



CSC Community Giving Proposal

This paper is split into two parts. The first part provides background on why the CSC is seeking feedback and comments on a proposal to approach Commonwealth Alumni to support the CSC through financial giving, and financial giving more broadly.

The second part outlines proposed ways in which the CSC could deliver financial giving opportunities for Commonwealth Alumni and how funds could be used.

Part One: Background

This proposal has been developed as part of a wider piece of work exploring the potential of partnerships in diversifying the delivery of Commonwealth Scholarships. Partnership opportunities the CSC is investigating include:

- Diversifying funding to deliver Commonwealth Scholarships through partnerships with UK Government departments and other organisations/institutions;
- Delivering prestigious opportunities for Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni through partnerships with organisations/institutions which share the CSC's vision and values; and
- Increasing alumni investment in the CSC through greater philanthropic opportunities, such as financial giving.

Why now?

The CSC is funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and UK University partners. The FCDO provides the largest funding for Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships from the UK's aid budget. This funding also supports the delivery of supplementary activities, including the scholar and alumni engagement programmes.

Over its 65-year history, the CSC has experienced changes to its funding. The CSC is not immune to the potential impact of decreased funding on its delivery, nor is it inexperienced in navigating potential challenges arising from this.

Exploring partnerships has the potential to provide ways of reducing financial shocks on the CSC's delivery both in the short and long term, as well as fostering new relationships with other government departments, organisations and stakeholders to create new opportunities.

Why financial giving?

Financial giving is not solely a mechanism for collecting funds. It provides an alternative route to effect change that will support the overall objectives of Commonwealth Scholarships in supporting the skills and knowledge development of individuals across the Commonwealth to contribute to sustainable development at the community, national and international level.

Commonwealth Alumni are the CSC's biggest, fastest growing and largest reaching stakeholder, with potentially the greatest capacity, motivation and personal investment to support the CSC philanthropically.

The CSC already engages alumni through philanthropy, offering opportunities to volunteer their skills and time to support Commonwealth Scholars (for example, the CSC Mentoring Programme, speaker opportunities), share their experiences and learning across professional fields (for example, the Development in Action webinar series, Alumni Associations), and in delivering community focused and grassroots engagement opportunities (for example, the Alumni Community Engagement Fund).

Developing a financial giving strand within the CSC's existing philanthropic activities presents another way that alumni can support, influence and invest in the future of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships.

Scope

This paper presents an initial proposal on ways the CSC could introduce financial giving into its existing delivery. The paper focuses on Commonwealth Alumni as principal donors however it should be noted that the proposal could also be applied to 'friends' of the CSC willing to give.

Why give?

There are multiple ways in which gifts (donations) can be received and several factors which influence the decision to give.

Key to all of these is a compelling reason or cause that giving will support and have a real and lasting impact on.

Research shows that donors typically do not give because there is a need. Instead, donors are compelled by the campaign or programme outcomes that may be achieved through giving.

Factors which influence the reason to give include (this list is not exhaustive):

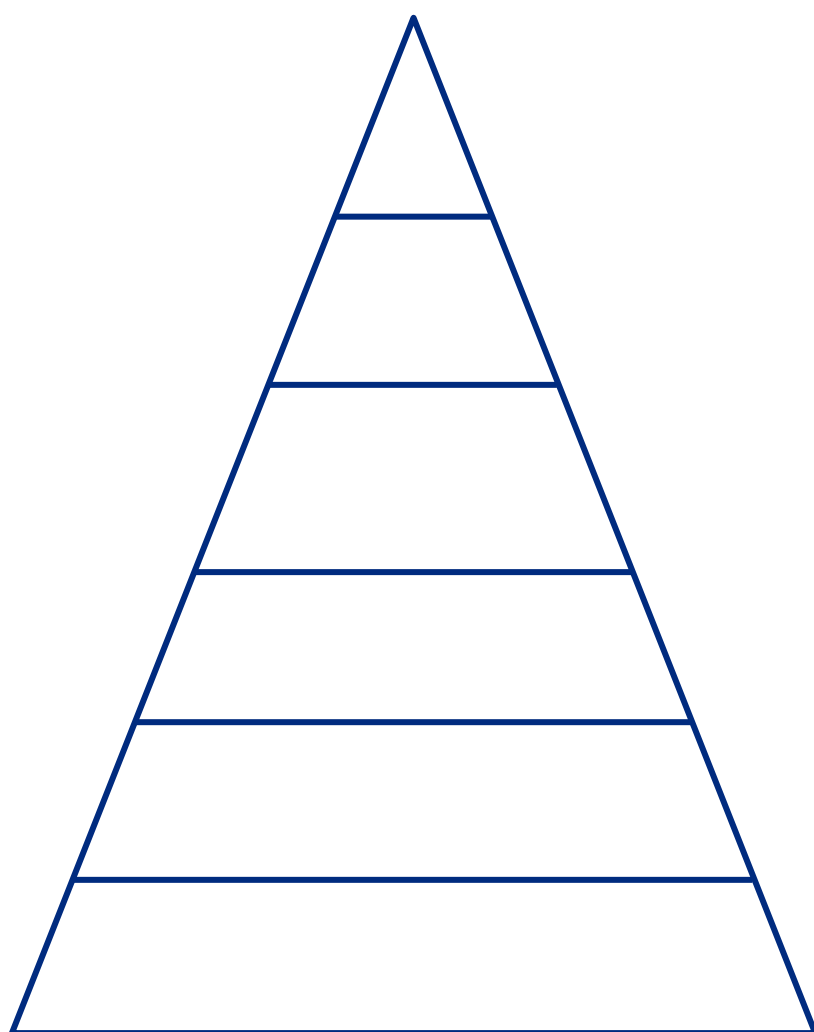
- Altruism, a sense of moral duty
- Ego, the personal satisfaction or pride that comes with giving
- Legacy, the reputation and lasting pride that comes with giving
- Social dynamics, influence of peers who are giving
- Trust, that the organisation knows how best to use gifts
- Impact, seeing the change that giving can achieve
- Relatability, sharing or sympathising with the experience of those the gift will impact

Ways of giving

The diagram below outlines types of giving.

The most popular and accessible financial giving mechanisms are one-off donations and regular giving, which enable donors to control their donations and respond to campaigns and causes they feel passionate about.

Larger gifts are usually cultivated over time, building important relationships with donors to ensure their gift is meaningful to them and valuable to the organisation receiving it. Larger gifts are not always financial and may include assets.

Figure 1: Types of financial gift

- **Transformational gift**
A gift or donation with the capacity to significantly alter the future of the organisation
- **Principal gift**
A large gift or donation at the top of or above the threshold of a major gift
- **Major gift**
A gift or donation that will have a significant impact on fundraising work
- **Leadership giving**
Large, repeating gifts
- **Regular giving**
Typically monthly donations
- **One-off gift**

Diagram reference: Council for Advancement and Support of Education Spring Institute in Educational Fundraising

Figure 1 provides a visual overview of types of financial gifts and the accessibility of these amongst donors. One-off gifts and regular giving are most accessible, with donors opting for a commitment and gift size that is most appropriate for their circumstances.

As gifts increase in size, the donor pool decreases due to personal, social and economic factors that influence giving in this way. However, it is typically found that 80-90% of donations received are gifted by 10-20% of donors making larger donations significant to the success of any giving campaigns.

Part Two: CSC Community Giving

This section of the paper outlines ways in which the CSC could provide financial giving opportunities for Commonwealth Alumni. It explores how gifts could be asked for and received, what gifts could be used for, and acknowledges enabling and constraining factors to implementing such a programme.

Guiding principles

The following principles have been developed to guide the proposal:

- The UK government remains committed to delivering world-class scholarship programmes

- Financial gifts from donors will not replace existing funding received from the UK government
- Donors give what is significant for them
- The CSC and donor mission must be shared
- Donor support has the potential to make a difference
- Financial giving is sensitive and should be approached and managed with care
- Financial giving is part of wider philanthropic opportunities for Commonwealth Alumni
- Being engaged in the CSC Alumni Network is not an expectation to give; giving is not part of the CSC's Alumni Engagement Strategy

Financial giving mechanisms will be developed under 8 pillars:

1. **Donor centric-** giving campaigns and programmes will be sensitive to the economic and social status of donors; gifts will be used towards programmes and opportunities donors and the CSC feel are most valuable.
2. **Integrated-** the receipt of gifts will be integrated into the delivery of the programmes and opportunities they are donated to support.
3. **Consistent-** the CSC will remain committed to the campaigns and programmes gifts are given to support and will treat all gifts received, no matter how big or small, as valuable.
4. **Metrics driven-** any financial giving models will be monitored and evaluated to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet donor and organisational needs. Where they do not, they will be reviewed and donors informed of changes.
5. **Data compliant-** the CSC will be data and UK law compliant in the management of all personal and sensitive data gathered through financial giving.
6. **Responsive-** giving campaigns and programmes will be responsive to the needs of donors and the CSC. This includes making changes to campaigns, programmes and financial giving models where metrics indicate this is required to ensure value.
7. **Evidence-based-** gifts will be used to support CSC programmes and opportunities where they can achieve the greatest impact. Giving campaigns will be driven by evidence on the impact of gifts, which may include storytelling, personal communications and news updates.
8. **Stewardship focused-** all donors will be included in a comprehensive stewardship programme to ensure they are informed on the impact of their donation and the giving campaign or programme their gift is supporting.

Who are the donors

For this proposal, Commonwealth Alumni are the principal donors referred to. It should be noted that the proposal could also be applied to 'friends' of the CSC willing to give.

Types of gifts

Whilst not all gifts are financial and can include assets, given the function of the CSC as a scholarship provider with limited physical needs (for example, buildings, library resources), gifts referenced in this proposal are financial only.

Ways of giving

Below are outlined key ways the CSC could provide financial giving mechanisms.

It is not proposed that the ways of giving and giving campaigns outlined below are implemented at the same time. A gradual implementation over a 1-3 year period is proposed which would allow the CSC to monitor and evaluate uptake and gather feedback before developing further opportunities.

For all the models below, it is proposed the CSC develop a dedicated webpage to communicate ways in which Commonwealth Alumni can financially give. This page would host information about each of the giving models available, how gifts will be used, where donors can specify how gifts are used, stories of impact, and legal and data compliance information, as well as CSC contact information for further details.

Where consent is given, donors will be recognised through the CSC's financial giving page as part of a 'Roll of Supporters'. Published recognition could include one or more of the following: name, year of scholarship, amount gifted, and campaign or programme the gift is donated towards. If a donor stops becoming a regular giver, they will still be listed on the 'Roll of Supporters'.

Where consent is not given and/or donors prefer to be acknowledged anonymously, this would also be recorded on the 'Roll of Supporters' as an anonymous gift.

One-off gift

Donors can:

- Give any amount, any time
- Give one-off gifts multiple times throughout their lifetime, with no commitment to regularising this giving
- Stipulate which campaign or programme they would like their gift to support. Where they have no preference, they can select for the CSC to assign the gift to the campaign or programme where it can make the most difference at that time (for example, a campaign that is near its financial target). See below the Chair's Fund for more information on open giving.

Regular giving

Donors can:

- Give a regular amount every month or quarter
- Decide the amount they give
- Become regular givers at any time
- Stop regular giving at any time
- Give additional one-off or other gifts at any time
- Stipulate which campaign or programme they would like their gift to support. Where they have no preference, they can select for the CSC to assign the gift to the campaign or programme where it can make the most difference at that time (for example, a campaign that is near its financial target). See below the Chair's Fund for more information on open giving.

Fundraising

Different to the one-off and regular giving models above, a fundraising model offers Commonwealth Alumni the freedom to raise funds in their own way to gift to the CSC.

Fundraising could be done by individual or groups of Commonwealth Alumni or through CSC Alumni Associations.

Fundraising models could include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Giving weeks- set weeks within the year in which Commonwealth Alumni are invited by the CSC to deliver fundraising activities. This would be supported through CSC giving toolkits.
- Events- most relevant to CSC Alumni Associations, they could deliver ticketed events, with profits gifted to the CSC.
- Sponsored activities- such as marathons, personal and team challenges
- Merchandise- most relevant to CSC Alumni Associations, they could sell association branded items, with profits gifted to the CSC.

CSC Alumni Associations may also choose to raise funds to support their own activities and to reduce financial requests on the CSC.

Leadership, major, principal and transformational giving

These types of gifts are typically the result of longer-term consultation and communication with donors. The CSC would be open to receiving gifts of this nature and in cultivating a positive relationship with these donors.

Any Commonwealth Alumni wishing to give larger gifts would be encouraged to contact the CSC to discuss the most valuable use of such an investment. Making a one-off gift would also be an option for these donors should they prefer to give to an existing campaign or programme, however significant sized gifts may not always be most appropriate for these.

Giving campaigns and programmes

In launching financial giving, it is important that gifts will be used to support valuable opportunities within the CSC's delivery that are of importance to donors and the CSC. Gifts can be used to supplement existing opportunities, releasing existing funds, or to expand existing opportunities, improving their reach.

Gifts may also enable the CSC to explore new opportunities, particularly in the case of major, principal and transformational gifts and gifts received with donor conditions.

The CSC has identified the following giving campaigns where funds have the potential to make the biggest impact on the CSC's delivery and Scholar experience. It is proposed these be launched as initial campaigns to introduce financial giving to Commonwealth Alumni.

Scholar Conference Grants

Campaign to raise funds to provide individual conference grants of a set amount.

- Annual fund to award conference grants for Master's and PhD Scholars to attend a conference in their country of study they otherwise could not afford to attend.
- The fund will be awarded on a competitive basis to Scholars who could not otherwise afford to attend and where attendance will have an impact on their studies and professional development.
- Those awarded grants will agree to provide a report on their conference attendance and opportunities gained and arising from this. This will be published as part of the CSC's commitment to communicating the impact of financial giving.

- Donors will receive copies of the report and thanks from all Scholars benefitting from the grant.

Scholar Development Opportunities

Campaign to raise funds to support the delivery of the Scholar engagement programme, Leaders for Sustainable Development. The campaign will focus on providing funds to increase the number of places at or iterations of the Cumberland Lodge residential weekends.

Currently, attendee costs are on average £850 per place.

- Annual fund to award Cumberland Lodge places/opportunities for Master's and PhD Scholars studying in the UK.
- The fund will be awarded as appropriate for the amount raised and availability to deliver the residential.
- Reports on the residentials will be published as part of the CSC's commitment to communicating the impact of financial giving. All gifts contributing to the delivery of the weekend will be acknowledged and attending Scholars will be informed of the support provided by donors.
- Donors will receive a copy of the report and thanks from Scholars benefitting from the opportunity.

Chair's Fund

An open fund where donors select for the CSC to assign their gift to the campaign or programme where it can make the most difference at that time (for example, a campaign that is near its financial target).

The Chair also has the discretion to use this fund to respond to additional needs arising in the financial year in which the gifts are received. This would be limited to the following only:

- Increased disability allowance payments, enabling Scholars with more complex or specialised needs to complete their studies in the UK with limited barriers to achieve their personal, study and professional goals.
- Additional Thesis Grant payments, supporting PhD Scholars to bolster opportunities for high-quality research. Supplements to the existing grant payments of £225 would be awarded on a competitive basis.

However the Chair's Fund is used, all donors for this fund will be informed of this decision and its impact on the CSC's delivery and Scholars.

The Chair has the discretion to not use the gifts received in the current financial year and to carry these over into future years where this may be most beneficial to ongoing giving campaigns and programmes.

Regional Scholarship Fund

Campaign to raise funds to cover the full cost for one or more Commonwealth Master's Scholarships to be delivered in the UK. Through this fund, the CSC aims to award scholarships across more Commonwealth countries and to applicants from countries which have historically received fewer awards and are therefore underrepresented.

The Regional Scholarship Fund has the biggest financial requirement of all the funds outlined above to be successful. Full costs would include the course of study, stipend payments and supplementary immigration and health costs.

- Annual fund to award fully funded Commonwealth Master's Scholarships through gifts only.
- The Chair is responsible for deciding which country(ies) and applicant(s) to award the scholarship(s) to, within the region(s) in which donors have stipulated.
- Donors can select any Commonwealth region for their gift; it does not have to be their home country region. They can also choose not to select a region and still give to this fund. In these situations, the Chair will assign their gift where it can make the most difference at that time.
- To support informed decision making, donors will have access to information on the year-on-year scholarship distribution across Commonwealth countries and regions.
- Scholar(s) in receipt of these scholarships will be announced to all donors, alongside information about their studies, how they intend to utilise their scholarship experience for maximum benefit, and their intended development impact and why this is important to their home country/region.
- Donors will receive a copy of the report and thanks from Scholar(s) benefitting from the fund. They will also receive an update from the Scholar(s) at the end of their studies, reflecting on their scholarship experience and next steps.

The costs associated with this fund mean it may take years to achieve the funding for one Master's Scholarship. As such, this fund is most suited to major and principal giving, whilst also being supported through one-off and regular giving. Fundraising, led by CSC Alumni Associations working at the country and/or regional level and coinciding with giving weeks, may be impactful in raising adequate funds.

Considerations

Financial giving of any size requires significant consideration for both the donor and receiving organisation. Building donor relationships through two-way communication will be key to the success of any financial giving model. Feedback and consultations, alongside ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be employed to ensure donor satisfaction and interest.

In developing this report and initial proposals, the CSC has considered and noted the following enabling and constraining factors.

Enabling factors

Donor pool

Over its 65-year history, the CSC has awarded over 31,000 Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships. On completing their studies, Commonwealth Alumni take up positions across a range of sectors and fields and at all levels, as national leaders, government ministers, CEOs, managing directors and founders, community leaders, and policy advisors to name a few.

For many, the opportunity to complete higher and further education in the UK would have been impossible without a Commonwealth Scholarship. Opportunities to contribute to the ongoing delivery of Commonwealth Scholarships and to support the next generation of Commonwealth

Scholars and Fellows is important in ensuring the legacy of Commonwealth Scholarships and Commonwealth Alumni, and future of the scheme.

Supporting leaders for sustainable development

Commonwealth Alumni go on to effect real change at local, national and international levels and apply the skills, knowledge and experiences gained during their CSC funded studies to achieve personal and professional goals and contribute to some of the biggest global challenges.

For many, they could not have achieved their goals without their CSC-funded studies and supplementary opportunities, such as those provided by the CSC's scholar and alumni engagement programmes.

Opportunities to give towards scholarships and additional opportunities enables donors to support the CSC's holistic approach to supporting individuals to become contributors and leaders for sustainable development.

Increasing alumni investment in the CSC

Commonwealth Alumni are deeply invested in the CSC as recipients of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships and become lifelong ambassadors. Financial giving provides a mechanism for Commonwealth Alumni to influence key CSC deliverables, stipulating how gifts should be invested to provide the most value.

Stewardship

Donors value their personal relationships with the CSC and CSC Secretariat which are built on consistent engagement, open communication and trust. A 'supporter journey' will be designed from the first gift including personalised thank you letters, access to CSC-specific stewardship materials and opt-in access to follow scholar journeys. Personalised supporter journeys reinforce donor retention rates and provide a platform for donor-CSC relationships.

Data driven strategy

The CSC employs a variety of methods to successfully gather and communicate evidence relating to the outcomes and impact of its programmes.

Financial giving will be monitored and evaluated to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets donor and organisational needs. This may include analysing donor behaviour, affinities and preferences to inform strategy changes. Where data indicates that strategies are not effective, they will be reviewed and donors informed of and/or consulted on changes.

Gathering important and compelling evidence on the impact of giving will be used to ensure donors and future donors understand the impact of their gift.

Constraining factors

Donor pool

Commonwealth Alumni perform vital roles in achieving sustainable development. Given the shrinking development and funding landscape, and growing global economic instability, many potential donors may find themselves in challenging financial circumstances that prevent them from giving.

Recently graduated Commonwealth Alumni also face difficult and highly competitive job markets and may experience periods of initial unemployment, with some continuing to experience periods of unemployment throughout their career.

The CSC does not expect Commonwealth Alumni to give financially but proposes to provide an opportunity to do so as part of wider philanthropic alumni activities.

- Currently engaged alumni can opt-out of receiving targeted information about financial giving
- Newly engaged alumni can opt-in to receiving targeted information about financial giving

The CSC could implement an approach to not send financial giving information to Commonwealth Alumni up to 2-years post-Scholarship, as part of the opt-in/opt-out consents above. These individuals could still give and access this information via the CSC's website.

The CSC has never provided financial giving mechanisms before. In launching a 'cold' programme, it is not known how many Commonwealth Alumni will give or what level of gift they may be able and willing to donate.

Attrition rate and static donor base

Unlike many institutions, the CSC's donor base of Commonwealth Alumni will grow slowly over time. It is not guaranteed that a high percentage of its current base or future base will financially give. Engaging and retaining donors will be important in any CSC financial giving strategy.

The CSC's limited donor base means effective first-time campaigns and stewardship are critical for a high donor retention rate. The fundraising sector averages that only 23% of first-time one-off donors continue to give after six months. Once donors lapse, extensive effort is required for successful donor recapture. The CSC will already be facing sector-wide low retention rates aggravated by global financial insecurity.

Fluctuating funds

Linked to the above, fluctuations in giving and the funds raised will impact the success of the giving campaigns and programmes. Where gifts do not achieve the overall financial targets required, this may be disappointing and de-motivating to donors and could affect their decision to give in future, as well as impact their trust in the CSC to manage financial giving effectively.

Mismatched priorities

The giving campaigns and programmes outlined in this proposal are designed to be valuable to Commonwealth Alumni as donors and the CSC. As per the guiding principles outlined in this paper, it is important that the donor and CSC mission is shared. If the campaigns and programmes do not align with donor priorities, this could significantly impact gifts received and donor trust in the CSC in understanding what is valuable to Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni.

Optics of financially giving/asking

As outlined, the CSC has never provided financial giving mechanisms in its 65-year history.

Commonwealth Scholarships are funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and UK University partners to provide access to higher and further education for individuals who would otherwise not be able to afford these opportunities.

Introducing a financial giving mechanism may be seen as inappropriate given the economic status of Commonwealth Scholars prior to taking up their awards and the economic environment Commonwealth Alumni are currently navigating. There may also be concerns on the appropriacy of the UK government raising funds from Commonwealth citizens to support the delivery of a scholarship programme designed to address sustainable development challenges, some of which are a direct result of UK colonialism.