



# Relevance, resilience and respect in the “Mother of All Networks”: Networking Commonwealth Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

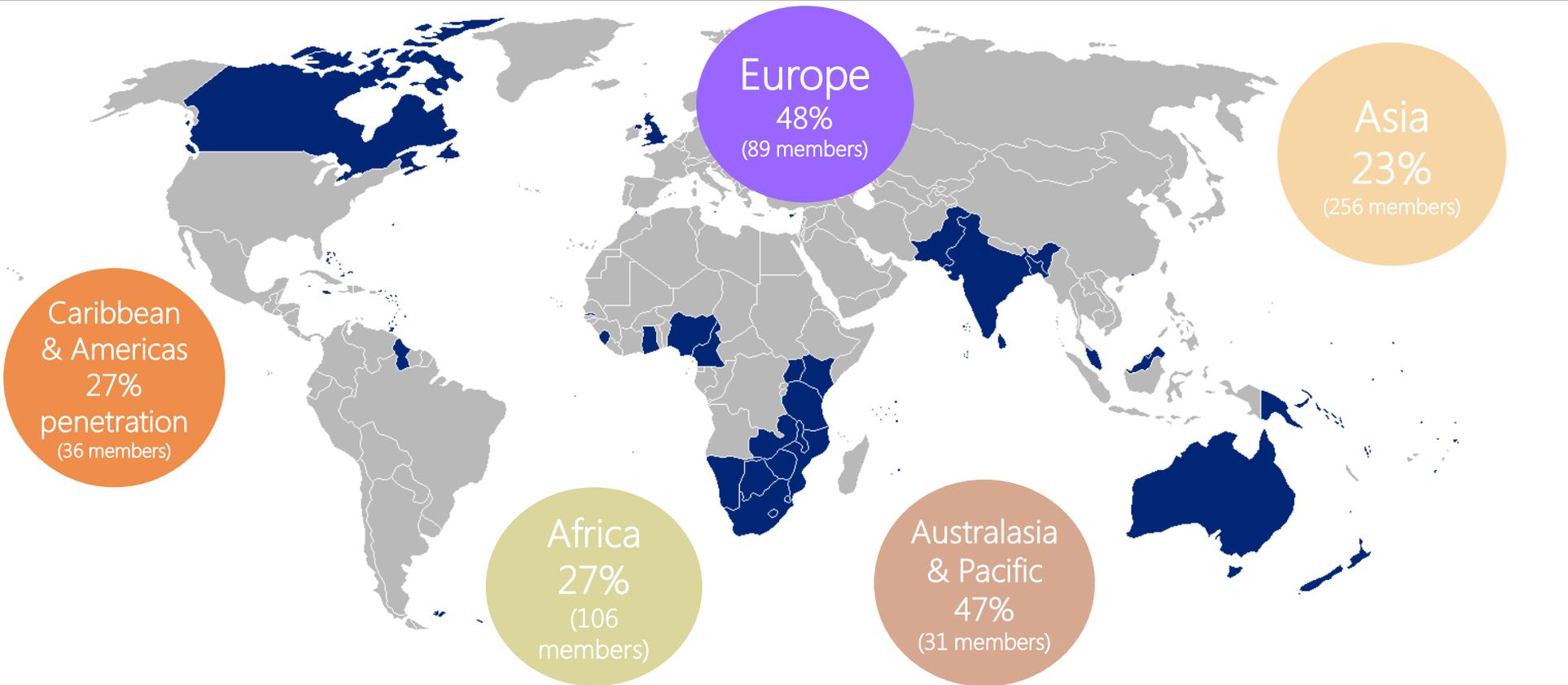
*To UNICA Rectors’ Seminar, University of Belgrade, 24-25 May 2018*

Dr Faye Taylor, Head of Strategic Partnerships  
The Association of Commonwealth Universities

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# The ACU: the voice of higher education in the Commonwealth

*committed to transformational impact of HE on global challenges*



**500+** member universities

**66%** in low and middle income countries

**5%** in small states

**Africa:** 106 members (20% of membership)

**Asia:** 256 members (49%)

**Americas:** 36 members (7%)

**Australasia and the Pacific:** 31 members (6%)

**Europe:** 89 members (17%)

# In a colliding world...



...Networks matter more than ever



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But what is it about the  
**Commonwealth**  
that makes it such a  
**relevant, resilient** and **valuable**  
framework for cooperation?



# It is uniquely diverse

- Commonwealth member nations are among the world's **largest**, **smallest**, **richest**, and **poorest**
- It is one of the few **international networks** not based on geography, defence, or economic status

# Breadth and reach

- A combined population of **2.4 billion**, of which more than **60%** is aged 29 or under
- Africa (**18** countries), Asia (**7**), the Caribbean and Americas (**13**), Europe (**3**), and the Pacific (**11**)
- **24** members are small island developing states
- Populations range from **10,000** (Nauru) to **1.2 billion** (India)

# Emerging systems; tomorrow's superpowers

- A **platform to engage** with multiple nations
- Half of the top 20 **global emerging cities** are in the CW
- Shift of global economic power to emerging markets:  
**India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan** = all Commonwealth member states...
- ...**soaring demand** for higher education in many of these

# A vision of equity; supporting small states

The policies and priorities of the Commonwealth are shaped by its member nations, and all have an **equal say** – irrespective of size or economic status – including **small and vulnerable** states which are often left out



# Commonalities and compatibility

A common **language**, laws, traditions, and **constitutional frameworks** pave the way for dialogue



Commonwealth  
People's  
Forum

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# Shared values: The Commonwealth Charter

1. **Democracy**
2. Human **rights**
3. International **peace** and security
4. Tolerance, **respect** and understanding
5. **Freedom** of expression
6. Separation of **powers**
7. Rule of **law**
8. Good **governance**
9. Sustainable **development**
10. Protecting the **environment**
11. **Access** to health, education, food and shelter
12. Gender **equality**
13. Importance of **young people** in the Commonwealth
14. Recognition of the needs of **small states**
15. Recognition of the needs of **vulnerable states**
16. The role of **civil society**

# Major challenges

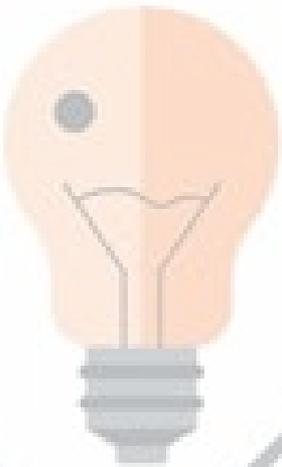
A photograph of a person walking through a flooded street. The person is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and dark shorts, and is holding a large umbrella with orange and black panels. The water is murky and reflects the surroundings. In the background, there are buildings and other people, some also with umbrellas, suggesting a heavy rain or storm. The overall scene is hazy and overcast.

Commonwealth countries are among those most acutely affected by **global challenges**

# Higher education and the Commonwealth...



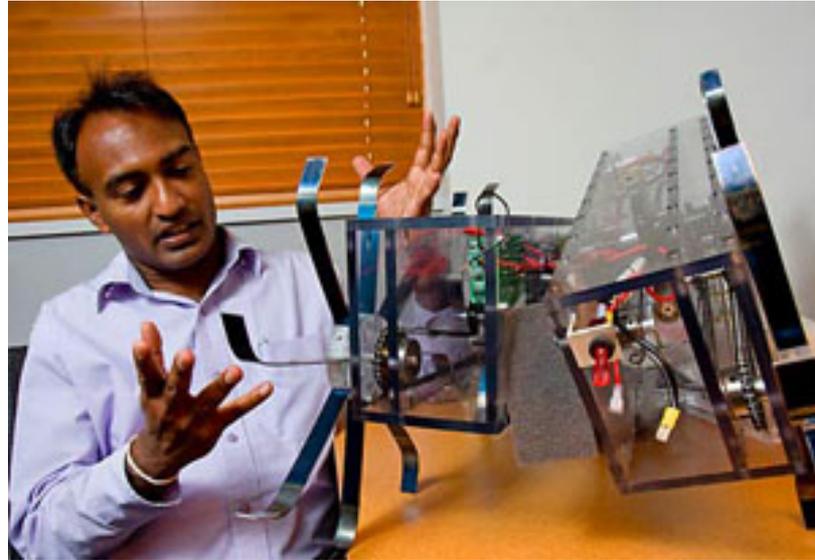
...a **frontline** for challenges;  
a **hub** for solutions



# Technological advances enable innovative solutions...



A device for detecting beetles blighting coconut trees...



New robots to detect landmines...



'Tactile' surgery at a distance...

# Building capacity for growing demand for HE

- Between 2015 and 2030, **600–800 million** more young people will enter the job market and by 2020, the world could have **40 million** too few workers with tertiary degrees, relative to demand.
- In India an estimated **30 million** students are enrolled in tertiary education... Unmet demand is estimated at **three to four times** this number
- Alongside rising student numbers, universities face a **shortfall** of qualified and experienced staff... In Kenya, the average lecturer to student ratio has been estimated at **one lecturer per 500 students (1:500)**

# Priorities for HE in the Commonwealth

- Higher education's critical contribution to meeting the **SDGs**
- **Access and inclusion**, including gender equity
- **International mobility** and recognition of qualifications
- **Employability** and the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution
- **Growing research capacity** through N-S, S-N and SS partnerships
- Universities' role in building **respect and understanding**



# The ACU in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...

- **Convening** its members for 'common action in the common interest'
- **Seeding change...** building the capacity to serve current and future generations
- **Championing** the work of Commonwealth universities

# ACU Policy Priorities

- Respect & understanding
- Truth & Reconciliation
- Commonwealth Climate Resilience Network
- Commonwealth Smart Cities
- Gender
- Sustainable Development Goals

# ACU Convening Power...CCEM20



- 19-23 February 2018, Nadi, Fiji
- Commonwealth Education Partnership for Sustainable Development
- A new Commonwealth Climate Resilience Network
- Expansion of the CSFP endowment fund & CHOGM

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# Launch of Queen Elizabeth Scholarships at CHOGM 2018



- HRH Prince Harry announced the new Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships in his first speech as Commonwealth Youth Ambassador.
- By 2025, an additional 150 Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholars from across the Commonwealth will have studied at leading universities in low and middle income countries.
- The CSFP endowment fund, managed by the ACU, will be able to support even more scholarships from 2019 thanks to an additional £5 million contribution from the UK government.



DFE @educationgovuk · 19/04/2018

To offer even more young people the opportunity to further their #education at a #Commonwealth university abroad, we're investing £5m in the Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships Fund: [gov.uk/government/new...](http://gov.uk/government/new...)



"For young people across the Commonwealth, sharing in this partnership presents a unique opportunity to learn about other cultures. It also gives us the chance to share learning from our respective education systems and to draw inspiration from across the globe, so that every child gets the education they deserve.

This investment builds on this celebrated relationship by offering even more young people around the world the opportunity to further their education at a Commonwealth university abroad."

**Damian Hinds**  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education



Mo Dewji Foundation @DewjiFoundation · 16/04/2018  
The scholarship scheme will be expanded until 2019. With the target by 2025 low or middle countries will have access to these scholarships. The common wealth scholarship will be known as Queen Elizabeth Scholarships.

@Commonwealth18 #CHOGM18



UK in Mozambique @UKinMozambique · 25/04/2018  
Príncipe Harry anunciou novo programa de bolsas de estudos que vai enviar 30 jovens por ano às Universidades da #Commonwelth, começando em 2019. Mais sobre o Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships em: [bit.ly/2HnZID9](http://bit.ly/2HnZID9)

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# Convening universities: ACU events & networking

- Member communities: Engage, HR in HE, Internationalisation and Research, Knowledge and Information Community
- Events provide a unique opportunity to network, share best practice and exchange ideas
- Support personal and professional development and impact for institutions
- Next event: 8<sup>th</sup> ACU HR in HE Community Conference, University of Waterloo, Canada

# Seeding change through academic mobility

The ACU manages the UK Government's three main **scholarship programmes**

MARSHALL  
SCHOLARSHIPS



COMMONWEALTH  
SCHOLARSHIPS

The ACU is central to discussions about a new Commonwealth-wide system for the **mutual recognition of qualifications**

We offer our own **grants and awards** such as the ACU Fellowships and Early Career Academic Grants and Summer schools

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# ACU Fellowships

In 2015, an ACU Fellowship enabled **Dr Juliet Daniel**, from McMaster University, Canada, to travel to the University of West Indies, Barbados

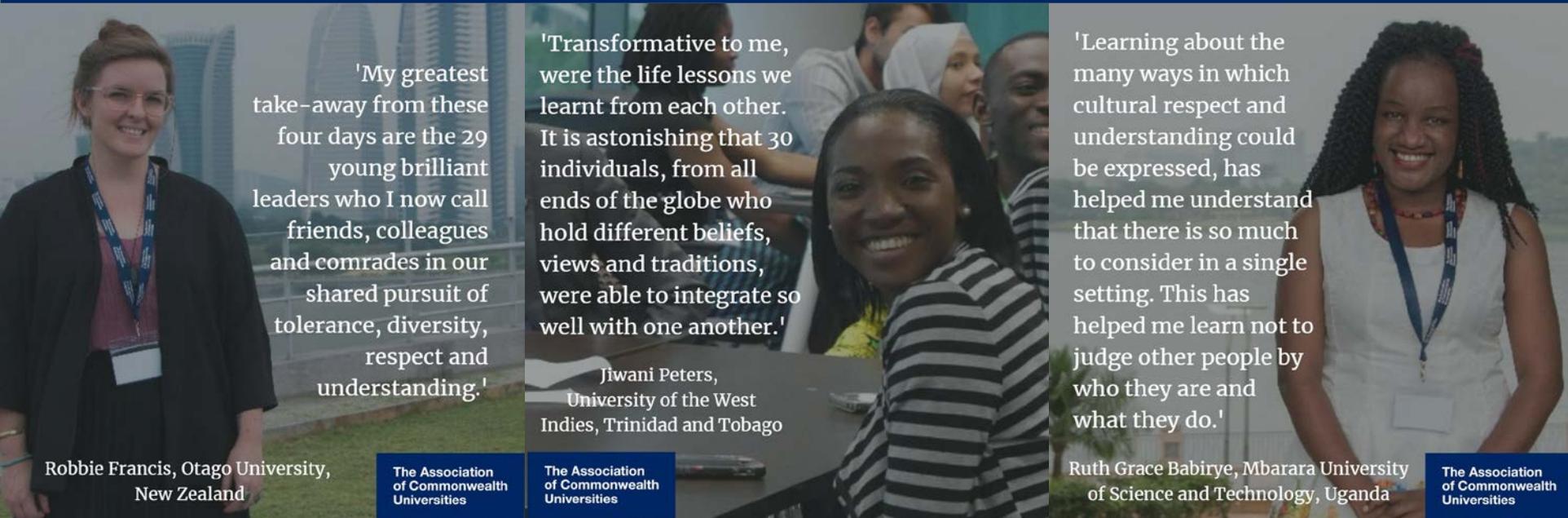


Her research focused on triple negative breast cancer, and why it is more common in women of African ancestry.

Since returning to Canada, she has opened a research lab, and continues to collaborate with colleagues in Barbados – including supervising a PhD student she met while on her Fellowship.

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# We campaign: universities promote respect and understanding



'My greatest take-away from these four days are the 29 young brilliant leaders who I now call friends, colleagues and comrades in our shared pursuit of tolerance, diversity, respect and understanding.'

Robbie Francis, Otago University, New Zealand

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'Transformative to me, were the life lessons we learnt from each other. It is astonishing that 30 individuals, from all ends of the globe who hold different beliefs, views and traditions, were able to integrate so well with one another.'

Jiwani Peters, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

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'Learning about the many ways in which cultural respect and understanding could be expressed, has helped me understand that there is so much to consider in a single setting. This has helped me learn not to judge other people by who they are and what they do.'

Ruth Grace Babirye, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda

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- Universities have an important role in promoting **mutual respect and understanding**. Through the Commonwealth, universities could take a leading role promoting dialogue, engagement, and exchange **across borders, cultures and faiths**
- In December, the ACU gathered **student leaders from 20 countries for a residential in Malaysia** on practical means of promoting respect on campus
- **Get involved:** case studies; statement of shared values on respect

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# We build capacity: strong track record in supporting universities through programmes and partnerships

- Research management and uptake
- Capacity building (i.e. CAAST-NET, Circle, Drussa, RINEA, Stars)
- Employability and skills
- Gender
- ACU Measures

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy



Department  
for International  
Development



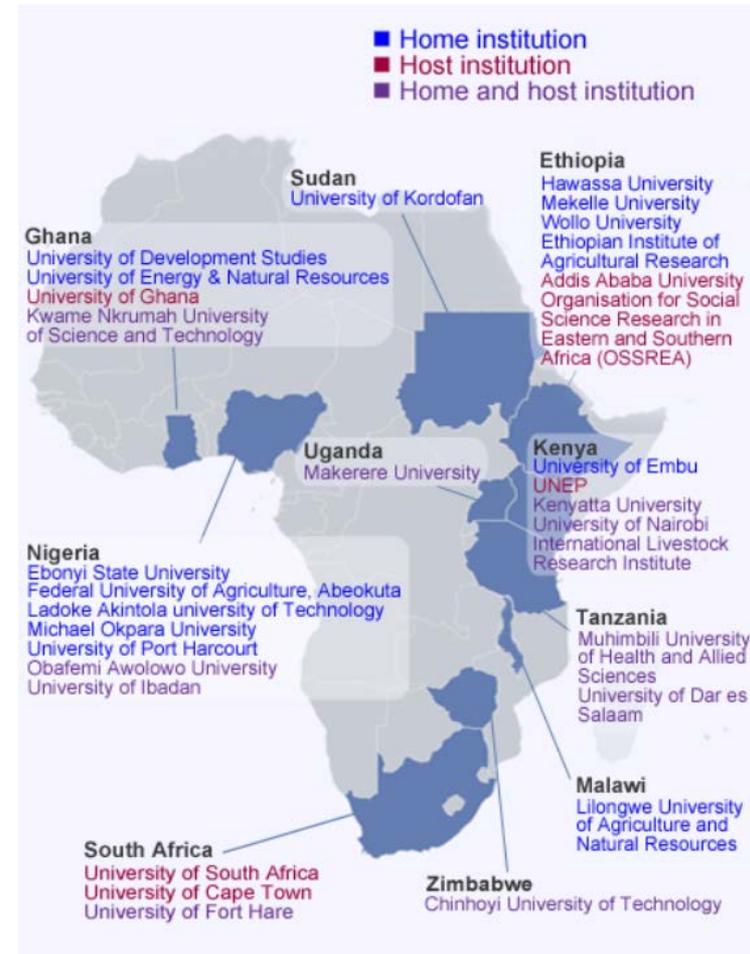
Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
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# Example: CIRCLE

## Climate Impacts Research Capacity and Leadership Enhancement (CIRCLE)

- DfID-funded (£4.85 million) & recently extended
- Managed by the ACU and the African Academy of Sciences
- 3 cohorts of fellows, training provision, institutional strengthening programme



# Our plans for the future...

- Through strong partnerships, leveraging our networks to **strengthen HE across the CW and globally**
- **Fully engaging** our membership to better represent and promote regional and international opportunities and issues
- **Increasing opportunities** for mobility and capacity building through funded programmes
- **Promoting** the work of our members

# Strategic partnerships

- Commonwealth Secretariat & COL
- African Academy of Sciences
- Association of Indian Universities
- Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)
- UNICA? How might we work together?  
Research for global challenges?

# Find out more



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