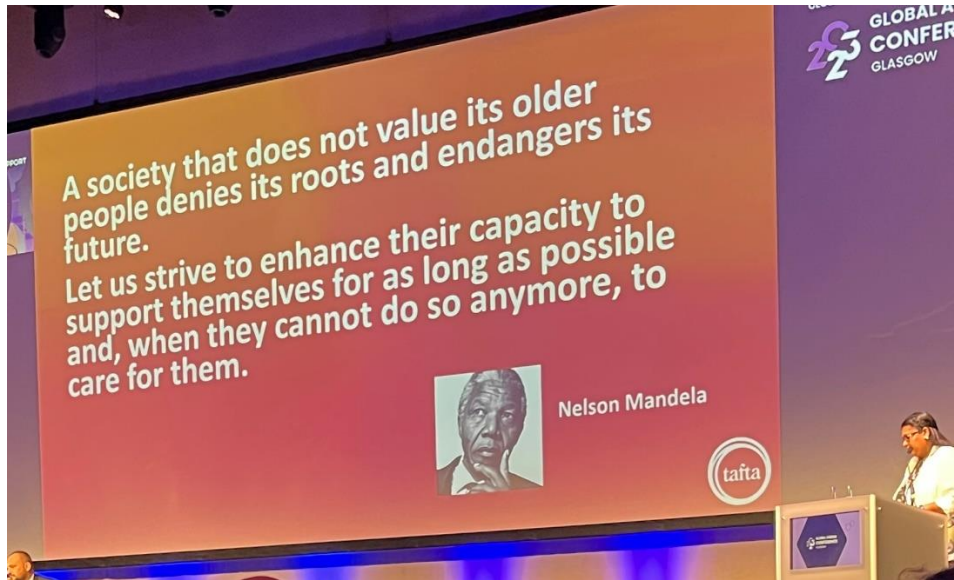


ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2023-2024

1. **Introduction.** In 2023 CommonAge marked the completion of its first decade since the charity was formed in Australia in 2013. It was another year of considerable progress in our work for the interests of people of all ages, but especially senior citizens, in a multigenerational, all-age friendly Commonwealth. In terms of our advocacy work the year was one that marked a significant breakthrough in gaining recognition of the huge demographic challenges of ageing populations in all Commonwealth countries as highlighted in our “Ageing in the Commonwealth” Report, published in 2018 ([Report: Ageing in the Commonwealth - CommonAge Website \(commage.org\)](https://www.commonage.org.au/reports/ageing-in-the-commonwealth)).



CommonAge Vice Chair Femada Shamam evokes memorable words of Madiba – Nelson Mandela at the Global Ageing Network Conference in Glasgow in September 2023

2. **Appointment of the Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Ageing Well.** After several years of lobbying and advocating for greater recognition of the place of older persons in the Commonwealth, CommonAge was delighted to note the appointment of Professor Dame Carol Black GBE FRCP, as the Secretary General’s First Special Envoy for Ageing Well. Dame Carol is a past-President of the Royal College of Physicians, of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, and of the British Lung Foundation, past-Chair of the Nuffield Trust for Health Policy, and past-Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. She is currently Chair of the UK Centre for Ageing Better and Chair of the British Library. Dame Carol attended the Commonwealth Health Ministers’ Meeting in Geneva in May 2024 and secured the unanimous support of health ministers for the development of a Commonwealth Roadmap for Ageing Well, to be adopted by all member states at the

CHOGM in October 2024. The appointment of the Special Envoy represents a major step forward for the interests of older persons in an all-age friendly Commonwealth, and will ensure that the voices and interests of older persons are recognised and valued in Commonwealth discourse.



Dame Carol Black's first meeting with CommonAge Directors Andrew Larpent OBE, Nadra Ahmed CBE and Ken Bluestone in London on 1 July 2024

3. Global Ageing Network (GAN) Conference Glasgow 6-8 September 2023.

This major international Conference was hosted jointly by partner organisations the National Care Forum and Scottish Care. CommonAge awarded travel bursaries for 9 delegates from Commonwealth countries to allow them to participate and contribute to the event. On the day before the start of the conference a delegation of CommonAge directors was able to make a visit to the Iris Murdoch Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling.



Chair (Elect) Mansur Dalal gives keynote speech at the GAN Workforce Summit

The conference also provided a rare opportunity for CommonAge to hold a face to face Annual General Meeting. At an evening reception presentations were made to founding leaders of CommonAge and this event saw the launch of the CommonAge Recognising Excellence (C.A.R.E.) Awards to outstanding advocates and service providers from across the Commonwealth whose attendance at the conference was made possible through CommonAge's financial assistance.



Recognised as Fellows of CommonAge were Klaus Zimmermann AM, co-Founder and first CEO and David Stevens, CEO of corporate supporter Standards Wise International.



Award recipients Eze Ajoku Darlington of COSROPIN – Nigeria and Femada Shamam of TAFTA -South Africa



Dr Vinod Shah Founder and Chair of the Janaseva Foundation of India and Mina Vinod Shah

CommonAge Bursary Recipients



Elie Mugabowishema of NZINDAGIZA – Rwanda and Dr Pascale Dinan of FIAPA - Mauritius



Sandra Latibeaudiere of University of West Indies, Jamaica and Megan Mutepfa of Botswana



Linda Smith of Retirement Network, South Africa



Acknowledging with thanks the sponsorship and support for the Bursary Awards by the UK Research and Innovation Healthy Ageing Challenge Programme.
 George MacGinnis, Challenge Director and Cynthia Bullock, Deputy Challenge Director

4. **International Day of Older People 2023 (IDOP 23).** On 1st October 2023 CommonAge, in partnership with the Commonwealth Resounds staged an online concert featuring artists from across the Commonwealth in aid of the Dementia Foundation for Spark of Life and the Motor Neurone Disease Association. The headline soloist was Heerah Ravindran from Malaysia and a member of the CommonAge Youth Chapter.



Heerah Ravindran

5. **Mission to Brunei 23 – 28 October 2023.** At the invitation of *demensia Brunei* (dB), a member of the Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI), a delegation of Datin Jacqueline Wong (also acting as dB Hon. Advisor), Andrew Larpent and Rianna Patterson attended and presented at the ADI Asia Pacific Region Conference (APRC) in Brunei. During the visit, in addition to attending the conference, a meeting with the Minister of Health for Brunei and senior health officials took place. A reception entitled “**A Conversation: Commonwealth Health, Ageing & Longevity**” was held with invited guests where presentations were made on CommonAge and Standards Wise International. The event

was attended by ministers and senior officials from five ministries: (1) Health; (2) Culture, Youth, and Sports (with the portfolio of older persons, youth, and social welfare); (3) Home Affairs; (4) Education; and (5) Finance and Economy. Invitees include High Commissioners of several Commonwealth countries; international and regional institutions and NGOs: the International Institute on Ageing United Nations-Malta; ADI–Asia Pacific; ASEAN on Women’s Rights; Universiti Brunei Darussalam; Osaka University; and collaborative partners. Also attending were selected international experts on ageing and dementia for the ADI APRC 2023 hosted by dB from 27-29 October.



Meeting with Minister of Health, Dato Paduka Dr Haji Md Isham bin Jaafar and ministry officials



Datin Jacqueline Wong, CommonAge Vice Chair presenting CommonAge

- 6. Formation of the CommonAge Youth Chapter.** While in Brunei discussions took place about the formation of the Youth Chapter. A number of friends and colleagues have been recruited and a WhatsApp group has been established under the leadership of Rianna Patterson. An inaugural video meeting of supporters took place on 21 November 2023

and has already attracted young supporters from Malaysia, Zambia, Dominica, Jamaica and Tanzania.



Founding members of the CommonAge Youth Chapter
Heerah and Harsha Ravindran with Rianna Patterson

- 7. 10th Anniversary Dinner.** In 2023 CommonAge marked its first decade of operation in a number of ways. On 14th November 2023 a celebration dinner took place at His Majesty's Tower of London. This event, generously sponsored by Standards Wise International, was an opportunity to thank many partner organisations and stakeholders for their support for the charity. The Commonwealth Secretary General was represented by Mr Joshua Setipa, Senior Director, Strategy, Partnerships and Digital Directorate at the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Commonwealth Foundation was represented by the Director General Dr Anne Gallagher.



10th Anniversary Dinner at HM Tower of London

- 8. Outreach to Cameroon.** One of the most successful outcomes from CommonAge's outreach and networking activity in its first decade has been the initiative developed between our CommonAge Ambassador in Cameroon Francis Njuakom and American philanthropist and social entrepreneur Jack York. This has resulted in practical development work in the country that has benefitted many thousands of older persons supported by the local charity Community Development Volunteers for Technical

Assistance (CDVTA). Since 2015, Jack York has been a steadfast supporter of elders and rural communities in Cameroon. His contributions have funded social care, senior centres, income-generating initiatives, agriculture, health education, women's empowerment, village water schemes, livestock farming, construction of classrooms, wells and toilets for schools attended by grandchildren of elders. The project is outlined at [How 'buying a goat project' led to sustainable communities in Cameroon - CommonAge Website \(commage.org\)](http://CommonAge Website (commage.org))



Jack York and Francis Njuakom with CDVTA volunteers and friends

- 9. Passing the Chair.** At the end of CommonAge's first decade, the Founder and 1st Chairman (and author of this report) stepped down from the Board of the charity and passed the chair to his successor. Mr Mansur Dalal was unanimously elected to the chair at the first board meeting following the AGM. After handing over, the newly entitled Chair (Emeritus) embarked with his wife, Anne, on a world cruise to mark their 50th Wedding Anniversary, at their own private expense. The cruise provided the opportunity to connect with CommonAge supporters at a number of stops along the journey in South Africa, Mauritius, Australia and Sri Lanka.



Marking Chinese New Year with friends from FIAPA – Mauritius in Port Louis



A reunion with CommonAge Founding Members and supporters in Adelaide, South Australia



Catching up with CommonAge Director Linda Justin in Sydney, Australia and with Prof Vajira Dissanayake and Dr Chamila Dalpatadu at Colombo University, Sri Lanka



With TAFTA resident Mrs Dudizile Kumalo and friends at The Association for the Ageing (TAFTA) In Durban, South Africa



Meeting residents and staff of TAFTA

10. Dementia in the Commonwealth Report. At the start of 2024 CommonAge embarked on its major project for the year, to produce a report on Dementia in the Commonwealth. The report was completed in August and launched at the International Dementia Conference in Sydney, Australia on 6th September 2024. It was then presented at the conference of our partner organisation the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation in Malta on 26th September. It is to be presented at the Commonwealth People’s Forum at the CHOGM in Samoa on 22nd October 2024. The purpose of the report is to encourage all Commonwealth governments to make dementia a public health priority and for each country to progress with developing and implementing National Dementia Plans. We wish to acknowledge the financial sponsorship of Age International, UK Research and Innovation, and Hammond Care, which made the production of the report possible. We also recognise the excellent work of Dr Emma Hodges as author, editor and project manager, and the support of Rianna Patterson as lead researcher. See full report at: [New report sheds light on dementia in the Commonwealth - CommonAge Website \(commage.org\)](https://commage.org)



Dementia In The Commonwealth



11. Train the Trainer Programme. This free training programme for those delivering elder care in developing countries was held in Durban South Africa, between June 10 to 21, 2024. With a special focus on ageing in Africa, the training programme, led by CommonAge director and US Fulbright Specialist - Dr Renu Varughese, aimed for enhanced elder care outcomes through international collaboration, emphasising knowledge sharing and capacity building. 28 delegates from 3 countries participated in the programme and they, in turn, are now scheduled to train more in their own respective countries in a ripple effect. This programme was supported by the prestigious Fulbright Specialist programme, known for its global impact and aligned perfectly with the CommonAge vision of fostering collaboration and expertise exchange. The Train the Trainer programme arose out of an aligned vision for enhanced practices in supporting older persons, with a special focus on dementia care. This practical solution resulted from a collaborative effort, exemplifying how like-minded organisations can amplify their impact through partnership. This highly successful pilot project now provides an important template from which to develop further such projects across the Commonwealth, thereby having a direct impact on the quality of aged care services and life enhancing outcomes for older persons. See full report at: [TRAIN THE TRAINER Project Proposal \(commage.org\)](https://commage.org/train-the-trainer-project-proposal)



Train the Trainer Participants – Durban, South Africa, June 2024

12. Launch of CommonAge Chapters. Realising the importance of localized nodal bodies and structures for faster rollout and nimble logistical support, four country chapters of CommonAge—South Africa, India, Botswana, and Kenya—were launched in Durban, South Africa, on June 15th, 2024. This effort aims to further the cause, mission, and ethos of CommonAge. All the Chapter leads are pioneering this initiative in a voluntary capacity. They are working and collaborating to instigate initiatives and lobby their governments to ensure elders receive the care they deserve and are not left behind in policy making decisions. See full report at: [Chapter Report \(commage.org\)](https://commage.org/chapter-report). The development of further chapters across the Commonwealth is a major area of focus for the charity.



Launch of India, Kenya, Botswana and South Africa Chapters

- 13. Extending our Influence.** CommonAge Vice Chair Datin Jacqueline Wong (Malaysia/Brunei) is an active and influential participant and campaigner on Ageing in the Commonwealth in numerous high level international conferences and working groups. In 2023-24 Jacqueline has participated in and contributed to the following:
- a. COP 28. 30 November to 12 December 2023 in Dubai, UAE
 - b. The Road to CHMM 2023-2024-2025
 - c. C7 Summit, W7 Summit and G7 Ministerial Dialogues 2024
 - d. IMF-World Bank Group Spring 2024 and Annual Meetings 2024
 - e. "Reframing Ageing" Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Population Ageing 2024
 - f. Davos Alzheimer's Collaborative Lausanne XI Conference and Workshop 2024
 - g. Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review

Further detailed reports on these activities are included in the Appendix to this report.

- 14. Partnerships.** CommonAge is an active participant in partnerships with numerous national and international organisations working with and for older persons, including:
- Global Ageing Network
 - Alzheimer's Disease International
 - Age International
 - Global Alliance on the Rights of Older Persons (GAROP)
 - International Institute on Ageing (INIA) United Nations Malta
 - World Health Organisation – UN Decade of Healthy Ageing
 - Dementia Alliance International
 - Davos Alzheimer's Collaborative

- 15. Membership of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO).** CommonAge is an active member of IFCO, through which it has been able to develop productive relationships with many other accredited Commonwealth Organisations which share common interests and objectives. CommonAge looks forward to continuing

to play its part in working for strengthened links between Commonwealth governments, institutions and civil society organisations.

16. Preparation for CHOGM 2024. CommonAge will send a strong delegation of 6 directors and supporters to the CHOGM in Samoa in October 2024. They will be supporting Dame Carol Black with the introduction of the Commonwealth Roadmap for Ageing Well. The Dementia in the Commonwealth Report will be presented at a Delegate Led Session at the Commonwealth People's Forum.

17. Re-Accreditation. Following the review process of accredited organisations CommonAge was pleased to receive confirmation of Re-accreditation to the Commonwealth as a Civil Society Organisation on 13 June 2024.

18. Financial. The Annual Accounts for the charity will be submitted as an addendum to this report once audited and approved by the CommonAge Board. It is important to report that, despite the range of activity outlined in this report, the charity operates on very limited funds and relies on the annual contributions of corporate and individual members. Fundraising is a priority and limited funding is a significant constraint on activity. The directors of CommonAge contribute financially and in kind to support the activities of the charity and give freely of their time and resources. The charity has no paid staff apart from a part time executive assistant whose remuneration is sponsored by Standards Wise International, and a part time freelance communications assistant.

19. Governance. Two directors retired from the board at the end of 2023 on completion of their terms of office. They are:

- Andrew Larpent OBE (UK) – Founder and 1st Chair
- Dan Levitt (Canada)

The current board members of Commonage are:

- Mansur Dalal (India) – Chair
- Femada Shamam (South Africa) – Vice Chair
- Datin Jacqueline Wong (Malaysia/Brunei) – Vice Chair
- Nadra Ahmed CBE (UK)
- Ken Bluestone (UK)
- John Collyns (New Zealand)
- Linda Justin (Australia)
- Andrew Kavala (Malawi)
- Antony Pivato (Australia) – Hon Treasurer
- Dr Renu Varughese (India) – appointed January 2024



Board members and core supporters past and present – September 2023

20. Administration. Administration of the charity is undertaken by our Executive Assistant – Reneta D’Souza in India. Contactable at secretariat@commage.org

21. Communications. We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the exceptional contribution to CommonAge by our freelance Communications Officer Annie Waddington Feather from 2013 to 2024. The Communications lead for the charity is now taken by Anita Natu (India).

22. Looking ahead 2024-25. CommonAge has many hopes and aspirations for the year ahead. The immediate agenda includes:

- Development of further Chapters for CommonAge with a focus on Australia, UK, Nigeria and the Caribbean region.
- Supporting the development and implementation of the Commonwealth Ageing Well Roadmap.
- Virtual AGM in December 2024.
- Taking our place as the Civil society representative body on the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health (CACH) for 2024-25.
- Promotion of the “Dementia in the Commonwealth” Report.
- India Delegation visit November/December 2024. To include participation in:
 - DEMCON 24 - International Conference on “Reaching the Unreached in Dementia” Bangalore between November 29th – 30th, 2024 in Bangalore.
 - Celebration of the City of Kochi as India’s first accredited WHO Age Friendly City on 3-4 December 2024.
 - The Association of Senior Living India “Ageing Fest” 5-6 December 2024 in Bangalore.

- GAN Conference – Boston – September 2025
 - Bursary awards
 - 2nd CARE Awards
- Relaunch of the CommonAge website

23. Our Strategic Agenda.

- Promotion of Healthy Ageing across the Commonwealth
- Development of further national and regional chapters
- Promotion of the rights of older persons and their inclusion in society
- Intergenerational cohesion and engagement between young and old, including the development of the Youth Chapter
- Further development of the Train-the-Trainer programme
- Standards and quality of care and support services for elders
- Promotion of the interests of people of the Commonwealth living with dementia
- Promotion of seniors' sport and participation, and the inclusion of veterans' sports in the Commonwealth Games
- Building our professional secretariat to support our growing network of volunteers

Strategic Challenges.

- Communication
- Funding and fundraising
- Attraction and recruitment of volunteers
- Outreach to smaller states of the Commonwealth
- Succession planning and sustainability for the charity

21. Acknowledgements. None of the work of our volunteer run charity would be possible without the support we receive from our core corporate supporters and donors. We would like particularly to acknowledge with thanks the support of:

- Standards Wise International www.standardswise-int.co.uk
- Hammond Care [Aged health, dementia and palliative care specialists | It's not just care, it's HammondCare.](#)
- Age International [Age International | Helping older people live better lives](#)
- UK Research and Innovation Healthy Ageing Challenge [Healthy ageing – UKRI](#)
- Brand Partners for marketing and creative material www.brandpartners.net.au
- Person Centred Software [Person Centred Software - Care Management Software](#)
- William Buck for his pro-bono support in auditing the CommonAge accounts
- Jill Seeman for her continued background support for our website
- Annie Waddington-Feather for her extra work on our communications, way over and above the call of duty.
- Our administrative and communications team of Reneta D'Souza (secretariat@commage.org) and Anita Natu (anita.natu85@gmail.com)

We also acknowledge with thanks the continued support of our corporate members:

- Southern Cross Care (SA, NT and Vic) [Southern Cross Care | Retirement Living, Aged Care & Wellness Services](#)
- Resthaven [Resthaven Aged Care - South Australia](#)
- Eldercare [Eldercare • Residential Aged Care and Retirement Living South Australia](#)
- ACCPA [Aged & Community Care Providers Association \(accpa.asn.au\)](#)
- Clayton Church Homes <https://www.claytonhomes.com.au/>
- Southern Cross Care (Qld) [Southern Cross Care QLD | Aged care provider in Qld \(sccqld.com.au\)](#)

24. Conclusion. At the start of its second decade CommonAge is in good health and is a growing dynamic re-accredited Commonwealth Civil Society Organisation. Operating with limited resources the charity is steadily extending its network and, through its stakeholders, chapters and individual supporters, can demonstrate that it is making a genuine difference in the lives of older persons across the Commonwealth. There is much work to be done in challenging ageism in Commonwealth countries and advocacy for the rights of people of all ages to live well in an all-age friendly Commonwealth that leaves no one behind on account of age, infirmity or frailty. 2023-24 has been a breakthrough year in terms of recognition of the Ageing Well agenda. CommonAge is extending its influence and looks forward with enthusiasm, commitment and energy to continuing its journey on behalf of a multigenerational, safe and secure Commonwealth that supports and values citizens of all ages.

Andrew Larpent
Chair (Emeritus) CommonAge
October 2024

APPENDIX. “Extending our Influence” Report by Datin Jacqueline Wong