



COMMONWEALTH
SCHOLARSHIPS

Building a common future

The impact of Commonwealth
Scholarships and Fellowships

cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. In 2015, the 17 goals are underpinned by 169 targets and 230 indicators; to be





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About the CSC

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) provides the leading scholarship programme focused on sustainable development for the government of the United Kingdom (UK). Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), it supports the **co-creation of research, innovation, and solutions to advance sustainable development priorities across the Commonwealth and beyond.**

The CSC represents a vivid and enduring demonstration of the UK's commitment to the Commonwealth. It operates within the framework of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), the foundational multilateral agreement that supports international educational mobility between Commonwealth countries.

Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships **extend life-transforming higher education opportunities, reward merit, and promote equity and inclusion, especially among people from disadvantaged backgrounds.**

The CSC's innovative programmes provide access to UK-based study and training to individuals with outstanding talent and potential who would not otherwise have that opportunity. They also **benefit the UK by strengthening international partnerships and collaborations, attracting outstanding leaders and innovators from across the Commonwealth to UK universities, and supporting local economies across the country.**

The CSC works closely with many partners in the delivery of its programmes. University partners in the UK play a pivotal role in the success of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships. They provide world-class education and research facilities for Scholars and Fellows, and financial support through co-funding of scholarships and tuition fee reductions. UK-based universities also gain significant benefits from Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships. The presence of some of the brightest minds of the Commonwealth in their graduate programmes and research teams **enriches the experience of all students and researchers. It also fosters the creation and strengthening of long-term partnerships and collaboration with other international universities.**



Nominating agencies are also valuable programme partners, ensuring that scholarships and fellowships support local priorities. National nominating agencies select candidates who will be studying subjects which **directly address the skill, knowledge, and sustainable development needs of their countries**. NGO partners nominate candidates working in priority areas in sustainable development such as gender equity, disability rights, and refugees, while Commonwealth universities recommend staff working in subjects with significant demand for doctoral training.

Upon completion of their studies and research, **Commonwealth Alumni return to their home countries and work to address these local and national sustainable development priorities**. They continuously make use of what they learned throughout their careers, meaning **the impact of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships can span decades**.

Throughout their careers they work to address sustainable development challenges, and share their knowledge and skills with both colleagues and their own students. They continue to push the boundaries of research, and collaborate internationally with partners in both the UK and the Commonwealth, improving the lives of their fellow Commonwealth and global citizens.

Through its work the CSC:

- Focuses on tackling the most pressing development issues of our time and furthering collaboration and partnerships across the Commonwealth.
- Supports talented individuals to catalyse sustainable development across the modern Commonwealth.
- Works together with governments, universities and other organisations to transform talent and societies.
- Supports candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds, a distinctive feature of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships.
- Attracts outstanding Commonwealth talent to contribute to UK research and innovation.
- Prioritises value-enhancing innovations and programmes, including scholarship schemes enabling awardees to study from their home country.

Introduction

One of the Commonwealth's finest innovations and one of the United Kingdom's best forms of soft power, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission stands out among HMG's scholarships through its robust support of both the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the international development priorities of its principal funder, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission supports the advancement of talent from across the Commonwealth, including people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those based in low and middle income countries.

Our scholarships and fellowships serve as catalysts for sustainable change and enrich the UK's universities, its research and innovation base, and its international networks and partnerships.

Throughout this report are examples of how we **enable the co-creation of knowledge, innovation, and solutions for sustainable development priorities across the modern Commonwealth** through our range of programmes, including innovative Split-site and Distance Learning Scholarships.

However, these examples provide only a glimpse into the breadth of our work: the reach of the CSC cannot be overstated. Over 31,000 Commonwealth citizens have taken up a Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship since the first cohort of 175 Scholars arrived in the UK in 1960 and we are immensely proud of the role that the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission has played in **enabling outstanding individuals from across the Commonwealth to further their skills, abilities, and potential to make a real and lasting difference in their home countries and globally.**

Each year, the CSC family continues to grow, further expanding the impact of our Scholars and Fellows on skills development, research, networks, and international development.

In addition to the examples within this report, stories and statistics about our Scholars and Fellows can be found in our alumni profiles, case studies, and reports on our website, and our regular publications of our Annual Report and our magazine *Common Knowledge*. Each of these stories provides another example of the sustainable change that over 31,000 Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows are achieving in their institutions, communities, nations, and for all of humanity.



**Professor Robin Mason ORB
Chair, Commonwealth Scholarship
Commission in the UK**



Our alumni

A Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship is for life. Upon finishing their scholarship or fellowship, recipients join a thriving community of over 31,000 Commonwealth Alumni who are working across a range of sectors and fields, effecting real change at local, national, and international levels. These alumni include:



8

Prime Ministers,
Deputy Prime
Ministers, Premiers,
Presidents, and
Vice-Presidents



60

Government
Ministers and
Deputy Ministers



23

Ambassadors, High
Commissioners,
and Deputy High
Commissioners



32

Permanent
Secretaries and
Senior Civil
Servants

262

University Chancellors,
Vice-Chancellors,
Presidents,
Pro-Vice-Chancellors,
and Provosts



1

Nobel
Prize
winner



1

Pulitzer
Prize
winner

13

Attorney Generals,
Chief Justices, and
Solicitor Generals

18

High and Supreme Court
Justices and Judges

19

Judges and Justices

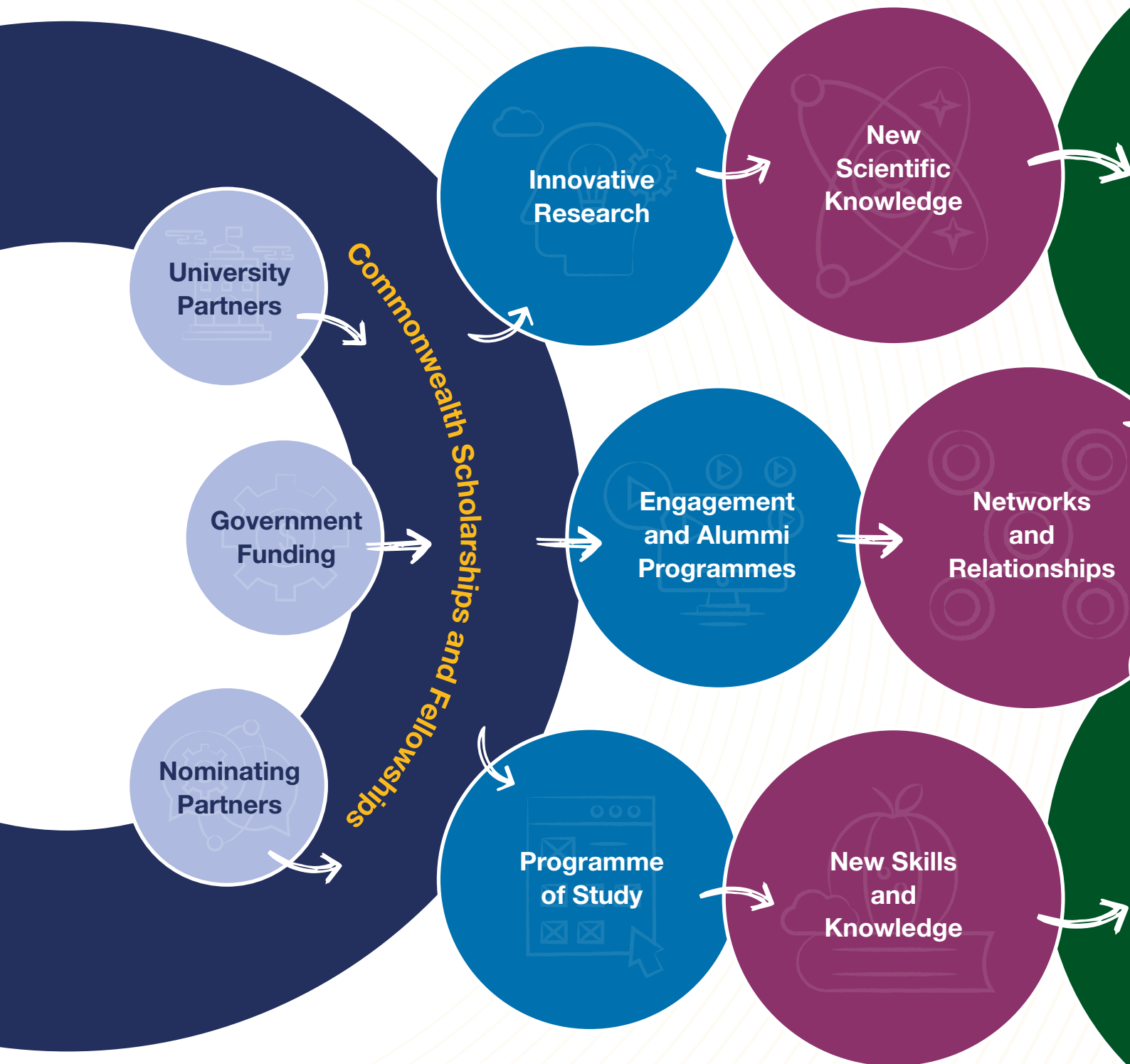
566



CEOs, Executive and Managing Directors, Founders
and Co-Founders

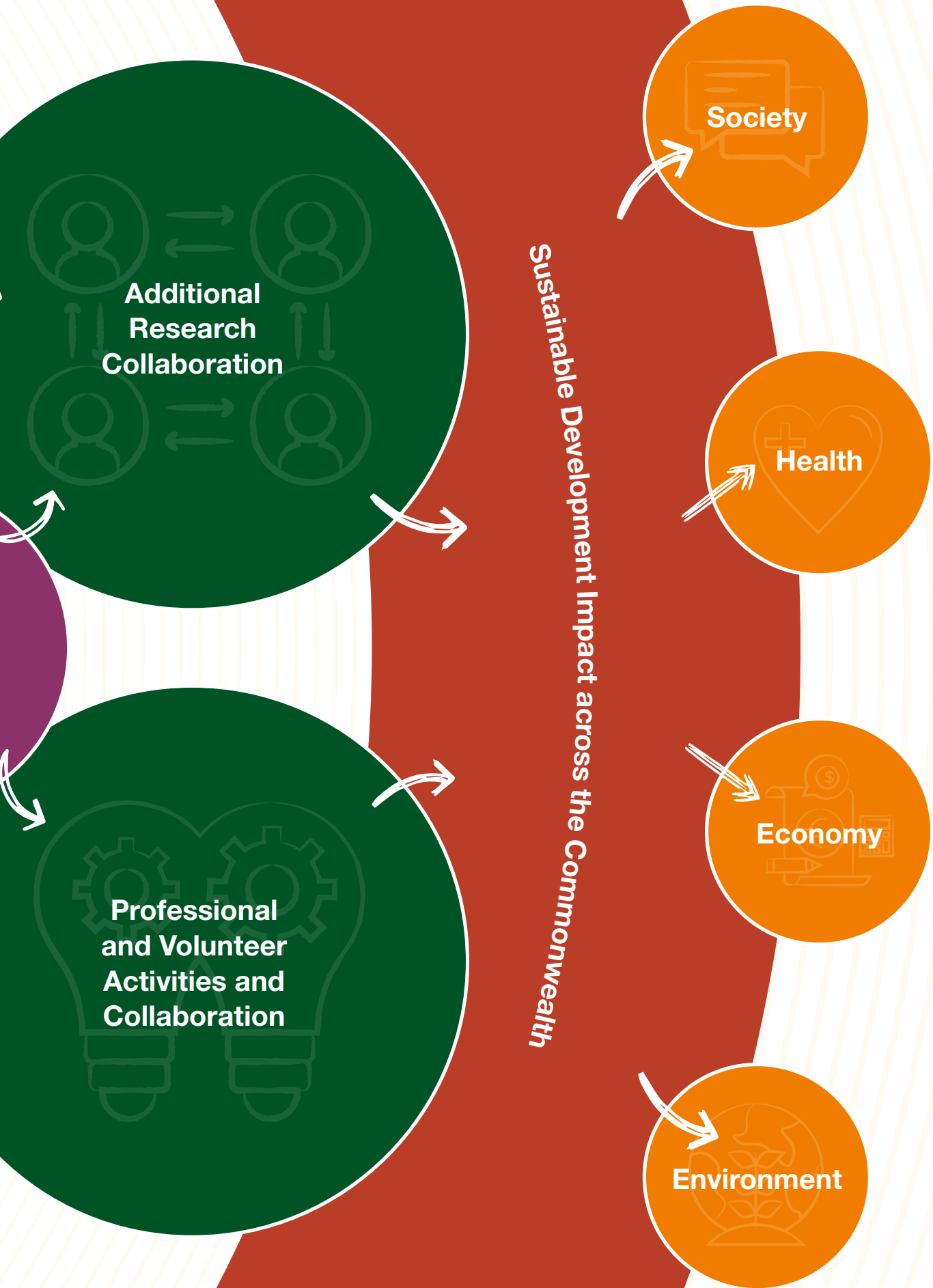


Our theory of change



Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships work in partnership with universities, governments, and nominators to catalyse progress in alignment with the UK government's vision for sustainable development and Commonwealth values. They do this by enabling Scholars and Fellows to expand

networks, acquire essential skills, drive scientific innovation, and facilitate knowledge exchange. Commonwealth Alumni then leverage their expertise to engage in impactful professional and volunteer activities and pursue further research, all of which contributes to sustainable development impact across the Commonwealth.





Strengthening global security and governance



Commonwealth Scholarships develop knowledge and/or skills w national, regional, or international levels. Multiple approaches are such as strengthening open and transparent governance; improv between societies; and building systems that reduce the potent

How are you strengthening global peace

Our impact



Developing leadership skills

Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships deliver decades of impact over recipients' careers through the enhanced skills and leadership development they provide.



100%

improve critical thinking skills

Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows receive graduate-level and professional training that addresses immediate skills shortages, supports teaching and knowledge transfer, creates jobs, and improves livelihoods across the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows consistently report strong gains of knowledge and skills from their studies, including hard and soft skills.



100%

approach problems differently

During their studies, Commonwealth Scholars contribute significantly to UK classrooms and institutions, bringing talent and perspectives that enrich the learning experiences for their colleagues.

UK-based academics value the different intercultural and professional experiences of Scholars, the new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships they bring, and the enhanced reputation and profile from hosting a prestigious scholarship. Scholars continue to contribute to their institutions long after graduation through ongoing collaborations and volunteering.



98%

train colleagues

Once in the workplace, Scholars and Fellows consistently apply what they learned during their studies, approaching problems from new perspectives, and making changes to improve practices. Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in turn teach what they have learned to others in their workplace, **creating a significant multiplier effect that extends to their co-workers and the organisation as a whole, and is highly valued by their employers.**



Siaosi Sovaleni
Prime Minister, Tonga

1992 Master's Scholar from Tonga

MA Computer Science and Mathematics,
University of Oxford

Honourable Hu'akavameiliku Siaosi Sovaleni is currently serving as Prime Minister of Tonga. With a strong background in a range of fields including advanced analytics skills, business administration, and computer science, His Excellency previously served as Deputy Prime Minister and has worked at the Ministry of Finance, as well as the Pacific Community and Asian Development Bank. Currently his portfolio includes the Ministry of Education and Training; the Ministry of Police, Fire Services, and Emergency Services, and the Ministry for His Majesty's Armed Forces (Tonga).



Building professional networks

Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships develop and strengthen essential international networks and relationships which support further work towards sustainable development.

64%

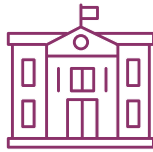


of organisations that hosted Commonwealth Professional Fellows continued to collaborate with Fellows' employers after the fellowship

Through its programmes the CSC directly supports partnerships between universities and NGOs across the Commonwealth. Alumni also act as key links connecting businesses, NGOs, governments, universities, and regional and multilateral organisations.

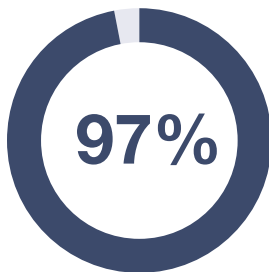
Commonwealth Alumni go on to hold leading roles in government, business, and civil society. Commonwealth Alumni have been heads of states, ministers, attorney-generals, supreme court justices, ambassadors, CEOs, and directors. They have also held roles in the higher education sector as university presidents, chancellors, and vice-chancellors.

61%

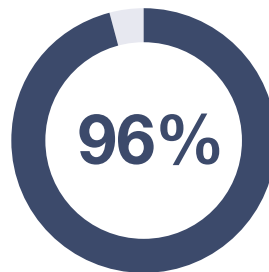


of universities involved in Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships continue to collaborate with the partner university

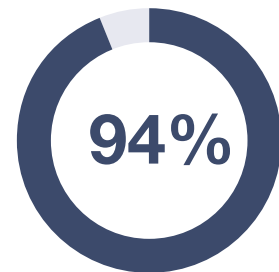
Through the development of more abundant and robust bilateral and multilateral relationships, they contribute to the soft power of the UK, other Commonwealth countries, and the Commonwealth as a whole.



of alumni maintain professional and personal contacts with people in the UK



of alumni maintain professional and personal contacts with people internationally



of alumni maintain professional and personal contacts with other Commonwealth Scholars, Fellows, and Alumni



Henry Mafabi Gizamba
Orthopaedic Technologist, Mulago Hospital
2018 Fellow from Uganda
Fellowship, University of Salford

Henry Mafabi Gizamba is an Orthopaedic Technologist by profession working with Mulago Hospital in Uganda. He is responsible for the fabrication of artificial limbs to support prosthetic and orthotics patients. Access to orthotic and prosthetic services is a key challenge in Uganda, and often comes with an unrealistically high cost. Most of the patients requiring prosthetics rely on the delivery of free services through outreach clinics and workshops, which cannot always provide high-quality services due to capacity issues.

While in the UK on his Commonwealth Professional Fellowship, Henry was able to persuade Legs4Africa to partner with Mulago Hospital Orthopaedic Workshops. Through this partnership, Legs4Africa has provided Mulago Hospital Orthopaedic Workshops with equipment and finance to enable patients to access prosthetic and orthotics services in Uganda. Additionally, through outreach workshops and clinics Henry has been able to extend prosthetics and orthotics services to rural areas where the Gizamba Prosthetic-Orthotics Services Organisation provides the same service to people with disabilities in Uganda.



Making a difference

Commonwealth Alumni contribute to global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals at every level, impacting their local communities and wider international contexts.

Commonwealth Alumni make a difference in their home countries through the sharing of new practices, such as promoting sustainable agriculture in Tanzania through farmer field schools. They are leading the low-carbon construction of hundreds of facilities for local schools in Uganda using innovative technologies they studied and researched in the UK. They are also supporting tens of thousands of low income residents of cities in Bangladesh to obtain solar home energy systems and improve their safety through the installation of fire detection systems in their homes, and street lights in their neighbourhoods.

At the national and international levels, Commonwealth Alumni influence the development of government policies, for example providing technical support to the Liberian government's climate change and biodiversity strategies or steering the adoption and implementation of anti-corruption regulations in Ghana. They achieve reforms to existing systems by improving support for disabled students taking university exams in India. They also drive the implementation of regional projects, such as leading UNESCO efforts to professionalise and increase the supply of teachers in Uganda or supporting Caribbean states to draft comprehensive disaster management policies in partnership with universities, regional bodies, and UN agencies.





Idrissa Mamoud Tarawallie
Head of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) Sierra Leone Country Programme
2009 Master's and 2013 PhD Scholar from Sierra Leone
MA International Development, Politics and Governance,
University of Manchester; PhD Development Studies,
SOAS University of London

With expertise in post-war peace building, civic mobilisation for effective participation in electoral processes, and state-society relations, **Idrissa Mamoud Tarawallie is a significant contributor to peace, justice and strong institutions and partnerships for the goals in post-conflict Sierra Leone and Liberia.**

Motivated by the role of democratic political institutions as enablers of sustainable development, Idrissa is currently a Head of International IDEA Sierra Leone Country Programme and playing a pivotal role in fostering the role of the Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC) to deepen dialogue and engagement with political stakeholders, including the media. Idrissa also works closely with democratic institutions for the mitigation of pre-election violence, as well as with youth in the promotion of peaceful tolerance and coexistence.



Growing economies

Commonwealth Alumni protect livelihoods, found businesses, and create jobs.

Throughout the Commonwealth, **alumni protect at-risk livelihoods through direct applications of their scientific research.** For example, alumni are undertaking groundbreaking work genetically sequencing the hilsa fish in the lab and using that knowledge to improve breeding and conservation efforts to protect fisheries in Bangladesh that are relied upon by more than one-eighth of the population for their livelihoods. They have also supported indigenous communities in Cameroon to protect their rights to hunt, fish, and collect forest products on which their subsistence depends.

Many Commonwealth Alumni go on to found their own businesses. These include companies such as a logistics enterprise in Nigeria co-founded by two alumni which improves access to healthcare by supporting the last-mile provision of medical supplies, a consultancy supporting environmental management and agricultural development in Dominica and the Eastern Caribbean, and a renewable energy company in Rwanda.



One-fifth of Commonwealth Alumni have founded new companies, departments, or institutes contributing to job creation, economic growth, and institutional strengthening.



Commonwealth Alumni provide training to communities to support local entrepreneurship, promoting economic activity and stimulating local and national growth. They run programmes supporting communities in India to professionalise traditional skills to establish art and craft businesses, improving the livelihoods of 50,000 people across 20 villages. They have led the establishment of vocational skills training centres training nearly 2,000 youths from local refugee and host communities in Uganda, 60% of whom have founded their own businesses using start-up kits they received after graduating.

Alumni also encourage entrepreneurship by providing support to new businesses. Alumni have provided information and communications technology training to hundreds of women in Pakistan to help them scale up their businesses. Many of these women have also gone on to run their own workshops, expanding the reach of the training to over 6,000 girls and women. They have identified the challenges that entrepreneurs face in Uganda, and developed policies responding to those challenges to promote entrepreneurial growth in the country.



Rodinald Soomer
Chief Executive Officer, CARICOM Development Fund
1991 Master's Scholar from St. Lucia
MSc Economics, University of York

Rodinald Soomer has been the Chief Executive Officer of the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF) since September 2015, where he applies his experience working in the tourism, agriculture, and economic and social infrastructure sectors. As the CEO, Rodinald works to establish strategic alliances to promote dialogue, investment, and cooperation in key development areas in the Caribbean.

Having started his career with the Government of St. Lucia in the Ministry of Planning, Development and Environment, he has managed multi-year programmes of donor and technical assistance from multiple international agencies. These include the British Development Division/DFID, the European Union, the Kuwait Fund, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Organization of American States, the World Bank, and the Caribbean Development Bank.

In addition to leading on government initiatives, Rodinald has also excelled in the private sector as Executive Vice President and CEO of the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA), and has built partnerships around key industry priorities, including inter-sectoral linkages, safety and security, human resource development, and tourism policy making.



Supporting the rights of others

Commonwealth Alumni come from and work with underrepresented and disadvantaged groups ensure equity of opportunity and support for the rights and interests of all.



Alumni are working with vulnerable communities in Ghana to assert their rights to traditional land, supporting low income residents in India to understand their housing rights, and enabling citizens in Uganda gain access to information about government activities to improve transparency and accountability. They are working to secure gender equity in judicial systems in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ghana, and Uganda and advocating for the social inclusion of former prisoners in the Eastern Caribbean.

Commonwealth Alumni also support refugee populations through their work. They are working with refugees from South Sudan to continue their education while in Uganda and provide courses that actively support children who have experienced trauma, and are advocating for organisations engaged in humanitarian work with over one million refugees across East Africa. They also support others who are working with refugee populations, for example by leading a project for the International Organization for Migration to provide psychological support training for counsellors working with Rohingya refugees.



Shaheen Sardar Ali
Professor of Law, University of Warwick
1995 PhD Scholar from Pakistan
PhD International Law of Human Rights, University of Hull

Shaheen Ali was appointed the first woman cabinet Minister for Health, Population Welfare and Women’s Development for the Government of Pakistan in 2000. She served as the first Chair of the National Commission on the Status of Women in Pakistan, and as a member of the Prime Minister’s Consultative Committee on Women in Pakistan and the National Commission of Inquiry on Women.

As a socio-legal expert and advocate for women’s and children’s rights and Islamic law, Shaheen’s work and its impact was recognised in September 2024 by the conferment of an honorary doctorate by the University of Oslo. Shaheen has served as the Vice-Chair for the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), served on the British Council Task Force on Gender and Development, and founded the South Asian Research network on Gender, Law and Governance (SARN). In higher education, Shaheen was a rector of the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), the Director of the Women’s Study Centre, and Professor of Law at the University of Peshawar in Pakistan for twenty-five years. Shaheen has consulted for UNICEF, UNDP, UNIFEM, DFID (now FCDO), the British Council, and sits on the Advisory Board of the Arab Law Quarterly. Shaheen currently serves as a member of the International Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran (2022-2025) and is a member of the Expert Panel on Arbitrary Detention in State-to-state Relations set up by the Government of Canada.



Improving health

Commonwealth Alumni contribute to global efforts to improve health and wellbeing.



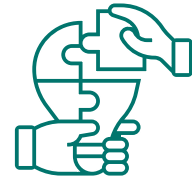
63%

of Commonwealth Alumni continue to do research during their careers



98%

of those are furthering the research themes they focused on during their Commonwealth Scholarship



81%

of those are collaborating internationally on research

Commonwealth Alumni improve access to healthcare for under-served and disadvantaged populations, by founding NGOs that provide frontline health services for disadvantaged communities in Nigeria, or leading a project for United Methodist Church Global Ministries to provide over one million children in Africa with essential life-saving health services that reduced infant mortality rates by up to 50%.

Commonwealth Alumni improve the capacity of their health systems. They improve the ability of nurses to support maternal health in rural communities in Ghana through fundraising that built community maternity clinics and bought motorcycles that allowed them to make home visits across wider areas.

The research conducted by Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni significantly affects the health of others. It has led to identifying widespread under-reporting of HIV and maternity-related deaths in low income communities in Nairobi and the construction of additional healthcare facilities benefiting over two million people in those communities. They have translated health research into impact by identifying gaps and establishing centres for treatment of HIV, the provision of dialysis and kidney transplant facilities for low income patients, and the development of national guidelines for cervical cancer screening.



Monira Rahman
Founder and Executive Director,
Innovation for Wellbeing Foundation
2012 Professional Fellow from Bangladesh
Fellowship, Acid Survivors Trust International

Monira Rahman is an award-winning human rights activist, with decades of experience in gender and mental health and wellbeing. **A pioneer in addressing violence against women, Monira's work has been instrumental in decreasing the number of acid attacks in Bangladesh.**

She is a recipient of several international awards, including the Amnesty International Human Rights Defender Award 2006, the Americans for UNFPA award in 2009, the World's Children's Prize in 2011, and the International Human Rights Award from the French Government in 2011.

In her current role as Founder and Executive Director of Innovation for Wellbeing Foundation and a Country Lead of Mental Health First Aid for Bangladesh, Monira is advocating for transforming laws, policy, and services promote mental wellbeing for all.



Helping nature

Commonwealth Alumni are protecting the environment and contributing to global efforts to tackle climate change.

Alumni work to reduce the environmental impact of human activity through the improvement of existing practices.

They are applying technologies that they studied during their scholarship to process organic waste into fish food and sharing that technology with hundreds of farmers in Kenya, improving the sustainability of its fishing industry while reducing waste. They have reduced the carbon footprint and increased the use of clean energy at schools in Zambia by constructing biodigesters, installing solar panels, and promoting local cultivation of vegetables among students. And they have improved the sustainable management of forest resources in countries across the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Alumni have also contributed to mitigation efforts, reducing the impact of climate change.

They have run communication efforts and national education programmes on the impact of climate change in Jamaica and the Caribbean, and raised awareness across hundreds of communities in Bangladesh about disaster risks, resilience strategies, and climate change. In Liberia, they have worked to reduce the impact of plastic pollution by organising beach cleanup activities.

Commonwealth Alumni also help those most affected by climate change, supporting thousands of climate migrants in Bangladesh by providing them with basic services including water, sanitation and hygiene, waste management, housing facilities, financial services, and livelihood development.





Rolph Payet

Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam,
and Stockholm Convention

1989 Undergraduate Scholar from Seychelles
BSc Biochemistry, University of East Anglia

Rolph Payet was appointed as the Minister for Environment and Energy for Seychelles in 2012, serving in this position until 2014. Previously he served as the first President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Seychelles in 2009, and as an Associate Professor at the University of Linnaeus in Sweden. **Rolph is a globally recognised international policy expert, researcher, and speaker on environmental and climate change issues and has received numerous awards for his work.**

Rolph served as lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Third and Fourth Assessments. In recognition of his contributions to marine research, he was elected as Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS) in 2007. Rolph currently serves as an Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions of the United Nations and was the Chief Negotiator for Seychelles for the Basel Convention, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Montreal Protocol. He also co-established the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and co-chaired the International Coral Reef Initiative.



Enhancing education

Commonwealth Alumni strengthen policy and effect change across the education ecosystem.



Commonwealth Alumni have supervised tens of thousands of Master's and PhD students in their home countries, and hundreds of thousands of undergraduate students: a critical contribution to the quality and volume of graduates their higher education institutions are able to train. They also develop new offerings at their institutions based on their studies, introducing new courses on topics such as climate change, water safety planning, and forestry management. Commonwealth Alumni also apply experiences gained from undertaking research in the UK while supervising students in their home countries and developing new cohorts of world-class researchers.

The work of alumni expands educational outreach and opportunity. They have worked in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning to support secondary school teachers to develop open-source educational resources for use across the Caribbean. In Kenya and Nigeria, they have mentored hundreds of school-age girls to support their interest in STEM subjects and provide career guidance to hundreds more girls interested in pursuing careers in STEM.



100%

of alumni who teach make use of what they learned during their scholarship



Heinrich Mutsinzi Rukundo
Education Specialist, UNICEF Türkiye
2010 Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholar
from Rwanda
MSc Education for Sustainability, London South
Bank University

Heinrich Mutsinzi Rukundo is an Education Specialist for UNICEF. He works with national governments to transform and strengthen their education systems to improve learning and gender-equal outcomes for all. He has worked with UNICEF in Rwanda, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Malawi, and Türkiye to build transformative and sustainable education systems by contributing to major policy and capacity development initiatives and programme designs.

Heinrich has supported girls' education in conflict-affected Northern Nigeria to improve enrolment, retention, and quality learning outcomes for all children, particularly girls. In Sierra Leone, after the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic, he worked with the Ministry of Education to develop programmes that supported adolescent and pregnant girls to transition back into the school system. After the COVID-19 pandemic, he worked in Malawi to revise and implement the school readmission policy guidelines to ensure adolescent girls, including young mothers, accessed and remained in school. Currently, Heinrich is designing education and skills development programmes to ensure vulnerable children in earthquake-affected areas and adolescent refugees are accessing education in formal and non-formal settings in Türkiye.





Our programmes

Commonwealth Scholarships for Master's studies

Commonwealth Scholarships for Master's studies are offered through three distinct programmes, each with its own unique features and partnerships for delivery.

All Commonwealth Scholarships for Master's studies enable talented and motivated individuals to gain knowledge, skills, and relationships that equip them to advance sustainable development over the course of their career. They are for students from low and middle income Commonwealth countries who would not otherwise have the opportunity to study at an institution in the UK.

Commonwealth Master's Scholarships

are one of the original Commonwealth Scholarship programmes offered since 1960. They support students to undertake a full-time taught Master's degree at a university in the UK in a subject of their choosing. Candidates who are interested in applying to this programme can do so either through their national nominating agency, or a selection of NGOs and charities.

National nominating agencies are a critical partner in this programme. They are government departments or ministries of education, skills, or human resource development who act on behalf of their government. They shortlist candidates with proposed study plans that fit with their government's sustainable development priorities, and ensure that Commonwealth Master's Scholars are developing the knowledge and skills that are most needed by their country.

The CSC also partners with select NGOs and charities to nominate candidates. These specialised nominators work on high priority issues in sustainable development, including gender equity, disability rights, and refugees. These nominators help to further the CSC's mission to provide scholarship opportunities to all, regardless of background or disadvantage.

Since 1960, over **7,000** Commonwealth citizens from **62** countries and territories have studied in the UK on a Commonwealth Master's Scholarship.

Individuals interested in applying for a Commonwealth Master's Scholarship can do so through nominating agencies.

Commonwealth Shared Scholarships

were established in 1986 and are **delivered in close partnership with UK universities who provide co-funding and administrative support.** They are intended for students wishing to undertake full-time Master's studies at a UK-based university who have never previously studied in a high income country.

Candidates interested in applying for this programme apply directly through the CSC's online application system and are shortlisted by university partners, and must also successfully apply and secure a place at their university and Master's programme of choice.

The selection of these courses of study are one of the key roles that university partners play in addition to the funding and administrative support. Each year they propose Master's programmes with sustainable development applications which are then allocated scholarship places that the universities can recruit for. University partners review applications and shortlist and recommend candidates to the CSC for scholarships.

University partners' support for this programme underscores the benefits that their campuses gain from the presence of Commonwealth Scholars.

They enrich the university experiences for all students and faculty by bringing greater breadth of experience and perspectives to their classrooms and research facilities, and build networks and relationships that provide rich opportunities for future international collaborations and partnerships.

Over **5,000** Commonwealth citizens from **43** countries have studied in the UK on a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship since 1986.

Individuals interested in applying for a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship can do so through the CSC.



Olaoluwa Abagun
Founder, Girl Pride Circle

2018 Shared Scholar from Nigeria
 MA Gender and Development,
 University of Sussex

Olaoluwa Abagun is a lawyer and women's rights activist who is the Founder of the Girl Pride Circle, a Nigerian-based non-profit initiative. Her inspiration to advocate for the rights of children is embedded in her personal experience when at the age of 13 she served as a Child Senator in the Nigerian Children's Parliament.

Olaoluwa's work addresses key areas within gender equality, including gender transformative education, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and gender-based violence. Her approach to delivering change is embedded in the principles of participatory processes.

Olaoluwa has received several accolades, including the distinction of Associate Fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society and was named in 2018 as one of the world's 100 most influential individuals in gender policy.



Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships

were introduced in 2002 as an **innovative programme to support a new mode of study and further expand the opportunity for Commonwealth citizens to access UK-based Master's studies.** Distance Learning Scholarships are for high-quality postgraduate students who want to access training and programmes that are not otherwise available in their home country, but also want to remain in their home country while they study.

University partners for this programme are chosen annually, with UK-based universities proposing Master's programmes that they offer through online and distance learning which have clear sustainable development applications. Candidates can apply for a Distance Learning Scholarship directly through the CSC's online application system and are shortlisted by university partners, and must also successfully apply and secure a place at their university and Master's programme of choice.

Uniquely among Commonwealth Scholarship programmes, Distance Learning Scholars have the option to undertake their studies on a part-time basis for up to five years. This makes them well-suited for individuals who have other demands on their time such as ongoing employment, volunteer, or care responsibilities. **Many of these Scholars do continue in their jobs while they study, allowing them to immediately apply what they learn in their work, and share that knowledge and skills with their colleagues.**

Since 2002, over **4,000** Commonwealth citizens from **41** countries have studied at an institution based in the UK on a Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarship.

Distance Learning Scholars are more likely to go on to work in the **public, NGO, and multilateral** sectors.

Individuals interested in applying for a Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarship can do so through the CSC.



Iffat Zafar Aga

Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer, Sehat Kahani

2017 Distance Learner from Pakistan

University of Edinburgh, MSc Global eHealth

Iffat Zafar Aga co-founded Sehat Kahani while studying at the University of Edinburgh, directly applying her learning to the development of her business in real time. Meaning ‘story of health’, Sehat Kahani is a health-technology social impact initiative which democratises access to healthcare by using technology to connect patients from rural and low income urban communities with online doctors. Sehat Kahani has a nationwide network of 63 e-Health Clinics spread in rural populations, a mobile app which is used for consumer and corporate markets, and are servicing over 900 corporations and their employees and families. Other services provided include E-Pharmacy, Outpatient Department (OPD) Management, and Home Healthcare. Collectively through their programmes, Sehat Kahani has facilitated over 3.6 million online consultations.

As a result of her work in Pakistan, Iffat has contributed to efforts to improve access to healthcare in remote communities by the WHO, Grand Challenges Canada, the British Asian Trust, and Amplify. In 2019 she was awarded the MIT Elevate Prize, and in 2022 she was awarded the Heroine of Healthcare Award and the GBH Provocateur Award. Most recently, in March 2024 she received the Study UK award from the British Council.



Commonwealth Scholarships for Doctoral studies

Commonwealth Scholarships for Doctoral studies contribute to the sustainable development needs of Commonwealth countries by supporting research that will have a developmental impact.

There are two kinds of Commonwealth Scholarships at the Doctoral level: Commonwealth PhD Scholarships, and Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships. These scholarships enhance the individual teaching and research abilities of recipients, leading to increased institutional capacity inside and outside the academic sectors of Commonwealth countries. They also contribute to higher education and research in the UK by attracting high-calibre international researchers and encouraging ongoing partnerships and collaborations between institutions in the UK and the wider Commonwealth that continue long after the completion of the scholarships.

Commonwealth PhD Scholarships

are the other original Commonwealth Scholarship programme offered since 1960, and support students to do full-time doctoral studies at a UK-based university. Commonwealth PhD Scholarships are for graduates who are undertaking world-class research with clear sustainable development applications. They are available to individuals from low and middle income Commonwealth countries where the need for doctoral training is the greatest. Candidates interested in applying for this programme can do so through their national nominating agency or through select Commonwealth universities.

These Commonwealth universities can nominate members of staff for Commonwealth PhD Scholarships to support the development of their faculty's qualifications. Through this nomination route the CSC is able to support its Commonwealth university partners to increase the number of doctorate-qualified academic staff in their institutions, expanding the amount of doctoral training their institution can provide.

Over **7,500** Commonwealth citizens from **61** countries and territories have studied in the UK on a Commonwealth PhD Scholarship since 1960.

Individuals interested in applying for a Commonwealth PhD Scholarship can do so through nominating agencies.



Jean-Yves Duclos

Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Canada

1989 PhD Scholar from Canada

PhD Economics, London School of Economics and
Political Science

First elected as a Member of the Canadian Parliament in 2015, Jean-Yves has held positions as Minister of Health, President of the Treasury Board, and Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. Prior to serving as an elected official, he was the Director of the Department of Economics at the Université Laval, and President-Elect of the Canadian Economics Association. He is the Co-Founder of the Poverty and Economic Policy Research Network and has received recognition for his publications in the Canadian Journal of Economics, including his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in recognition of his research work.





Commonwealth Split-site PhD Scholarships

are an innovative scholarship programme that was launched by the CSC in 1998. It is for doctoral students who are enrolled on PhD programmes at an institution in a low or lower middle income Commonwealth country undertaking research with applications in sustainable development. They support these doctoral researchers to do one year of research at a UK-based institution that has equipment or expertise that they would not otherwise be able to access in their home country. Candidates interested in applying for this programme can do so directly through the CSC's online application system.

Split-site PhD Scholarships are also intended to support the strengthening of existing collaborations and partnerships between universities in the UK and the rest of the Commonwealth. Candidates must be able to demonstrate existing institutional or departmental links between their current university and their proposed UK university, while alumni of this programme often continue to be engaged in research partnerships with their UK university, including joint grant applications, research projects, and publications.

Over **750** Commonwealth citizens from **28** countries and territories have studied in the UK on a Commonwealth Split-site PhD Scholarship.

Individuals interested in applying for a Commonwealth Split-site PhD Scholarship can do so through the CSC.

**Akanksha Gupta**

Researcher, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

2020 Split-site Scholar from India

PhD Geophysical Fluid Dynamics,
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Hosted by the University of Dundee

Driven by the desire to mitigate against marine pollution and protect coastal communities, Akanksha Gupta's work bridges environmental and geophysical fluid dynamics, and oceanic engineering. Her research work is focused on wave energy, including free-surface flows, surface gravity wave, wave-seafloor-current interactions, tracer transport, and Stokes drift.

Akanksha obtained her PhD from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at IIT Kanpur, India, in 2022. She is a recipient of various awards, including the Raman-Charpak Fellowship (Indo-France), the Shastri Indo-Canadian fellowship and her Commonwealth Split-site Scholarship. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO), University of California San Diego.



Commonwealth Professional Fellowships

Commonwealth Professional Fellowships provide professionals with the opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills in their given sector, and to have catalytic effects on their workplaces.

The CSC has offered Commonwealth Fellowships since 1969, with the current Professional Fellowships programme introduced in 2000. They are intended for mid-career professionals from low and middle income Commonwealth countries to spend time at a host organisation in the UK related to their field for a programme of professional development. Over the course of their time in the UK, Professional Fellows gain knowledge, learn new technical skills, and establish opportunities for future collaborations.

This programme is delivered in partnership with host organisations based in the UK. Hosts are chosen on an annual basis, and interested organisations can apply to host Professional Fellows directly through the CSC's online application system. Hundreds of organisations in the UK have hosted Commonwealth Professional Fellows, including universities, charities, NGOs and private companies. Hosts benefit from enhanced professional networks and opportunities for international collaboration in their areas of work, with the majority of Professional Fellows continuing to work on joint projects with their host organisation after completing their fellowship.



Over **6,000** Commonwealth citizens from **53** countries and territories have completed fellowships in the UK on a Professional Fellowship.

Individuals interested in applying for a Commonwealth Professional Fellowship can do so through the CSC.



Patience Ikpeh

Head of Programmes, West Africa Network for
Peacebuilding Nigeria

2021 Professional Fellow from Nigeria

Fellowship, Lifegate Outreach Centre UK

Patience Ikpeh is a gender and peacebuilding policy specialist and the Head of Programmes for the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) Nigeria.

She ensures that the challenges faced by women and girls during conflict and in the peacebuilding process are integrated into WANEP's programmes. This work includes five thematic programme areas: women in peacebuilding, active non-violence and education, early warning response, democracy and good governance, and document, research and networking.

Patience and her team have run numerous workshops and activities, reaching thousands of participants. They have supported over 1,000 women to understand how they can contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding discussion sessions within communities across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. They have also successfully delivered a programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Lagos State to raise awareness of gender-based violence and drug abuse in six education districts in over 100 public schools, reaching more than 2,000 young people.



Further information

For more information about Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, please visit the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK's website at cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk

Here you can find out more about the CSC's work and programmes, including:

- Application dates, routes, requirements, and advice
- Programme policies
- Details about our UK and international partners
- Publications, features, case studies, and reports on alumni impact
- Latest news

You can also contact the CSC directly with queries at info@cscuk.org.uk

Each year, the CSC family continues to grow, further expanding the impact of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows on skills development, research, networks, and international development.

In addition to the examples within this report, stories and statistics about Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows can be found in our alumni profiles, case studies, and reports on our website, and regular publications of our Annual Report and biannual magazine *Common Knowledge*. Each of these stories provides another example of the sustainable change that over 31,000 Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows are achieving in their institutions, communities, nations, and for all of humanity.





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