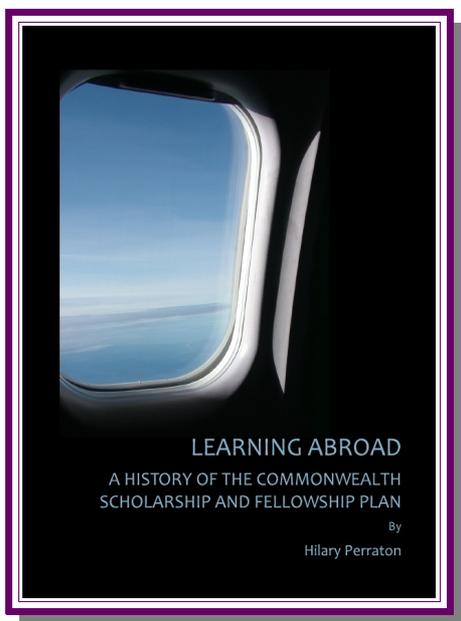


LEARNING ABROAD

A History of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan



BY
HILARY PERRATON

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Commonwealth scholarships began in 1959. They have since moved 25,000 people across borders, launching them into influence as politicians, poets, painters, professors—and the rest. Their stories illuminate the sociology and politics of higher education, of the Commonwealth, and of its member countries: they include the last scholar before apartheid took South Africa out of the Commonwealth, who became a high court judge, and the first after it came back, now a vice-chancellor. Half a century of British society shows up in the record of the Scholarship Commission that made Britain's awards. Its first chairman, the son of a general, was the Lord Chamberlain, taking time off from censoring plays. Fifty years later his successor took time off from a day-job as professor in a new university. Her father had left school early to look after the pigs.

This book sets out the narrative of the scholarship plan from its unlikely conception in a Commonwealth trade conference. By asking who was selected for scholarships, how, and why, it examines the policies of countries offering scholarships and those receiving them, looks at their role within universities round the Commonwealth discusses the experience of scholars as they studied abroad, and assesses the long-term impact of that experience. It is much more than just a British story and the book is enriched by material from case studies carried out by local scholars in Africa, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, and Canada.

Three themes stand out. First, scholarship policy, increasingly now part of aid policy, has been shaped by the interplay of national politics and education. Second, crossborder university enrolments are themselves now big business and the stuff of international politics. Changes in the politics and practice of the Commonwealth provide a microcosm. Third, the experience and achievements of former scholars answer the policy question: was investing in scholarships a good way of spending public money?

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“Hilary Perraton brings a supple mind and a fluent pen to a 50-year story of high hopes substantially, but never wholly, fulfilled which, so far, has shaped the lives of 25,000 people. Apart from *Learning Abroad* being a tale well worth telling in its own right, it provides a sensitive and sympathetic insight into the vicissitudes of the Commonwealth idea since its late fifties apogee.”

—**Peter Hennessy** FBA, Atlee Professor of Contemporary British History, Queen Mary, University of London

“In this absorbing and thoroughly researched study, Dr Perraton and his international team have made an invaluable contribution to our understanding and appraisal of the fifty-year history of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, its many achievements, setbacks and its central role in the Commonwealth-wide expansion of educational opportunity and exchange. No less, this book provides a judicious commentary on the political, organisational and financial complexities of sustaining large scale, multi- and bi-lateral programmes over long periods of time. The author's insights and shrewd advice are relevant for policy makers, administrators, institutions, researchers and students engaged in the ever expanding field of international education. Of particular interest is the attention given to the engagement of highly motivated, persistent internationally minded educators in promoting and sustaining the commitment of governments and administrators faced with changing national needs and priorities.”

—**Malcolm Skilbeck**, Emeritus Professor and former Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University, Australia; former Deputy Director for Education, OECD

“You have succeeded in making something very readable and interesting which, handled another way, might have been about as engaging as the telephone book or a street directory.”

—**Professor Thomas Symons** OC, Founding President and Vanier Professor Emeritus, Trent University, Canada

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Hilary Perraton Hilary Perraton is a visiting fellow at the Institute of Education, University of London. He is a historian, with long experience of international education, and was for seven years a member of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission.

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