COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

COMMONWEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Promoting healthy societies

Showcasing innovative solutions by Commonwealth Scholars that deliver equity and resilience in healthcare.

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Contents

The first word

This issue of *Common Knowledge* explores how we can promote healthy societies and improve the lives of people across the Commonwealth.

In my role as Emeritus Professor of Population and International Health at the University of Southampton, I regularly see the impact of research-led interventions in delivering better health outcomes. Understanding the scope and depth of health inequalities is an integral aspect of my research, informed by several decades of working with low income populations in the Middle East and West Africa. While there are multiple and competing priorities in the area of healthcare, it is inspiring to see the collaboration and innovation that Commonwealth Scholars are bringing to address these challenges in this issue of *Common Knowledge*.

In the wake of COVID-19, societies around the world have begun to recognise the common threads that bind us all together. Our shared interest in health is both a weakness and a strength. As many of the contributors to this issue highlight, the disparities in healthcare resourcing on a local, national, and international scale have direct consequences for people, particularly those from marginalised or remote communities. By pooling knowledge and exchanging ideas, we can tackle health inequalities.

International higher education enables Commonwealth Scholars to learn new techniques and see challenges from a different perspective. By translating this expertise to health settings and learning institutions in the Commonwealth, Scholars and Alumni can begin to redress healthcare imbalances and forge new connections for equitable health research and interventions.

Promoting healthy societies implies not only that everyone can access the current healthcare they need, but also that we are meeting the health challenges of the future - whether that is adapting healthcare provision to support ageing populations, new sources of infection, or combatting antimicrobial resistance in healthcare settings.

In this issue of *Common Knowledge*, we feature work by Alumni such as Lois Okereke who is applying mathematical models to optimise treatment for cancer patients in Nigeria. We also highlight the work of Scholars like Marzia Dulal whose research into e-textiles is paving the way for low-cost, sustainable garments that remotely monitor patient vital signs and reduce the burden on frontline health services. In the face of ongoing epidemics like HIV, Alumni such as Agnes Kosia are delivering much needed public health programmes to reduce intergenerational transmission of the infection.

Together, these articles demonstrate the wealth of experience within the Commonwealth Scholarship community and the impact of their work in strengthening health systems and transforming lives for the better.

After reading this issue of *Common Knowledge*, we hope that you are inspired to find out more about the work of Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni as they strive to improve the health and wellbeing of their countries and communities in the years to come.

Professor Allan Hill
CSC Commissioner

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Preventing mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania

Agnes Kosia *oversees the delivery of a Mother Mentors (MMs) programme which recruits and trains women with HIV/AIDS to deliver PMTCT services to fellow HIV+ women.*

Agnes Kosia
2006 Commonwealth Scholar
Tanzania
MSc Public Health
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Adolescent girls and young women are disproportionately affected by HIV. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 1.3 million women and girls living with HIV become pregnant each year. In the absence of intervention, the rate of transmission of HIV from a mother living with HIV to her child during pregnancy, labour, delivery, or breastfeeding ranges from 15% to 45%. Ensuring HIV-positive (HIV+) mothers and pregnant women have access to antiretroviral treatment to prevent transmission from mothers to babies is therefore critical in combatting HIV.

Preventing mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania

"Mother Mentors (MMs) are uniquely qualified to deliver support and guidance based on their personal experiences of HIV and pregnancy and act as important role models."

Gardening as income generating activity

Mother mentors and health care workers at the health facilities

In Tanzania, the estimated prevalence rate of mother to child transmission (MTCT) is very high. Due to stigma around HIV/AIDS and lack of health education, HIV+ women are often unaware of the risks associated with MTCT. The Tanzanian government has set a national target to reduce the prevalence of MTCT by 2030.

In April 2021, I was the Project Manager for the Prevention of Mothers to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS project, delivered by the Christian Social Service Commission (CSSC) and funded by the Global Fund. In this role, I oversaw the delivery of a Mother Mentors (MMs) programme which recruits and trains women with HIV/AIDS to deliver PMTCT services to fellow HIV+ women. The programme was delivered in 8 regions through a network of 265 health facilities.

Creating a network to deliver support and guidance

MMs are uniquely qualified to deliver support and guidance based on their personal experiences of HIV and pregnancy and act as important role models. They provide a range of support and guidance to pregnant and breastfeeding women on accessing PMTCT services, such as HIV testing during pregnancy, to reduce MTCT. As a technical expert on HIV and PMTCT, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health PMTCT Unit and AMREF Health Africa, I supported regional teams and health workers to train MMs and develop activities to engage HIV+ pregnant women in the programme.

Stigma, discrimination, and a lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDs are still prevalent in many countries and communities. As such, HIV+ individuals often experience issues in accessing employment and securing a stable income.

To address this, working with MMs, regional health teams and District Development Officers, I initiated over 170 group activities to discuss psychosocial interventions and income generation opportunities. This included MM-led discussions on advocating for safe sex with partners, understanding the risks associated with exchanging sex for money, and building their confidence and skills to access employment. Community District Development Officers provided information to MMs on vocational training opportunities which women could access to build their skills, as well as information on how to open a bank account and financial literacy.

These group interventions led to improved quality of life and a significant reduction in gender-based violence and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS within communities. Realising the benefits of the MM support groups, HIV+

Global Fund Director visiting the PMTCT project

women not initially engaged in the programme began to attend sessions resulting in a 100% improvement in PMTCT service adherence across all 8 districts.

A further component I initiated as part of the wider project focused on the role of men in promoting healthcare and accessing PMTCT services. In the African context, male partners do not take an active role in ensuring pregnant partners access healthcare facilities. To address this, my team worked closely with village leaders to recruit influential male role models to promote PMTCT services and improve awareness. This component was called 'The Influential Man'.

Over 200 influential men were recruited and advocated for PMTCT services across the 8 regions, increasing male partner engagement by 78%. This initiative also led to an increase in men testing for HIV/AIDS while accompanying their partners for antenatal care and PMTCT services. Those testing as HIV+ were referred to access treatment.

Looking to the future

The MM project was completed in December 2023, and I'm pleased to share that through the work with local health facilities and MMs, the programme has contributed to national efforts to reduce MTCT from 26% to 9.4% between 2020 and 2021.

Since completing the project, I have lent my expertise to revising the national PMTCT guidelines and policies. As the MM model was successfully delivered in 8 regions, it has been deemed as the best MTCT intervention model for implementation in Tanzania and will now be scaled nationally.

There are also plans to scale-up the Influential Man component and psychosocial and income generation discussion groups and activities. With the hope that the success stories and reduced rates of MTCT will help in securing funding for future project delivery. CK

Providing health education at ANC

Healthy numbers: using modelling to tackle cancer

__Dr Lois Okereke__ discusses the importance of using applied mathematics in medicine to improve cancer care and patient outcomes.

Dr Lois Okereke

2020 Commonwealth Split-site Scholar

Nigeria

PhD Pure and Applied Mathematics

University of Liverpool and African University of Science and Technology Abuja

According to multi-national healthcare company Roche, in 2020, approximately 125,000 people were diagnosed with cancer in Nigeria and 79,000 died from the disease. The overall goal of my work is to provide a cost-effective alternative to the lack of expertise and resources in cancer care in Nigeria, which has largely impacted my country's ability to keep pace with achieving SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing.

Through my ongoing research at the Center for Computational Oncology, part of the Oden Institute for Computational Engineering and Sciences at the University of Texas, I am developing models and algorithms for analysing imaging and clinical data that is used for cancer management.

Using these models, we can create a digital version of a patient to analyse how their cancer tumour is growing and the impact of the treatment administered. Through applied mathematics, we can then perform simulations and optimisations to systematically determine effective treatment doses, thereby reducing potential treatment complications and increasing efficacy.

My current project is focused on optimising chemotherapy treatment by identifying the most effective low dose ranges for a patient's tumour to be controlled while limiting exposure to toxicity. My research seeks to support an interdisciplinary mix of specialists, such as oncologists and other medical professionals, as well as the policymakers responsible for driving changes to improve patient cancer care and survivorship. It also has implications for how we apply mathematical theorems more widely in science and medicine.

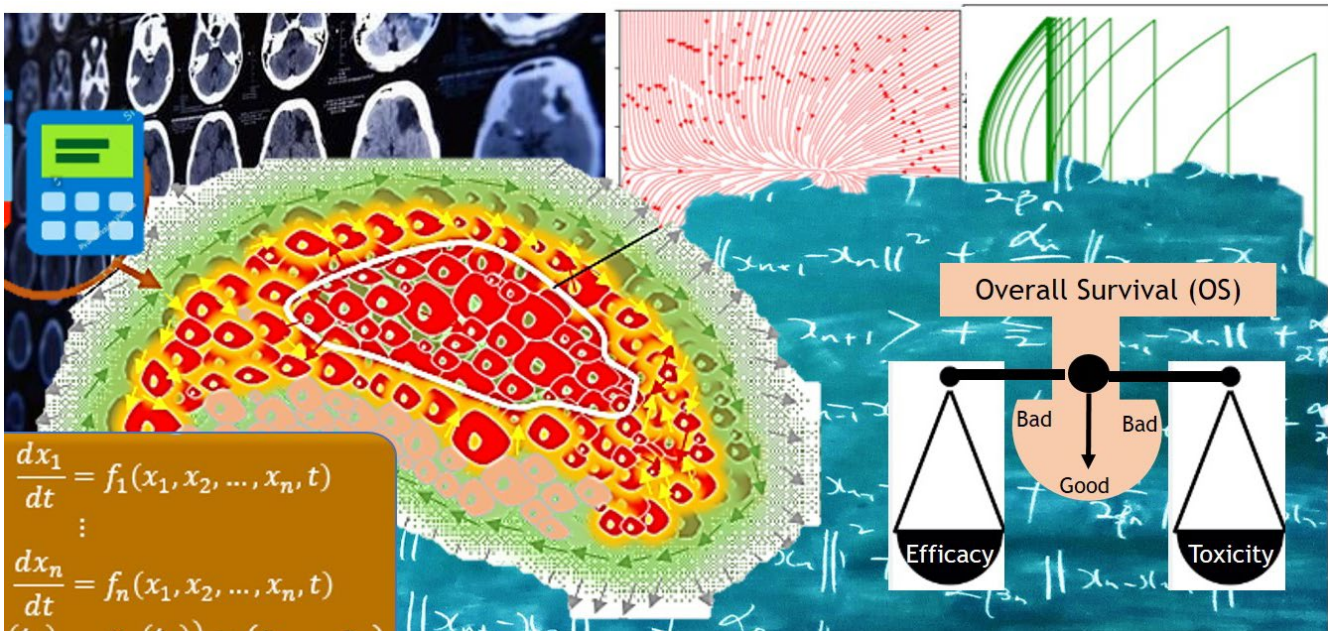
Applying the theory

In Nigeria, there is a lack of awareness about applying rigorous quantitative approaches in medical settings to improve patient treatment. During my undergraduate degree, investigating how maths and theorems could be applied to everyday life was not generally considered relevant to the study of pure mathematics.

However, while completing an internship at a national hospital, I witnessed the awful consequences of limited healthcare access, especially with respect to cancer care, and was moved to think: 'Is there a way that the maths I'm doing can be of help?'

Following cancer diagnosis, there is often a delay in planning patient treatment owing to the huge number of patients that each doctor treats. This led me to think about optimisation and how this could be applied in the context of Nigeria's healthcare system to improve patient turnaround times and ease doctors' workloads.

This realisation inspired me to undertake a Commonwealth Split-site Scholarship as part of my PhD in Pure and Applied Mathematics focusing on radiotherapy treatment planning.



A synthesis of tumour imaging data and mechanism of drug administration and interaction is translated into a mathematical framework that helps to determine an effective way to balance treatment efficacy and toxicity.

Supporting better cancer care

After completing my scholarship, I returned to Nigeria to apply my research, and the training, knowledge, and experience I had gained in the UK, to improve patient outcomes.

In collaboration with university professors in Nigeria, I developed a proposal to build an 'Automated Radiotherapy Treatment Planning Aid' (ARTPA). This would enable medical teams to share, assess, and evaluate radiotherapy treatment plans, as well as increase cancer knowledge and expertise with the ultimate aim of improving patient care and rates of survivorship.

The proposal has been approved for funding by the Nigerian Government through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and is currently in preliminary stages of its development. The project is bringing together a team of professionals, including the President of the Oncology Association of Nigeria and a former President of the Nigerian Association of Medical Physicists alongside statisticians, medical physicists, practising oncologists, and PhD researchers, who are actively involved in defining what good cancer treatment should look like.

Spreading the word about science

Working with government funders has illustrated to me the importance of working directly with those who can implement the findings and recommendations from scientific research. The need to improve how we communicate science to policymakers and non-scientists is vital if we are to deliver real-world change to the people who need it most.

As part of this, I have talked about my own research, and the learnings from the ARTPA project on radio programmes in Nigeria, which has enabled me to reach a broad and diverse range of people. This experience has helped me to adapt my style of communication and provide clarity for a non-specialised audience.

In an effort to enhance the active participation of more local researchers, I also began sharing my research with mathematics students and colleagues at my former institution, the Mathematics Institute at African University of Science and Technology (AUST) Abuja, encouraging them to think about how they could apply their studies in real-world settings. Since then, there has been a 30% increase in the number of students and colleagues at the Mathematics Institute AUST Abuja who are actively collaborating in healthcare, to apply their work and research.

This is a significant change and inspires me to become a mentor for younger university students and to share my research more widely. My drive has always been to help people, and now that I have the knowledge and skills, I know how best to help them. CK

> **"Using these models, we can create a digital version of a patient to analyse how their cancer tumour is growing and the impact of the treatment administered."**

Collaborating to control the spread of diseases

Dr Leslie Tasha Mbapah highlights the need for a One Health approach to infectious disease control that brings together different areas of knowledge to address complex health challenges.

Dr Leslie Tasha Mbapah

2023 Commonwealth Shared Scholar

Cameroon

MSc One Health: Ecosystems, Animals and Humans

Royal Veterinary College and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

> "One Health provides a collaborative approach that encompasses animal, human, and environmental health"

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, understanding novel infectious diseases has become an ever more critical issue in global health. While these diseases often originate in animals, their emergence in human populations is closely associated with human activities and behaviours, such as increasing land use for agriculture and urbanisation, growing international trade and travel, and the destruction of natural ecosystems.

To address these multiple dynamics, One Health provides a collaborative approach that encompasses animal, human, and environmental health to understand the background of emerging diseases and develop a comprehensive response for monitoring, controlling, and mitigating outbreaks in humans.

In Cameroon, the government has already adopted a One Health initiative to tackle the country's priority zoonotic diseases, which include but not limited to bovine tuberculosis, Ebola, and avian influenza. However, there is still more to do to implement a fully realised One Health approach that utilises cross-sectoral knowledge to improve the responsiveness of the health system.

A case of Salmonellosis

I am currently investigating how far this One Health approach is working in the control of Salmonellosis in Cameroon. Although Salmonellosis is not considered a particularly severe zoonotic disease, outbreaks of the disease can have a serious impact on health, food security, and the economy.

As a clinician, my response to Salmonellosis and the advice I would offer patients used to be: 'Improve your hygienic conditions, make sure you drink clean water, and cook your food well.' But since studying at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), I have learned more about the nature of Salmonellosis from an animal and environmental perspective, and this has increased my understanding of how to address the different impacts of the disease.

While in humans, Salmonellosis often leads to acute diarrheal illness, although rarely to invasive bloodstream infection, in livestock and poultry, it is usually asymptomatic (they act as carriers) which increases the risk of transmission to humans via direct and indirect routes. However, the disease can affect growth rates, egg production, and other factors which have negative consequences for food producers as well as consumers. By improving surveillance of Salmonellosis and implementing mechanisms to mitigate the risks of an outbreak at the human, animal, and environmental level, Cameroon could develop more efficient prevention and control strategies to contain the spread of the disease.

As Salmonellosis is one of the priority diseases in the Cameroon national zoonosis programme, this project has given me the opportunity to evaluate the performance, functionality, and infrastructure of Cameroon's One Health initiative through the lens of Salmonellosis. The findings from this work will go a long way to identifying the strengths and gaps in the health system for controlling other emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.

This project is also helping to sharpen my health research skills which I hope to apply at the Triad Research Foundation (TRF), a not-for-profit organisation that I founded which aims at carrying out regular collaborative research and mentoring early career researchers in Africa to strengthen research capacity and increase data-led decision making.

Using the knowledge and skills I have gained during my Master's, I will be able to analyse diseases using situational analysis and system thinking to better understand the complex interaction of variables and the extent to which different elements contribute to the outbreak and spread of diseases.

Supporting people affected by cerebral palsy

I am also involved in a two-year research project to understand the burden of cerebral palsy on children and their caregivers in Cameroon. Cerebral palsy is a lifelong condition affecting movement and coordination, and stems from abnormal development of the brain during pregnancy or damage to the brain during or after birth. There is no cure for cerebral palsy but with the right treatment and support people can live independent lives. Unfortunately, treatment can be very expensive in Cameroon, which does not currently provide universal health coverage, so this places a significant financial demand on caregivers alongside the emotional and physical toll of caring for someone with the condition.

Working with four tertiary hospitals and two disability centres in Cameroon, the project will investigate the clinical profile of children with cerebral palsy as well as the effect of the condition on their primary caregiver's mental health. Overall, it will establish a cerebral palsy database in Cameroon and contribute to the Global Low and Middle Income Countries Cerebral Palsy Registry (GLM-CPR) to help improve health literacy and health seeking behaviour in more remote areas of Cameroon.

Since studying in the UK, I have come to understand the true extent of the suffering that people with cerebral palsy and their caregivers experience. This has renewed my motivation to help people affected by cerebral palsy and provide an opportunity for them to share their experiences to increase understanding about the challenges they face.

Building foundations for better disease control

It is becoming increasingly clear that a holistic approach to disease control that intersects humans, animals, and the environment and leverages intersectoral collaboration is paramount if we are to prevent the global health threats of emerging and re-emerging diseases.

When I return to Cameroon, I hope to use the knowledge from my Master's to work as an infectious disease and One Health expert. My aim will be to advocate for infection prevention and control (IPC) departments in all hospitals to implement effective IPC measures and reduce incidences of hospital acquired infection. I also plan to organise training campaigns that can be scaled up across Cameroon to supplement this work on IPC.

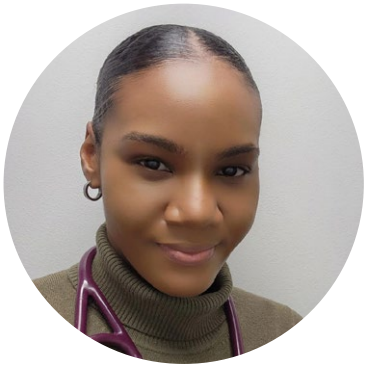
In the coming years, I will collaborate with veterinarians and agricultural and environmental science specialists in Cameroon to coordinate research projects on the control of infectious disease emergence and spread as well as establishing decentralised antimicrobial resistance (AMR) monitoring sites.

I will also work to elevate TRF's involvement in health research and campaigns on infectious diseases and AMR awareness. By championing the One Health initiative at a local, national, and international level in collaboration with other organisations, I hope to help identify solutions to some of Cameroon's pressing public health challenges.

Longer term, I aim to partner with international organisations such as UK-MED to increase NGO capacity strengthening, train personnel, and improve the resilience of Cameroon's health infrastructure for infectious disease outbreak response. CK

The fightback against antimicrobial resistance

***Dr Nadine Joy-Ann Louis** explains how gaps in Saint Lucia's healthcare system are causing preventable infections and what needs to be done to tackle the rise of antimicrobial resistance.*



Dr Nadine Joy-Ann Louis
2023 Commonwealth Master's Scholar
Saint Lucia
MSc Clinical Microbiology
Queen Mary, University of London

"We need to use appropriate antibiotics at the right time for the correct duration to produce the best outcomes for patients."

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a growing threat to health systems and people across the globe. According to research published in *The Lancet*, bacterial AMR is estimated to have caused 1.27 million deaths and contributed to 4.95 million deaths in 2019, making it a leading cause of death worldwide.

While experts in microbiology have long emphasised the importance of tracking AMR and developing new antibiotics to tackle so-called superbugs, many countries across the globe struggle to keep pace with the acceleration of AMR infections.

In countries like Saint Lucia, where the healthcare system is ill-equipped to diagnose and treat emerging AMR infections, patients admitted to hospitals are at greater risk of contracting infectious diseases during their stay. Unfortunately, those with weakened immune systems such as cancer, neonatal, and end-stage renal disease patients are some of the most vulnerable to AMR infections, often leading to severe illness or death.

Insufficient diagnostic capacity, a lack of antimicrobial stewardship, and a shortage of funding are some of the barriers that I hope to address using the expertise gained through my MSc Clinical Microbiology at Queen Mary, University of London.

Diagnostic dilemmas

During my time as a hospital physician, delayed patient diagnoses were a major contributor to the increase in AMR infections. In hospitals, we rely heavily on microbiological test results to guide antibiotic therapy. As a result, a delayed microbiological diagnosis lengthens the duration of time a patient spends on an inappropriate antibiotic. This increases the likelihood of a patient's infection becoming resistant to antibiotics meaning that their health deteriorates and they become more difficult to treat.

These delays prompt physicians to prescribe antibiotics without adequate knowledge of the infection they are attempting to treat resulting in ineffective outcomes which for some patients can be fatal.

When I worked in a hospital setting, there were often routine delays in testing caused by understaffing and the use of outdated diagnostic technologies. As a result, staff were unable to handle the complexity and volume of samples that came in. These problems were further compounded by a lack of trained consultants in clinical microbiology and infectious diseases as well as the absence of a dedicated antimicrobial stewardship team.

These issues are not unique to the hospital in which I worked but are widespread in Saint Lucia. It is vital, therefore, that we address all these components to enable hospitals to manage infections and AMR more effectively and improve patients' recovery.

Building on my Commonwealth Scholarship, I hope to draw on Public Health England's diagnostic model to increase Saint Lucia's capacity to limit the spread of infectious diseases and AMR. Although hospital laboratories in Saint Lucia need to improve their methodologies, there is also an onus on clinical directors and chief medical officers to facilitate greater learning and dialogue among physicians, laboratory technicians, and pharmacists.

By strengthening collaboration between specialists in this space, it would be possible to develop a sustainable plan that addresses the current diagnostic frailties of Saint Lucia's health system.

Developing an antimicrobial stewardship programme

Antimicrobial stewardship involves developing frameworks to gauge the most effective and efficient use of the antibiotics that are available. We need to use appropriate antibiotics at the right time for the correct duration to produce the best outcomes for patients. Without these frameworks in place, we run the risk of misusing antibiotics, and not only failing to cure patients, but also increasing the risks of AMR.

At present, Saint Lucia does not have a database of the most common organisms that cause infections in our hospitals, which means that we do not know how to apply international standards in local settings. By increasing diagnostic capacity, we can begin to develop a successful antimicrobial stewardship programme underpinned by a framework of evidence from timely and accurate lab diagnoses.

As a clinician, the knowledge I am gaining through my current studies will enable me to implement a practicable antimicrobial stewardship programme in Saint Lucia within the next five years. Furthermore, qualifying as a medical microbiologist will give me the expertise to advise other physicians on how to effectively manage infections and prescribe antibiotics in alignment with international standards.

Breaking the funding deadlock

Governments, multilateral agencies, and corporations across the globe are dedicating huge resources to AMR research and the development of antimicrobial agents, but Saint Lucia and the wider Caribbean does not always benefit from this funding. Without the capacity to generate high-quality research into the specific microbiological challenges we face, Saint Lucia is falling behind in the struggle against AMR.

While a robust antimicrobial stewardship programme is one step towards managing AMR, we also need to stimulate more interest in research and foster collaboration within Saint Lucia's healthcare system to move beyond the funding impasse. I hope to engage policymakers in Saint Lucia and encourage more international collaboration in the realm of AMR research.

Towards a sustainable healthcare model

My studies will enable me to break into the field of medical microbiology and use the skills and experience I have gained to overcome AMR challenges in Saint Lucia. However, knowledge alone will not be enough to achieve these aims.

This scholarship has given me access to an extensive network of Commonwealth Scholars who are all working towards similar goals in their home countries, and thus widening my perspective of infectious disease issues. It has also provided me with the skills and confidence to communicate with a range of different stakeholders which will be vital when I return to Saint Lucia and engage with those who have the power to foster collaboration and galvanise action in this field.

The expertise I am acquiring will be a powerful driver of change, but no man is an island. Through cooperation and shared knowledge, I hope to contribute to an effective and sustainable infrastructure that will protect hospital patients from infectious diseases and bring AMR under control in Saint Lucia. CK

Wearing your heart on your sleeve

Marzia Dulal *discusses how sustainable wearable electronic textiles have the power to transform healthcare and revolutionise the textile industry for all.*

Marzia Dulal
2021 Commonwealth PhD Scholar
Bangladesh
PhD Art and Design (Textile)
University of the West of England

> **"E-textiles allow medical professionals to provide individualised patient care with the ability to take preventative measures if a patient's health starts to decline."**

Wearable electronic textiles, or 'e-textiles', with sensors integrated into the textile fabric have shown a lot of promise for remote, continuous, and discreet health monitoring. E-textiles offer a comprehensive and real-world view of a person's health, enabling medical professionals to evaluate vital signs including body temperature, pulse rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure without the need for in-person visits.

This presents an array of benefits for patients, from pre-empting hospital visits and decreasing the frequency of hospital stays to complementing wellness initiatives that can improve patients' overall health. At the same time, e-textiles allow medical professionals to provide individualised patient care with the ability to take preventative measures if a patient's health starts to decline. These innovative textiles also have the potential to improve health service efficiency by facilitating the rapid and effective triaging of patients to reduce the burden on critical frontline services.

Despite the multiple benefits of using e-textiles in healthcare settings, there is still a limited take up within the sector. This is predominantly due to the limited performance and lifespan of the existing materials used in e-textile production, and the sustainability of the manufacturing processes involved.

Material challenges

My research proposes a sustainable approach to producing e-textiles for the monitoring of human vital signs with the aim of overcoming the challenges of fabric deterioration, particularly at the end-of-life stage of an e-textile garment.

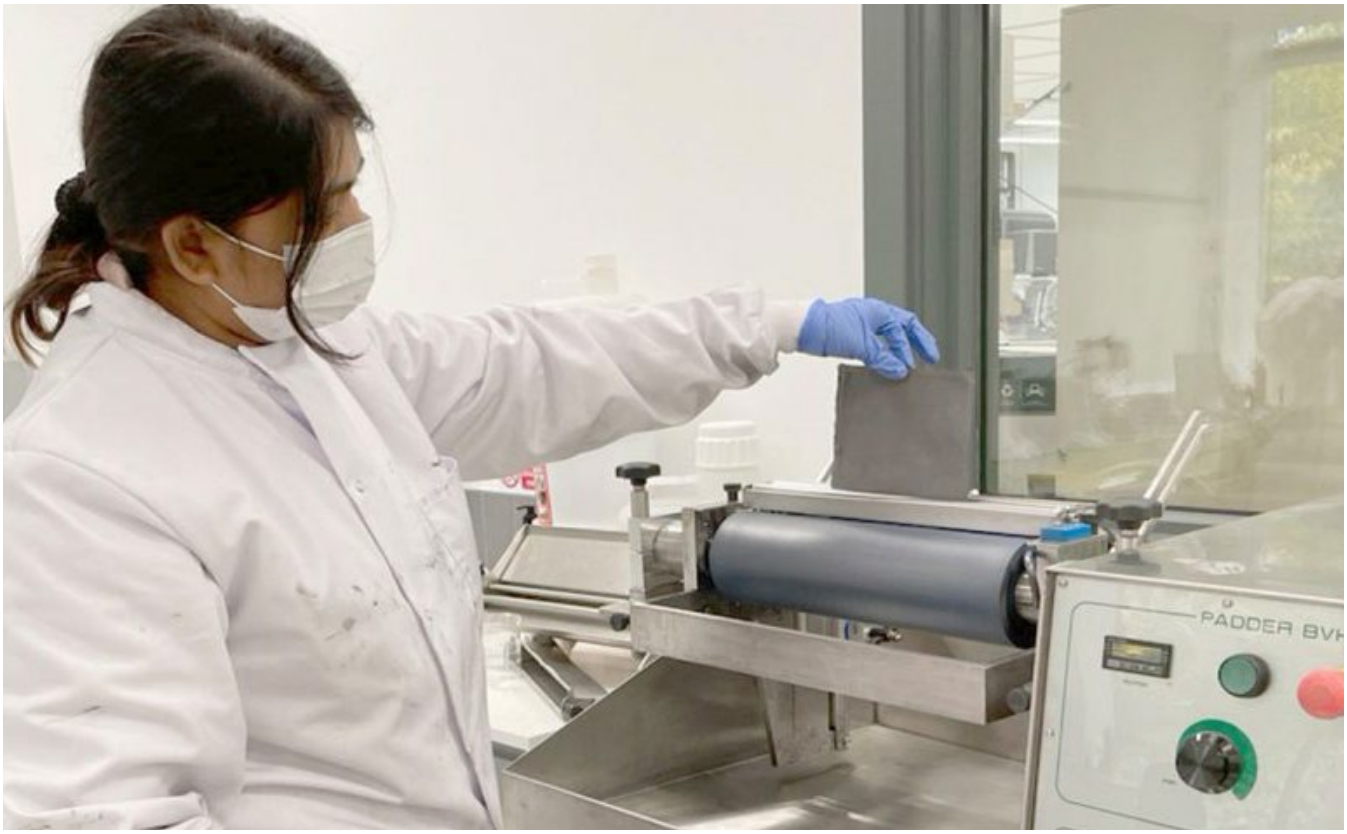
The first stage has been to investigate the lifecycle of e-textiles, from the sourcing of potential materials through to manufacturing and end-of-life disposal alternatives. Through this, I have increased my understanding of the environmental impact of wearable e-textiles, and this has formed the basis for evaluating methods of responsible e-textile disposal such as recycling, reducing, and reusing.

Environmental impact is an important aspect of my research because of the threat of climate change to people in Bangladesh which has devastating consequences on habitats and health. My focus is always on how I can deliver technology with functional applications that is both cost efficient and does not negatively impact the environment or individuals.

Making textiles smarter

My greatest achievement so far has been to create a textile-based sensor constructed of sustainable materials and produced using scalable sustainable techniques. The sensor has been incorporated into a pair of gloves which detect electrocardiogram (ECG) signals to show the wearer's heart rate as well as monitoring body temperature.

The sensor has been tested using life cycle and biodegradation behaviour analysis to assess its sustainability and provide a circular recycling template for similar wearable e-textiles.



Marzia testing the scalable fabrication of materials in the lab as part of her research.

The second stage of my research involved exploring multifunctional textile-based composites and looking for creative ways to incorporate cutting-edge functions into textiles. This involves integrating smart materials and technologies into textiles to improve their performance and adaptability for a range of applications, such as sensing, energy storage, or providing heating.

Jointly, these projects will contribute to the creation of adaptable and environmentally-friendly textile solutions, pushing the frontiers of usefulness and innovation to support the healthcare sector and provide a blueprint for transforming the textile industry more widely.

Putting sustainability on the agenda

One of my main goals is to promote the widespread adoption of sustainable textile processes in developing countries, with an emphasis on Bangladesh, where I was born and raised, and where there is a significant textile industry.

I plan to propose and advocate for regulations that encourage and reward environmentally-friendly ways of generating new smart e-textiles beyond traditional textile processes. By engaging with local government officials, corporate executives, and other relevant stakeholders, I hope to embed circular economy ideas into the planning and production of new textiles with an emphasis on sustainable materials and greener waste disposal techniques. Through the adoption of sustainable e-textiles, the aim is to restructure Bangladesh's textile industry, harmonising national development aspirations with global sustainability goals to increase social responsibility, decrease environmental impact, and improve resource efficiency.

I am also passionate about breaking down barriers and improving inclusivity within local communities, especially among underrepresented groups such as women in science and technology. Drawing on my Commonwealth Scholarship experience, I am keen to engage in mentorship to enhance girls' participation in research and development initiatives related to sustainable product development. Through this work, I hope to inspire and empower girls to actively contribute to the advancement of sustainable technologies within the textile industry.

Learning from the experts

Developing sustainable e-textiles that will transform the textile industry requires expertise in materials, textiles, and electronics. This can only be achieved through collaboration with specialists in these fields and in cooperation with wider stakeholders such as the consumer groups that drive change within the industry.

As an academician and researcher, I have the privilege and opportunity to convene a research group at my university which can take this innovative work further and support other researchers striving to achieve sustainable e-textiles that bridge the gap between technological advancement and responsible consumption.

Together, we can instigate a revolutionary change in the textile industry, aligning environmental sustainability and social empowerment to create innovative e-textiles with the power to improve health and wellbeing for all. CK

New research, new knowledge

The CSC Research Impact Awards (RIA) celebrate the research and publication endeavours of doctoral Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni at the early and mid-career researcher stages. The annual awards are offered through two streams, with an annual topical prize also available to entrants.

In this article, the winners of the 2023 CSC Research Impact Awards and two fellow highly commended entrants summarise their pioneering research and its development impact.

Dr Cornelius Dodoo

2010 and 2013 Commonwealth Scholar

Ghana

MSc Drug Delivery; PhD Pharmacy

University College London School of Pharmacy

Taylor & Francis CSC Research Implementation and Uptake award

Dr Cornelius Dodoo is the winner of the 2023 Taylor & Francis CSC Research Implementation and Uptake award stream for his article, 'Development of a local antibiogram for a teaching hospital in Ghana', published in *JAC - Antimicrobial Resistance*.

My article is focused on the development of an antibiogram (a table showing how susceptible a series of organisms are to different antimicrobials) for Ho Teaching Hospital in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Antimicrobial resistance is recognised as one of the top ten global health threats, with developing countries carrying the greatest burden. Antibiograms serve as useful tools in managing infectious diseases and reducing antimicrobial resistance.

My article outlines the research undertaken to determine the resistance patterns of commonly encountered bacteria in Ho Teaching Hospital and the effectiveness of antibiotics used to treat these.

My research found that some disease-causing microorganisms were becoming resistant to antibiotics classified under the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Watch and Reserve groups. The Watch group lists antibiotics with a higher potential of developing resistance, whilst the Reserve group contains last-resort antibiotics used for multi-drug resistant infections.

The research was sponsored by the UK Department of Health and Social Care under the Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship programme and involved researchers from University College London Hospital, University of Health and Allied Sciences, and Ho Teaching Hospital.

My research has highlighted the need to intensify antimicrobial stewardship in the Volta Region to prevent an escalation of antimicrobial resistance. As part of our research, my team and I have helped establish an antimicrobial stewardship committee that is championing antimicrobial stewardship in Ho Teaching Hospital. We are also working with four other key referral facilities in the region to build the capacity of healthcare workers to reduce antimicrobial resistance.

At the national level, the findings from our work have been presented to the Antimicrobial Resistance Secretariat of the Ministry of Health which is collating information on antimicrobial resistance patterns to inform policy. Currently, we are embarking on a series of public awareness campaigns through the media to educate the public on antimicrobial resistance and highlight their role in curbing this problem.

Dr Maryam Bashir

2020 Commonwealth Split-site Scholar

Pakistan

PhD Organic Chemistry

University of Bristol and the University of the Punjab, Lahore

Dr Pradeep Kumar Dammala

2016 Commonwealth Split-site Scholar

India

PhD Civil Engineering

University of Surrey and the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

CSC Research Output award

Dr Maryam Bashir is the winner of the 2023 CSC Research Output award stream for her article, 'Application of Enantioselective Sulfur Ylide Epoxidation to a Short Asymmetric Synthesis of Bedaquiline, a Potent Anti-Tuberculosis Drug', published in *Organic Letters* (American Chemical Society).

My article examines the successful completion of a nine-step synthesis of the potent anti-Tuberculosis (TB) drug, Bedaquiline.

Despite being curable, TB remains a formidable global health challenge in low and middle income countries. Almost one quarter of the world's population has been infected with latent TB, making it a leading cause of death globally. The percentage of new TB cases has increased significantly owing to multi-drug resistance TB and extensive-drug resistance TB, making it one of the prime challenges in medicinal chemistry.

The first multi-drug resistance tuberculosis drug, Bedaquiline, was introduced in 2012, and revolutionised TB treatment by offering a potent solution for drug-resistant strains, improving treatment outcomes, and shortening the duration of therapy. However, its conventional synthesis is complex and requires multiple steps which result in high production costs.

The research conducted by myself and my team identified an innovative way to streamline the synthesis process whilst enhancing the efficiency of Bedaquline and potentially reducing production costs. By improving the synthesis process, our research has set a precedent to identify more efficient synthesis methods in the production of a wide range of pharmaceuticals.

Applying this research to my home country, the production of a new anti-TB drug in the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan has the potential to reduce import costs and enhance economic growth through export and employment.

Annual topical prize – Earth Day 2023 theme: Invest in our Planet

Dr Pradeep Kumar Dammala is the winner of the 2023 RIA topical prize for his research addressing the Earth Day 2023 theme. His article, 'Offshore wind farms as additional coolant power sources to enhance seismic resilience of nuclear power plants – A case study', is published in *Nuclear Engineering and Design*.

My research proposes a seismic resilient strategy to enhance the robustness of cooling power for nuclear power plants during seismic events using sustainable wind power.

To address the anticipated 50% increase in global energy demand by 2050 and tackle concerns regarding energy consumption, there is a growing emphasis on expanding renewable energy sources. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), over 80% of global energy is currently derived from fossil fuels, contributing to more than 60% of greenhouse gas emissions, which negatively impacts the environment.

Nuclear energy is considered a viable alternative to fossil fuels. A reliable supply of cooling power is crucial for the operation of nuclear power plants (NPPs) and design engineers must adhere to strict guidelines to ensure multiple layers of safety for NPPs. However, unforeseen events, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, can lead to the loss of coolant, with potentially devastating consequences.

My research proposes a seismic strengthening strategy for NPPs, integrating sustainable wind energy as an alternative cooling power source during emergencies. This strategy involves estimating cooling power requirements, designing offshore turbines and foundations, and evaluating the foundation's safety under anticipated seismic scenarios. The proposed methodology is illustrated through a case study of an existing NPP in India located along the southern coastline, which is at risk of geohazards such as tsunamis and earthquakes.

My research has been published in Indian media and shared through an international workshop for over 200 participants organised through the CSC's Alumni Community Engagement Fund (ACEF).

Highly commended entries

Dr Oladapo Edward Olaniru

2010 and 2013 Commonwealth Scholar

Nigeria

MSc Pharmacology and Biotechnology; PhD Diabetes and Endocrinology

Sheffield Hallam University; King's College London

Dr Samuel David Dunstan

2016 Commonwealth Scholar

Papua New Guinea

PhD Scientific Computing

University of Warwick

Taylor & Francis CSC Research Implementation and Uptake award

Dr Oladapo Edward Olaniru was highly commended for his paper, 'Single-cell transcriptomic and spatial landscapes of the developing human pancreas', published in *Cell Metabolism*.

Approximately 422 million people worldwide have diabetes and 1.5 million deaths are directly attributed to diabetes each year. Insulin is produced in the pancreas by beta cells and helps control the blood sugar levels needed for energy. In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas no longer makes insulin, and instead this must be injected to control blood sugar levels.

My research sheds new light on how cells in the human pancreas develop, with the goal of optimising beta cell production in the laboratory to help treat diabetes. Currently, it is hard to make functional beta cells in the lab. Understanding how the pancreas develops these cells is therefore important to develop better treatments for diabetes.

With my research team, I utilised advanced techniques to study different cell types in the pancreas. This enabled us to observe how cells change over time, where they are located in the pancreas, and how beta cells develop from a less mature to a more matured state. We also observed that some cells, called Schwann cells, are close to the cells that turn into beta cells. This suggests that they might work together during pancreas development.

By advancing our understanding of pancreas development and offering insights into improving beta cell production, our study contributes directly to efforts to develop a more efficient and reproducible generation of functional beta cells and revolutionise cell replacement therapy of type 1 diabetes treatment.

We have shared our research through an interactive web resource which facilitates collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the research community, which we hope will accelerate progress towards addressing this pressing health issue.

CSC Research Output award

Dr Samuel David Dunstan was highly commended for his paper, 'A direct numerical simulation display of the rotational frame preference of turbulence', published in the *AIP - Advances* (American Institute of Physics).

My research seeks to understand the physics of turbulence and contribute to the ways in which turbulence is modelled in drag reduction studies. It can be applied to improve the energy efficiency of high-speed transportation, such as airplanes, by reducing drag and lowering costs and carbon emissions, and is also of interest to astro-physicists as it contributes to our understanding of dark matter.

Computer simulations are used to model turbulence and identify optimum levels of efficiency in propulsion. The most naturally occurring turbulence has a 3D turbulent boundary layer (3DTBL). However, most modern computer (mathematical) models only work for the most basic of turbulent flows and therefore cannot model to this optimum level.

Direct numerical simulation (DNS) is the most accurate computational fluid dynamics (CFD) method of modelling turbulence. Whilst supercomputers can achieve the scale of mass mathematical calculations required, they can only calculate the simplest of turbulence flows accurately, and simulating a 3DTBL with DNS is still cutting edge.

My research investigated the 3DTBL using DNS and has revealed that the Coriolis force that results from the rotation of the Earth (Coriolis) and the centrifugal force must be taken into consideration in the study of a turbulent fluid under rotation. One of the past failures in developing computer models is the appreciation that turbulent fluids under rotation can only be studied in non-inertial reference frames. The study shows that when a fluid becomes turbulent, it no longer matters if the surface in contact with the fluid is moving or not. The effect is indistinguishable from the turbulent fluid in perpetual Coriolis rotation. This raises interesting questions relating to the parallel concept of the 'equivalence principle', in Einstein's Relativity.

Scholar events

LGBT+ Rights in the Commonwealth residential retreat

In November, the CSC hosted a residential retreat for 37 Scholars to encourage dialogue and engagement on the issues affecting LGBT+ people in the Commonwealth as part of its special programme of activities in 2023-2024 on LGBT+ Rights.

The retreat was guided by a panel of academics and activists, who shared ideas and stories from their professional and personal experience to foster discussion on LGBT+ equality.

Regional Network events

Since November, the new Regional Network Coordinators have been organising events and activities to help bring Scholars together in their regions across the UK. These include meet and greet sessions over Christmas, a networking and bowling get-together, a walking tour around Edinburgh, New Year celebrations hosted by the Bristol Commonwealth Society, and workshops facilitated by Commonwealth Alumni.

Strengthening the Rule of Law workshops

In January, 12 Scholars joined the first in a series of workshops exploring how laws are made, contested, and enforced. Bringing together a range of legal perspectives and distinguished experts such as The Rt Hon. the Baroness Hale of Richmond DBE, the workshops will help Scholars to deepen their understanding about how the rule of law applies in different legislatures across the Commonwealth.

The workshop series is delivered in partnership with Cumberland Lodge, the College of Policing, and Big Voice London.

Scholars at the Strengthening the Rule of Law workshop in January

Leaders in Sustainable Development workshops

The Leaders in Sustainable Development workshops support Scholars to gain practical skills and experience that they can apply to careers and development projects after their scholarship. The workshops began in January with sessions on Research Project Management and Writing for Development and will continue until May.

'The [Writing for Development] programme...allowed me to think and reflect about a number of issues and see how I can contribute to positive changes in my country.' – 2023 workshop participant

'After attending the Research Project Management training, I developed strong confidence in research project management and my future ambition of PhD studies.' – 2023 workshop participant

Connect and Collaborate 2024

Dr Terri-Ann Gilbert-Roberts addresses Scholars at Connect and Collaborate 2024

In February, over 350 Commonwealth Scholars came together in London for the annual Connect and Collaborate event. The event helped Scholars forge new connections, explore development challenges, and hear from expert speakers on some of today's most pressing issues including how to empower young people and harness the power of AI for common good.

This year, the CSC was pleased to welcome Commonwealth Alumni Dr Terri-Ann Gilbert-Roberts (Commonwealth Secretariat) and Dr Shakir Mohamed (Google DeepMind) as the event's keynote speakers.

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

1969

Paul D N Hebert has been awarded the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Earth and Environmental Science for developing a DNA barcode that allows the cataloguing of every living organism. (Scholar from Canada, PhD Biology, University of Cambridge)

1994

Carl Justin Floyd Robinson has been appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal of The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus. He has also been made Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic, Industry Partnerships and Planning at the university. (Scholar from Barbados, PhD Business Administration, University of Manchester)

Emily Achieng Akuno has been appointed Vice Chancellor of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST). She is the first music professor from Kenya to be elected president of the International Music Council (IMC). (Scholar from Kenya, PhD Music Education, Kingston University)

2003

Cornelia Osim Ndifon opened her first private health practice in December 2023. The practice will provide specialised gynaecologic care in collaboration with specialist doctors at local private hospitals. (Scholar from Nigeria, MPH Public Health, University of Leeds)

2008

Hammad Omer has been awarded the 'Tamgha-i-Imtiaz', a state-organised civilian honour, by The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for excellence in the field of engineering. His four inventions in the field of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) have been granted international patents by the United States Patent Authority. (Scholar from Pakistan, PhD Medical Image Processing, Imperial College London)

2016

Vishal Sharma has been honoured with the 'Young Achiever Award in Science & Technology' for his outstanding achievements in the field of science and technology at the national and international level. Vishal's endeavours aim to foster an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship within the Maulana Azad Memorial College, Cluster University of Jammu where he is Head of the Department of Electronics. (Split-site Scholar from India, PhD Physics, University of Sheffield)

2018

Wasswa William was a finalist in the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Innovation for Sustainable Development Awards. The awards celebrate the contributions of innovators in the public, private, and voluntary sectors across the Commonwealth. (Split-site Scholar from Uganda, PhD Biomedical Engineering, University of Strathclyde)

2019

Femi James Adekoya has been awarded the 'Eco-Innovation in Technology Award' at the Certified Sustainable Business's Sustainability Awards 2023. The award recognises his outstanding efforts in promoting sustainability through his AgriTech company, Integrated Aerial Precision, where he is the Managing Director. (Shared Scholar from Nigeria, MSc Integrated Pest Management, Harper Adams University)

2020

Gladys Atto has been recognised as the 'Doctor of the Year' at the 2023 Heroes in Health Awards. The award recognises unique individuals and entities transforming the health sector. Gladys was awarded for her exceptional services in the field of eyecare. (Shared Scholar from Uganda, MSc Public Health for Eye Care, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Emily Achieng Akuno

Vishal Sharma

Femi James Adekoya

Gladys Atto

Obituaries

1960

Gordon Edwin Merritt was a fluid dynamicist and founding supervisor of the Hydrodynamics Group at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. He developed scaling laws to estimate the growth and decay of submarine wakes and led research studies to characterise the generation and evolution of submarine-generated internal waves. Gordon passed away on 29 June 2023. (Scholar from Canada, PhD Aerodynamics, University of Southampton)

1967

William Herbert Newton-Smith was a renowned Canadian philosopher of science and played an important role in the founding of the Central European University in Hungary. He dedicated part of his career to fighting against authoritarian regimes in East and Central Europe and was Co-founder of the Jan Huus Foundation which did important work for freedom of expression and inquiry. William passed away on 8 April 2023. (Scholar from Canada, DPhil Philosophy, University of Oxford)

1972

Nimi Dimka Briggs was Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the 5th Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt. Nimi's career counts many academic and professional achievements in the field of public health, including a pioneering campaign for safe motherhood in Northern Nigeria. Nimi passed away on 10 April 2023. (Scholar from Nigeria, MRCOG Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Chester City Hospital)

1981

Carissa F Etienne served as Director of the Pan American Health Organization and as the World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Director for the Americas from 2013-2023. She supported the mission to expand access to health services for people in the Americas and globally, particularly for vulnerable populations and in underserved and rural areas. Her leadership was critical to the WHO's Pan American response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She passed away on 1 December 2023. (Scholar from Dominica, MSc Community Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

2005

M. Rafiqul Islam was a professor and former Chairman of the Department of Applied Chemistry & Chemical Engineering at the University of Dhaka. As the founding President of the Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (BACSAF), he created a community of Commonwealth Alumni in Bangladesh, enabling them to network and utilise their expertise to contribute to sustainable development in their home country. Rafiqul passed away on 29 January 2024. (Academic Fellow from Bangladesh, Utilisation of coal resources and environmental issues, University of Nottingham)

Alumni events

August 2023 – January 2024

Global events

In December, the Commonwealth Scholarships Alumni Association of Kenya (CSAAK) held a hybrid panel discussion on 'Leveraging Technology in the age of AI for Social Economic Development'. The event brought together panellists and alumni from across the Commonwealth and coincided with Kenya Innovation Week 2023. Panellists discussed the challenges and possibilities of artificial intelligence across a range of sectors. This was the first alumni association event open to the CSC's global community.

CSAAK event on 'Leveraging Technology in the Age of AI for Social Economic Development'

In-country events

Ghana

In January, recently returned Scholars were invited to a Welcome Home Reception and Networking Reception hosted by the British High Commission.

India

In December, alumni in Kolkata attended and led a panel discussion on 'Mental Health Emergency – How Modern Lifestyle affects our Mental Health'. Alumni speakers highlighted the importance of managing mental health and the impact of stress on individuals.

In December, alumni in Mumbai gathered for a panel discussion on 'Transforming India: Fostering a Digital Ecosystem in the next Decade'. The event was led by alumni and industry leaders with expertise in digital technology.

Nigeria

In October and November, alumni in Lagos and Abuja joined panel discussions to explore the challenges and prospects of mental healthcare in Nigeria. Panellists highlighted the importance of tackling stigmas associated with mental health and in providing more training and resources to support mental healthcare.

In January, recently returned Scholars were invited to a Welcome Home Reception and Networking Reception hosted by the British High Commission.

Pakistan

In October, Commonwealth Alumni in Pakistan attended an event to explore the interconnectedness of mental health, wellbeing, and climate-related stressors. Through guest lectures and networking, the event highlighted the power of networking to promote both mental wellbeing and environmental sustainability in a rapidly changing world.

In November, alumni attended a panel discussion and networking reception on 'Challenging Gender Roles in Pakistani Society – Women Empowerment and Gender Equality' to shed light on the disparities and challenges faced by women in Pakistan while exploring how Commonwealth Alumni can advocate and promote gender equality and contribute to a more inclusive and progressive society.

South Africa

In September, Commonwealth Alumni in South Africa gathered for a panel discussion on 'Youth in Leadership and Governance: The role and potential of South African youth'.

Alumni Association events

Bangladesh

In October and November, the Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (BACSAF) hosted seminars on mental health to promote mental health awareness for alumni in Dhaka and Mymensingh. The sessions included presentations, interactive activities, self-reflection, and mindfulness practices.

Alumni at the BACSAF seminar in Dhaka

Canada

In September, the Canadian Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (CACSF) brought together alumni living in Kingston to network and discuss opportunities to promote Commonwealth Scholarships in Canada.

Ghana

In September and November, the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Alumni Association Ghana (COSFAG) hosted a virtual information session for prospective Commonwealth Scholarship applicants to learn more about CSC programmes and the application processes.

Kenya

In August, the Commonwealth Scholarships Alumni Association of Kenya (CSAAK) held a Commonwealth Scholarships information session at Strathmore University in collaboration with the State Department for Higher Education and Research.

Rwanda

In August, alumni in Rwanda were invited to a networking reception for all UK university alumni living in Rwanda hosted by the British High Commission.

South Africa

In September, the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Alumni Association – South Africa (COSFAA-SA) collaborated with the African Leadership Academy to provide career guidance and mentorship to students and promote Commonwealth Scholarships.

Alumni at the COSFAA-SA career and mentorship event

Development in Action webinar series

August 2023

Supporting refugee students' education and wellbeing in Uganda

CSC theme: Access, inclusion and opportunity

Commonwealth Alumnus Zaharah Namanda is one of the founders of Africa ELI (Africa Education and Leadership Initiative) in Uganda, an NGO working to empower young refugees and local youths, especially women and girls, through education, leadership, and wellbeing. In this webinar, she highlighted how her work with Africa ELI is improving the quality of education for refugee students in Uganda.

September 2023

Generating energy from agricultural waste in Nigeria: A case of Abakaliki rice mill cluster

CSC theme: Science and technology for development

Commonwealth Alumnus Prince Anthony Okoro presented on his work as the Co-Founder and Managing Director of Bebeque Energy, a start-up company that is using an innovative solution to generate energy from agri-residues (agricultural waste products) to support the activities of a rice processing cluster in Nigeria.

October 2023

Stakeholders of terrorism within the Caribbean context

CSC theme: Strengthening global peace, security and governance

Drawing on his CSC funded doctoral research and recent book, *Stakeholders of Terrorism and the Caribbean: A Short Case Study*, Commonwealth Alumnus Dr Emanuel Patrick Quashie discussed the negative and positive aspects of being part of a terrorist group and how these factors influence Caribbean nationals' decision to join. He also shared recommendations for spreading awareness about the risks of joining a terrorist group and countering the negative ideological influences at a community level through educational programmes.

November 2023

Understanding how carbon financed projects contribute towards Sustainable Development Goals

CSC theme: Strengthening resilience and response to crises

Commonwealth Alumnus Lilian Kagume explored the role of carbon finance projects in delivering positive outcomes for economies and contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Coinciding with the COP28 climate summit, Lilian discussed government commitments to cut global emissions, and the opportunities for the private sector to conduct their own stocktake of carbon emissions.

January 2024

Exploring impact through doctoral research: In conversation with the 2023 CSC Research Impact Award winners

CSC themes: Science and technology for development; Strengthening health systems and capacity

Commonwealth Alumni Dr Maryam Bashir and Dr Cornelius Dodoo, the winners of the 2023 CSC Research Impact Awards (RIA), discussed their winning articles and the important role of research and researchers in addressing global challenges and contributing to sustainable development through the implementation and uptake of their findings.

Celebrating 65 years of Commonwealth Scholarships

Get ready for the CSC Alumni Anniversary Census

As we celebrate our 65th anniversary we want to capture a snapshot of Commonwealth Alumni in 2024, no matter what you are doing or where you are doing it.

In April, you will receive an invitation to take part in our second Anniversary Census.

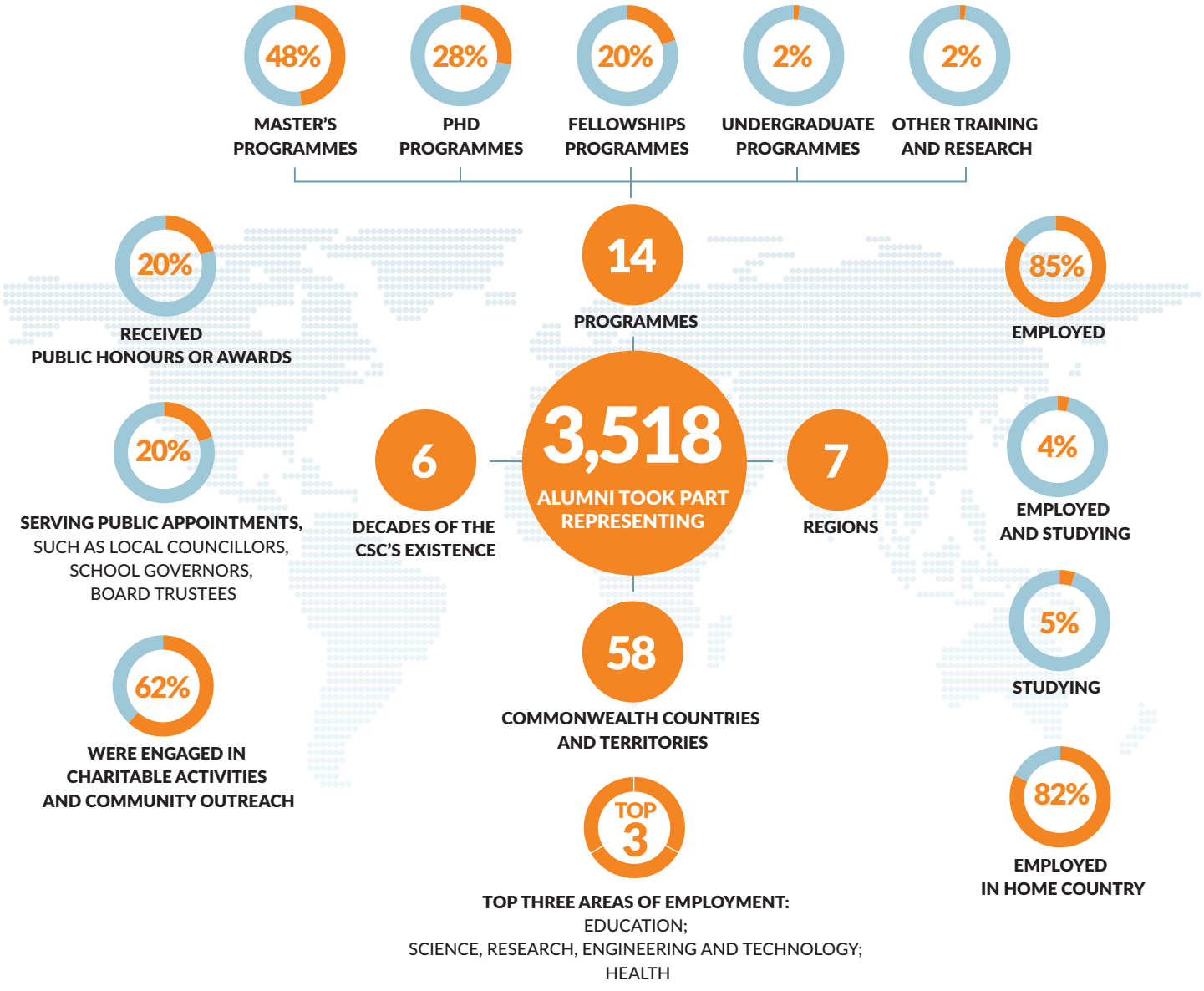
The census will ask you to confirm your contact and employment details where we hold these. There will also be questions about the impact of your Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship on your personal and professional development, as well as your memories of being a Commonwealth Scholar.

We will also gather your thoughts on the types of activities and opportunities that you would like to get involved in through the CSC Alumni Network.

This is your opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences and help the CSC showcase the impact of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships over the last 65 years.

We will be publishing a report on the census findings in October 2024 on our 65th anniversary impact hub.

Findings from the 60th Anniversary Census



Get involved

You can stay part of the CSC community through events across the Commonwealth, by promoting our Scholarships and Fellowships to potential applicants, by joining our alumni associations and other networks, and by keeping us up to date with your recent achievements and challenges.

CSC Evaluation and Monitoring Programme

The CSC Evaluation and Monitoring team measure the outcomes and impact of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships on individuals and institutions, as well as communities and societies by gathering data through longitudinal surveys, counterfactual studies, and case studies involving Commonwealth Alumni. This data is shared through reports to funders, on our website, on social media, and in publications. It also helps inform CSC policies and strategy. Alumni can get involved by taking part in:


Surveys sent via email


Focus groups


Interviews


Diary studies


Research projects


The Alumni Advisory Panel

Scan to find out more about CSC Evaluation and Monitoring

Regional Networks

Regional Network Coordinators organise in-person and virtual events and regional activities across the UK for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in the same university or region within the UK to connect and support one another. The regions represented are:

East Scotland
West Scotland
North-West England
North-East England
Wales
Northern Ireland
Midlands
Oxford
London
Cambridge
South-West England
South-East England

Scan to find out more about the Regional Networks

Knowledge Hubs

The CSC's Knowledge Hubs provide a platform for Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni studying and working in similar disciplines to network and exchange ideas to support a shared sustainable development outcome under the CSC's six themes:

Science and technology for development

Strengthening health systems and capacity

Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship

Strengthening global peace, security and governance

Strengthening resilience and response to crises

Access, inclusion and opportunity

As a member of a Knowledge Hub, you can post news about your current work and research, share links to readings and publications, and ask and answer questions related to your work.

Scan to find out more about the Knowledge Hubs

Alumni Associations

Meet and network with Commonwealth Alumni through your local alumni association. CSC alumni-run associations are present in the following countries:

N. America
Canada

Caribbean
Guyana
Jamaica
Saint Lucia
Trinidad and Tobago

Africa
Cameroon
The Gambia
Ghana
Kenya
Lesotho
Malawi
Mauritius
Nigeria
Rwanda
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda

South Asia
Bangladesh
India
Pakistan

Pacific
Solomon Islands

Scan to find out more about Alumni Associations

Events

Find out about upcoming CSC community events:

@commschols

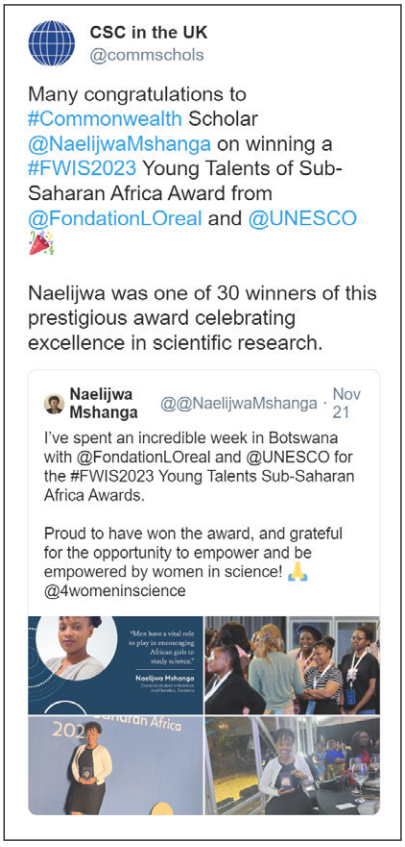
@commonwealthscholarships

www.cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk

Scan to find out more about upcoming events

Share your updates with us

We always love to hear from Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni via email or our social media channels about events you have been involved with, development activities you have undertaken, awards you have won or papers you have published. Here are just some of the Scholars and Alumni we have featured on our channels this year thanks to the updates they shared with us:



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

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

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Commonwealth Scholars at Connect and Collaborate 2024

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

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