



Commonwealth  
Foundation

# Annual Report

2020-2021

*‘We recognise the important role that civil society plays in our communities and countries as partners in promoting and supporting Commonwealth values and principles, including the freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and in achieving development goals.’*

The Commonwealth Charter, agreed by Commonwealth Heads of Government, 2012

The Commonwealth Foundation is unique among intergovernmental organisations in being explicitly mandated, by our Member States, to advance the interests of Commonwealth civil society. Upholding a firm commitment to the principles and ideals of the Commonwealth, the Foundation seeks to nurture the growth of vibrant and free societies: championing the active and constructive participation of people in all aspects of governance.

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4	Welcome from the Chair
6	Introduction from the Director-General
8	Our story
10	Our Member States
11	Our Commonwealth partners
12	Shaping our future
14	Our reach 2020-2021
16	Our achievements during this strategic period 2017-2021
19	Our programmes and highlights
49	Our people and our finances
56	Annex: Programme activity 2020-2021

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# Welcome from the Chair

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As the incoming Chair of the Commonwealth Foundation's Board of Governors I am delighted to welcome this comprehensive report of a well-spent, if challenging year. Throughout the reporting period the Foundation has worked quietly and consistently to advance the interests of the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens across a wide range of fronts: from vaccine equity to climate justice; from gender equality to freedom of expression. This work affirms the essential value of the Commonwealth as an organisation that is truly of and for its people.



I take this opportunity to thank the Foundation team, whose hard work and dedication lies behind much of what is reported below. The leadership of the Director-General, Dr Anne Gallagher and Deputy Director-General, Mr Shem Ochola, has been especially important during this time of disruption and uncertainty. Their vision and steady good sense is amply reflected in the excellent work that has been done, setting the course for the next five years.

*'The core mission of the Foundation—to nurture the growth of vibrant and free civil societies—is one that must, for the sake of the Commonwealth, be shared by us all.'*

Sincere thanks are also due to H.E. Mr Milton Inniss, High Commissioner of Barbados, who has chaired both the Executive Committee and the Grants Committee throughout the past year with great distinction. His unflagging commitment to the Foundation is much appreciated and, on behalf of the Board, I express our gratitude to High Commissioner Inniss for his valuable service.

Our Board has a unique and valuable resource in its Civil Society Advisory Governors: Gorette Kyomuhendo (Africa); Kalpana Kannabiran (Asia); Marlene Attzs (Caribbean); Celia Wade-Brown (Pacific); and Ajay Chhabra (Europe). Each governor has brought important skills and experiences to the Foundation. Together they provide an important reminder of our core mission: to elevate and support civil society throughout the Commonwealth.

As my predecessor did a year ago, I close by affirming the central role of Member States in our present and future success. The Foundation belongs to its Members and it is our responsibility to provide all necessary guidance and support, including through the timely payment of assessed financial contributions. We also have a collective interest in encouraging those few Commonwealth States that are not members of the Foundation to join. The core mission of the Foundation—to nurture the growth of vibrant and free civil societies—is one that must, for the sake of the Commonwealth, be shared by us all.

Dato' Sudha Devi K.R. Vasudevan  
Chair

## Chair of the Executive Committee

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H.E. Mr Milton Inniss, High Commissioner of Barbados

## Civil Society Advisory Governors

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Civil Society Advisory Governors (Left-Right). Gorette Kyomuhendo (Africa); Kalpana Kannabiran (Asia); Marlene Attzs (Caribbean); Celia Wade-Brown (Pacific); and Ajay Chhabra (Europe).

# Introduction from the Director-General

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Through hardship, isolation and sadness, we have all had recent cause to reflect on the crucial importance of human solidarity. As the Commonwealth Foundation moves into a new chapter of its history, we affirm our commitment to solidarity with the people of the Commonwealth, and to the principles and ideals of the Commonwealth Charter.

The past year has been one of great challenge. But it has also brought unimagined opportunities for learning and growth. Within the Commonwealth Foundation we have actively sought to identify and harness those opportunities: adapting our ways of thinking and working in order to provide leadership and support to Commonwealth civil society. I am confident that over the past 12 months we have become more resilient and, despite physical separation, moved closer to those we serve.

It is with great pleasure that I present this annual report: a confirmation that despite significant operational limitations, the Foundation has met its ambitious operational goals and, in some areas, greatly exceeded them. While the report focuses particularly on the past year, we also reflect on the broader achievements of the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 which is now close to completion.

As Director-General, I have many reasons to be proud of the Foundation and its contribution to the mission of the Commonwealth. But looking back over the past year, three highlights deserve special mention.

First is the successful rollout of our Covid-19 Special Grants Call. One year ago, the Foundation went to its governors with a plan to radically shift the longstanding grants programme in order to deliver urgently needed support to civil society organisations working alongside their governments at the frontline of pandemic recovery and rebuilding efforts. We extended the call for proposals to all Commonwealth Member States and more than 800 grant applications were received. A much-appreciated extra-budgetary contribution from the Government of Canada enabled us to fund an additional tranche of deserving initiatives. The lessons learned from this unexpected detour in our strategic plan have been carefully analysed and are reflected in our planning for the years ahead.

When CHOGM 2020 was originally postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we started thinking about how to maintain momentum and, more importantly, how to ensure that the voice of Commonwealth civil



society could be heard during these extraordinary times. We knew what was at stake: in these times of unprecedented instability and change, better ideas are needed—and more powerful, diverse voices—if we are to adapt to change and lead the transformation of systems and attitudes that entrench inequality and marginalise so many. The result of our thinking was *People of the Commonwealth: Critical Conversations*, an online event series that began in October 2020 and has since attracted thousands of participants. It is our hope that this new form of outreach and engagement will continue as a pillar of the Foundation's work.

Finally, a personal and professional highlight for me has been the privilege of leading the Foundation team: an extraordinary group of committed individuals whose capacity to operate effectively under pressure and uncertainty has been crucial to our success over the past year. The Foundation recognises that its success depends on the dedication and professionalism of our people. Over the past year we have focused attention on staff learning and growth, establishing clear pathways for competency-based career development that aims to empower individuals while also strengthening our organisation.

As we move into a new era, I take this opportunity to thank our governors for the role they have played—and will continue to play—in ensuring the success of their Foundation and its mission. Your active, consistent involvement will be especially critical in the coming year as we launch our new strategic plan, and as we seek to expand the Foundation's reach and impact. We are thrilled that the Maldives has returned to the Foundation and look to our governors to encourage those few Commonwealth Member States that are not yet part of the Foundation to join.

Finally, a special word of thanks is due to the new Chair of the Foundation, Ambassador Sudha Devi Vasudevan and Chair of our Executive Committee, High Commissioner Milton Inniss. Your wise guidance, unwavering interest in the Foundation and confidence in our work has been invaluable and greatly appreciated.

*'Better ideas are needed—and more powerful, diverse voices—if we are to adapt to change and lead the transformation of systems and attitudes that entrench inequality and marginalise so many.'*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Gallagher". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Anne T. Gallagher AO  
Director-General

# Our story

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The Commonwealth Foundation was established by Heads of Government in 1965, reflecting the commitment of Member States to ensuring that the Commonwealth family would be as much an association of peoples as of governments.

As one of the three intergovernmental pillars of the Commonwealth, the Foundation operates within that critical space between government and civil society. We work to bring the voice of civil society into all aspects of governance, supporting civil society engagement in shaping the policies and decisions that affect people's lives.

Our support is delivered through grant-making, capacity development and cultural initiatives to amplify less-heard voices in communities throughout the Commonwealth.

The stories that follow reflect our achievements over the past year and, more broadly, over the four years of our current strategic plan which is now ending. Together with our governors and many partners we are now looking towards a new future, striving for an inclusive Commonwealth that is truly of and for the people.



## Our Member States

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Membership of the Foundation is open to all Commonwealth Member States and we are proud that the overwhelming majority of Commonwealth countries are part of the Foundation family. Our Members are critical to the success of the Foundation's mission. Through their participation in the Foundation's governance bodies: Board of Governors, Executive Committee and Grants Committee, members provide much-valued guidance. And, as explored further in 'Our finances' later in this report, their financial contributions are what enable us to do our work.

Despite the limitations of the past year, the Directorate has sought to ensure close and consistent engagement with Member States, principally through regular communication with High Commissioners. Where a need was perceived, we organised special briefings for individual countries and groups of countries. The delivery of a comprehensive outreach programme for civil society in Cameroon is an example of the former. A briefing for Caribbean Commonwealth States on our work in the region and on our plans for the future was an example of the latter.

The Foundation was delighted to welcome the Maldives back into membership in April 2021 and is looking forward to re-establishing its links with the Government and people of the Maldives. Seven Member States of the Commonwealth (Fiji, the Gambia, Nauru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Singapore and Tuvalu) are not members of the Foundation.

During the reporting period the Directorate reached out to all High Commissioners and Honorary Consuls as part of a universal membership initiative that began in 2019. Our goal is to work closely with the relevant representatives in uncovering possible obstacles to membership and identifying ways that these could be managed. In some cases, we have identified gaps in understanding about the Foundation's mandate, its programme of work and its performance record. Part of our response to this has been to improve our communication with this small but important group of States: regularly informing them of Foundation activities, especially when their nationals are involved, and inviting High Commissioners and Honorary Consuls to join Board of Governors meetings as observers.

*'The Foundation was delighted to welcome the Maldives back into membership in April 2021 and is looking forward to re-establishing its links with the Government and people of the Maldives.'*

## Our Commonwealth partners

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As one of the pillars of the Commonwealth, the Foundation invests strongly in its Commonwealth partners, actively seeking opportunities to collaborate, inform and support.

Our relationship with the Commonwealth Secretariat continues to go from strength to strength. The Secretary-General and the Foundation's Director-General have continued to meet and present publicly together, including at regular briefings to the Commonwealth's highly valued accredited organisations. Both organisations also consulted in the development of their respective strategic plans, with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Assistant Secretary-General playing a key role in the peer review process for the Foundation's 2021-2026 Plan. Other examples of cooperation during the reporting period include: (i) co-convening (with both the Secretariat and the Commonwealth of Learning) the annual Diplomats Induction programme; (ii) collaboration aimed at securing civil society input into Commonwealth ministerial processes; and (iii) co-organising, with the Secretariat, a major session for London Cancer Week.

Remote working increased opportunities for contact and collaboration with other Commonwealth partners: principally through Directorate involvement in workshops, webinars and other events organised by Commonwealth organisations including the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth. In furtherance of our commitment to supporting Commonwealth bodies working with civil society, the Director-General regularly participated in meetings of two key umbrella organisations: the International Federation of Commonwealth Organisations and the Council of Commonwealth Societies. The senior management team was able to conduct remote consultations with counterparts at the Commonwealth of Learning and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association aimed at sharing our learning across a range of areas and exploring avenues for future cooperation.

# Shaping our future

The Foundation's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 is coming to an end, and development of the new Plan has been a major focus of our attention over the past year.

Our strategic work was undertaken in two phases. The first phase, which took place between August and December 2020, involved a review of our current plan by external experts, Collaborative Impact. Given the rigorous evaluative evidence generated by the 2019 Mid-term Review (MTR), the review focused on creating shared forward-looking insights regarding the Foundation's value, niche and potential. It involved extensive consultation within the Foundation as well as with our governors and other partners.

The Directorate and consultants provided an interim report on the review process and outcomes to the Executive Committee in December 2020. The Committee endorsed the proposal that the next strategy should cover a five-year period (2021-2026), with a 'stop and reflect' built in at the end of years two and four. It was agreed that this approach would provide the Foundation with the right combination of flexibility and certainty.

[The final review report](#) was shared widely, including with all governors. Feedback confirmed that it provided a strong roadmap for the future. This enabled the Foundation to begin work immediately on the next phase: development of the new strategic plan. That work took place over a four-month period from January to April 2021, with support from Collaborative Impact. The draft was then scrutinised by a High-Level Peer Review Group comprising the Chair of the Foundation, Chair of the Executive Committee, Assistant-Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The group met in May 2021 to undertake a facilitated review of the draft strategy and its inputs are reflected in the final version.

The Foundation has taken the opportunity of the new strategic plan to refresh our vision, mission and theory of change and to adapt our structure accordingly. We have reflected on and absorbed the lessons of the past four years and have sought to create a strategy that will increase the relevance of the Foundation to the Commonwealth, and to Commonwealth civil society. Our future focus is firmly on solidarity with the people of the Commonwealth: using our resources, expertise, platforms and partnerships to amplify their voice and advance their interests.



## Our future focus:

### Support

the active and constructive participation of Commonwealth citizens in all aspects of their governance

### Nurture

the growth of vibrant and free civil societies in all Commonwealth countries

### Advance

the principles and ideals of the Commonwealth

# Our reach 2020-2021

Our programme activity over the reporting year spans 40 countries. Many of our projects were active in multiple countries during the reporting period and are counted here in all relevant regions. Projects completed and appraised this year (pages 28-31) are also included. A full list of projects, including country locations, is provided as an annex to this report.

**Americas**  
11 Projects 43 Partners

**Europe**  
4 Projects 15 Partners

**Africa**  
32 Projects 61 Partners

**Asia**  
27 Projects 107 Partners

**Pacific**  
7 Projects 15 Partners

◆ Programme activity in 2020-2021

◆ Covid-19 Special Grants Call

# Our achievements during this strategic period 2017-2021

While the Foundation's achievements over the past four years can be measured in many different ways, the following data provides a useful overview of the nature and scope of our work, specifically: what we have been working on and where; who we have been engaging with; and how our programme budget has been allocated.

## Projects



**£6.9m**

Total programme budget

## Budget per programme



## Themes

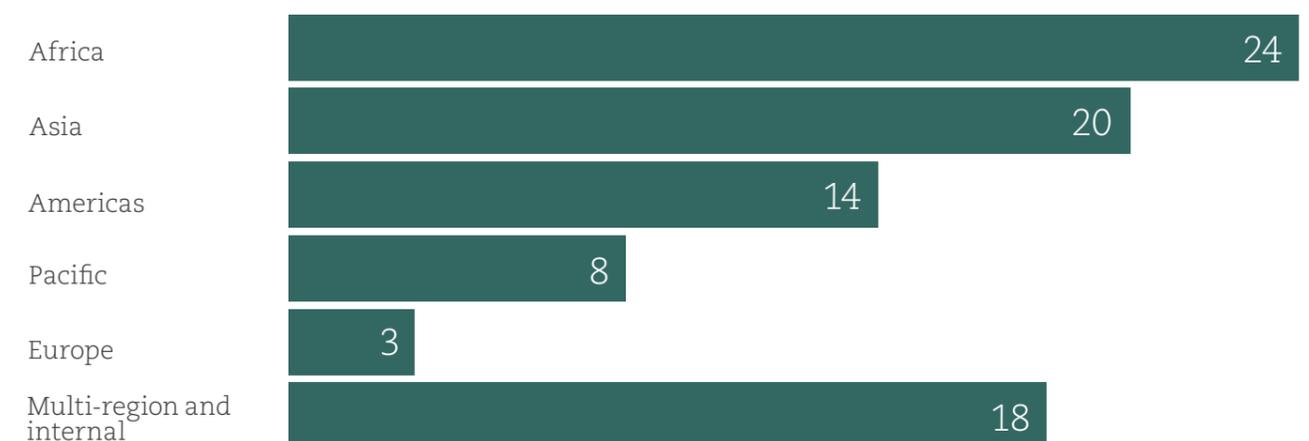
- Human rights 26%
- Gender equality 25%
- Health and disabilities 14%
- Storytelling and creative expression 14%
- Economic empowerment 9%
- Education and youth 6%
- Environment and climate change 6%



## Social actors

- Government institutions 17%
- Ministries, parliamentarians and other policy decision makers 12%
- Civil society organisations 16%
- Communities and grassroots organisations 13%
- Multi-stakeholder groups 14%
- Storytellers 7%
- Publishers, editors, translators 5%
- Media 5%
- Academia and research institutions 9%
- Private sector 2%

## Projects per region



## Our programmes and highlights

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# Our focus 2017-2021

The Foundation's mandate is a broad one and, in order to ensure impact and effectiveness, we have worked hard to identify areas of work that meet real needs and harness our unique strengths. The present report covers the final year of our current strategic plan, which began in 2017. The following are the areas of focus that have guided us over the past four years.

## Participatory governance

The Strategic Plan 2017-2021 established 'participatory governance' as the umbrella under which the Foundation would develop and implement its work. In this context, 'participatory governance' specifically refers to the engagement of the people in shaping the decisions, institutions, laws and policies that affect their lives. The idea of participatory governance recognises that such engagement affirms the legitimacy of the governance process. More practically, participatory governance helps to shape governance processes in ways that actively support the wellbeing of individuals and communities.



Papua New Guinea grant partner, Centre for Environmental Law and Community Rights, presents to High Commissioners at a monitoring, evaluation and learning workshop

## 'Stronger civic voices'

The current strategic plan is geared towards supporting 'stronger civic voices': a recognition that without strong voices, including those voices that are too often on the margins, genuinely participatory and accountable governance will remain elusive. Support to civic voices cuts across all aspects of the Foundation's work. We work with civil society organisations to help build their capacity to influence policy and decision making, as well as to network, communicate and learn from each other. We also support the amplification of less-heard voices: providing avenues and platforms for important stories to be heard.

## Gender and inclusion

The Foundation's commitment to less-heard voices and to improving participation is informed by a recognition that power dynamics which are so often gendered shape the spaces within which people live, the constraints on their lives, and the ways in which they are able to participate in and influence wider social life.

In all aspects of the Foundation's work, we explicitly recognise gender as a major basis of oppression, inequality and exclusion. Our programming reflects an understanding that, if we are to make real progress towards inclusion, then we must pay close attention to the many factors that influence the capability of individuals and communities to shape lives of value and meaning.



Gender consultation session facilitated by grant partner, Women and Democracy, Maldives

## A commitment to learning

The 2017-2021 strategy explicitly affirms the identity of the Foundation as a 'learning organisation'. In other words, we take deliberate steps to learn from what we do: to carefully document that learning; and to incorporate it into all aspects of our organisation with the goal of improving our work and the delivery of our programmes. Our commitment to learning extends to our partners: we actively seek out opportunities to learn from them, and to provide them with opportunities to learn from each other, as well as from us.

A further theme emerged during the period covered by this report:

## Flexibility and responsiveness

While the 2017-2021 strategy provided a strong framework for our work, it was unable to anticipate the seismic changes that took place in our operating environment due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Those changes required us to shift our focus to ensure we could be of greatest service to Commonwealth civil society during these extraordinary times. By making ourselves responsive, and by embracing flexibility, we were able to pivot our programming in important ways: reconfiguring our grants process; providing tailored support to partners experiencing difficulty; advocating for solidarity on matters such as vaccine equity; and providing a platform for Commonwealth civil society to share their stories and come together to discuss and debate some of the most important issues of our time.

## Programme overview from the Deputy Director-General

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As the overall manager of our programming, I am pleased to present this part of our Annual Report: an overview of the work undertaken through our four main programmes during the past year. As we are completing the current strategic period (2017-2021), this section also provides a high-level insight into our broader accomplishments and achievements across that four-year period.



As noted by the Director-General in her introduction, the past year has brought significant challenges to our staff and partners. The Foundation has sought to respond to those challenges with understanding, agility and efficiency. The reorientation of our grants programme to respond to clear and urgent civil society need across the Commonwealth is one example. The provision of tailored support to partners experiencing implementation delays and difficulties is another.

*‘Despite the many difficulties, 2020-2021 has been a year of learning and growth, across all of our programmes.’*

Despite the many difficulties, 2020-2021 has been a year of learning and growth, across all of our programmes. Those lessons have been carefully captured and analysed and are reflected in the new strategic plan that will guide our work over the next five years.

The Foundation recorded strong achievements across all four of our operational programmes over the past year. I am delighted to draw special attention to just a few of the impressive figures we were able to record.

- General interest in our programmes has reached a record high. Over 41,000 subscribers have signed up to our mailing lists since June 2020. The Foundation now has a total mailing list audience of 65,000.
- The 2021 Commonwealth Short Story Prize received a record-breaking 6,400 entries from 50 countries. Two countries, Namibia and Lesotho featured on the shortlist for the first time. Entries in languages other than English were almost double those received in 2020.
- We publish the best pieces of new writing from around the Commonwealth via our online magazine, *adda*. Readership has increased by 62% as compared to the last reporting period.
- Thanks to an improved outreach strategy, grant guidelines and criteria for our Covid-19 Special Grants Call were downloaded 290,000 times. This translated into a record 809 grant applications being submitted from across the Commonwealth.

Metrics can only tell part of the story and other substantive programme achievements also deserve to be celebrated. Our participatory governance and gender work in the Caribbean, for example, has received wide praise for its innovation, as well as its continuing relevance and impact. In the same region the Foundation delivered substantial grants, alongside a comprehensive programme of skills development for 10 early-career filmmakers and screenwriters from eight different Commonwealth countries. We continue to see strong evidence that this kind of work has the potential to create real and lasting change: not just in the individuals most directly involved, but also in the communities and countries they are living and working in.

The Foundation has committed itself to a path of continuous improvement and we understand very well that in times of such uncertainty, this level of improvement requires a genuine commitment to listening and learning. It is in this spirit that we embark on the journey ahead, working alongside our many valued partners in making real the principles and ideals of the Commonwealth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shem Ochola', written in a cursive style.

**Shem Ochola**  
Deputy Director-General

# People of the Commonwealth: Critical Conversations

A significant innovation of this reporting period was the launch of an online event series which provides the opportunity for Commonwealth leaders, thinkers, practitioners and activists to share their perspectives on the big, important questions of our age. Over 5,000 people, representing more than a hundred countries, have convened for six live events in the lead up to this year's Commonwealth People's Forum.

As part of our adaptive response to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, we created *Critical Conversations*, a series of online events to ensure that civil society voices could be heard during these extraordinary times. Fundamental issues of our age were discussed and debated within an overarching remit: how do we advance our common future? Below are some highlights from the series.

**A Commonwealth for All: Young Leaders Speak** convened a group of inspiring young leaders to discuss what the Commonwealth means to them, what they hope for its future, and what might be done to make the Commonwealth more accessible to its people and more relevant for today's world. Thousands signed up to this event and the interaction from participants was intense.

**Protecting Media Freedom in the Commonwealth** brought together frontline journalists, other media practitioners and policy experts to raise awareness of the erosion of media freedom across the Commonwealth. The stories this event brought to light are worrying. But there are also real signs of hope, not least the work of Commonwealth Member States to speak out against repressive policies and actions and bring the Charter's commitments to the free flow of information and freedom of expression to life.

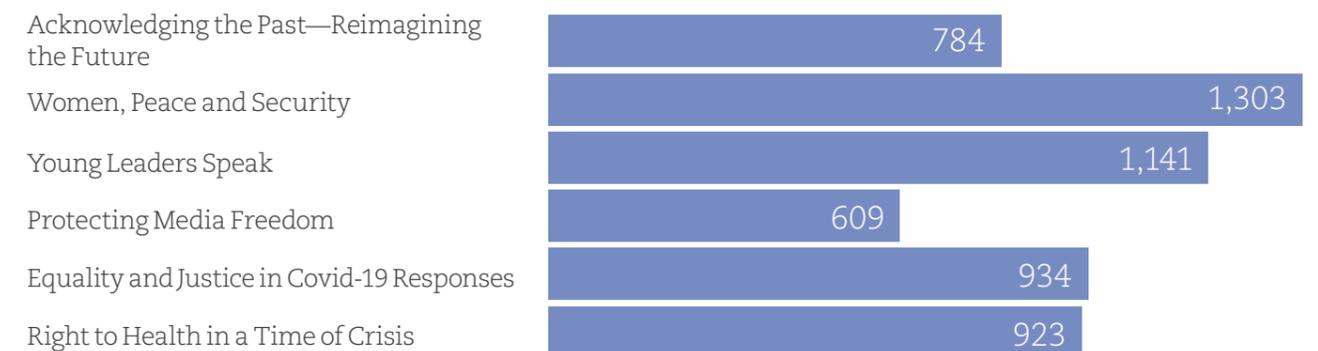
**Equality and Justice in Covid-19 Responses** confronted the clear evidence that women are experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic differently to men and that the vulnerabilities which reflect women's gender roles and unequal social status have been exacerbated. Member and former Chair of CEDAW, the United Nations women's committee, Hilary Gbedemah, brought together a formidable line up of women advocates and practitioners to highlight the gendered impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for more just and equitable policy responses.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive for these opportunities to learn, share and network beyond the usual constraints of international travel. It is our hope that the *Critical Conversations* series will continue as a pillar of the Foundation's work and will be reflected in a reimagined Commonwealth People's Forum, designed to bring the voice of the people into the conversations and decision-making spaces that affect their lives.

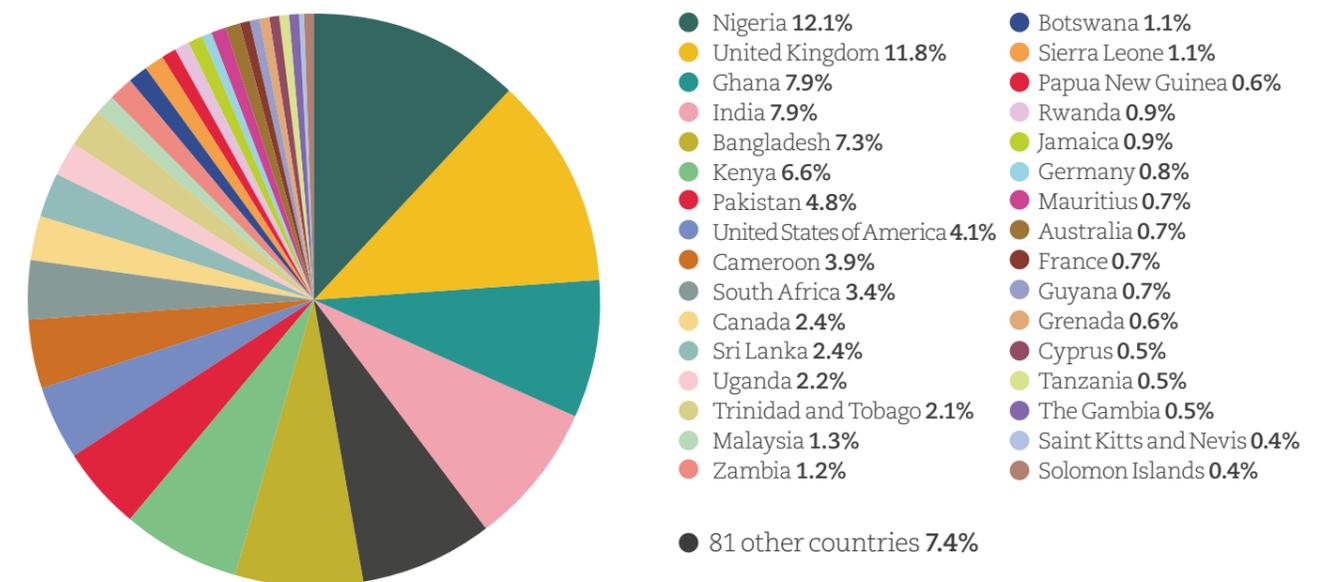
All events are available to view on our website.



## Live attendance by event



## Live attendance by country



# The Grants programme

The Commonwealth Foundation sets aside £1,000,000 each year for the Grants programme, awarding civil society organisations from Member States up to £200,000 over a period of up to four years. Our grants support innovative project ideas and approaches that seek to strengthen the ability of civic voices to engage with governments and that have the potential to improve governance and development outcomes through their active participation.

The rigorous selection process is regularly refined to ensure continuous improvement. Following an internal review process, a final list of applications is submitted to our Grants Committee. Member States on this committee settle on which projects to support. In 2020-2021, awards were made to 33 new civil society organisations in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Canada, Fiji, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Uganda.

## Covid-19 Special Grants Call

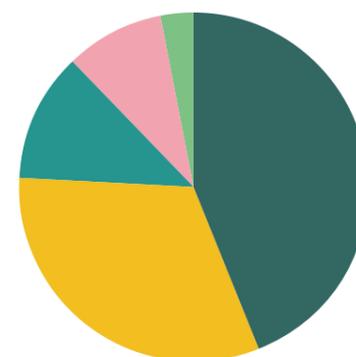
- A Special Grants Call in response to the Covid-19 pandemic received 809 applications for projects related to capacity building, public awareness, research and government engagement. The Grants Committee originally endorsed 16 projects, disbursing funds totalling £439,234. Additional funding of £315,863 provided by the Government of Canada enabled us to fund an additional 10 projects under this Special Call.
- In the spirit of Commonwealth solidarity, the Special Grants Call was open to civil society organisations from all Member States, regardless of their membership status. As hoped, this helped to expand our reach and the Foundation was delighted to welcome new grants partners from the Caribbean (Saint Kitts and Nevis) and the Pacific (Fiji).
- Tailored support, including extra financial assistance, was provided to existing grants partners experiencing implementation difficulties due to the pandemic. Two partners, in Kiribati and Malaysia, received no-cost extensions, and six partners across Africa, Asia and the Pacific were approved for cost extensions.
- In August 2020, we ran our first-ever online workshop for grants partners. Training in monitoring, evaluation and learning techniques was delivered to the 2020 cohort of grantees from India, Jamaica, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan and South Africa.

*‘One of the best funders out there in terms of understanding grantee’s needs, challenges and suggestions to overcome them.’*

**Feedback from grant partner, mid-term review final report 2019**

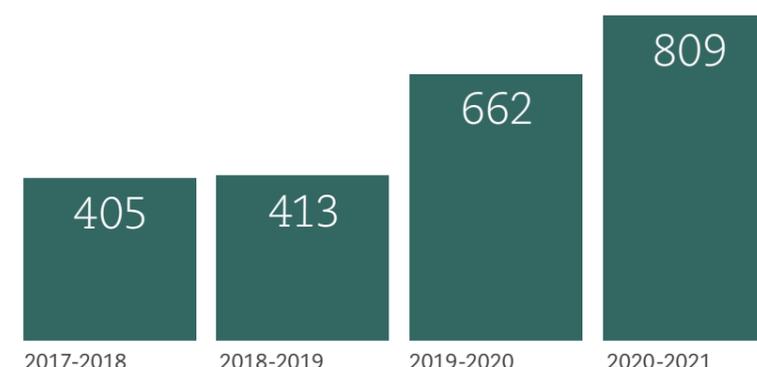
## Strategic period 2017-2021: at a glance

4 Grant calls  
2,289 Applications received  
46 Projects approved  
£3.8m Total funds awarded  
\*does not include additional EBR Special Grants Call funding



Regional spread of projects

- Africa 44%
- Asia 32%
- Americas 12%
- Pacific 9%
- Europe 3%



Number of applications received

- 14 monitoring visits to projects in Bangladesh, Botswana, Fiji, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, the Seychelles, South Africa, Tonga and Vanuatu.
- Two learning exchanges on the themes of ‘Health rights and accountability’ and ‘Disability rights and accountable governance’, brought together a total of 28 participants from grants partners across the Commonwealth.
- Noticeable increase in the quantity and quality of applications from the Caribbean and Pacific following prioritised outreach in these regions.

Seven projects were completed and appraised during the reporting period.

## Improving the environment and livelihoods of waste pickers

South Africa, 2016-2020

Informal workers in city landfills and collectors of recyclable street waste play a vital role in South Africa's waste industry but lack recognition and security. Our grant enabled Women In Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) to strengthen the capacity of waste picker organisations in Johannesburg and Tshwane to advocate for improved working conditions.

The project supported the establishment of the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO), an umbrella organisation based in Johannesburg. Leaders from ARO, together with those from the South Africa Waste Pickers Association, participated in the development of South Africa's first National Guidelines for Waste Picker Integration (Department of Environmental Affairs, April 2019) ensuring the voices of reclaimers were taken into consideration.

Workshops, training and mentorship strengthened the capacity of 105 reclaimer leaders to engage with officials on integration into waste management systems. At the end of the project, 75% of waste pickers reported improved conditions including safer working environments, reduced harassment and an increased sense of unity among workers. Media outreach enhanced recognition of



In March 2020 the African Reclaimers Organisation had signed up 4,100 members

Waste pickers at the Marie Louise landfill, Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa © Mithika D'Cruz

the role played by reclaimers and increased opportunities for their voices to be heard in waste management discussions.

[A Commonwealth Voices podcast about this project is available on our website.](#)

*'Before ARO we never had a structure to talk to the municipality about all our problems in the landfill. Now we are addressing the issue of safety.'*

**Louis Mahlangu, waste picker in Johannesburg**

## Strengthening the voice of tribal organisations

India, 2017-2019

India has new laws to protect the rights of tribal communities but organisations in rural settings often lack the skills to ensure legislation is implemented. With our grant, Find Your Feet and partners Badlao Foundation and Lokshakti Samaj Sevi Sanstha, strengthened a network of community-based organisations (CBOs) and tribal rights fora (TRF) to enable communities to engage in decision-making processes and improve monitoring of legislation.

The project worked with CBOs from 240 villages in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand states with representatives convening to form TRF. Training in leadership and advocacy skills was provided for 573 members. The networking and alliance-building capacity of these organisations was systematically strengthened from village level CBOs to inter-state level TRF and they have, in turn, forged working relationships with government, media and human rights institutions at every level.



337 women and 236 men were trained in leadership and advocacy skills

Representatives from community-based organisations celebrate completing a capacity development programme, Jharkhand, India

Social audits of government programmes were conducted through six public hearings, attended by 195 CBO leaders alongside policy makers and other stakeholders. Tribal organisations are now able to document rights abuses over issues such as denial of food rations or land rights disputes at the grassroots level and work collaboratively with human rights institutions on rights advocacy and monitoring processes.

## Enhancing accountability in social protection programmes for vulnerable communities

Kenya, 2016-2019

The social protection programme in Kenya provides direct cash transfers to vulnerable people, however social audits suggest significant numbers are not receiving their entitlement. With our support, the African Platform for Social Protection (APSP) embarked on a data-collecting exercise and increased awareness among beneficiaries, service providers and government for more effective policy implementation and cash transfer delivery.

Training provided grassroots organisations in Kajiado, Kilifi and Busia counties with skills for more effective monitoring and engagement in policy advocacy. APSP recruited and trained 30 social monitors who captured data from 1039 cash transfer beneficiary households and an additional 300 elderly citizens through social

audits. This data, alongside testimony from community members, provided critical evidence for recommended improvements to the design and delivery of the system.

Discussions between grassroots organisations and both national and county governments led to the formation of a social justice monitoring system for the cash transfer programme. Advocacy efforts resulted in improvements to the quality of service provided to cash transfer recipients by banking institutions and there was an increase in recognition among persons with disabilities of their entitlement. In 2019, government agreed to a 7% increase in the state budget for cash transfers nationwide and draft legislation for a Public Finance Social Assistance Fund was published by Parliament.

30 social monitors collected data from 1039 households in 3 counties

## Supporting communities to advocate for cleaner air and water

Jamaica, 2016-2018



Mining, quarrying, open burning and other industrial activities in Jamaica affect air and water quality, yet health and environmental impacts of this pollution are not widely recognised. With our grant, Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) raised public awareness of the issue and provided a platform for communities to advocate for improvements.

In October 2017, JET published the first detailed review of Jamaica's air and water quality standards, legal framework and monitoring

protocol, in collaboration with scientific advisor Dr Anthony Greenaway. The review received substantial media coverage and formed the basis of subsequent stakeholder discussions.

A year-long public education campaign improved understanding of air and water quality issues within communities. Over 120 people were trained in environmental advocacy in three communities and over 40 requests under the Access to Information Act were submitted to government agencies for air and water quality data and related documents.

JET facilitated a series of dialogues between representatives of communities affected by pollution and government regulators, including the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), the Water Resources Authority and the Ministry of Health. NEPA has since indicated it will be seeking expert input on new air quality regulations, revived a former Air Quality Management Committee and programmed a standards review.

[A Commonwealth Voices podcast about this project is available on our website.](#)

Over 120 people were trained in environmental advocacy

A community member raises awareness about air and water quality in an interview, Kingston, Jamaica

## Empowering residents of waterfront slums to advocate for more inclusive urban planning

Nigeria, 2016-2019

Informal waterfront settlements in Port Harcourt, Nigeria are home to up to 40% of the city's population. With our support, Stakeholder Democracy Network and partner organisation, Collaborative Media Advocacy enabled these communities to highlight issues affecting them and share their perspective on city redevelopment plans through music, radio and performance.

The project provided a platform for people living in waterfront settlements to express views about the future of their city, marking a significant advance in the promotion of civic engagement.

The creative skills of 110 young waterfront residents were developed with training in song writing, production and performance skills. Participants formed a band, 'Chicoco Sounds', which presented a series of shows combining elements of live music, screenings, open discussion and debates around local issues. The performances empowered people to speak out about issues of gang violence, gender equality,



forced evictions, rights violations, access to education, employment opportunities and the broader issue of community participation in the waterfront development.

Performances were taken to national and international audiences with media coverage contributing to an increased awareness of the issues faced by waterfront communities in Port Harcourt and beyond.

Performances reached a citywide radio audience of 662,166 monthly listeners

Chicoco Sounds performance, Port Harcourt, Nigeria © Anita Nzez

## Shaping community engagement in local governance

Sri Lanka, 2015-2019

Opportunities for civil society participation in decision-making processes in Sri Lanka have improved following the enactment of the Right to Information Act and the Open Government Partnership agreement in 2015. Our grant enabled Eastern Social Development Foundation (ESDF) to strengthen the capacity of community centres (CCs) in the Batticaloa district of East Sri Lanka for more effective engagement with government.

The institutional capacity of CCs in Batticaloa was improved through a series of workshops where 869 members were trained to more effectively identify community needs and advocate for improved services. CCs were able to identify incidences of corruption, misappropriation, misuse of public resources and poor-quality Local Authority service delivery. Watchdogs were set up and coordinated from the CCs as a result.



660 community members and 54 elected council representatives took part in a total of 24 dialogues

Dialogues between communities and council representatives in Oddamavadi, Sri Lanka

ESDF convened a total of 24 dialogues between community members and elected council representatives to consider more effective, responsive and accountable systems in local government institutions. CCs are now consulted by local government during budget preparations including an opportunity to submit budget proposals based on the priorities and needs of communities.

## Mobilising a collective of women living in institutional settings

Malta, 2015-2019

Open centres and shelters in Malta offer refuge to women who are victims of domestic abuse or those escaping the dangers of war and persecution in their country of origin. Our grant enabled Jesuit Refugee Service and partner, Women's Rights Foundation, to identify the concerns of women living in these settings and advocate for improved living conditions.

The project established a Women's Advocacy Mobilisation Group (WAMG) and provided training in human rights, community mobilisation, advocacy, communications and research. Members of WAMG collectively engaged with policy makers to make preliminary recommendations based on their research.

WAMG published a research report, *In this Together*, with recommendations on priority issues relating to housing, finances, education, welfare and access to information. The report was launched at a public event in June 2019 attended by policy makers and media. Follow up meetings with policy makers to raise issues and recommendations identified in the research are anticipated.



6 women from domestic violence shelters and 2 from migrant open centres formed an advocacy group

Advocacy training for members of the Women's Advocacy Mobilisation Group, Malta

*'I am now more than my experiences in the shelter, I am a woman who has learnt how to reach out to others, understand them and fight for change for all of us. I know now, I can, together with the others, make a change where it is needed.'*

Project participant

Gender equality was identified as a cross cutting outcome under the Strategic Plan 2017-2021. This resulted in gender considerations being integrated in the grants application and selection criteria from 2017. The following year, gender mainstreaming became an integral focus of the support provided to new grantees at the annual monitoring, evaluation and learning workshops.

Since 2018, workshop participants engaged in challenging discussions on gender inequalities, the ways in which the lives of women and girls can be different to men and boys, how power imbalances between genders operate in practice and how projects can inadvertently contribute to reinforcing gender inequalities.

Each of the grantees was introduced to analysis tools developed to help them think through and frame their project activities and outcomes through a gender lens. Long-term strategic changes as well as immediate needs of women and girls were identified and the importance of disaggregating data and specific gender indicators to monitor progress was emphasised.

The impact of the Foundation's greater attention to gender with respect to its grantees has been significant. Gender equality is the principal focus of 30% of projects. In addition, data comparisons from a recent survey of 28 current grantees showed that those that had received support to mainstream gender into their projects reported 46% greater impact on projects and stakeholders than those that had not received such support.

The results of the survey also indicated that gender mainstreaming support had influenced, or partly influenced, the organisation's wider approach to gender in 70% of respondents, as illustrated by this project in Bangladesh:

*'Now more women are there in the governing body of the organisation and as staff members. Organisational principles and values as well as the three-year organisational Strategy Planning (2018-2020) has focused on equal participation of men and women. Besides, organisational policies and practices, planning and budget allocation are focused on increased participation of women with disabilities, as they are the most marginalised groups, even in the disability movement their meaningful, active and equal participation are neglected.'*

**Turning Point Foundation, Bangladesh**



Consultations with street vendors to produce gender-sensitive policies for the Covid-19 pandemic in Rajasthan, India  
© Centre for Civil Society

Commonwealth Writers inspires and connects storytellers across all regions of the Commonwealth, bringing personal narratives to a global audience and recognising literary excellence in new and emerging writers. We support individuals in developing their craft and gaining access to spaces where their voice can be heard. We provide platforms for people to share stories, forge connections and discover common ground.

*'Commonwealth Writers gives a platform and visibility to writers who might otherwise struggle to be heard or to make an impact. By championing diverse voices, they are challenging the notion that literature can only be created in certain locations of the globe.'*

**Mbozi Haimbe, Regional Winner for Africa, Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2019**

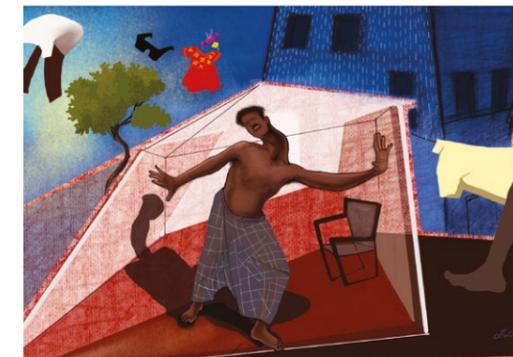
### Highlights 2020-2021

#### Connecting readers and writers through online storytelling: *adda*

Our online magazine, *adda*, is a platform for emerging writers to share new stories and narratives with readers around the Commonwealth. We publish fiction, non-fiction and poetry from authors who might not have the chance to publish elsewhere, featuring their work alongside that of more established writers.

An open call for submissions on the theme of climate change received close to 600 entries from 48 Commonwealth countries: 20 pieces were published, embracing a variety of genres and representing 13 countries. A second open call, targeted at translations from South and Southeast Asia, led to 35 commissions across 14 languages from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

Over the past year, *adda* has been redesigned and rebranded ahead of a major relaunch leading to a new visual identity and improved functionality. To celebrate this and to take advantage of *adda*'s flexible online format which enables us to deliver tailored and timely responses to urgent contemporary issues, the Foundation commissioned four globally acclaimed writers: Mia Couto (Mozambique), Ben Okri (Nigeria), Ananda Devi (Mauritius), and Olive Senior (Canada/Jamaica), to write on their experiences of Covid-19.



Commissioned for an *adda* piece titled *When the moon floats on the road* by Perumal Murugan  
© Rohini Mani

Efforts to increase our readership led to the number of monthly website visitors more than doubling in the last year. Newsletter sign-ups show sustained growth with a 62% increase in subscribers over the year.

*'Being commissioned by adda was an affirming experience... It has also got me thinking about legacy, impact, and the need to create spaces for new talents and voices.'*

**Mathapelo Mofokeng, South Africa**

## Sharing perspectives on Covid-19: #StoriesToConnectUs

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, we invited writers to share their stories. More than 80 creative responses were published under the hashtag #storiestoconnectus as a way of connecting readers and writers around the world facing similar challenges during this period of isolation and uncertainty.

Poems, short stories, creative non-fiction, short videos and photographs were received from both new and established writers, conveying an array of perspectives on the pandemic: social distancing in Kenya, mental health during lockdown in the Caribbean, the impact of the virus on education in the Pacific and what might happen when it's all over in Asia.

A quick turnaround from receipt to publication, and being open to a wider range of artforms,



Illustration to *When All This is Over* by Nicholas Yong, Singapore

enabled us to respond rapidly and creatively to the evolving pandemic situation, reaching the broadest possible audience. All stories were shared on social media platforms and we encouraged writers to do the same.

## Facilitating discussion: Commonwealth Writers Conversations

Commonwealth Writers Conversations are platforms where writers, filmmakers, artists, activists and policy makers discuss narratives from across the Commonwealth that directly engage with the work of the Foundation.

As part of Cyprus@60, an online festival to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment and independence of the Republic of Cyprus organised by the Cyprus High Commission in the UK in October 2020, Commonwealth Writers organised a

conversation between 2019 Short Story Prize winner Constantia Soteriou, translator Lina Protopapa, and novelist Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi.

Our first online event in the series took place in March 2021. Kenyan writer and activist Kevin Mwachiro joined South African author Mark Gevisser and fellow African activists Nickita Maesela and Xeenarh Mohammed to discuss the themes which permeate Mark Gevisser's book, *The Pink Line: The World's Queer Frontiers*.

## Developing the craft of storytellers: translation and film workshops



Craft development is a crucial component of the Commonwealth Writers programme. Honing the skills of storytellers around the Commonwealth strengthens their capacity to share narratives that are not necessarily part of mainstream discourse, in places where freedom of expression is challenged and where publishing infrastructure is underdeveloped.

### Editors of Translations from South and South East Asia

In November 2020 Commonwealth Writers hosted its first online workshop: an eight-day training for professional editors of translated texts, in partnership with Kuala Lumpur UNESCO World Book Capital 2020. Led by publishers Bill Swainson (UK) and Minakshi Thakur (India), the workshop was attended by 19 editors, writers and translators from Bangladesh, Brunei, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

*'So many of us do this work in isolation...tremendous solidarity in meeting experienced and committed practitioners from across the region.'*  
Sunila Galappatti, Sri Lanka

### Commonwealth Shorts, Caribbean Voices

Ten early-career filmmakers and screenwriters from the Caribbean attended a two-week online skills development workshop led by filmmakers from the Caribbean, Canada and the UK. Participants received support from a professional script editor to develop their screenplay and will have a mentor to support their filming process. The filmmakers, from the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, have been awarded grants of between £6,000 and £8,000 to make their short films. A redeployment of funds following the move to online training allowed for twice as many filmmakers to receive grants as originally planned.

A bilingual French-English online workshop is planned for writers from Cameroon, Mauritius, Rwanda and the Seychelles in the summer of 2021.

*'I feel more confident in taking a production from script to screen as I've been taught about how to navigate my way throughout the whole process.'*

Riyadh Rahaman, Trinidad and Tobago

Felicia Nunez depicts an ancestor on the set of Felene Cayetano's *Commonwealth Shorts, Caribbean Voices* film, Dangriga, Belize  
© Emilio Thomas

## Spotlight: a prize that changes lives

Celebrating ten years, the [Commonwealth Short Story Prize](#) is the world's most global literary prize. The prize is at the heart of our work and is much more than just an award: it brings international attention to the shortlisted and winning stories; it helps writers find new audiences; it introduces authors to agents and publishers; it offers opportunities for development; it shares lesser-heard narratives; and it establishes networks of writers across the regions of the Commonwealth.

Nominations have helped new writers forge diverse literary careers:

2020 Pacific winner Andrea E. Macleod, 2018 overall winner Kevin Jared Hosein and 2020 overall winner Kritika Pandey have all secured agents. Three-times shortlisted Sharma Taylor has secured a two-book publishing deal where the first book, her debut novel, is based on her shortlisted story, *Son-Son's Birthday*.

The Foundation understands that craft development is an important part of helping writers tell their stories. Our short story craft development workshops in Barbados (2018), Cyprus (2019), Guyana (2020), Sri Lanka (2018), and Zambia (2018) have yielded real results for emerging writers. Two participants were subsequently shortlisted—and one was selected as regional winner—for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. Participants have also been recognised by other prizes and literary organisations.

Working with editors, publishers and translators, we produced three anthologies that feature some of the shortlisted authors from the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. The anthologies have generated media attention around the writers and the narratives explored in the stories. The New Zealand launch of *So Many Islands* (2017) received national media coverage, engaged civil society organisations and social justice movements on climate change issues and was utilised by a youth-led climate action organisation in their work.

Some of the participants from our translation workshops in Tanzania are now translators for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. Many have now forged careers in literary translation and all have contributed to the Kiswahili anthology, to be published in July 2021.

We publish the best pieces of new writing from the Prize shortlist and from other writers around the Commonwealth via our online magazine, *adda*. Since its inception in 2016, *adda* has showcased 210 stories and narratives, representing 45 Commonwealth countries. Following an open call for submissions on the theme of climate change one of our published writers, Mathapelo Mofokeng from South Africa, went on to win the PEN/Robert J. Dau Short Story Prize for Emerging Writers for *The Strong-strong Winds*.

*'The prize gives a platform to places isolated from the traditional infrastructure of publishing, and through it we've had the chance to discover a range of brilliant new voices, many of whom go on to find success on bookshelves around the world.'*

**Luke Neima, Deputy Editor, Granta**



© Small Axe

### Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2020

The 2020 prize was awarded to Kritika Pandey from India for her story, *The Great Indian Tee and Snakes*. An online ceremony reached 1,500 live viewers, increasing to more than 4,000 views by the following day. Kritika has since been invited to deliver workshops and her winning story has been translated into Marathi, Italian, Pashto, Bengali, and Malayalam. Substantial media coverage included widespread regional exposure of Kritika's win in local language newspapers.

Video profiles of the 20 shortlisted authors, a compilation video of their responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and a published collection of the five regional winning stories further amplify both the narratives and the voices of these writers.

Caribbean regional winner Brian S Heap allocated part of his prize money to establish a playwriting and short story competition for students of the University of the West Indies, in partnership with the Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts in Jamaica.

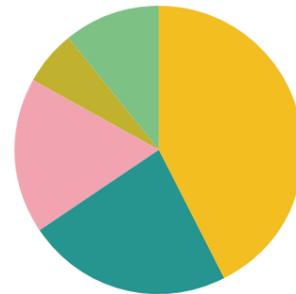
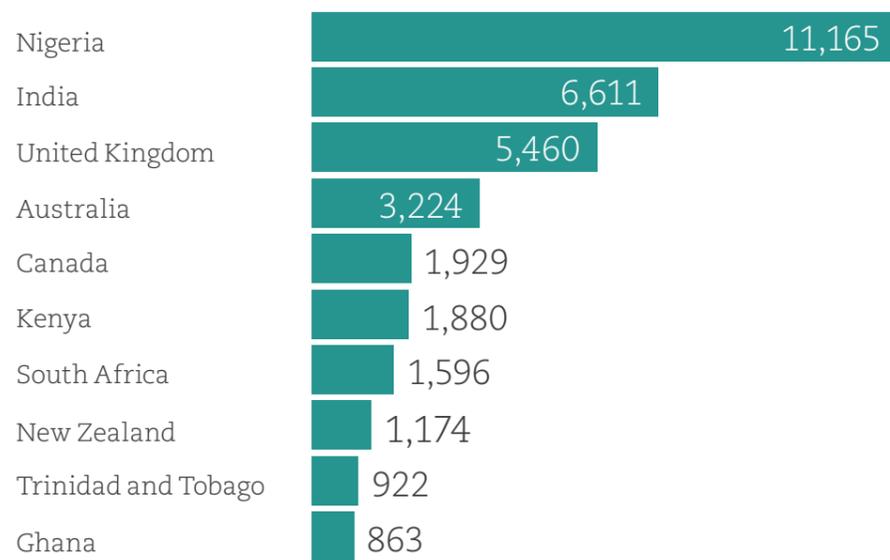
*'[Winning] tells me that all those days when I lock myself in my room to stare into a computer screen, unsettled and unsure, might just be a worthwhile way of engaging with the world. It reminds me that I must, therefore, continue to inquire into the human condition, to make sense of existence, to listen carefully, to resist, and to hope.'*  
**Kritika Pandey, winner of the 2020 Commonwealth Short Story Prize**

# Commonwealth Short Story Prize: celebrating ten years

Awarded annually for the best piece of unpublished short fiction, the Commonwealth Short Story Prize continues to grow in recognition and reach. The 2021 prize received a record-breaking 6,400 entries representing 50 countries; two countries, Namibia and Lesotho, featured on the shortlist for the first time and entries in languages other than English nearly doubled.

**43,388** Total entries  
**53** Countries represented

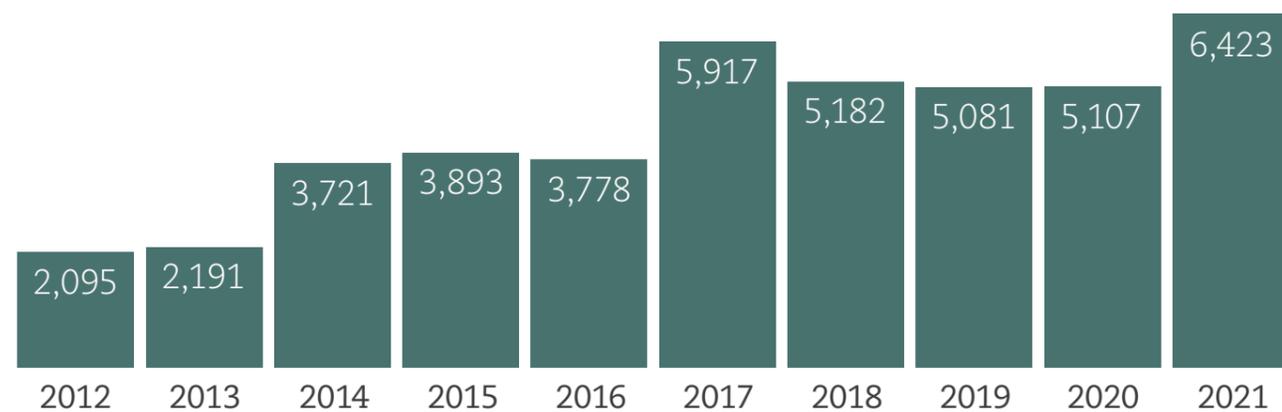
## Top ten countries by entries



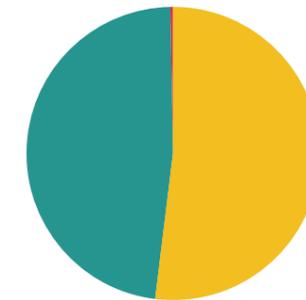
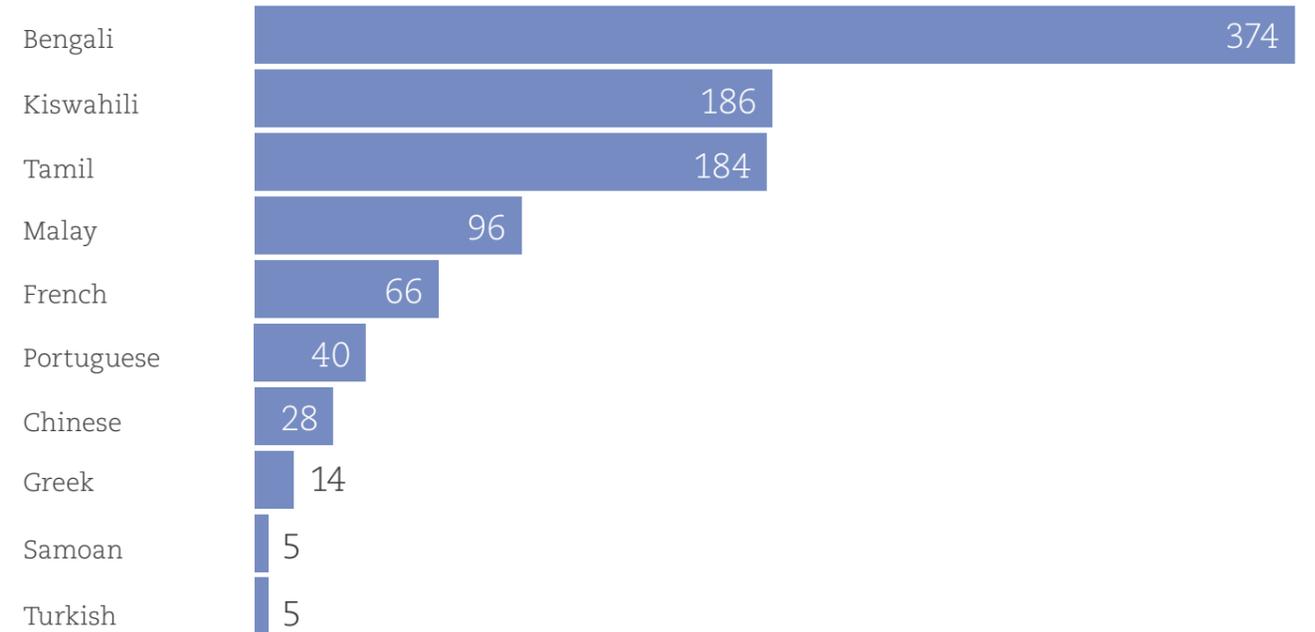
## Entries by region



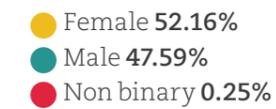
## Entries by year



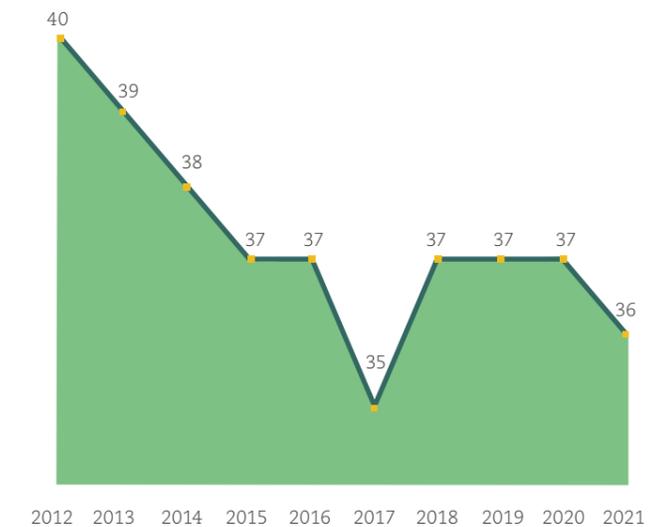
## Entries in languages other than English (2016-2021)



## Gender ratio



## Average age by year



# The Participatory Governance and Gender programme

This programme supports the capacity of civil society organisations to constructively participate in governance at every level: shaping the institutions, policies and practices that affect the lives and livelihoods of Commonwealth citizens. Our capacity development approaches include assisting in the development of networks and coalitions, brokering access to decision-making platforms, and facilitating dialogue between civil society and government in support of genuinely inclusive governance.

## Key achievements: 2020-2021

- The Gender Analysis Tool developed by Caribbean civil society practitioners as part of the *Gender and Climate Change* project has informed the secondary school curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago as well as a draft 'National Bush and Forest Fire Policy'.
- As a result of the *Advocating for Gender Equality in West Africa* project, there has been a measurable increase in the number of women engaging with district assembly structures and traditional and religious leaders to promote the rights and interests of women and girls in rural districts in Ghana and Sierra Leone.
- Two multi-stakeholder events in the *Critical Conversations* online series, 'Equality and Justice in Covid-19 Responses' and 'Reimagining Women, Peace and Security', attracted 2,237 live participants.
- Women's rights and women-led organisations were supported to advocate for UN Member State action on the Commonwealth's Four Priorities on Gender Equality in light of the Covid-19 pandemic at the 65th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

*'The Roundtable in Malaysia enabled [our two organisations] to build their relationship, upon which we have partnered on projects, outputs and events to disseminate the findings. This partnership has gone beyond the relationship between the Directors of the organisations who attended the Roundtable and other colleagues in our organisations are leading on projects, partnerships and speaking at events.'*

**Hannah Bond, Director of Gender Action for Peace UK, participant of the 2020 Roundtable on 'Women, Peace and Security'**

## Strategic period 2017-2021: at a glance

- Capacity development work has supported 144 civil society organisations (including networks and social movements) from across the Commonwealth to develop their skills to engage in policy processes.
- We have improved the skills of partner organisations to integrate gender and an intersectional analysis in their programming. This includes gender mainstreaming work around climate change in the Caribbean; advancing dialogue on women, peace and security, both in Cyprus and at global policy levels; and women's rights issues at local governance levels in Ghana and Sierra Leone.
- We have facilitated civil society engagement with Commonwealth policy makers to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 3 (Universal Health Coverage) at Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings; SDG 5 (Gender Equality) at the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting; and SDG 13 (Climate Action) with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) civil society at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP 24.
- Our work has contributed to the advancement of legislation to improve gender equality including the passing of two chiefdom by-laws against female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage in four districts of Sierra Leone, and the 2017 Gender Equality Bill for the East African Community.
- Partnerships forged during our roundtable meetings in Northern Ireland (2019) and Malaysia (2020), that brought together Commonwealth women peace and security advocates, have taken forward project outcomes through the Gender Action for Peace (GAPS) UK network and the Women International Peace Centre (WIPC) Uganda.



Susan Owiro presents to participants at the 2020 Roundtable on Women, Peace and Security in Penang, Malaysia

## Convening practitioners to improve understanding of the impact of climate change on women and local communities in the Caribbean



Vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is influenced by many factors. Integrating the concerns and needs of women, youth and vulnerable communities into climate change policy processes is critical to building the resilience of Small Island Developing States to climate change. We are supporting civil society organisations in the Caribbean to better understand the complex intersectional impacts of climate change especially on women and vulnerable communities, and to advocate for the inclusion of women's voices in policy processes.

In the final phase of this multi-year project, we focused on enhancing the ability of Caribbean practitioners to integrate gender analysis into their climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

This work is underpinned by the Gender Analysis Guidance Tool, developed in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Environmental Facility and the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. [The tool is available on our website.](#)

In Trinidad and Tobago, we supported project partners Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project to deliver a pilot of the tool which raised awareness in secondary schools and led to the first draft of a National Bush and Forest Fire Policy, developed with the IGDS. The project concluded with the final of the three 'conversations' in the series, convened online for partners in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Lucia, to share their experiences and learn from others about the practical use of the tool.

*'Traditionally, women are not included in these processes, but we see the need to include them as their experiences and use of resources differ. When we look at climate change issues, they are affected differently. This tool and the sessions I attended has helped me in understanding the issues and have offered insight in how to be inclusive of different groups.'*

**Representative of Toledo Maya Women's Council, Belize**

Caribbean climate change practitioners discuss the Gender Analysis Guidance Tool, University of the West Indies, Jamaica

## Facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues

We prioritise our role in supporting civic voices to constructively engage in multilateral spaces at all levels, from the smallest rural community to the largest international forum.

In November 2020 we supported Commonwealth civil society advocates on health to participate in a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer. The meeting was convened online in a joint venture with the Commonwealth Secretariat Health Unit as part of London Cancer Week. Attendees from The Kenya Legal & Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN), Health Related Information Dissemination amongst Youth (HRIDAY), Healthy India Alliance and Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) communicated their demands on health prevention strategies.

We convened the *Critical Conversations* event 'Equality and Justice in Covid-19

Responses', bringing together technical experts, practitioners and advocates to discuss challenges of policy approaches during the pandemic and to consider ways to ensure more equitable policy responses to this and future crises. Recommendations included: the need for more data and sustainable investment in health, education and social protection using a gender-lens; bridging the digital divide; and a call to ensure universal access to social protection for all informal workers.

*'I think this is an excellent forum [...] how do we take these conversations forward and influence policies? How do we ensure we build this into our policies? Maybe the Commonwealth Foundation is a platform for women's collective voices.'*

**Honourable Yvonne Aki-Sawyer  
Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone**

## Enhancing the capacity of women to engage in peace processes

Two decades ago, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as part of a global campaign to highlight the impact of conflict on women and the need to strengthen the inclusion of women in peace processes. We are supporting a network of women peace builders from 11 Commonwealth countries in their efforts to take those commitments forward: affirming the critical importance of a gender perspective during conflict and post-conflict repatriation, resettlement and reconstruction.

In Cyprus, we have continued our support for coalition-building of women peace advocates, implemented by our partners the Gender Advisory Team and Cyprus Academic Dialogue. Members of the coalition delivered online workshops attended by 14 women representing all Cypriot communities where they gained skills to constructively engage in advocacy on the national action plan on Women, Peace and Security. In March 2020, members of the coalition engaged with the Commissioner for Gender Equality in Cyprus, highlighting gaps in the development of the plan. This diverse, multi-communal group, working together to build trust and a shared understanding of fostering an inclusive peace, is unique in the politically divided context of Cyprus.



Participants at the 2020 Roundtable on Women, Peace and Security in Penang, Malaysia

In November 2020, our *Critical Conversations* online event 'Reimagining Women, Peace and Security' gave over 1,300 participants the chance to hear practitioners speak about how women's participation in peace processes might be made more meaningful for our future. The need for 'patience, perseverance and courage' was a key message to those advocating for women's inclusion.

*'I have been involved in women's groups in Cyprus since 2000, and this is the first time ever that there has been an informal group with so much diversity that is NOT politicised! This is unique in Cyprus.'*  
**Coalition member**

## Advocating for Gender Equality in West Africa

Women in West Africa continue to face challenges making their collective voice heard in decision-making spaces. We are providing targeted guidance and support to the Network for Women's Rights (NETRIGHT) in Ghana and the Advocacy Movement Network (AMNet) in Sierra Leone, to strengthen the capacity of rural women and girls to engage more effectively in local policy processes.

In rural Ghana, 479 women and girls benefitted from advocacy training provided by participants of previous capacity development workshops, acting as agents of change in their communities. A Commitment Statement signed by duty-bearers endorsed their work, empowering women and girls to engage in policy spaces to influence gender-responsive development in the district. Emerging issues were addressed through continued engagement with District Assembly officials, Department of Social Welfare and other critical actors. Both direct and indirect beneficiaries have shared stories about how their capacities have been strengthened, enhancing their ability to identify rights-based issues and what constitutes a violation of rights.

In Sierra Leone, our support resulted in a stronger and more inclusive intergenerational women's coalition across four districts: Bonthe, Port Loko, Kailahun and Koinadugu. Women and girl members were trained in advocacy skills to facilitate interactions with decision makers on issues of early marriage, FGM, women's participation in decision-making processes and girls' education. Public awareness of the issues was amplified by a series of radio discussions. Two Chiefdom by-laws have been passed as a result of these engagements in each of the four districts in relation to FGM and early marriage.

*'I have benefitted a lot from this project especially after the training, I was able to redefine myself as a woman. A woman that stands tall among men, a woman that knows her rights, a woman that knows what constitutes violence against women, a woman that is rising up with her fellow women with one big voice to say "no" to gender inequality.'*  
**Maria, trainee, Ghana**

# The Knowledge, Learning and Communications programme

This programme works across all teams to capture, analyse and communicate the results of all programme activity and to raise the visibility of the Foundation. We bring together a range of functions critical to the Foundation's identity, coherence and effectiveness. This includes the facility to learn internally; support for learning activities between and with partners; management of the Foundation's information and infrastructure; leadership of the Foundation's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) work; and all aspects of our communications and outreach.

## Key achievements: 2020-2021

- **Wider, deeper reach across the Commonwealth:** Since the launch of our *Critical Conversations* series, we have seen a 170% increase in subscribers to our mailing lists. And, following greater investment in our digital outreach communications using a social media advertising strategy, we have seen record growth in our online audiences across all platforms and in downloads of grant call applications and Commonwealth Short Story Prize submissions.
- **Strengthening of online working and information management capacities:** The Foundation has invested strongly in online platforms to support new ways of working and new information management demands. This has included integration of applications such as Slack, Airtable, and improved functionality of Sharepoint.
- **Evolving our MEL strategy to improve cross-team and outcome-level approaches:** The team took advantage of the opportunities presented by remote technologies to introduce an online dashboard platform to improve sharing and analysis of project monitoring results; and to utilise enhanced data analysis.
- **Upgrading the technical skills of all teams in online event management:** Successful delivery of the *Critical Conversations* online series launched in October 2020; our first online monitoring, evaluation and learning workshop for new grantees in August 2020; and the first-ever online award ceremony for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize in June 2020.

## Strategic period 2017-2021: at a glance

- Strong and consistent investment in communications (technology and expertise) has helped the Foundation adapt to new levels of demand over the four-year period. Internal systems for integrating communications, our messaging and the capacity of our team have grown tremendously, particularly over the last two years. The results are reflected in our follower growth, website traffic, greater use of audio-visual materials and increased media coverage in Commonwealth regions.
- Oversight of all Foundation monitoring and evaluation requirements has now been centralised with the team. This has facilitated opportunities for greater harmonisation of MEL across the programme, improved data analysis, visualisation and capacity strengthening within the teams.
- Two learning exchanges in 2019 and 2020 brought together a total of 28 participants from grant partners across the Commonwealth. Feedback on the sustained impact of these exchanges describes improved policy engagement with government using skills learned, positive changes to their organisation's advocacy approach and improvements to their media engagement and messaging.



Grants partners at the learning exchange on disability rights, Bangalore, India

*'There were two positive outcomes of participation in the Learning Exchange: being involved in the review of the mental health legislation in Kenya and the impact the Learning Exchange had on the person responsible for reforming mental health legislation in Botswana who was empowered to pursue the new legislation even though the project had ended.'*

Jill Iliffe, Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation

## Outreach and visibility

The Commonwealth Foundation's reach this year has been wider and deeper than ever, despite the challenges posed by Covid-19. Our new approach to communications has led to an upsurge in engagement with our programming among audiences that are many times larger and more diverse than previous years.

We have emerged with a strategy that is fit for an organisation with a global remit—and for a world that has changed so dramatically.

### A growing community

Targeted social media advertising has been run Commonwealth-wide. We spend more on outreach to underserved regions and Member States. Many new audiences now follow us. The Foundation's Twitter following is up 237%. A total of 78,000 people now follow our social media accounts.

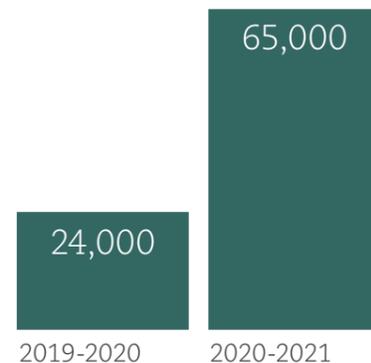
Since the launch of our [Critical Conversations](#) online events series in late September 2020, over 25,000 people have registered to participate in the series; 80% of these audiences had no prior engagement with the Foundation. These new audiences, acquired mostly through social media advertising campaigns which have had over 14.5 million views this year, have been retained as subscribers to our mailing lists.

Over 41,000 subscribers have signed up since June 2020. The Foundation now has a total mailing list audience that is 65,000 strong. These audiences will be key to future outreach.

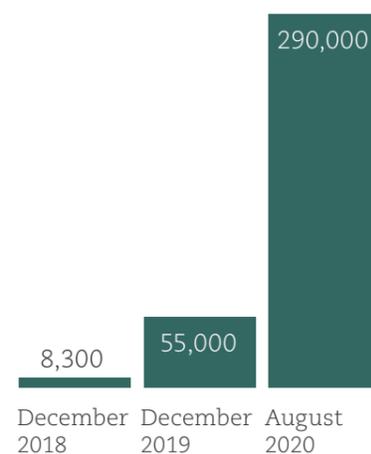
### Grants

Thanks to our improved outreach strategy, grant guidelines and criteria for our Covid-19 Special Grants Call were downloaded 290,000 times. This figure is a useful proxy for general interest in the Grants Calls. Compare 290,000 to last year's 55,000 downloads; a year-on-year increase of 527%.

But 'interest' in the calls counts for little if it does not convert into submitted grants applications. That is why we are pleased to see an increase of nearly 400 applications over the four-year strategic period.



Total subscribers to Foundation mailing lists (nearest thousand)



Downloads of grant guidelines and criteria over last three annual Grants Calls

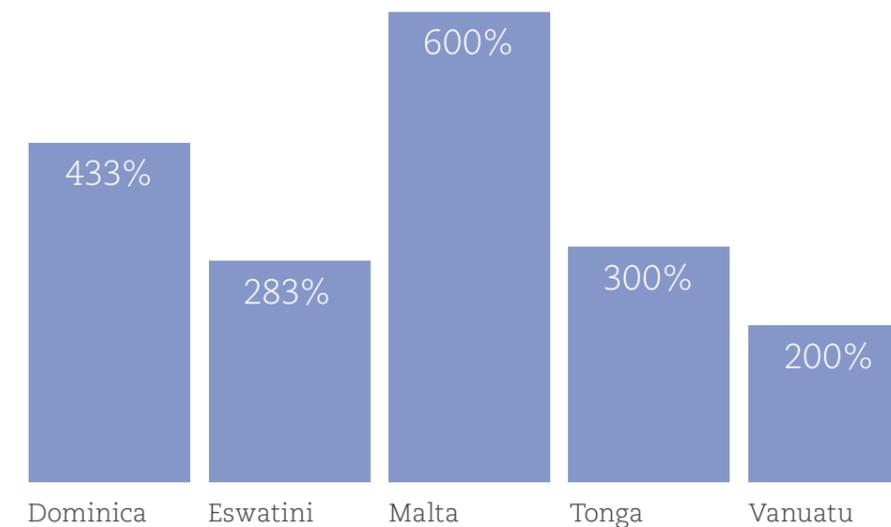
### Commonwealth Short Story Prize and *adda*

We believe it's vital that voices from across the Commonwealth are heard. Outreach for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize prioritises the newest Member States in the Commonwealth family, and countries with low numbers of entries in previous years.

Priority audiences are allocated a higher advertising budget and more human resources to engage in targeted, person-to-person outreach. This year, 36 stories were submitted from the Maldives—which has recently rejoined the Commonwealth family.

The special attention paid to underserved countries during the campaign also yielded dividends. The chart below shows the increase of entries from five low-submission countries. These percentage increases are relative to last year's results.

Readership of our online magazine, [adda](#)—publishing new writing from around the Commonwealth—also grew by 62% as compared to the last reporting period.



Increase in Commonwealth Short Story Prize entries from low submission countries since last reporting period

### Speaking engagements and media appearances

Over the past year, we have recorded over 50 appearances in major national and international media outlets across all five Commonwealth regions; publications range from the Times of India to BBC World News.

We secure comment pieces in sector-wide publications on behalf of global civil society and government partners. Over this year, they have featured alongside the Foundation in publications like Devex, the International Observatory of Human Rights, and Thomson Reuters Foundation. The Director-General has authored many of those pieces and participated in many more speaking engagements as compared to the previous reporting period, across the Commonwealth's time zones.

## Spotlight: meeting the challenge of practical, accessible monitoring, evaluation and learning

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Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) is of critical importance to the Foundation: helping us understand the impact of our work and giving us the insight necessary to constantly refine and improve what we do and how we do it. The range and diversity of our programming presents particular challenges to a unified approach to MEL.

Over the past two years we have refined our approach in ways that allow programme teams to map progress and outcomes more easily against our theory of change and to identify the countries, regions and social actors where we are making the most significant contributions.

This involved the piloting of a MEL method ‘outcome harvesting’ and the integration of this method into our overall approach. Outcome harvesting encourages more evaluative thinking and learning and we have found that it can better capture unexpected as well as expected changes across different social actors.

This revised approach was accompanied by the development of a more accessible reporting format so that information and data can be readily shared within the Foundation and with our partners and stakeholders. The new reporting template and accompanying tools include an online data management platform ‘Podio’ and tools such as ‘Power BI’, which have been employed to improve data visualisation and analysis.

Any MEL system is dependent on those who are using it and the Foundation has prioritised the building of internal capacity through internal presentations, training sessions and mentoring and coaching of programme staff; most particularly in relation to developing key ‘harvest’ questions and analysing results. Guidelines and an online webinar with additional supporting materials were also developed to support staff and partner learning.

Outcome harvesting is a work in progress. Trials undertaken thus far have focused on the Covid-19 grants cohort and the *Gender and Climate Change* project. The Foundation has also selected three completed grants projects in Jamaica, Kenya and Sri Lanka to participate in a trial of outcome harvesting using a participatory process involving project leaders and other stakeholders. Initial results are promising, and work is already underway to take the methodology forward into our new strategic plan.

*‘Outcome harvesting encourages more evaluative thinking and learning and we have found that it can better capture unexpected as well as expected changes across different social actors.’*

## Our people and our finances

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# Our people

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The Foundation's people are its most precious resource, and the challenges of the past year has affirmed the crucial importance of a united team where each individual is valued and listened to. Over the past year we have sought to support the team's adaptation to new ways of working. Special attention has been paid to learning and development. The development of a new strategic plan also provided us with the opportunity to collaboratively revise our values, as well as to refresh job descriptions: establishing clear requirements and responsibilities against a strong framework of required competencies.

## Covid-19 impact on staff

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Marlborough House has been closed since March 2020, requiring the entire Foundation team to work away from the office. That situation presented substantial challenges and the impacts were felt unevenly across the team with some experiencing additional hardships due to factors such as family separation and bereavement. We have worked hard to ensure staff wellbeing and productivity during this time, regularly surveying our people to gain a full understanding of individual needs and concerns. Measures taken, either proactively or in response to requests, have included:

- Provision of appropriate office equipment including chairs and computer software and hardware
- Support to upgrade connectivity
- Advice on, and facilitated access to, mental health support services
- Maintenance of a regular schedule of whole-of-Foundation and team meetings
- Special provision allowing postponement of leave, with extensions granted on compassionate grounds
- Special provision for new joiners including through a tailored induction plan
- Initiation of small social events

Despite very real difficulties, the experiences of remote working have not been entirely negative, and it is expected that the lessons learned over the past 15 months will be reflected in the future through the adoption of more dynamic and flexible working practices.

# Our values:

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## Commitment to the Commonwealth and its Charter

We work to advance the principles and ideals of the Commonwealth.

## Integrity

We act with transparency, honesty and fairness. We own our decisions and behaviours.

## Respect

We treat colleagues and partners with appreciation and dignity.

## Professionalism

We set high standards, give our best and are consistently reliable. We deliver on commitments.

## Innovation

We encourage new thinking, listen to ideas and have an open mind. We are responsive to change.

## Plurality of thought and expression

We actively encourage and provide space for the open and free exchange of opinions and ideas.

## Collaboration

We cultivate and nurture honest, reliable and generous partnerships. We share challenges and successes.

## Staffing for our new strategy

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As part of the development process for the new strategic plan, the Foundation undertook a comprehensive review of the staffing structure. The review was guided by three principles: first, to make the most effective use of our precious human resources; second, a commitment to maintaining the staff budget at its current level while meeting the needs of the new plan; and third, a commitment to minimising redundancies.

The review and reorganisation of our staffing structure was tightly managed and undertaken to a strict timeline in order to ensure minimum disruption. The result met all our objectives. Approximately 60% of staff were appointed to roles identical or similar to those they have been occupying. The remainder successfully applied for different roles where their skills and experiences will be most valuable. Through careful reorganisation of both roles and responsibilities we were able to meet our objective of maintaining the staff budget, while creating three new positions. One long-standing and much-appreciated staff member was made redundant and has left the organisation under our enhanced redundancy scheme.

## Staff learning and development

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An updated and simplified appraisal process was introduced this year, with the goal of increasing the clarity and usefulness of the process to both the organisation and the individual. The revision of all job descriptions assisted this process. The update allowed us to incorporate learning and development within the process with all staff members required to develop their own learning and development goals relevant to the role, together with a plan for meeting those goals. An online platform has been established to encourage the sharing of relevant insights and information.

Learning and development within the Foundation has been helped enormously through our increased access to online platforms. Our collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning led to the Foundation being granted sufficient licenses for all interested staff to participate in the full *Coursera* programme at no cost. Our closer collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat has been equally productive, with Foundation staff members joining various learning activities including sessions on mental health awareness and use of specific platforms for virtual meetings. New joiners and other staff were able to participate in the Secretariat's induction for new staff: a valuable opportunity for our team to increase its knowledge of the Commonwealth and how it works. That same programme also works the other way, with the Director-General delivering a session to over 50 participants introducing the Foundation and its place in the Commonwealth family.

## A new competencies framework

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As part of our review of job descriptions and overhaul of the appraisal system, the Foundation introduced a competency framework to establish common standards of behaviour to guide the way we work.

The framework is based on our core values. It will be integrated into everything we do, most especially in how we attract, develop, appraise, and retain our staff. In addition, we will use the framework to:

- Regularly assess staff capability and the Foundation's ability to deliver its mission
- Clarify expectations of each role in a consistent and objective way
- Create shared language around our values and what is expected from staff
- Support a culture of feedback and development
- Provide appropriate professional development opportunities for staff who embody our competencies and core values in their work

The competencies are organised over three levels: Directors, Managers and Officers. The levels are cumulative. This means that all colleagues are expected to demonstrate the core competencies outlined at Officer level. Managers are expected to demonstrate specific additional competencies. Directors are expected to demonstrate all competencies.

## Interns

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The Foundation's internship programme offers carefully planned and supervised placements for recent graduates who are recruited through an open, competitive process. During the reporting year we hosted a rotating group of six interns, each for a 12-month period. The competition for intern positions within the Foundation is high and we have been fortunate to attract a cohort of dedicated and enthusiastic young people who have enhanced our internal culture and also contributed substantially to our work. Interns are paid and follow a tailored professional development programme that explicitly aims to prepare them for their next position including through interview skills training and CV development. The Foundation is proud of our recently departed interns who have secured positions in leading charities, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the UK civil service.

Looking ahead, we will be further refining the programme to ensure it is as accessible as possible, most especially to talented young people for whom such a life-changing opportunity might not usually be available.

# Our finances

The Commonwealth Foundation is principally funded by assessed contributions from Member States. As custodians of public funds, we strive for the highest levels of transparency and accountability, underpinned by a robust results-based management approach, and guided by our mission and values.

Commonwealth Foundation accounts are independently audited by the accounting firm Saffery Champness to a level compatible with International Financial Reporting Standards.

This year we will once again meet our target of completing our external audit process within four months of the end of the financial year. As has become our standard practice for the last four financial years, and in keeping with our commitment to full transparency, the audited financial statements will be made publicly available on our website.

## Summary of financial performance: 2020-2021

### Annual assessed contributions

At the end of March 2021, the Foundation had received 75.32% of the projected income from assessed membership contributions. This is lower than 88.36% received for the corresponding period in 2019-2020. Figure 1 illustrates the trend of income received from Member States for the last four financial years:

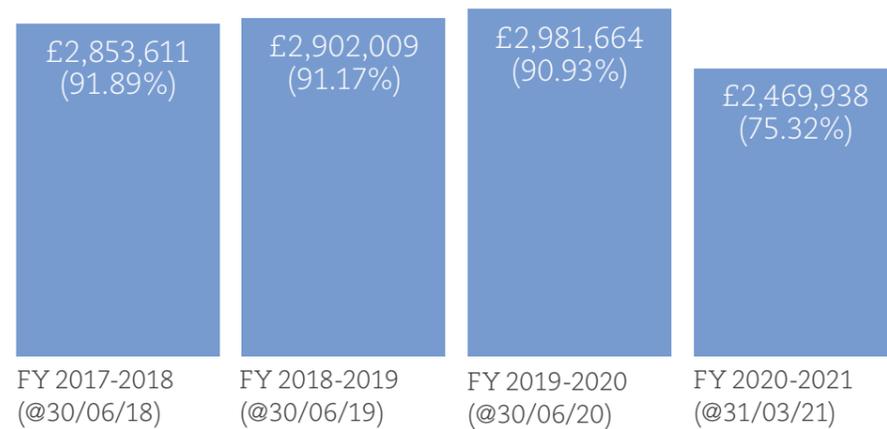


Figure 1: Annual assessed contributions received

### Arrears recovery project

As of March 2021, Member States owed the Foundation a total of £1,199,510 in overdue subscriptions. A total of £194,620 was collected in the current financial year.

The recovery of current accumulated arrears is critical to the financial health and sustainability of the Foundation and is, accordingly, a high priority. The Directorate has taken a proactive approach to current and accumulated arrears through a programme of targeted outreach, tailored payment plans and meetings with key Member States. We are conscious that some of our valued Member States may find it difficult to meet their financial obligations in this Covid-19 pandemic environment and commit to working closely with those affected to find appropriate solutions. The support and active involvement of all governors is important and strongly encouraged. Figure 2 illustrates the trend of arrears received for the last four financial years.



Figure 2: Arrears receipts

### Expenditure

Of the total approved budget of £3,272,829 for the financial year 2020-2021, the Commonwealth Foundation allocated the highest share of the budget expenditure to its programme (including staff costs for the programme) amounting to £2,641,913 (80.72%) and the remainder of the budget expenditure of £630,916 was allocated to the organisational core administration and staff costs (19.28%). Following the Board of Governors directive in 2013-2014, we continue to observe the 80:20 ratio of programme to overhead expenditure. Figure 3 illustrates the allocation of the annual budget to the different categories of the current strategy outcomes.

We anticipate that some budget funds may not be fully spent by the end of the financial year. Any small savings will be repurposed to boost the general reserves fund to meet the standard policy of six months' operational costs.

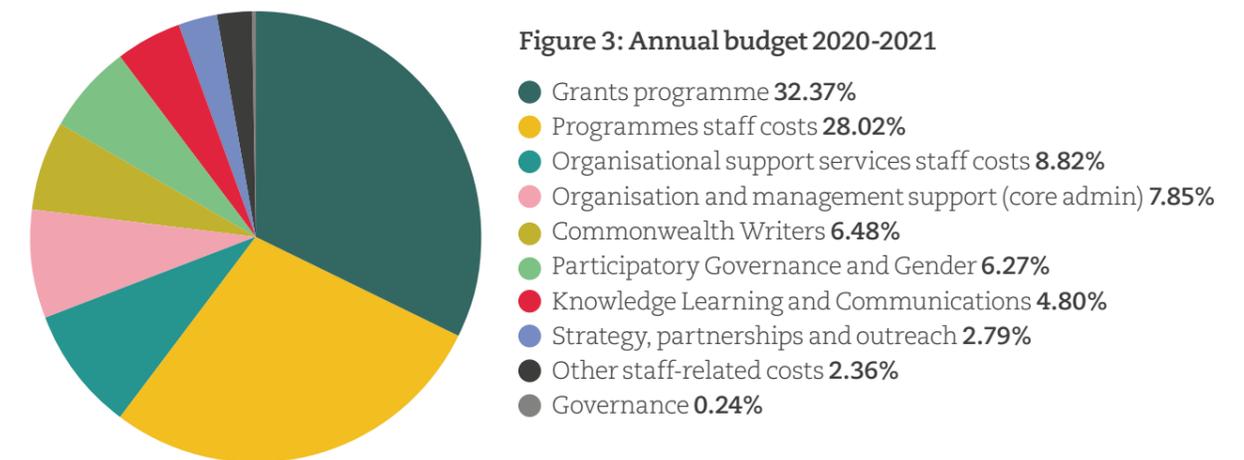


Figure 3: Annual budget 2020-2021

### Extra-budgetary resources

Extra-budgetary resources (EBR) are additional funds for discrete projects within the workplan, sought from external sources in accordance with guidelines set by the Board of Governors. EBR have not been a significant part of the Foundation's funding base until this year when the Foundation secured EBR in the amount of £315,863 from the Government of Canada to enhance our Special Grants Call in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This welcome contribution has enabled the Foundation to extend the number of projects supported under this call from 23 to 33, thereby further strengthening civic engagement and resilience of communities impacted by the pandemic.

# Annex: Programme activity 2020-2021

## Grants completed and appraised in 2020-2021

Empowering residents of waterfront slums to advocate for more inclusive urban planning	Nigeria
Improving the environment and livelihoods of waste pickers	South Africa
Strengthening the voice of tribal organisations	India
Mobilising a collective of women living in institutional settings	Malta
Supporting communities to advocate for cleaner air and water	Jamaica
Enhancing accountability in social protection programmes for vulnerable communities	Kenya
Shaping community engagement in local governance	Sri Lanka

## Covid-19 Special Grants Call 2020-2021

Supporting health at the grassroots	Kenya
Strengthening community responses to mitigate impacts of Covid-19 on vulnerable communities	Malaysia
Fostering multi-stakeholder outreach to improve policy action in the context of Covid-19 and beyond	The Maldives
Using government-developed transparency frameworks for accountability in Nigeria Covid-19 spending	Nigeria
Developing and implementing inclusive policies in response to the Covid-19 pandemic	Pakistan
Civil society engagement for effective Covid-19 response	Pakistan
Monitoring and promoting equitable access to Covid-19 prevention and treatment technologies	South Africa
Supporting the development of gender-balanced public health policies during emergencies	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Disability response to Covid-19 pandemic	Uganda
Strengthening voices of micro and small-scale entrepreneurs in post Covid-19 economic policy reforms	Uganda
Ensuring effective municipal responses to housing needs and homelessness during Covid-19	Canada
Strengthening citizen engagement in Fiji's Covid-19 response	Fiji
Strengthening Covid-19 accountability mechanisms	Ghana
Voices from the street: people, policy and pandemic	India
Building capacity of women and girls with disabilities to meet the challenges of Covid-19	India
Raising awareness of the impact of Covid-19 on persons with deafblindness and multiple disabilities	India
A coalition of DPOs for collaboration with government for Covid-19 response	Bangladesh

Civil society participation and accountability in health pandemic governance	Cameroon
Enhancing citizens participation in Covid 19 alleviation programming	Ghana
The artemisia project	India
InfraResilience	India
Improved social protection through collaboration with government	Malawi
Strengthening inter-cluster capacities for policy and programmes review	Malawi
Engaging Jamaica civil society in sustained multisectoral responses to pandemics	Jamaica
Sexual and gender-based violence collaboration, advocacy, awareness, and protection project	Nigeria
Basic income support in the context of Covid-19 and beyond	South Africa

## Ongoing grants

Strengthening the capacity of young people to reduce gun violence in their communities	South Africa
Safeguarding the rights of older women and men	Malawi
Enabling young people to shape the future	Mozambique
Strengthening inclusion of young people's voices in violence prevention and programming	Jamaica
Strengthening the implementation of legislation to end violence against women and girls	Nigeria
Protecting the rights of the transgender community through legislative development	Pakistan
Strengthening implementation of the laws that address violence against women	India
Promoting increased women's representation in government	Vanuatu
Strengthening the capacity of transgender and intersex persons to advocate for protection of their rights	South Africa
Promoting the rights of street children	Bangladesh
Strengthening the voices of communities to participate in the inland fisheries policy process	South Africa
Strengthening advocacy for better implementation of the Prevention of Atrocities Act	India
Promoting women's rights to inheritance	Pakistan
Empowering community paralegals to address statelessness	Malaysia
Helping rural women engage in land reform	South Africa
Strengthening the inclusion of i-Kiribati civic voices in climate change induced displacement policies	Kiribati

Ensuring the inclusive education of children with disabilities in Guyana and Jamaica	Guyana, Jamaica
Family caregiving and public policy in India: creating new opportunities for recognition and support	India
Promoting rights of persons with disabilities through community-led initiatives in Bangladesh	Bangladesh
Amplifying the voices of women community leaders in city-planning processes in India	India
Advocating for better health for people living with HIV and people who use drugs	Mauritius
Strengthening governance and democracy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the participation of young women	Pakistan
Increasing access to sexual and reproductive health rights and HIV services for women and adolescent girls	Nigeria
Strengthening women's participation in governance in Balochistan	Pakistan
Enhancing the ability of civil society to monitor the implementation of the Tonga Strategic Development Framework	Tonga
Enhancing localisation of the Papua New Guinea informal economy act	Papua New Guinea
Ensuring the right to health for vulnerable people	Kenya
Accelerating national commitments to reduce non-communicable diseases	India
Strengthening the capacity of civil society to advocate for the rights of young people with disabilities	Kenya

## Commonwealth Writers

Commonwealth Short Story Prize	Australia, India, Jamaica, Nigeria, United Kingdom
Connecting readers and writers through online storytelling: <i>adda</i>	Multi-region
Developing the craft of storytellers: translation workshops	India, Singapore, United Kingdom
Developing the craft of storytellers: film workshops	Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago
Sharing perspectives on Covid-19: #StoriesToConnectUs	Multi-region
Facilitating discussion: Commonwealth Writers Conversations	Multi-region
Kiswahili anthology	Kenya, Tanzania

## Participatory Governance and Gender

Convening practitioners to improve understanding of the impact of climate change on women and local communities in the Caribbean	Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago
Advocating for gender equality in West Africa	Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone
Enhancing the capacity of women to engage in peace processes	Cyprus, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Kingdom
Facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues	Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago

## Knowledge, Learning and Communications

Information management	Internal
Monitoring, evaluation and learning	Internal
Communications and outreach	Multi-region

## Whole of Commonwealth Foundation

Diplomats Induction 2020	Multi-region
People of the Commonwealth: Critical Conversations	Multi-region
Commonwealth People's Forum 2021	Rwanda



Cast and crew gathered at sunrise to shoot  
Felene Cayetano's *Commonwealth Shorts*,  
*Caribbean Voices* film, Dangriga, Belize  
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