Developing Global Leaders
A report from CSCLeaders 2013-19

CSCLeaders is a partnership between the international leadership development organization, Common Purpose, and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh’s Commonwealth Study Conferences (UK Fund).
“I have been impressed by the calibre of the participants who bring their own experience and knowledge, and have opened their minds to new ideas and challenges. What I have witnessed has been transformational as the individuals overcome assumptions and form into high performing focused teams. This is what makes the Commonwealth Study Conferences so special.”

HRH The Princess Royal,
HRH The Duke Of Edinburgh’s Commonwealth Study Conferences

Foreword

I am immensely proud of this programme. The sheer diversity of the participants, the deep immersions in cities and the powerful Cultural Intelligence (CQ) learning make this programme very special.

Year after year, leaders come on CSCLeaders because they want to make the transition to global or work with people in different sectors and countries. Repeatedly, I receive passionate emails, variations on the same story: that CSCLeaders has transformed them by giving them the confidence and the Cultural Intelligence to lead differently. There are few opportunities in the world that give senior leaders a safe space to cross boundaries in the way CSCLeaders does.

The need for inclusive and collaborative leaders in organizations and cities across the world is being felt constantly. I look forward to building on the success of CSCLeaders in the future.

Adirupa Sengupta
Chief Executive
Common Purpose Charitable Trust
This report highlights the impact of **CSCLeaders** on participants

### What is CSCLeaders?

CSCLeaders assembles exceptional, senior leaders selected from government, businesses and NGOs across the 53 countries of the Commonwealth to tackle Challenges, build the relationships and develop the Cultural Intelligence needed by the leaders of tomorrow.

CSCLeaders is a partnership between Common Purpose Charitable Trust and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh’s Commonwealth Study Conferences (UK Fund).

### Who attends?

CSCLeaders assembles a unique group of talented senior leaders from different sectors, countries, cultures and backgrounds. Participants include board-level executives from global businesses, Chief Executives, Permanent Secretaries of Governments, entrepreneurs, Pro-Vice Chancellors and civil society leaders.

### What happens?

CSCLeaders reinforces that, as the issues facing the world become increasingly complex, leaders will need to lead effectively across different boundaries.

Participants on CSCLeaders tackle a global Challenge with a diverse peer group of senior leaders. Common Purpose creates a unique environment where participants hear from thought leaders and visit various organizations in the UK to explore the Challenge and different concepts of leadership. Participants collaborate to develop ideas in response to the Challenge before presenting them to a panel of experts. Four months later, they reconvene in a different country, giving them chance to get beneath the skin of a vibrant and rapidly developing Commonwealth city.

### Measuring Impact

Following CSCLeaders 2019 in London and Manchester, participants assessed their learning from the programme, specifically their behaviour, leadership skills and competencies through a written online assessment. The CSCLeaders team also conducted in-depth one-to-one interviews with participants, their learning and development representatives and alumni. The interviewees reflect a cross section of sectors, industries and countries.

The shift in behaviours that occur following the programme are summarized as:

- **More inclusive** = **Lead innovative resilient teams**
- **Broader horizons** = **Make better decisions**
- **More collaborative** = **Accelerate complex change**

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**Leaders at a glance 2013-2019**

- **580 participants**
- **Representing 42 countries**
- **149 cities**

**Countries represented 2013-2019**

- **North America**
  - Canada
  - US
- **Europe**
  - UK
  - Germany
  - Norway
  - India
  - Hong Kong
- **Asia Pacific**
  - Malaysia
  - Pakistan
  - Singapore
- **Caribbean**
  - Barbados
  - Dominican
  - Jamaica
  - St Lucia
  - St Vincent and the Grenadines
  - Trinidad & Tobago
- **Africa**
  - Angola
  - Botswana
  - Cameroon
  - Ghana
  - Kenya
  - Malawi
  - Namibia
  - Nigeria
- **Australia and Pacific**
  - Australia
  - New Zealand
  - Papua New Guinea
  - Solomon Islands

**Gender split 2013 - 2019**

- Male: 55%
- Female: 45%

**Participant sector split 2013 - 2019**

- Not-for-profit: 31%
- Public: 34%
- Private: 35%

**Assessment results 2013 - 2019**

- 97% said the **CSC Leaders programme was good value for time**
- 86% are better able to adjust their behaviour in culturally diverse situations
- 90% are more likely to seek input from multiple diverse sources when making key decisions
- 88% are better able to lead or operate beyond their circle of authority
Case study: 
Hong Kong Police

Edwina Lau, Director, Hong Kong Police College

“We send our people to all the top-notch leadership programmes across the world, but what sets CSC Leaders apart is the environment and context that Common Purpose creates – an environment in which diverse people come together to examine a common question that is so pressing in today’s world. Rarely in my experience have we attended a programme that brings that level of diversity – that of culture, sector, background, countries etc. in the room. That is very precious, unique and not easy to create.

“At Hong Kong Police, we do problem solving every day within our own context. We try to broaden our horizons but our work environment is primarily limited to our own city; we handle problems that are local. It is therefore not easy to expand people’s mindsets to look at problems around the world, or even listen to what other people are facing. That’s why, time and again, we send high-ranking officers to CSC Leaders because they are the ones who face a lot of uncertainty in this complex and fast changing world. The aim is that, after this programme, they will be even more open minded and persuasive while handling counterparts from different backgrounds.

“They certainly become better leaders after participating in the programme – it is an eye-opening experience for them. We may not immediately see or realize all the benefits of the programme in the individual, but the impact is far reaching. Every now and then, we can relate back to our CSC Leaders experience and that helps us to make better decisions, be more open-minded and navigate uncertainties much better.”

Feedback and comments:
Hong Kong Police participants

“I found Cultural Intelligence very insightful, interesting and impactful on my leadership style. With a global mix of senior leaders from different cultures, the programme provided us with a very good platform to interact, share experiences and learn from each other. Through our discussions, I increased my own self-awareness, learnt the importance of listening to others from different cultures, and appreciated how crucial CQ is to my leadership.”

Raymond Siu, Assistant Commissioner of Police, CSC Leaders 2017

“I very much enjoyed CSC Leaders. The time away from my busy schedule allowed me to reflect on my own leadership style. Upon returning to my work, I have tried to listen more deeply and understand the views of those who are different from me. I am able to operate more effectively in unfamiliar settings, break down any barriers and co-create better solutions.”

Patrick Laidler, Assistant Commissioner of Police, CSC Leaders 2018

“Being on CSC Leaders helped me consolidate my personal learning journey in collaborative leadership. It helped me respect diversity and lead in a way that maximizes everybody’s contribution even at a time of adversity.”

Frederic Choi, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Security, CSC Leaders 2019
Each year, feedback from CSCLeaders shows those who participate are better able to work with people who are different to them. As a result of CSCLeaders, participants consistently say they increase their Cultural Intelligence – the ability to cross divides and thrive in multiple cultures. Specifically, they are more confident leading resilient teams of diverse people and engaging with multiple stakeholders. For many, this is the biggest learning.

Over six years, CSCLeaders has created a truly diverse network of almost 500 exceptional senior leaders. People who take part build long-lasting relationships during the programme, both with peers in similar industries and those who are very different from them.

Feedback from individuals and organizations shows that when leaders return to their own organizations and countries, this learning makes them better at leading resilient teams and engaging diverse colleagues, teams and stakeholders.

**More Inclusive**

If I had one word to describe CSCLeaders, it would be “immersive.” The opportunity to learn with, and from, such a diverse group of leaders in this environment was both enlightening and humbling. Having lived and worked in four continents, this programme really challenged me in a deeper way on how crucial true Cultural Intelligence is to impactful leadership.

David Locke, Regional Finance Director, Asia Pacific, Weir Minerals, Australia, CSCLeaders 2018

“I have returned to my own institution determined to push ahead with work we had already begun on diversity and inclusion but determined afresh to get beyond talking shop to real achievable projects and tangible actions. I now want to encourage others in my place to get out of their comfort zone and beyond the familiar as I know the new sense of energy and purpose this has given me and the difference it will make to my work.”

Professor Julie Sanders, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Newcastle University, UK, CSCLeaders 2018

“At Disposal we strive to weave diversity and inclusion into the fabric of our startup. We must be exceptional leaders to ensure our culture is truly inclusive, and that means really turning the mirror on ourselves and challenging our biases, our thinking, our preconceptions. I found that the CSCLeaders programme gave me the time and space to really do this. The activities and content challenged me to use this opportunity to develop my understanding, my core and flex and think about how I can translate it into my organization.”

Sophie Walker, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder, Disposal, UK, CSCLeaders 2018

“The strength of CSCLeaders is that brings together global leaders from across sectors, all with their unique knowledge, skills and experiences, to find meaningful and sustainable solutions to the challenges that confront us all. As a police officer, I have access to many international study programs, but these are all based on cohorts of police members. The chance to participate in this leadership programme showcasing the diversity of the Commonwealth, has therefore been both exciting and professionally rewarding.”

Uday Jaswal, Deputy Chief, Ottawa Police, Canada CSCLeaders 2019

“When we’re addressing a problem, we tend to look for a similar challenge. You are using comparative thinking but this means we’re forever benchmarking. Looking at the innovation process at CSCLeaders, this was much more about critical thinking – working with people who are not like you on something you know very little about so you have to start with what is on the table. The big questions in the world today require a different approach, a different sort of innovation – they need this critical thinking.”

Jay Bakshi, President and Chief Executive, DigiQom Solutions Pvt. Ltd., India, CSCLeaders 2015

CSCLeaders was a multi-layered lesson in diversity and inclusivity. We were an incredibly diverse bunch, not just in the usual metrics of nationality, ethnicity, religion, educational qualifications, but more importantly we were incredibly diverse in our thinking and in the articulation of our thoughts. Most of us have also embarked on several new friendships, which I’m sure we will all value, especially as we build on our shared experience during our week in the UK, and work on taking forward some of the ideas we came up with.”

Dr Shyamala Thilagaratnam, Director, Regional Health & Community Outreach Division, Health Promotion Board, Singapore, CSCLeaders 2018

“The opportunity to engage with people across different geographies as well as industries is a unique experience. It showed how inclusiveness and diversity leads to more collaborative co-creation. It was an environment where our own biases and assumptions were challenged when we are more inclusive, we get more out of everyone. The awareness of Cultural Intelligence helps us understand what our core is and what we are willing to flex on to enable us to understand another individual’s point of view. Our typical conditioning is challenged and personal prejudices are rewired.”

Zaved Akhtar, Marketing Transformation Director, Unilever South Asia, India, CSCLeaders 2018

“On CSCLeaders, I learned not only from the contributors and the study tours, but also from my peers in the group. When you are working with such a diverse group of people with so many different ideas and perspectives, you realize that you have to be an inclusive leader; not just a leader to direct the group, but someone who is also a team worker.”

Ashish Adukia, Chief Financial Officer, Grasim Ltd, Aditya Birla Group, India CSCLeaders 2019

**2019 Assessment Results:**

- **100%** are better able to lead or operate within a diverse team
- **98%** feel more able to engage with people who are different to them
- **92%** are better able to create the conditions required for innovation to occur
Senior leaders on CSCLeaders face increasingly complex situations in their organizations, sectors and countries. These often require them to make difficult decisions, involving many stakeholders, often in contexts that would be new and different to them.

The CSCLeaders programme requires participants to work on a complex and unfamiliar Challenge alongside a diverse peer group. In doing so, they are challenged to adapt to new environments and question their deep assumptions whilst solving complex problems. As a result, participants are more likely to seek out multiple perspectives and see their own situation within a broader context when making decisions and tackling challenges.

As Chief of Staff of a Group with multiple complex and very diverse business units, it is crucial for me to be able to understand the specific needs and expectations of each. Working in an incredibly diverse environment at CSC, leaders have better equipped me to work with diversity to deal with people from different backgrounds, different perspectives and different ways of thinking.”

Nnaji Igwe, Chief of Staff, Nestoil (Obijackson Group), Nigeria, CSCLeaders 2018

“There were such diverging views in the group I was with. We all started from our own place. I’m coming from a Southern African perspective, we had someone with East African perspective, we had India, UK, Australia, we had public and private sectors – so a lot of the views were very different! But by listening and engaging with each other, we came to converge a lot more than I would have expected.”

Iris Sibanda, Director, Brunswick Group, South Africa, CSCLeaders 2017

“My biggest learning was in growing my ability to consider multiple perspectives. Having such a diverse group of people from various sectors from all over the world exposed me to new ways of thinking – I was definitely stretched. It was challenging because it required me to learn, think, and commit to changing what I needed to change. It gave me greater ability to determine what my core and flex is and how my individual resilience and personal vision play a key role in building my Cultural Intelligence.”

Fadzi Whande, Global Diversity and Inclusion Strategist, Whande Group, Australia, CSCLeaders 2019

“CSCLeaders has been really insightful in that my background is private and not for profit sector and I have never had much experience with the public sector or been exposed to it. Working the public sector organizations has been the most insightful part for me as it is something I hadn’t experienced before. To be completely honest I was mildly prejudiced against them. I’d always seen them as bureaucratic and slow moving but that is completely the opposite of what I have seen! So CSCLeaders has helped me break down my prejudice and given me insight to other organizations and best practice.”

Kate Wilbroughby, Global CR Manager, DP World, UAE, CSCLeaders 2016

“Where before I’d be very clear what I am looking for, now I am looking for something different. I am beginning to see things differently, draw out others and recognize the contributions that every person makes to the organization.”

Bupe Auxilia Ponga, UN Women Country Representative to South Africa, UN Women, South Africa, CSCLeaders 2015

“In spite of working in multinational organizations in global roles, within the first day of attendance, I realized that I had certain preconceived notions – which were incorrect. The subsequent days of the programme contributed immensely to my developing an appreciation for the commonalities across cultures and more importantly being able to leverage the strengths embedded in this diversity.”

Naveen Gupta, Enjee Advisors, Singapore, CSCLeaders 2018

“The diversity of insight and thought I have gained through CSCLeaders is helpful to me every day. Exposure to such a diverse group of leaders, their thinking and approaches, is enabling me to view challenges in a new light – from multiple perspectives.”

Hilton Ingram, Head of Marketing: Precious Metals, Anglo American, UK, CSCLeaders 2017

“We usually don’t get an opportunity to work with such a diverse group of people, so we tend to get comfortable with working with people similar to us. During the course of the programme, I was forced to dig deep and move out of my comfort zone. Especially having to keep aside my way of thinking and my ideas, and listening to others – that was a huge learning experience.”

Prof Imran Rahman, Trustee, ULAB, Bangladesh CSCLeaders 2019

2019 Assessment Results:

- 98% are better able to adjust their behaviour to adapt to culturally diverse situations
- 97% better able to spot common ground and make connections between people
- 97% can now recognize their biases and minimize their effects
In today’s complex and ever changing world, senior leaders are required to work collaboratively to bring about fast paced and complex change. CSCLeaders reinforces for leaders the importance of stepping out of their default positions to lead differently and make a positive impact on their teams, organizations and cities.

Feedback shows that CSCLeaders gives leaders the confidence to break down silos and make change happen even when they are not in charge or the subject expert.

“What I will take back to my organization is the collaborative thought process. We talk about it but, in the industry I am in, it is very silo driven. So we need to understand that true collaboration comes from working with diverse groups of people with diverse thought process. As a big company you sometimes think people have to adjust to who you are, but I want to change that to get everyone to think what can different people with different perspectives bring to the party.”
Carol Abade, Group CEO, Expagency, South Africa CSCLeaders 2018

“We often surround ourselves, either consciously or otherwise, with like-minded people. We naturally determine the success of our meetings by the number of those in full agreement. Because of my learning insights from CSCLeaders, I actively encourage a difference of views. I seek to facilitate well-led discord as a powerful tool to generate ideas and drive innovation. The result is overwhelming - a multitude of ideas, thoughts and aspirations that in other circumstances might not have been considered. I am more aware of preconceived biases and now approach issues in a far more open-minded manner – willing to ask why, or why not?”
Paul Singer MVO, Official Secretary to the Governor-General, Australia, CSCLeaders 2015

“The networking alone opens one’s mind to how small we are, that we need to learn more and step outside of our comfort zones; it also helps to show big we are, that we are a significant force in creating positive change towards a better future, be it for our own nation and for the world we are in.”
YB Iwandy Ahmad, Member of Legislative Council, Brunei Darussalam, CSCLeaders 2018

“I now realize that my approach has to be to see the stakeholder’s perspective. I no longer think I know everything or that I have the right answer. I am not antagonistic now, I listen and am much more organized in my approach and my colleagues have noticed the change in my behaviour. This has enabled me to interact and engage much better with the different sectors.”
Oyebisi Oluseyi, Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs, CSCLeaders 2016

“CSCLeaders made me revisit who I am, and see what possibilities are out there. I really enjoyed the immersive visits, as it became a safe space for everyone in the group to really open up and share some difficult moments they had experienced. Through vulnerability, it allowed me and others to revisit our core and actually realize how a certain value or norm is actually a flex, and that before CSCLeaders, an opportunity to be free and safe had not been presented to reflect or talk about it.”
Faral Ncube, Arts and Partnerships Manager, British Council, Zimbabwe, CSCLeaders 2018

“Through the interaction with others from different sectors on the programme, CSCLeaders challenged me to think about my breadth outside my profession. I am now looking for opportunities to get involved in Weir’s education projects here in Malaysia as well as work with some NGOs. I now see that I need to get out of my comfort zone to explore my leadership and my personality more.”
Randeep Mahajan, Managing Director, Weir Minerals, Malaysia, CSCLeaders 2016

“I am about to open a new chapter as an adjunct professor teaching the next generation of public service leaders. CSCLeaders gave me a boost of confidence, greater self-awareness and a renewed passion for the challenges and rewards, indeed the necessity, of caring deeply about and promoting Cultural Intelligence and all the hard work that entails.”
Morah Fenning, Adjunct Professor, School of Policy Studies, Queens University, Canada, CSCLeaders 2018

“The most impactful experience for me during the programme was understanding the different levels of listening and what it actually takes to be a leader working across boundaries. I learned so much from my colleagues who had inspiring perspectives which challenged my own. I have shared the concepts I learned with my organisation and I have learned to apply the concept of seeking common intent with people who, on the surface, are very different to me.”
Cat Thao Nguyen, Managing Director, Global Ready LLC, Australia, CSCLeaders 2019

2019 Assessment Results:

- **92%** are better able to navigate complex situations involving multiple stakeholders
- **94%** feel more able to lead or operate beyond their area of authority
- **98%** feel better able to contribute to their organization, city or country

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<th>CSCLeaders 2016</th>
<th>Network of NGOs, CSCLeaders 2016</th>
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**More Collaborative**
Impact Stories

Ben Carblis, Executive, Mission Australia

Ben participated in 2014. During that time he was a State Leader with Mission Australia. Since the course, he has had two promotions and is now the Executive of Mission Australia.

“Being on CSC Leaders opened my eyes to the complexity of challenges faced by people in other countries. The programme enriched my critical thinking, opened my gaze not just to my world, but also to things and issues outside of my world. People are people, and there are key principles that apply no matter where you are. I work in the homelessness space so it was helpful to benchmark the challenges that I was going through to the challenges that other people are going through. The network certainly has a great impact – I have a level of connection with different people from my cohort. It has been four years since I did the programme and I still engage with my cohort.

“Common Purpose’s core and flex model was very unique and helpful. In my professional life, I have been able to engage with people with an open mind and get a sense through questioning where their core is and where their flex is. This has also supported me in my ability to lead, particularly with change management which we do a lot of in Mission Australia. It has also helped me with my own self-awareness and helped me tackle that unconscious bias. I have become a better listener and have become a bit more considerate in my decision-making.

“CSC Leaders opens your mind, challenges your own perceptions and helps you build a really good network. The real value add is the learning that will continue to accumulate even after the programme is over.”

Rufina Fernandes, Vice President – Strategic Initiatives, GTL Infrastructure Ltd., India

Rufina participated in 2015, when she was Head – HR, GTL and Group Head – CSR, Global Group, India.

“My biggest take away from CSC Leaders was the importance and relevance of Cultural Intelligence in the current context. The world is becoming a smaller place in this digital age and despite that CQ is a key success factor in effective communication and relationship management. I am continuously aware of CQ and that helps me tremendously in my interactions with people both in India and abroad.

“During the programme, I found many other senior people from different walks of life and different countries who also had similar challenges as mine. I found the closed group sessions to share our challenges and seek feedback really humbling and useful. I use the concept of ‘giving the abstract a form’, something I learned during the programme, to help get clarity of thought and concept whenever I am unsure of how to present an idea or strategy. I am more aware of people who are not similar to me in ethnicity and nationality – I am much better at relating to people who are very different to me.

“I am still in touch with many from my cohort – in fact, I collaborated with Dr. Vasudhara, Principal of Somaiya B.Ed College in Mumbai on various programs and we co-developed the Post Graduate Diploma in Education for Peace, a one-year programme that now runs at the college.

“CSC Leaders is a hands-on way to learn a lot more about your leadership style and how to relate to and work with people who are different from you, in a more effective manner.”
## Appendix: CSCLeaders 2019 Participants

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<th>Forename</th>
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<th>Role</th>
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<td>Farrar</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
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<td>Tafida</td>
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<td>Co-Founder and Chief Strategist</td>
<td>Commonwealth Orthopaedic Hospital</td>
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<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>New Times Corporation</td>
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<td>David</td>
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<td>Paul</td>
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“An enormous pool of talent participates; people with high levels of experience, high levels of intelligence and high levels of curiosity.”

Co-Founder and Chair, IMAGINE

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