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Commonwealth Scholarship Commission  
in the United Kingdom

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Scholarships aid international health targets, says new study

Higher education and international scholarships have made a significant contribution to the achievement of health targets set by the Millennium Development Goals, according to a new report from the DFID-funded Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom, published today.

The report, based on survey returns from over 2,000 former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, found that, while 16% of scholarships had been awarded in specifically health-related areas – ranging from community health programmes to groundbreaking malaria research – 38% of respondents were able to cite their work as having a direct impact on health. Likewise, many of those studying in health fields could also cite impact in other key areas such as agriculture, environment and governance.

According to the author of the report, James Ransom, the impact of alumni can be seen in a wide variety of ways. ‘Many alumni have risen to senior levels, including chief medical officers, permanent secretaries in health ministries and leading figures in international health agencies. Many more are involved in specific initiatives – particularly related to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6, which are concerned with reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. Most of the impact has been made through specific projects, although 31% are also able to cite ways in which they have influenced government thinking or policy.’

Professor Tim Unwin, Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, welcomed the findings of the report as ‘encouraging, and consistent with our findings in other professional areas’. The evidence and experience of Commonwealth Scholarships, he said, ‘add huge weight to the realisation amongst international aid agencies that higher education and high-level professional skills development are critical to the long-term achievement of international targets’. Professor Unwin was also encouraged by the finding that 89% of recipients remain working in their home or other developing country – a figure confirmed by Commonwealth Scholarship Commission studies in other areas.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC) is responsible for managing Britain’s contribution to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

Chair  
Deputy Chair  
Executive Secretary  
Medical Awards

Professor Tim Unwin BA, PhD  
Sir Brian Donnelly KBE, CMG  
Dr John Kirkland BSc, PhD  
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(CSFP), established in 1959, and supports around 750 awards annually. More information is available at [www.cscuk.org.uk](http://www.cscuk.org.uk).

2. The report *Evaluating Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom: Assessing impact in the health sector* is available at [www.cscuk.org.uk/docs/assessing\\_impact\\_health.pdf](http://www.cscuk.org.uk/docs/assessing_impact_health.pdf). Hard copies are available on request, and the CSC is also able to provide specific case study material and facilitate interviews with respondents.
3. The majority of funding for the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission comes from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which manages the UK's aid to poor countries and works to get rid of extreme poverty. DFID's work is guided, in part, by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). More information is available at [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk).
4. The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) is an international programme under which member governments offer scholarships and fellowships to citizens of other Commonwealth countries. The Plan was established at the first Commonwealth education conference in 1959 and is reviewed by education ministers at their triennial meetings.
5. For further information, please contact

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