

Alakeson, Anna Boase and Caroline Loat at The Foreign Policy Centre for their ideas and assistance, and to James Sparling of Emphasis Design for his efficiency and good humour in setting the text so quickly.

This report is the culmination of a six month research project. It follows up the project's interim report and discussion document *Making the Commonwealth Matter*. We were delighted that our first report created such a lively debate about the Commonwealth's priorities and about its place in the 21st century. Those who have been involved in the Commonwealth for many years were so keen to engage with and debate the ideas in the positive and constructive manner in which they were intended that we continued to learn about the Commonwealth and to believe that there is clearly something very special about an idea which inspires so many good people for so long. The report itself, and the reaction to it, was also able to demonstrate how little so most people know about the Commonwealth and what it is doing today. And so we were particularly pleased that we were able to help kick-start a process of debate about the Commonwealth among those who had heard little about it in recent years.

Our research was able to benefit from a wide range of inputs, through discussions, interviews, correspondence and seminars. We would particularly like to thank the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth Secretariat for organising roundtables in order to discuss and debate the findings of our interim report with representatives and officials from many Commonwealth governments, academic institutions, associations, non-governmental organisations, and from the Commonwealth Secretariat itself. Many people involved in Commonwealth Professional Associations provided very useful information and ideas, in seminars, conversation and correspondence. Although it is outside the scope of a short report like this one to report on their particular activities in depth, we believe that they will have an increasingly vital role if the Commonwealth is to deepen and better coordinate its cooperation with members. During these discussions, we found a widespread belief that the Commonwealth