of them.

On a more personal note, you are a devout Muslim and your father was an imam and a highly respected teacher of Islam. How has your faith influenced your work?

My life has been influenced by the principles of Islam, by the examples set by my father as a spiritual leader, and also by the examples I learnt from Dawda Jawara [the first President of the Gambia]. I am fortunate to have had two old men in my life who have been my mentors: Dawda Jawara on the government side, and my spiritual leader – who happens to be my father – on the religious side. They are both people with immense authority and knowledge who are respected by the community. They have been shining examples of modesty, perseverance, consensus building, and unity. They have also shown me how to hold firm to your principles and observe them. They have been very good examples for me, and I try to emulate them.

You sound optimistic for the future of the Gambia.

I am very optimistic. I think we are not going back to the pre-2017 years – we have gone past those. I don't think we will see a return to that. We can only move forward now towards a freer, fairer society, a more tolerant society, a peacebuilding, loving society with respect for law and justice.

CK

THE HUNTER BECOMES THE HUNTED

*How **Kelly Weston-Ford**'s breakthrough research on fingerprint retrieval is helping the fight against poaching.*

Kelly Weston-Ford *is a 2013 Commonwealth Scholar from South Africa – she studied MSc Forensic Science at King's College London.*

The trade in illegal wildlife is the world's fourth largest illegal trade – after drugs, human trafficking, and counterfeiting – and is estimated to be worth over £15 billion annually. Around 55 elephants are killed every day on the African continent, despite an international ivory trade ban that was introduced in 1989. This ban enabled some elephant populations to recover, especially where they were sufficiently protected, but there has been an increase in poaching recently, and tens of thousands of African elephants are killed each year. Currently, there are still more African elephants being killed than born, and so the populations continue to decrease.

Organised crime syndicates have become involved in the illegal wildlife trade, but the risk of prosecution has remained low. Fingerprint retrieval is rarely considered when wildlife goods are seized, and this potentially valuable evidence is being lost. Due to the ridged detail and porous nature of ivory, fingerprinting techniques using conventional powder materials have previously been largely ineffective in identifying poachers, and very little research has been conducted into its potential. Newer reduced-size fingerprint powders have been in use in the UK for a number of years, but had not been considered for use in fingerprinting ivory.

Kelly Weston-Ford was immediately drawn to this research topic as she has witnessed first-hand the devastating effect that poaching has had on animal populations – especially that of the African elephant – in her home country. Her hope was that, by conducting research on the retrieval of fingerprint ridge detail from elephant ivory with her supervisors at King's College London and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), she would be able to contribute to the fight against the illegal wildlife trade.

'I never thought in a million years that I would have the opportunity to work with the famous Metropolitan Police Service, and to work so closely with staff from the MPS was an incredible experience,' said Kelly. 'I visited an MPS Wildlife Crime Unit facility, where some of the illegal wildlife goods that have been seized are stored, so I could obtain the ivory required for my research project. It was mind-boggling and at the same time heart-breaking to see actual physical evidence of the enormity of the illegal wildlife trade.

'My only challenge during the project was working with the ivory itself. The tusks were very large and difficult to carry around, especially since they are

not inconspicuous. I often felt quite emotional working with the tusks, as the only place that they belong is in the elephants they came from, but I was also in awe of the fact that I was able to actually touch these magnificent specimens, which not many people get to do.'

Kelly found that the new smaller powders were able to effectively locate and produce useable fingerprint details on ivory up to 28 days after they were deposited. This suggested that the technique could be used as a practical and cost-effective tool to more easily identify poachers in regions close to the source of the ivory, which could aid in efforts to track and capture those involved. It quickly became apparent that the findings could prove very useful in the fight against poaching.

Kelly's research was one of ten funded projects run annually under King's College London's strategic alliance research partnership with the MPS. 'Working on a joint research project was a fantastic opportunity for me and showed the true partnership between the two institutions. I was also lucky enough to be named Student of the Year by the MPS for the project, which was a very proud moment for myself and for my colleagues.' Her research has been presented on a number of occasions, including to MPS staff, members of the Royal Institution of Great Britain, and members of the UK Parliament.

Efforts are now being made to implement the research findings in real life situations. A simple 'ivory fingerprinting kit' – including the necessary tools and consumables, such as the chosen fingerprinting powder and lifting tape – has been put together by Kelly's colleagues. The kits have been designed with the aim that anyone can be trained to use them in the field, which will allow ivory to be fingerprinted as soon as it has been seized, wherever that may be.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), an animal welfare and conservation charity, is now involved with this work. IFAW has funded a pilot study with the Kenyan Wildlife Service to enable these tools, and the skills required, to be used by rangers in the field to combat poaching directly. More than 15 ivory fingerprinting kits have been deployed in the country already and, together with intelligence and anti-poaching efforts, they have already helped gather evidence in multiple cases, which has led to arrests and ivory being seized.

IFAW is now preparing for larger-scale training events with wildlife rangers on how to use the various fingerprinting tools and techniques. The success of the technique in the UK could help provide fingerprint databases for countries that do not already have one. IFAW also recently delivered a presentation on the ivory fingerprinting kits to major law enforcement agencies in France that are working to stop environmental and wildlife crime.

In addition, further research has been conducted by scientists at King's College London and University College London. This includes testing the ability of the same powders to locate fingerprints on other surface types, such as birds' eggs and rhino horn, as well as the possibility of combining the fingerprinting technique with DNA profiling to retrieve usable DNA profiles from deposited fingerprints.

'I am absolutely thrilled that my colleagues have carried on with and expanded the original research,' said Kelly, 'and that we are continuing to see results through the fact that our research is actually being put into use in the field right at this very moment.' This new method of fingerprinting ivory is playing a small, but important, role in the fight to protect the remaining African elephants. CK

NEW RESEARCH,

*The winner of the **2017 Taylor & Francis Commonwealth Scholar Best Journal Article Prize** and three finalists summarise their pioneering research.*

The Taylor & Francis Commonwealth Scholar Best Journal Article Prize aims to recognise highly significant research and its subsequent distillation in journal publication form. It has been eye-opening to see the range of excellent research articles arising from Commonwealth Scholars since the prize was established in 2012.

It is a privilege for Taylor & Francis to sponsor this prize and to showcase the work of energetic Scholars contributing to greater knowledge gains and exchange. In a world where we need real solutions and greater capacities, the value of research cannot be understated. As fake news, propaganda, and suppression of information seem to be on the rise, we need empirical, self-aware, critical approaches to test assumptions and offer better ways to live in the world.

More than ever, there are calls for greater impact and engagement of research for sustainable development. The Best Journal Article Prize helps to surface and showcase the publication labours of Commonwealth Scholars in their journeys to make a difference in their spheres of influence, not least with the Sustainable Development Goals in mind. It commends the value of publishing, and of research communication more generally, in spreading the word and inspiring action.

Janet Remmington, *Regional Director for Africa, and Global Arts and Humanities Journals Director, Taylor & Francis*

NEW KNOWLEDGE

DR ERASMUS CILLIERS

2011 Commonwealth Scholar from South Africa, DPhil Economics, University of Oxford – winner for his article 'Reconciling after civil conflict increases social capital but decreases individual well-being', published in Science *in May 2016*

Over 50,000 people were killed in Sierra Leone's civil war, and more than half of its population of four million was displaced as part of the Revolutionary United Front rebel group's campaign of terror. Following civil conflict, many countries establish truth and reconciliation commissions (TRCs) as a mechanism to rebuild social cohesion and increase social capital. TRCs bring war victims face to face with perpetrators in forums where victims describe war atrocities and perpetrators confess to war crimes without facing punishment. Many proponents claim that these processes are highly effective, yet there is little evidence of how reconciliation processes help communities after a conflict.

After the civil war, the Sierra Leonean government set up a national TRC, but this had limited capacity and many rural citizens were unable to access the forums held in district capitals. Our research examined the consequences of one TRC effort in Sierra Leone designed and implemented in 2007 by a non-governmental organisation – Fambul Tok ('Family Talk' in Krio) – to address this gap. Fambul Tok's approach is similar to other TRCs, but it conducts community-level reconciliation.

Using random assignment, we studied the impact of Fambul Tok's TRC effort across 200 villages, drawing data from 2,383 individuals. Our evaluation revealed that there were both positive and negative consequences. It led to greater forgiveness of perpetrators and strengthened social capital – social networks were greater and people contributed more to public goods. However, the programme had substantial adverse effects on psychological health, increasing depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Both of these impacts were found to last for nearly three years after the intervention.

Our findings show that talking about war atrocities can be psychologically traumatic, and suggest that policymakers need to restructure reconciliation processes to reduce negative psychological costs, while retaining social benefits. Given the prevalence of conflict and the need for post-conflict reconciliation, further research is needed to examine alternative approaches to TRCs, such as those used by Fambul Tok, to support societies in recovering and moving on after war.

DR MOSABBER UDDIN AHMED

2005 Commonwealth Scholar from Bangladesh, MSc Communications and Signal Processing, Imperial College London; 2008 Scholar, PhD Data and Sensor Fusing, Imperial College London; and 2015 Academic Fellow, Imperial College London – highly commended for his article 'A Multivariate Multiscale Fuzzy Entropy Algorithm with Application to Uterine EMG Complexity Analysis', published in Entropy *in December 2017*

Normally, pregnancy lasts for about 40 weeks in humans. Babies born before 37 weeks of pregnancy are considered preterm. Preterm birth is a global problem: approximately 15 million babies are born preterm each year – more than 1 in 10 babies worldwide – and this number is rising. Preterm birth complications are the leading cause of death among children under five years of age, and were responsible for nearly 1 million deaths in 2013 alone.

Being able to predict preterm birth and to diagnose when a woman has gone into preterm labour is important. Evidence from many studies suggests that uterine electromyography (EMG) – recording the electrical activity produced by skeletal muscles in the uterus using electrodes placed on the surface of the abdomen – can diagnose labour more accurately than any other method. This suggests that this technique could be used to predict and diagnose preterm birth specifically.

This paper proposed a novel algorithm, multivariate multiscale fuzzy entropy (MMFE), for the classification of uterine EMG. Our results showed that differences in the uterine EMG signals are related to how long a baby has been in the uterus, so they can be used to predict preterm birth. Overall, our study has suggested that the MMFE analysis can provide a better way of identifying women at risk of preterm delivery than existing methods.

DR MELISSA KAPULU

2006 Commonwealth Scholar from Zambia, MSc Immunology and Infectious Diseases, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; and 2009 Scholar, DPhil Immunology, University of Oxford – highly commended for her article 'Comparative Assessment of Transmission-Blocking Vaccine Candidates against Plasmodium falciparum', published in Scientific Reports *in June 2015*

Malaria remains a major health problem in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that 7,000 people die from malaria (out of 2.8 million cases) in Zambia each year, despite the use of control interventions such as mosquito bed nets and anti-malarial drugs. On a global scale, there are around 200 million cases and 0.5 million deaths due to malaria.

Despite many decades of intense research and development effort, there is no commercially available malaria vaccine at the present time. More than 20 vaccine constructs are currently being evaluated in clinical trials or are in advanced preclinical development. We conducted a head-to-head comparison of the leading antigens (molecules capable of inducing an immune response) being considered for use in malaria vaccines. We tested the effectiveness of the immune responses generated by the antigens against different parasite strains from malaria risk areas, using parasites from Burkina Faso as representative of sub-Saharan Africa. We found that the immune responses varied in longevity, which would affect a vaccine's ability to prevent transmission effectively over time.

This research has provided insight into how preclinical development can increase our understanding of what a real-world vaccine would need to achieve in order to reduce malaria transmission, before it is scaled up into human trials. This research will support and enable similar comparative analyses to be carried out – for malaria and for other diseases – so that only the best proven candidates are taken forward for clinical development.

DR NIROJ KUMAR MOHALIK

2010 Commonwealth Scholar from India, PhD Environmental Engineering, University of Nottingham – highly commended for his article 'Estimation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Spontaneous Combustion/Fire of Coal in Opencast Mines – Indian Context', published in Carbon Management *in October 2016*

Coal mines in India have a record of catching fire due to spontaneous combustion – over 140 years, approximately 70% of mines have been set alight in this way. The spontaneous combustion of coal – and subsequent mine fires – produce a mixture of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, and carbon monoxide, which contribute to global warming.

Estimating greenhouse gas emissions caused by the spontaneous combustion of coal is a major challenge. A critical review reveals that there are no standard methods to estimate such emissions from mine fire/spontaneous combustion areas. Measurements of fugitive emissions (leaks and other unintended releases of gases from industrial activities) do not include the gases released through spontaneous combustion, which may make a major contribution to greenhouse gas levels. The greenhouse gas emissions from spontaneous combustion in opencast coal mines are recognised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), but there is a lack of measurement methodology.

Our research aimed to use current methods to estimate the greenhouse gas emissions from spontaneous combustion in India, and provide baseline data for these emissions as part of fugitive emissions within the Indian energy sector. In this study, the chamber sampling method of direct measurement was evaluated by carrying out two field measurements of greenhouse gases emitted over three months from a spontaneously combusting coal seam at the Enna Opencast Project in the Jharia coal fields, in Jharkhand state. This was the first attempt to estimate greenhouse gas emissions from the spontaneous combustion of coal in India.

The study concluded that the scale of the emissions depends on the location of their source seam and the gas emission temperature. This intensive study may be useful for future emission measurements of spontaneous combustion in India.

CLEANING UP

***Rachael Ununuma Akpiri** on her discovery of a new species of sea sponge.*

For many decades, pollution and environmental damage to agriculture and fisheries in the Niger Delta has undermined the population's basic human rights, such as access to safe drinking water and food and health. In Nigeria, especially in fishing communities, fish and seafood comprise around 75% of the animal protein consumed. Therefore, the people of the Niger Delta are faced with serious public health challenges as a result of contamination from environmental pollutants. Local and international regulators, scientists, and human rights organisations – including the United Nations – have expressed serious concern about pollution in the region.

Sea sponges – immobile underwater organisms that remain fixed to a surface on or near the seabed – are able to accumulate a wide range of environmental pollutants in their aquatic environment. As such, they can be quick and efficient bioindicators, serving as an early warning system for environmental pollution from toxic metals and organics. The information they provide can be used to assess toxicity levels and the risk of exposure, to inform environmental regulations and policies.

My interest in sea sponges stems from their potential use as a novel tool to assess the genotoxic impact of pollutants on the marine environment – to determine if these chemicals damage genetic information in cells, causing mutations that may lead to cancer. My PhD research seeks to examine the levels of various environmental pollutants in the Niger Delta, through establishing the profile of these pollutants in sea sponges from the area, and investigating whether they cause DNA damage in the sponges. Several studies have deployed sea sponges to biomonitor pollution levels in coastal regions across the world; my research is the first to explore this application in west Africa. The overall aim of the study is to generate reliable scientific data for sustainable public health management in the region.

In preparation for my PhD, I collected a sea sponge sample during a field trip to a creek in the town of Kalibiama, along the Bonny estuaries in Rivers State in the Niger Delta, in February 2013. Subsequent analysis revealed sufficient genetic differences for this sea sponge to be considered a separate species in its own right. This is a very important development in my research, as it contributes new scientific knowledge about the evolution of sponge species in Nigeria, and will be the first-ever entry of a west African species into the Sponge Barcoding Project (www.palaeontologie.geo.uni-muenchen.de/SBP). It's also fun because I get to choose a name for the new species, which I have decided to call *Amorphinopsis kalibiama*. A manuscript describing this new species is currently in preparation.

This is not the only success to arise from this research so far. We have, for the first time, measured two toxicity endpoints in sea sponges that are established precursors of mutagenic and carcinogenic effects in living systems, so may result in cancers, genetic aberrations, or other lethal effects. These findings were published in the journal *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* last year.

In the long term, I hope to develop sea sponges as a rapid and reliable tool for biomonitoring and risk assessment in the marine environment. This could inform the enactment and enforcement of more environmentally-friendly policies in countries where pollution, especially from industrial waste, remains a huge challenge. I am seeking funding to expand this study, as well as collaborations with environmental advocacy groups and both international and local regulators to apply these findings in the real world. CK

Rachael Ununuma Akpiri *is a 2014 Commonwealth Scholar from Nigeria – she is studying for a PhD in Environmental Physiology and Toxicology at the University of Birmingham.*

The new species of sponge discovered by Rachael in its natural habitat, on a mangrove stump

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

NAVIGATI CHOPPY WATERS

The dialect between the 'geese' and the 'pluckers' aptly identified by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's finance minister, remains true as far as it goes. However, the hissing of geese is not the only sound heard on the tax front.

Geopolitically dominant countries now complain that some of their 'geese' have wandered beyond their borders to fatten themselves abroad, making it difficult for the 'pluckers' to calculate and extract the feathers they see as their due. In response to such wandering, the pluckers from the dominant countries have developed complex cooperation regimes designed to bolster their plucking, and demand that other jurisdictions implement these under penalty of sanctions. In turn, some small and developing countries complain that they are being forced to bear the cost for the implementation of disproportionately onerous cooperation regimes that they had no role in designing. Trying to discern which of these complaints is legitimate in the midst of threats, partisan narratives, and name-calling can be difficult.

In 2007, the Commonwealth Secretariat offered me the opportunity to examine some of the challenges facing small and developing Commonwealth countries due to the rapidly changing international tax environment. In particular, I was asked to look at what could be done to alleviate obstacles on the path to a level playing field in the area of cross-border cooperation in international taxation.

The book which came out of that work, titled *Assessing the Playing Field: International Cooperation in Tax Information Exchange*, was published a decade ago. With that ten-year milestone in mind, I will examine two issues here: whether the realities confronting small and developing countries indicate any movement towards that level playing field; and what needs to be done immediately, and over the long term, to move the world towards unbiased rules and fair treatment for these countries.

A short history

The origins of many of today's small and developing countries, as well as some of the problems they face, can be traced back to the era of mercantilism, extending from the 16th to 18th centuries. During this period, there was intense and sometimes violent competition among the dominant European powers that extended well beyond Europe. In the context of the Caribbean, competition among European powers was for the control of commodities, including gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, and timber, as well as for the slave trade that was relied upon for the extraction of those commodities.

The mercantile-era relationship of the 'New World' and the 'Old World' was skewed. The European powers viewed the New World as existing to serve their interests. There is scant evidence in the literature of that era that the basic welfare interests of either the indigenous or the imported peoples of the New World were considered by European decision-makers. International agreements governing the allocation of commerce and state revenues during this time were forged between nations in Europe with virtually no input from those in the New World. These agreements established standards that covered everything from the distribution and sale of slaves to the trading of entire Caribbean islands.

As cross-border commerce grew in the late 19th and 20th centuries, efforts aimed at preserving the economic status quo and enhancing both private and state revenues gradually shifted in focus from the control of territory in the 'New World' to the control of the allocation of trade and taxation rights. Consistent with existing practices, the initial bilateral tax instruments, produced in the context of the League of Nations in the 1920s, were also shaped by representatives of a small group of geopolitically dominant countries.

Following World War II, the process for developing rules for the allocation and enforcement of taxation rights passed to

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Camille Stoll-Davey *is a 2003 Commonwealth Scholar from the Cayman Islands – she studied for a DPhil in Law at the University of Oxford.*

'The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest amount of feathers with the smallest possible amount of hissing.'

***Camille Stoll-Davey** discusses the realities of international taxation in small and developing countries.*

the same small group of the most developed states, reconstituted as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The inherent lack of democracy, and perhaps inevitable biases, led to the development of an alternative process with the United Nations that was designed to give greater consideration to the interests of smaller and developing states. However, the UN process has never received the same level of economic support or been allowed the same level of influence as the OECD.

Recent developments

The past 20 years have seen a great deal of activity in redefining and expanding the rules relating to international tax competition and cooperation among tax administrations. Given accelerating globalisation, the arrival of the digital economy, and the challenges arising from the increased mobility of capital, much of this activity is understandable.

In 1998, the OECD embarked on an exercise to suppress types of tax competition deemed 'harmful' to the interests of its member countries. The interests of small and developing countries were not represented in setting the tax competition criteria and ground rules. 41 mostly small and developing countries – but no OECD member states – were initially identified under OECD criteria as 'tax havens', as part of that 1998 exercise.

The OECD and the G20 recently introduced a new set of highly complex tax cooperation rules designed to combat tax evasion through the Common Reporting Standard (CRS), an information standard for the automatic exchange of tax and financial information on a global level, and the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) rules, designed to identify gaps in tax rules currently exploited to artificially shift profits to low or no-tax locations.

While there are undoubtedly benefits for all jurisdictions in ensuring that corporate tax abuse is minimised, the rules developed by the OECD demonstrate a lack of awareness of the limited capacities of small and developing countries. Many do not have the economic or human resources required to implement these highly complex standards in the short timeframes set by developed countries, and little assistance has been offered. In some instances, there are fewer than ten qualified professionals to deal with all aspects of a nation's domestic tax administration and tax treaty management, let alone the burdens created by the introduction of new rules.

The predicaments of some of the smallest Caribbean Commonwealth member states have been compounded by recent hurricanes that have destroyed their infrastructure and crippled their economies. These difficulties, together with the demands of the OECD, stand in sharp contrast to the stance of the rulemaking jurisdiction with the largest economy, which has indicated that it has no current intention to implement the OECD's new reporting standard.

What next?

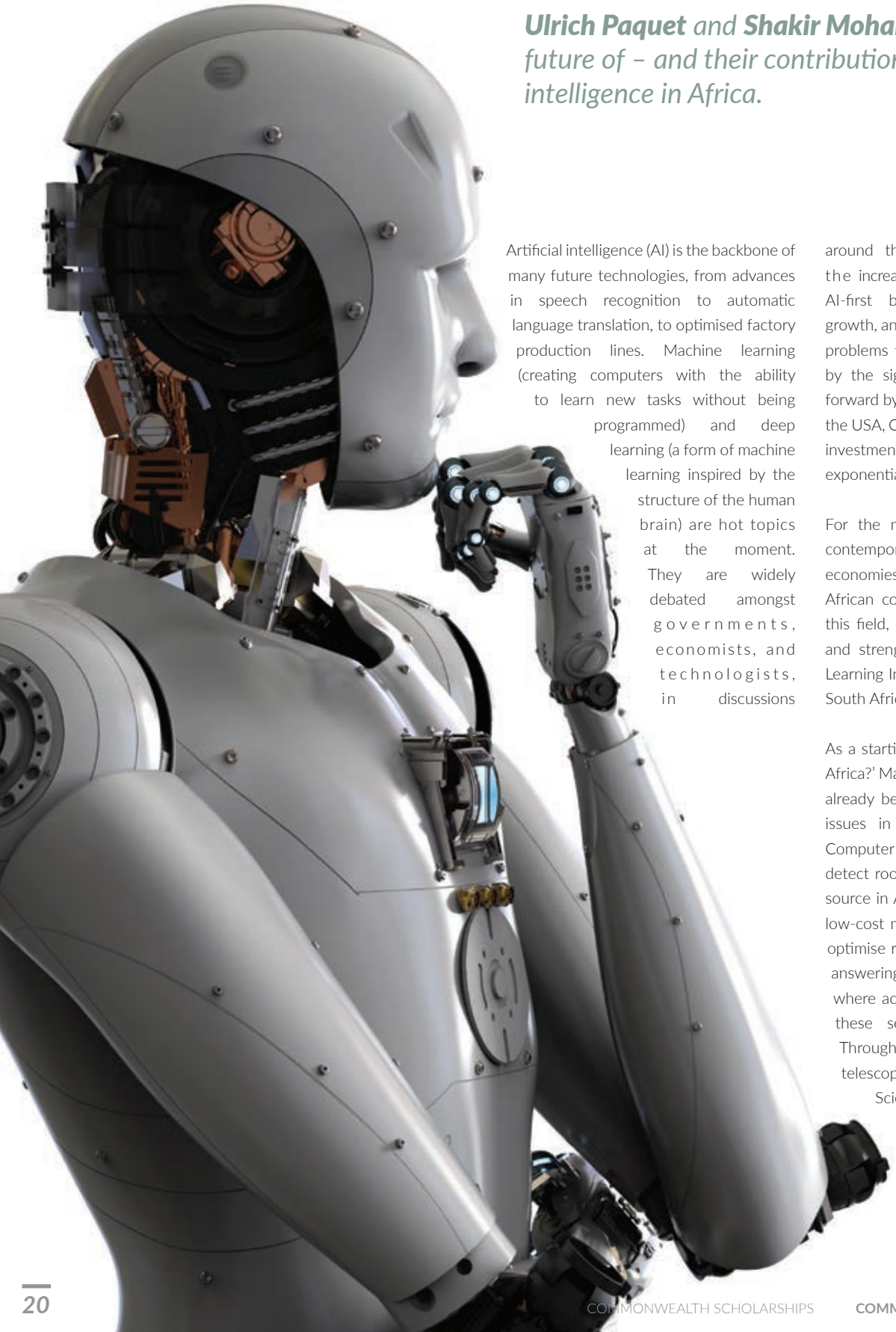
There is little evidence that over the past ten years the playing field has been made level in any meaningful sense. In December 2017, as part of a process that began in 1996, the European Union released a blacklist of 17 'non-cooperative tax jurisdictions' that will be made subject to unspecified sanctions. The EU's criteria for this list are opaque, but it has acknowledged that it excluded assessment of the tax practices of both EU member states themselves and a number of other nations. Unsurprisingly, both the blacklist and the grey list produced by the EU included only small and developing countries, but no geopolitically powerful ones.

In the short term, some of the smallest and least developed Commonwealth countries would clearly benefit from assistance in meeting the tax cooperation obligations imposed on them within the past five years.

In the longer term, hopefully an alignment of interest will be recognised and some mechanism will be found to permit small and developing countries to have a meaningful voice in shaping the rules that they are required to follow. This would go a significant distance towards finding that elusive level playing field. CK

THE ROBOTS ARE COMING

Ulrich Paquet and Shakir Mohamed discuss the future of – and their contribution to – artificial intelligence in Africa.



Artificial intelligence (AI) is the backbone of many future technologies, from advances in speech recognition to automatic language translation, to optimised factory production lines. Machine learning (creating computers with the ability to learn new tasks without being programmed) and deep learning (a form of machine learning inspired by the structure of the human brain) are hot topics at the moment. They are widely debated amongst governments, economists, and technologists, in discussions around the fourth industrial revolution, the increasing effects of automation, creating AI-first businesses, promoting economic growth, and the promise of solving intractable problems facing humanity. This is evidenced by the significant government policies put forward by major economies, including China, the USA, Canada, and the UK, and large global investment in this area. AI is, at present, an exponentially growing field.

For the most part, the advances seen in contemporary AI are driven by these major economies. Recognising the critical need for African countries to start to take a lead in this field, we initiated an effort to stimulate and strengthen capacity through the Deep Learning Indaba event, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2017.

As a starting point, one might ask 'why AI in Africa?' Many important applications of AI can already be found that support development issues in African countries, and globally. Computer vision is currently being used to detect root disease in cassava, a staple food source in Africa, through images captured by low-cost mobile phones. AI is being used to optimise response times in mobile question-answering services for healthcare, especially where access to clinics is limited, to enable these services to reach more people. Through the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) telescope, Africa will also contribute to Big Science, and will advance the state of machine learning to provide new insights into the workings of the universe.

Shakir Mohamed *is a 2007 Commonwealth Scholar from South Africa – he studied for a PhD in Biomedical Signal Processing at the University of Cambridge.*

Ulrich Paquet *is a 2003 Commonwealth Scholar from South Africa – he studied for a PhD in Computational Learning Theory at the University of Cambridge.*

To find out more about the Deep Learning Indaba, visit **deeplearningindaba.com**

Despite these applications, the attendance and participation of citizens of African countries at international machine learning conferences is extremely low at present. It is crucial that Africans are contributors, shapers, and owners of the coming advances in this area. The Deep Learning Indaba was a direct effort to strengthen the foundations of African machine learning, and to increase the participation of African researchers in the field.

The Indaba brought together 300 students, postdoctoral researchers, academics, and industry professionals, representing 23 African countries – making it one of the largest teaching events of this kind globally. An 'Indaba' is the Zulu word for a special kind of gathering: a gathering that happens across the African continent where communities meet to share experiences, seek advice, and discuss pressing issues. The pressing issue for the first Deep Learning Indaba was how the pan-African research landscape in AI could be strengthened.

The Indaba was designed to address two principal aims: African participation and contribution to advances in AI and machine learning; and diversity in these fields of science. Over five days, the Indaba brought together leaders in the field to teach and mentor students, academics, researchers, and entrepreneurs in the theory and practice of deep learning. It presented a kaleidoscope of state-of-the-art machine learning lecturers and accompanying practicals during the day, and poster and networking sessions in the evening. Beyond the technical exchange, the week created opportunities for new research connections, fostered a better understanding of the variety of career paths in the field, and, through new friendships, perspectives and backgrounds, took steps to realising a more diverse, racially representative, and multicultural machine learning community.

The Indaba's masterclasses were presented by a range of African and international researchers from both academic and industrial backgrounds, drawn from DeepMind, Google, Facebook, Amazon, the Universities of Oxford, Pretoria, the Witwatersrand, Brown, Imperial College London, and South Africa's Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Among the speakers was George Konidaris, 2002 Commonwealth Scholar from South Africa, now Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science at Brown University. Interwoven practical sessions cemented theoretical explanations, and we developed a cloud-based curriculum around TensorFlow, a deep learning toolkit. This curriculum is now used in a number of universities and meet-ups across the African continent.

As organisers, we were aware of the access challenges faced by many students in African countries. These range from financial barriers to never having the opportunity to participate in leading discussions simply by living in a remote location. The Indaba was free to attend for all students and, through generous sponsorship from a long list of companies, start-ups, universities, and government institutions, we were able to provide scholarships (flights and accommodation) for 70 students. Additionally, we were pleased to note that 25% of attendees were women – a remarkable turnout for an AI event.

Around 150 students presented their latest work in evening poster sessions, which were an opportunity to celebrate African research excellence in machine learning. The posters covered every topic imaginable: diagnostic tools for breast cancer, malaria and tuberculosis; ways to address water management in areas that are experiencing severe shortages; machine learning in mining and mineral extraction; much-needed tools for support, analysis, and translation of local languages; the analysis of astronomical data generated by the SKA telescope; and even using machine learning to characterise the structure of large prime numbers.

The diversity and quality of work was astounding, and a panel of judges – including Bubacarr Bah (2007 Commonwealth Scholar from Ghana, now Research Chair at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences) – was tasked with scoring each poster. 37 students were awarded prizes, ranging from books from the University of Cambridge and MIT presses to all-expenses-paid trips to the Neural Information Processing Systems (NIPS) conference, the world's leading meeting for machine learning research.

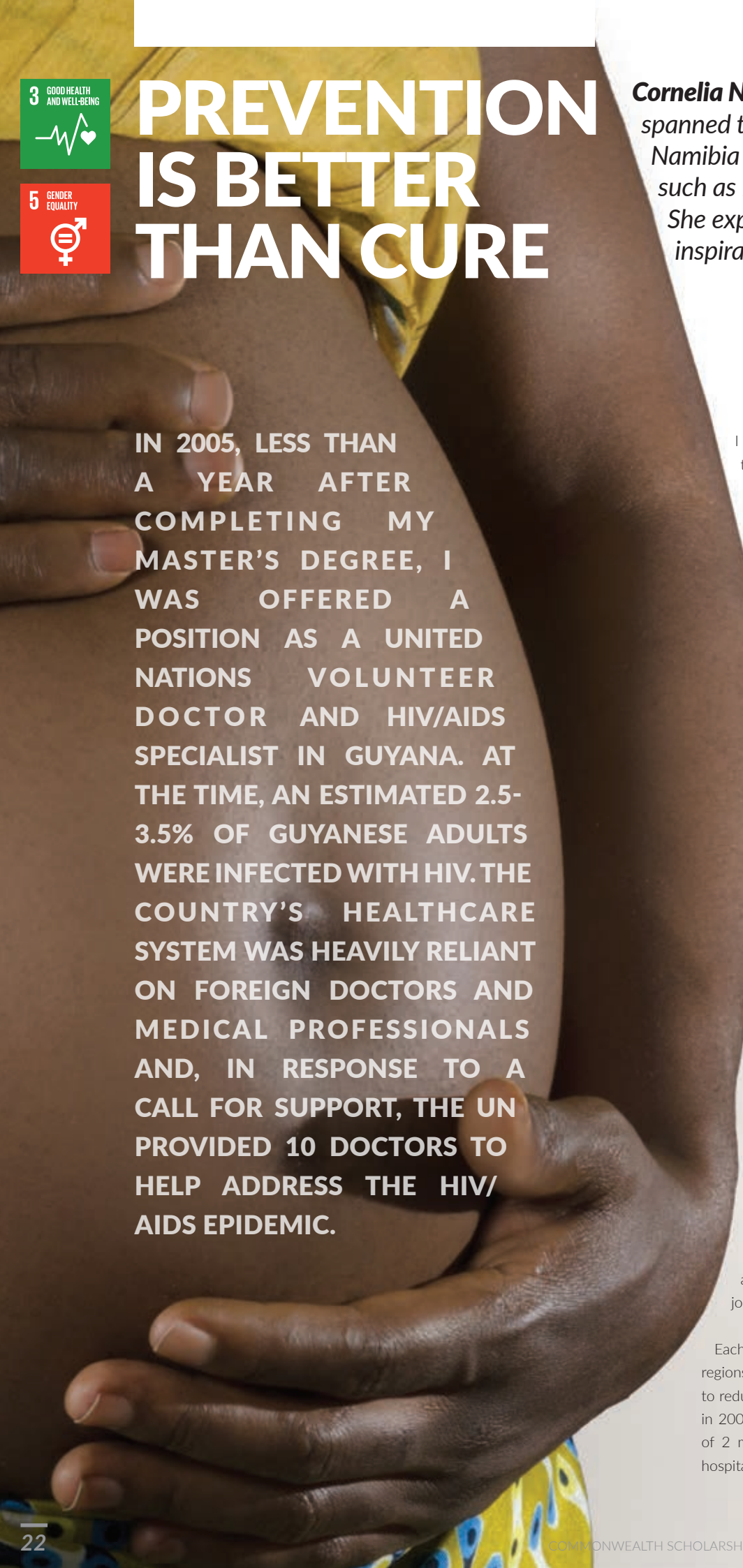
A larger Deep Learning Indaba is planned for 2018, again in South Africa, after which it will be grown to a sustainable pan-African initiative. As African machine learning researchers, we have jointly put our mind to the future. CK

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

5 GENDER EQUALITY

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

***Cornelia Ndifon**'s medical career has spanned the Atlantic – from Guyana to Namibia – and also a range of issues, such as HIV and teenage pregnancy. She explains her journey and the inspiration behind her work.*



IN 2005, LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER COMPLETING MY MASTER'S DEGREE, I WAS OFFERED A POSITION AS A UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEER DOCTOR AND HIV/AIDS SPECIALIST IN GUYANA. AT THE TIME, AN ESTIMATED 2.5-3.5% OF GUYANESE ADULTS WERE INFECTED WITH HIV. THE COUNTRY'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM WAS HEAVILY RELIANT ON FOREIGN DOCTORS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND, IN RESPONSE TO A CALL FOR SUPPORT, THE UN PROVIDED 10 DOCTORS TO HELP ADDRESS THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC.

I was based in the capital, Georgetown, where I treated pregnant HIV patients and provided clinical mentoring to local healthcare providers. During my time there, services for HIV, tuberculosis, and maternal and child health were integrated. As a result, my role was not only to manage the immediate HIV needs of pregnant women, but also to review other specific pregnancy-related risks, such as high blood pressure.

Guyana was one of the first countries to introduce the antiretroviral drug ATRIPLA and, by the end of 2008, the mother-to-child transmission rate of HIV had declined by 1%. In 2013, it was estimated that 1.4% of adults were HIV positive. Efforts were also made to address stigma through the formation of support groups, where members were able to openly acknowledge and discuss their HIV status. I was privileged to work with these groups and hold seminars on reproductive health topics, including family planning.

Moving to Namibia

After three years in the role, I was keen to gain experience in other countries and to learn more about the differences and similarities between healthcare systems, in order to share best practice. I joined the International Training and Education Centre for Health (I-TECH) in Namibia in 2008 as one of six HIV Clinical Mentors, training local doctors and healthcare workers on the clinical management of HIV. I-TECH provides in-service training for almost all cadres of healthcare staff so, as a mentor, I was able to build the skills of workers as they did their jobs.

Each mentor was assigned to specific administrative regions within Namibia, to work with government leaders to reduce the rate of HIV infection across the country – in 2008, an estimated 18% of the country's population of 2 million was HIV positive. I supported six district hospitals in the Otjozondjupa and Kunene regions. While

Dr Cornelia Ndifon *is a 2003 Commonwealth Scholar from Nigeria – she studied MPH Public Health (International) at the University of Leeds.*

> **I am motivated to do something – however small it may be – to end the growing trend of teenage pregnancy.**

there were a number of doctors in these regions who received frequent training in HIV and antiretroviral therapy, I travelled to remote locations to provide hands-on mentoring, ensuring that patients who had a high risk of being infected with HIV were tested, and that those who tested positive received treatment at the earliest possible opportunity.

In 2013, after a break to pursue a second Master's in Maternal and Fetal Health at the University of Manchester in the UK, I rejoined I-TECH to take up a second clinical mentoring position in Rundu, the capital of the Kavango East region – and the town with the second highest HIV infection rate in the country (24.1% in 2014).

The Kavango East region borders Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana and is characterised by cross-country migration, which has had a negative impact on both HIV infection and teenage pregnancy rates. A number of refugees moved into the region during the Angolan Civil War, which led to a rise in infectious diseases, including HIV.

Teenage pregnancy is also particularly high in this region – within one year, there were over 25 pregnant girls at one secondary school – and a number of schools asked the local health authority for a doctor to come and speak to students about sexual health and teenage pregnancy. I was nominated by colleagues as they felt I had a way of reaching out to the school girls on these topics. As a result, I became involved in community outreach, providing information to secondary school girls on ways to prevent pregnancy and HIV infection.

Moving into the community

During my meetings with these girls, it became apparent that the main reasons for such a high number of teenage pregnancies are poverty and cultural background. I have observed that poverty pushes parents to be blindsided with regard to relationships between girls and older men. Cultural practices – such as sexual readiness testing by male relatives, which exposes girls as young as 10 years old to sexual activity – also predispose girls to early teenage pregnancy. The girls themselves report being 'driven away' from family planning facilities and told that they are too young for advice on these matters.

According to the UN Population Fund, 46,000 teenagers became pregnant in Namibia in 2013. In 2015, 1,843 teenagers dropped out of school as a result of pregnancy – this rose to 4,000 in 2016. These figures are alarming and continually motivate me to do something – however small it may be – to end this growing trend. I believe it is important that these girls have positive role models and that schools provide extracurricular activities to encourage them to pursue a different lifestyle and delay sexual activity.

I am still based in Rundu, working at the state hospital as a Medical Officer. My focus has shifted to internal medicine, and I treat patients predominantly suffering from asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, schizophrenia, malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV. Healthcare provision in Namibia is hospital based, and there is a strong need to develop primary care services (such as clinics and health centres) to provide easily accessible routes to healthcare, and to establish hospices to cater for long-term chronic and dependent patients. These facilities would make a huge impact in alleviating patient suffering, as well as reducing the financial burden of long-stay hospital admissions.

In 2017, I founded the Dr Cornelia Ndifon Rural Health Foundation to address preventive health issues at the community level. I am currently raising awareness of the consequences of teenage pregnancy, which range from medical short- and long-term complications – such as low birth weight babies, increased possibility of surgical delivery, and vesicovaginal fistulae – to social aftereffects, including dropping out of school and the resulting lack of employable skills. The key issue for me is to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies because of its close links with unsafe sexual practices and possible HIV contraction. I also work with communities and local churches to raise awareness of cervical and breast cancer, and of ways to reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure and diabetes.

I currently visit three schools in the Kavango East region to talk about HIV and pregnancy prevention, but have somewhat adopted one: Sauyemwa Combined School, which has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the region. While my main reason for visiting is to discuss health-related matters, I also talk to the girls about their education and career aspirations, and the impact that staying in school and studying hard has had on my life, including the opportunities to study and work abroad and do a job I love. I often deliver motivational talks at the beginning of each school term or before exams, to encourage learners to take their studies seriously, abstain or practice safe sex, and aim high and believe in themselves.

Since I started visiting Sauyemwa Combined School, the number of pregnancies has fallen – despite the rise in the national numbers – and many students have performed better academically than in previous years. I will continue my community outreach, with the hope of eliminating teenage pregnancy. CK

BRIDGING DIVIDES THROUGH FILM

How can film – and the process of filmmaking – bring divided people together? Conciliation Resources, a UK-based peacebuilding organisation, has hosted Commonwealth Professional Fellows from the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir since 2011. ***Muhammad Urfi***, ***Mohammad Irfan Dar***, *Pawan Bali,* ***Shafat Ahmad***, *and* ***Atia Anwer Zoon*** *spoke to their former host organisation about the importance of collaboration in the region.*

2017 marked 70 years since the partition of India, and the subsequent forced separation of hundreds of thousands of people living in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir – an area divided by the Line of Control into Indian and Pakistani administered territories.

The region has been a hub of violent conflict since 1947, and communication between the two sides is extremely limited. Over the past seven years, four filmmakers, from both the Indian and Pakistani sides of Kashmir, have worked together to produce a series of films about the lives of people living in this region and the potential for building positive relationships across the divide.

The latest film in the series – *Disaster: the common enemy* – highlights the need for collaboration across the Line of Control to help prepare for, and respond to, natural disasters. Over the past 40 years, south Asia has experienced more than 1,300 disasters, many of which have been particularly severe in Jammu and Kashmir. Improved collaboration to manage natural disasters could not only save lives, but also help to build confidence between different divided groups in the region.

A team of four filmmakers from both sides of the Line of Control – Commonwealth Professional Fellows Muhammad Urfi, Mohammad Irfan Dar, and Muhammad Mohsin Shakil, plus Pawan Bali – came together to create the film. It was made together with people who were affected by and responded to natural disasters in Kashmir, as well as others who work on disaster management and peacebuilding – including Commonwealth Professional Fellows Shafat Ahmad and Atia Anwer Zoon.

Filmmaker Muhammad Urfi on location in Kashmir

What motivated you to make this series of films?

Muhammad Urfi: From 1989-2004, when India and Pakistan were fighting over the Line of Control, I was a war reporter. I witnessed dead bodies, burned homes, and broken families, and I wanted to do something that could help to neutralise the tensions. So I volunteered myself to help share the stories of the people living either side of the divide.

Mohammad Irfan Dar: My motivation is that this work is based on construction, not destruction. I do it for the love of connecting people.

Pawan Bali: One of the important things we wanted to do with these films was to bring the voices of the people on the ground to those who are in a position to make decisions.

For a long time, people on either side of the Line of Control were living with a complete information block. For the first time in the region of Jammu and Kashmir, we are presenting a common narrative of people living on both sides of the line.

How do you think films can be used as a tool for peacebuilding?

PB: I believe that media and filmmaking should no longer be on the periphery of conflict resolution, but should take centre stage. A film can help people to empathise with each other, and that's what we are trying to do. We are not merely journalists, but people trying to build bridges.

MU: This is an active conflict. There are people suffering and dying on the Line of Control. In an active conflict, it can be difficult to discuss sensitive issues. I think films are an important tool to help start these discussions within communities.

MID: Films can connect people and give them a sense of belonging and identity. Films are about building stories. The dialogue is there on the ground; we are just bringing the stories out. Our work will be part of the evidence of what people thought and felt at this time.

How has the filmmaking process changed you?

MU: When we made the first film, I did not have a single connection with anyone on the other side of the Line of Control, so it was fascinating when I met the other filmmakers. Growing up, I was told that people from the other side are our enemy, but the more people I have met, the more my perceptions have changed. We may have different languages, education, and culture, but we can accommodate these differences. It has given me confidence that we can move forward.

MID: Every film I have made has changed me a bit. These films were my first contact with the other side. It was emotionally overwhelming and challenging.

PB: Over the last seven years, I have realised that the stories on both sides are the same; we are the same people. When you show the films to people, they can relate to these stories. They say 'Yes, this is your story and it is my story'.

Every film is a learning process; we learn more about the region and about each other. Filmmaking bridged our perception gaps. It taught me to understand nuances, to reach common ground despite differences, and to be sensitive to each other's problems.

BRIDGING DIVIDES THROUGH FILM

The filmmaking team: (l-r) Mohammad Irfan Dar, Muhammad Urfi, Mohsin Shakil, Pawan Bali

Mohammad Irfan Dar *is a 2013 Commonwealth Professional Fellow from India.*

Muhammad Urfi *is a 2013 Commonwealth Professional Fellow from Pakistan.*

Shafat Ahmad *is a 2015 Commonwealth Professional Fellow from India.*

Atia Anwer Zoon *is a 2015 Commonwealth Professional Fellow from Pakistan.*

They were all hosted by Conciliation Resources.

To find out more about the film, visit **c-r.org/the-common-enemy**

4

Why is joint disaster management so important for this region?

Shafat Ahmad: A more effective response to disasters could save lives in this region. It is in the interests of both of these countries to share joint research and data to help prepare for, and respond to, disasters. I also think that working collaboratively will build trust and confidence between people on either side of the divide.

Atia Anwer Zoon: Disasters know no geographical boundaries. They therefore create a special opportunity for collaboration in conflict-sensitive regions. I was really inspired by the idea of exploring the potential for joint disaster management between the two sides of Jammu and Kashmir.

MU: This film is not just about disaster management, but also about collaboration. We want to make the government and the people aware of the issues. You cannot separate what happens in one part of Kashmir from the other. We need communication between people living up and down stream.

5

How has the Commonwealth Professional Fellowship helped you in your work?

MID: I have become a better listener since the fellowship. Every single person I met inspired me in a different way. During the fellowship, I met with other filmmakers working in conflict regions, and learnt what it takes to document a story in a conflict.

I don't just want to raise awareness of an issue – I also want to contribute to solving it. The fellowship made me look at my work as part of a wider peacebuilding effort in Kashmir. Now I am not only documenting a story, but also using these stories to bring people together and encourage discussion through film.

MU: I live in an area with a heavy military presence. I felt inspired after my visit to the UK, particularly to Northern Ireland. People were working in difficult conditions, and I learnt that two different ideologies can exist side by side at the same time.

SA: My fellowship focused on disasters in conflict situations. It really helped me to understand how academic institutions and the scientific community on both sides of the Line of Control could cooperate, by sharing research, technology, and early warning systems.

AAZ: The fellowship provided a unique opportunity for people from both sides of the divide to explore the potential of joint disaster management. It helped me to understand the importance of building resilient communities that are well prepared to respond to natural disasters through early warning education.

6

What impact do you hope this series of films will have?

MID: I believe that films can move people and, for change to happen, we need to move people. I hope that our films will become a catalyst for people to move towards, and not away from, each other.

PB: I feel that telling these stories in a shared, collaborative way is very important. If we can stress the need to collaborate – to work together and have dialogue – then at least part of our work is done. CK

ALUMNI NEWS

The updates below (listed by year of award) summarise just some of the achievements of our global alumni. To let us know about your successes, email ***alumni@cscuk.org.uk***

1965

Karinginayi KUNHIRAMAN has been awarded the first Prof M S Nanjunda Rao National Award for Art by the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, India, for his contribution to Indian art. (Scholar from India, BCC Sculpture, University College London)

1966

Fred AFFLECK has been made an Officer of the Order of Australia for his services to the transport and logistics industries through leadership roles, to policy development and planning, and as a supporter of the performing arts. (Scholar from Canada, PhD French History, University College London)

1968

Olubukanla Tejumola OKUSANYA has been elected as a Fellow of the Nigerian Society of Botanists in recognition of his services to society and to the development of the study of botany in the Nigerian university system. (Scholar from Nigeria, MSc Ecology, Bangor University; 1974 Scholar, PhD Plant Ecology, Lancaster University)

1970

Anisul Islam MAHMUD has been appointed as Bangladesh's Minister of Environment and Forestry. He was elected as Member of Parliament for the Chittagong-5 constituency in 2014. (Scholar from Bangladesh, PhD Economics, University of Essex)

1971

Edwin BOURGET has been made a Member of the Order of Canada for his advancement of research in the field of marine ecology and his contributions to fostering dialogue between universities and industry in Quebec. (Scholar from Canada, PhD Marine Biology, Bangor University)

1978

Stewart GILL has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his contribution to tertiary education and the wider community. (Canadian Commonwealth Scholar from the UK, MA History, University of Toronto)

1981

Chris BURN has been awarded a Higher Doctorate of Science (DSc) in Geography by Durham University, UK – one of only ten higher doctorates awarded by the university since 1999. His primary research focus is the field investigation of permafrost environments in northwest Canada. (Canadian Commonwealth Scholar from the UK, MA Geography, Carleton University)

1984

Nizamuddin AHMED has been appointed as Vice-Chancellor of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT) for a four-year term. (Scholar from Bangladesh, PhD Architecture, University of Sheffield; 1996 Academic Fellow, University of Sheffield)

1985

Selma Udine JACKMAN has been awarded an honorary degree by the University of the West Indies for her work on improving the patient healthcare system in Barbados. She is widely known as one of the first Caribbean-born female surgeons to have qualified and worked in the region. In 2016, she was awarded the honorific title Dame of St Andrew for her outstanding contribution to the medical profession. (Medical Fellow from Barbados, Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, Great Ormond Street Hospital, and Bristol Children's Hospital)

1987

Kwame DAWES has been named as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. Over a six-year period, he will consult on matters of artistic programming and judge the organisation's largest prizes in poetry. (Canadian Commonwealth Scholar from Ghana, PhD English Literature, University of New Brunswick)

2000

Alayne FRANKSON-WALLACE has been appointed as Executive Director of the Office of Administration of Justice at the United Nations. She was previously Ombudsman for UN Funds and Programmes, after serving as Ethics Advisor to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (Scholar from Jamaica, LLM International Commercial Litigation, University of Sheffield)

ALUMNI NEWS

▲ Abdul Mumuni

▲ Neeraj Sharma

2001

Donna Rose ADDIS is one of the first international researchers to be granted funding through the Canada 150 Research Chairs Program. She will return to the University of Toronto to research how memory loss resulting from ageing and depression affects the ability to use memory to imagine and plan future events. (Canadian Commonwealth Scholar from New Zealand, PhD, University of Toronto)

2005

Kitila MKUMBO has been appointed as Permanent Secretary of Tanzania's Ministry of Water and Irrigation. He was previously a Lecturer in Education at the University of Dar es Salaam. (Scholar from Tanzania, PhD Applied Psychology, University of Southampton)

Busnur MANJUNATHA received a 2016 Best Teacher Award for his contribution to teaching and research at the Faculty of Science and Technology at Mangalore University, India. (Academic Fellow from India, Sanger Centre)

2007

David MUSOKE has been elected as Co-Chair of Health Systems Global's Thematic Working Group on Supporting and Strengthening the Role of Community Health Workers. During his two-year tenure, he hopes to establish collaboration amongst research projects and links with global partners to support the working group. (Distance Learning Scholar from Uganda, MSc International Primary Health Care, University College London)

2008

Abdul Nashirudeen MUMUNI has been awarded the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) Young Scientist Award 2017. (Scholar from Ghana, MSc Medical Physics Computing, University of Aberdeen)

2009

Helina JOLLY received the 2016 Nehru Humanitarian Graduate Scholarship in Indian Studies at the Centre for Indian and South Asia Research, University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada. This annual award is given to the UBC graduate student judged to have the most promising research programme related to South Asia. (Scholar from India, MSc Environmental Policy and Regulation, London School of Economics and Political Science)

Kohinoor Shampa YEASMIN has been awarded the Bangabandhu National Agriculture Award 1421 and 1422 by Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, for her use of environmentally-friendly technology in organic farming practices in the Bandarban district. (Professional Fellow from Bangladesh, Rights of Women)

2011

Lana ASHBY has been voted by students as Law Teacher of the Year at Durham University, UK. She has previously received Durham's Excellence in Learning and Teaching Award. (Shared Scholar from Barbados, LLM Law, University of Cambridge)

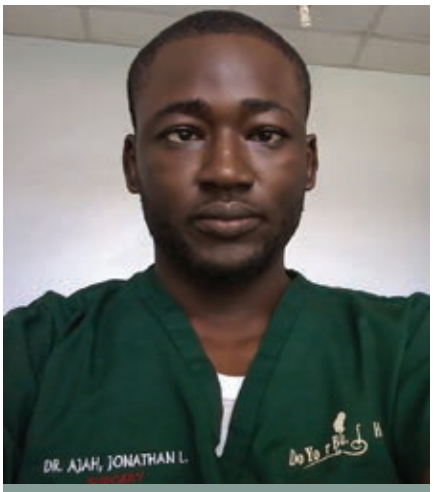
Aishwarya TIPNIS has been conferred the Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government, in recognition of her role in the conservation of French and Indo-European architecture. (Professional Fellow from India, Tayside Building Preservation Trust)

2013

Samantha-Kaye Denise CHRISTIE was one of two prizewinners at the 2017 Mark Liveris Research Students Seminar at Curtin University, Australia. She also received the People's Choice Award at the university's Three Minute Thesis competition in 2016. (Shared Scholar from Jamaica, MA Education, Liverpool Hope University)

Neeraj Kumar SHARMA has been named as one of ten 'New Faces of Civil Engineering' by the American Society of Civil Engineers (Scholar from India, MSc Soil Mechanics and Environmental Geotechnics, Imperial College London)

ALUMNI NEWS



▲ Jonathan Ajah

2014

Ghazala NAUREEN has been awarded a scholarship by the Australian Catholic University to study for a PhD with the Musculoskeletal Health, Health Economic and Nutrition Research Group at the university's Institute for Health and Ageing. Her PhD project will look at practices in fracture risk assessment and management in older adults. (Shared Scholar from Pakistan, MSc Biotechnology, University of the West of Scotland)

2015

Jonathan Luka AJAH has launched a website, in collaboration with colleagues in the UK, to support trainee surgeons studying for the West African College of Surgeons exam: passlist.ng (Distance Learning Scholar from Nigeria, MSc Surgical Sciences, University of Edinburgh)

George NGWANE has been appointed as a Member of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in Cameroon. The commission will seek to promote the exchange of language and culture and strengthen national unity. (Professional Fellow from Cameroon, Minority Rights Group International)

2016

Md Ashraf HARUN has been awarded the Professor Jim Lynch/Chartered Institute of Marketing Prize by the University of Leeds, UK. (Scholar from Bangladesh, MSc International Marketing Management, University of Leeds)

OBITUARIES

1961

Paramhamsa (Prem) NABABSING served as Deputy Prime Minister of Mauritius from 1990-1995. First elected to the National Assembly in 1987, he served as Leader of the Opposition from 1987-1990, as well as Minister of Health and Minister of Planning and Economic Development from 1991-1995. His previous roles included Mauritian Ambassador to France. Prem passed away on 21 October 2017 at the age of 76. (Scholar from Mauritius, BSc Chemistry, University of Exeter)

1972

Christopher DE FREITAS was a prominent New Zealand climate scientist and former Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland. He was also Vice-President of the Meteorological Society of New Zealand and a founding member of the Australia-New Zealand Climate Forum. He was an advocate of open and well-informed reporting on scientific issues, and was a three-time recipient of the New Zealand Association of Scientists' Science Communicator Award. Christopher passed away on 5 July 2017 at the age of 68. (Australian Commonwealth Scholar from Canada, PhD Climatology, University of Queensland)

1974

Babatunde OSOTIMEHIN was the fourth Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) from 2011 until his death. He was Nigeria's Minister of Health from 2008-2010, and Director-General of the country's National Agency for the Control of AIDS from 2007-2008. He was highly regarded for his work in global health and promoting sexual and reproductive health among young adolescent girls. Babatunde passed away on 4 June 2017 at the age of 68. (Scholar from Nigeria, MRCP Endocrinology, University of Birmingham)

Lalji SINGH was known as the 'father of DNA fingerprinting' in India. He developed and established DNA fingerprinting technology in his home country, which has been used to solve high-profile criminal cases including the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He established the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics in India in 1995. He also founded the Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species in 1998, and the Genome Foundation in 2004 to diagnose and treat genetic disorders affecting underprivileged people in rural areas in particular. He was Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University from 2011-2014. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2004, in recognition of his contribution to Indian science and technology. Lalji passed away on 10 December 2017 at the age of 70. (Scholar from India, postdoctoral research in Molecular Biology, University of Edinburgh)

EVENTS

COMMONWEALTH v CHEVENING SCHOLARS FOOTBALL MATCH

The first-ever match between the two schemes was held in June 2017 at the University of Manchester – the Commonwealth team won!

SCHOLARS AT PARLIAMENT

Commonwealth Scholars had the chance to meet the Rt Hon Lord Bates, Minister of State for International Development, at the Parliamentary event in July 2017

SHARING RESEARCH

The Midlands and Oxford Regional Network held a research presentation symposium at the University of Nottingham in July 2017

CSC FELLOWS CONNECT

An event for Commonwealth Fellows, held in London in October 2017

FAREWELL EVENT

Our annual event for departing Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, held in London in July 2017

WELCOME EVENT

The 2017 Welcome Event for Commonwealth Scholars was held in London in November

EVENTS

BANGLADESH

Alumni at the BACSAF Annual General Meeting, held in Dhaka in October 2017

CANADA

Dr Kevin Goheen (1983 Commonwealth Scholar and CACSF Coordinator) with Dr Joanna Newman (Executive Secretary of the CSC) at an alumni reception in Ottawa in October 2017

CANADA

Alumni at the first-ever reception on Prince Edward Island, held in November 2017

GHANA

An alumni panel discussion on 'Tackling diabetes: your right to a healthier future' – held as part of Diabetes Awareness Month – in Accra in November 2017

KENYA

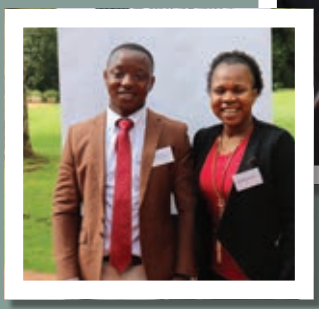
Following the country's ban on plastic bags, alumni took part in a panel discussion on 'Protecting the environment' in Nairobi in October 2017

MOZAMBIQUE

Commonwealth and Chevening alumni attended a welcome home event at the British High Commission in Maputo in November 2017

SIERRA LEONE

Alumni held a mentoring workshop on preparing for exams and how to avoid exam malpractice at St Joseph's Secondary School in Freetown in December 2017



TANZANIA

Alumni shared their experience of studying in the UK at a UK Education and Scholarships Mini Fair, hosted by the British Council in Dar es Salaam in December 2017

SOUTH AFRICA

Professor Robin Grimes (Chief Scientific Advisor to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office) hosted a discussion on promoting partnerships between the UK and South Africa with Commonwealth and Chevening alumni and current Commonwealth Scholars, in Johannesburg in December 2017

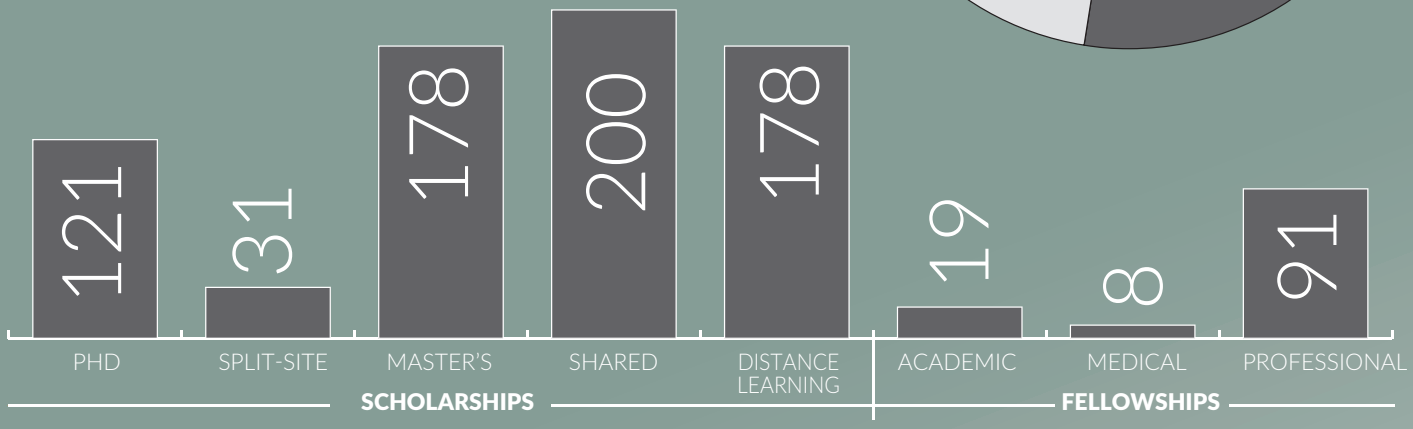
ZAMBIA

Alumni marked World AIDS Day with panel discussions on the recent announcement of mandatory HIV testing for patients, held in Lusaka and Kitwe in December 2017

THE CSC IN NUMBERS

2016-2017 AWARDS

1746
AWARDS IN TOTAL



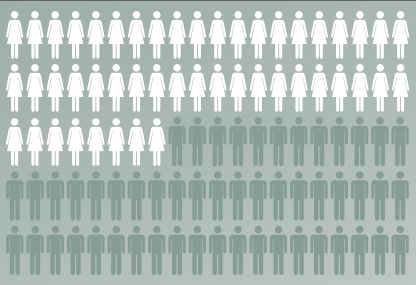
Scholars studied at

94
UK UNIVERSITIES

Fellows were hosted by

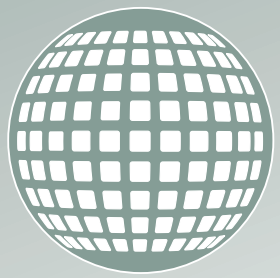
56
UK ORGANISATIONS

48%



OF CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR A DFID-FUNDED SCHOLARSHIP WERE WOMEN

85%



OF AWARDS WERE MADE TO CITIZENS OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S 24 POOREST STATES

GET INVOLVED!

You can stay part of the CSC community through events across the Commonwealth, promoting our scholarships and fellowships to potential applicants, and joining our alumni associations and other networks.

REGIONAL NETWORKS

Connect with Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in the same university or region in the UK

Scotland
North West
North East
Wales and Northern Ireland
Midlands and Oxford
South West
South East

For full details, visit
bit.ly/cscuk-regional-networks

ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

Meet and network with past, present, and future Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows

Bangladesh
Barbados
Belize
Cameroon
Canada
Ghana
Gibraltar
Grenada
Guyana
India
Jamaica
Kenya
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Mauritius
Namibia
Nigeria
Pakistan
St Lucia
Sierra Leone
Sri Lanka
Tanzania
Trinidad and Tobago
Uganda
Zambia

For full details, visit
bit.ly/cscuk-associations-alumni

CALENDAR 2018

February

Uganda Commonwealth and Fellowship Alumni Association career talks in schools

Trinidad and Tobago Commonwealth Alumni Association 2018 planning meeting
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (BACSAF) leadership and skills development workshop for adolescent girls
Dhaka, Bangladesh

19-23 February

20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM)
Nadi, Fiji

w/c 26 February

Commonwealth Alumni Association Sierra Leone peace walk and press conference on peaceful elections
Freetown, Sierra Leone

March

Entries open for the 2018 Taylor & Francis Commonwealth Scholar Best Journal Article Prize

Kenya Commonwealth Scholarships Alumni Association community activity

BACSAF alumni engagement workshop
Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymemsingh

12 March

Commonwealth Day

w/c 12 March

Panel discussion and welcome home reception
Lilongwe, Malawi

Alumni St Lucia Association Commonwealth Day celebration
Castries, St Lucia

4-15 April

XXI Commonwealth Games
Gold Coast, Australia

16-20 April

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
London and Windsor, UK

July/August

Applications open for Commonwealth PhD, Master's, and Split-site Scholarships

ROYAL SOCIETY GRANTS

The Royal Society is the independent scientific academy of the UK and the Commonwealth, dedicated to promoting excellence in science. It offers grants for outstanding researchers in the UK and internationally, including the International Exchanges scheme and Newton International Fellowships. To find out more, visit **royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants**

The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Secretariat is calling for experts to join their Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) Talent Bank. The CFTC provides technical expertise to the public sector by employing professionals on specialist assignments in Commonwealth member countries. More than 350 experts are deployed each year on assignments that range from a few days to two or three years in length.

Assignments typically involve a mix of policy advice and guidance, strategy development and implementation, institutional capacity development, and mentoring and skills training for senior level officials.

Key programmatic areas of focus for the Commonwealth are currently:

- **Democracy**
- **Public institutions**
- **Special development**
- **Youth**
- **Economic growth and sustainable development**
- **Small states and vulnerable states**

For more information on how to register with the CFTC Talent Bank and other jobs offered by the Commonwealth Secretariat, visit **thecommonwealth.org/jobs**

For further details about these activities and more, visit **www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk**

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

ISSUE #5 FEBRUARY 2017

▲ *Commonwealth Scholars show their commitment to sustainable development at the CSC Welcome Event in November 2017 – for more pictures from the event, see page 30*

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

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London WC1H 9HF
United Kingdom
info@cscuk.org.uk
www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk

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fb.me/commonwealthscholarships
flickr.com/cscuk