

CommonAge Newsletter, June 2024



A Message from our Vice Chair



Dear esteemed partners, colleagues and friends.

The Commonwealth commemorated its 75th anniversary in April 2024. Since its establishment in 1949, it has expanded in scope and influence with 56 member states spanning five continents and accounting for one-third of the global population. As we commemorate this momentous milestone, *the Charter of the Commonwealth*, rooted in **a spirit of determination to create possibilities, expand opportunities and leave no one behind, comes to mind.**

CommonAge is guided by these principles and values. It is our responsibility to contribute towards building a Commonwealth of peace, sustainable development and human rights for all, with a specific focus on older people, and young people who will be the next and future generations of older people.

As towards CHOGM Samoa 2024, with the theme *"One Resilient Common Future: Transforming Our Common Wealth"*, we are committed to building and enriching the Commonwealth we know it can be. **Together, we can accomplish this.**

Regards,

Datin Jacqueline WM Wong

Vice Chair, CommonAge

Honorary Advisor, demensia Brunei

Greater outcomes in Cameroon

Our bursary programme provides financial support to delegates from developing commonwealth countries to enable them to attend selected international conferences, and to participate in a truly global education and networking event that otherwise would simply not have been possible.

A chance meeting through our 2015 bursary has led to great outcomes in Cameroon

In 2015, through our bursary programme, we supported **Francis Njuakom Nchii** to come to the Global Ageing Network's biennial conference that was held in Perth, Australia. He is the founder and Chief Executive of Cameroon's leading organisation that takes care of older people, [CDVTA \(Community Development volunteers for Technical Assistance\)](#).

At this conference he met **Jack York**, the founder of Tailgate, an initiative collecting and sharing seniors' stories and LifeLoop, a comprehensive software platform that helped senior living communities flourish.

We are delighted to have been the instigators of this outcome!

Earlier this year, Jack returned to Cameroon, and they share their story [here](#).

[Read More](#)

UN Member States take an important step on the protection of rights of older persons



The UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing recently concluded its 14th Session in New York after having agreed by consensus that gaps in the protection of the rights of older persons exist and that a new Human Rights Convention for Older Persons is one of the ways to address those gaps.

This is a significant step forward for the UN and paves the way for further discussions to continue under the auspices of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Council has greater technical expertise on human rights and allows civil society and National Human Rights Institutions to contribute on a more equal basis with Member States. It also signals the likely closure of the Open-ended Working Group.

CommonAge Director **Ken Bluestone**, who attended the 14th Session, commented that: “We are hopeful that this will lead to the Human Rights Council taking the long-awaited decision to start drafting a Human Rights Convention for Older Persons. This is long overdue and is necessary for addressing ageism and reframing attitudes towards older people, as well as articulating more clearly how international law must address older people’s rights. This is an agenda that we hope that the Commonwealth will support, making real the aspirations of the Commonwealth Charter through which its Members are committed to the protection of rights “for all without discrimination on any grounds.”

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Renu Abraham Varughese Receives Fulbright Specialist Award to South Africa at TAFTA

The U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board are pleased to announce that Renu Abraham Varughese of Mercy College has received a Fulbright Specialist Program award.

Dr. Varughese will complete a project at Tafta in South Africa that aims to exchange knowledge and establish partnerships, that benefit participants, institutions, and communities both in the U.S. and overseas through a variety of educational and training activities that promote public/global health.

Dr. Varughese is one of over 400 U.S. citizens who share expertise with host institutions abroad through the Fulbright Specialist Program each year. Recipients of Fulbright Specialist awards are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, demonstrated leadership in their field, and their potential to foster long-term cooperation between institutions in the U.S. and abroad.

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to build lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The Fulbright Program is funded through an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions, corporations, and foundations around the world also provide direct and indirect support to the Program, which operates in over 160 countries worldwide.

Since its establishment in 1946, the Fulbright Program has given more than 400,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists, and scientists the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

Fulbrighters address critical global issues in all disciplines, while building relationships, knowledge, and leadership in support of the long-term interests of the United States. Fulbright alumni have achieved distinction in many fields, including 60 who have been awarded the Nobel Prize, 88 who have received Pulitzer Prizes, and 39 who have served as a head of state or government.

For further information about the Fulbright Program or the U.S. Department of State, please visit <http://eca.state.gov/fulbright> or contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Press Office by telephone 202-632-6452 or e-mail ECA-Press@state.gov.

A Day at TAFTA



A wonderful visit to **The Association for the Aged (TAFTA)** in Durban, last month by Andrew Larpent, Chair Emeritus, CommonAge.

It was a great opportunity meeting residents and staff in this great not for profit organisation led so ably by our dear colleague and friend **Femada Shamam**.

Mansur Dalal, Chair of CommonAge Invited to Join the Board of Global Ageing Network!



CommonAge is delighted to announce that our Chair, **Mansur Dalal** was invited to join the Board of Directors at The Global Ageing Network. Their board of directors comprises of volunteer members from various aged care organizations and businesses around the world.

The Global Ageing Network is an international network of leaders in ageing services, housing, research, technology and design. They bring together experts from around the world, lead education initiatives and provide a place for innovative ideas in aging services to be explored. They also pave the way to improve best practices in aged care so that older people everywhere can live healthier, stronger, more independent lives.

[Read More](#)

Introducing our new Partners



AAG
Australian
Association of
Gerontology



International Institute on Ageing
United Nations - Malta

We are delighted to welcome our new partners:

INIA- International Institute on Ageing, who are working to empower countries with low economies and with economies in transition, to cope with the challenges of an ageing populations.

AAG - Australian Association of Gerontology, Australia's only independent, impartial membership organisation whose over-arching aim is to improve the experience of ageing by connecting gerontological research, policy and practice.

#ConversationsInCommon

With a view to advance healthy ageing across the Commonwealth, CommonAge is excited to announce a new initiative, 'Conversations in Common' across the Commonwealth.

The purpose of these conversations will be to promote a greater dialogue on core issues of ageing, linked to the CommonAge mission and strategy.

We are delighted that our first series of Conversations will be on the subject of 'Healthy Ageing with Jo Boylan', the chair of CommonAge Healthy Ageing Taskforce.

Dates and details will be announced shortly on our website and social media.

Introducing our exclusive Membership Badge

We have developed this exclusive badge for members to support their credibility and commitment on working towards an all age-inclusive Commonwealth, as well as being part of a Commonwealth affiliated organisation that is committed to ensuring older people are fully recognised in society, and are supported and enabled to live well.



Member Updates



Senator Dr. Eze Darlington Ajoku, our C.A.R.E Award recipient was recently interviewed by Irene Okechuku on Old Age.

The Interview can be viewed here: [OLD AGE: LIVING A QUALITY LIFE](#)

Senator Dr. Eze Darlington Ajoku, is President Coalition of Societies For the Rights of Older Persons In Nigeria (COSROPIN), President Coalition of Orphanages and Children Homes in Nigeria (COCHIN) 1st Vice Chairman, Civil Society Organisations Strategy Group on SDG, Nigeria.



Magen Mutefpa, our bursary recipient conducted an event on "Creative Brain Health Week" with other stake holders at Mochudi last month.

The pictures to the event could be found [Here](#).

Magen is the Chair and co-founder of the NGO [Ageless Inspirations](#), and as an associate professor, has been carrying out research into older people since 2012. Her advocacy for older people includes sharing her research in best practice in local communities and the international community, as well as teaching Masters and psychology students.

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International Institute on Ageing
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a contribution to the
Decade of healthy ageing



NSINDAGIZA
Organization



AAG
Australian Association of Gerontology



THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PEOPLE

Our Brand Graphics consultant (pro bono)

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Join us!

We are a charity and our voluntary Board of Directors is committed to making changes to older people's lives across the Commonwealth.

Help us deliver the ideal of an "All Age Friendly" Commonwealth that values the dignity of older people, respects their wisdom and experience, and that leaves no one behind in the journey towards a sustainable, peaceful future.

[Donate, partner, become a member!](#)

You can donate to us via

- Credit card: Visa, Mastercard and American Express
- Apple Pay
- Google Pay
- PayPal

Get in Touch! We'd love to share your stories and help us to grow the conversations about our mission and vision, and to celebrate the great achievements of organisations and older people themselves.

Thank you for you continued support.

Team CommonAge

Visit our website www.commage.org for more information
about our work and for regular updates.

Email Reneta Dsouza, Executive Assistant at secretariat@commage.org or connect with us on social media.



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