

ALUMNI NEWS

Official newsletter for
Alumni of Australia
Awards in Africa



ARCHBISHOP TUTU MEETS AusAID SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS AND ALUMNI IN CAPE TOWN

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu has dedicated more than fifty years of his life to fighting social injustice and promoting human development at home and abroad. One of Africa's most respected icons, this Nobel Peace Prize Laureate is a man of passionate principles and, since 2010, he's been the Patron of the Australia Awards in Africa.

The Archbishop, who recently turned 80, says he is surprised he's made it this far because he had polio as a baby. This left him with a semi-paralysed right hand and he had to adjust to being left-handed as a result.

What makes him even more remarkable, is his sharp wit and the fact that, in spite of announcing his retirement from public life on his 79th birthday in October last year, he accepted AusAID's invitation to become the key spokesperson for the Australian Government's Scholarships program in Africa.

"It's through education that we are most likely to help people to escape poverty," he said during a recent meeting with a group of Alumni and new Awardees in Cape Town. "I mean it's how you get your development. So I'm thrilled with this particular program, the Australia Awards, where you are assisting all these up-and-coming young people to take their place in our society because they are critical for our development," he added.

The Archbishop waved his hands energetically to underline his point as he welcomed to his office Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, Her Excellency Ann Harrap and AusAID's Minister-Counsellor, Jamie Isbister.

Alumna, Lorraine Rademeyer told the Archbishop that she won a Scholarship to attend a three-month course in Project Management for Infrastructure Development at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 2008. Today she's working for the Western Province Provincial Government where she's involved with Health infrastructure for clinics.

"We're busy building two new hospitals in the Western Cape at the moment," Lorraine explained. "One in Mitchells Plain and a second hospital with 230 beds in Khayelitsha (both poverty-stricken townships on the outskirts of Cape Town). So my studies in Australia made a huge difference to me and the way I see things. I have the principles now that I need to use and I'm doing that while we manage the construction of these new community hospitals."

"It was also a wonderful experience being in Australia because we were able to visit different companies and some of the Government departments as well to see how they are doing things so I could bring those things back to South Africa with me," she added.

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Archbishop Tutu shares a private word with Jamie Isbister, AusAID's Minister-Counsellor for Africa

(from page 1)

Eugene Lalloo won an award to study for his Masters degree in Environmental Management and Development at the Australian National University in Canberra. Today he's the Coordinator for Occupational Health and Wellness at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and he's teaching Environmental Management at the same university.

"What I liked about the program was it was very supportive. We were sent a month before the start of the course and they gave us what they call 'academic skills' so we found that when the course started we knew exactly what to do. The whole program is very relevant because I found Australia is excellent in Environmental Management," he said.

The Australia Awards in Africa initiative is managed by AusAID (The Australian Agency for International Development) and Scholarships are currently being offered across 48 African countries. The program is aimed at achieving sustainable development by sharing knowledge and skills in areas where Australia has global expertise. During 2011, 325 successful candidates have been selected to study in Australia in 2012.

Speaking on behalf of the Australian Government, Jamie Isbister said, "It's an exciting time to be part of Australia's Aid Program to Africa. The Australian Government is committed to expanding our support and engagement with Africa on a range of levels, but the Australia Awards in Africa are really a central part of our program. What it's really about is looking at ways Australia can share its expertise and many of these Awardees are coming to Australia to learn more. They then build relationships which they bring back for long-term benefits and changes to these individuals, but also for Africa's sustainable development."

The High Commissioner, Ann Harrap presented Archbishop Tutu with a giant Australia-shaped cake covered with Australian icons such as kangaroos, a trio of koalas and a sugar replica of the Sydney Opera House. Right under the shadow of Uluru stood a figurine of the Archbishop himself.

"It's delightful for us to be here to celebrate your birthday," the High Commissioner laughed, "so we've brought you a cake." The Archbishop danced up and down when he saw his image on the cake. "Oooh, he's quite handsome!!" he chuckled. "This is SO lovely... just look at this!"

Then with his usual wit he proclaimed his birthday wish to the crowd. "The most wonderful thing," he said to everyone's amusement, "would be that when we meet in the World Cup Australia is nice to us!"

**by Phoebe Anderson
Communications & Media Officer
AusAID, Pretoria**



Archbishop Tutu receiving his birthday cake from Her Excellency Ann Harrap



"Well I think that to have someone of Desmond Tutu's integrity, calibre and passion endorsing the Australia Awards program in Africa signifies a big tick for the effectiveness of this program. This is a man who takes education seriously, who understands the value of not only starting with young children, but helping to continue a person's professional education later on in their lives. And the fact that he described our program as 'superb' is a ringing endorsement of the Australia Awards program."

Australian High Commissioner, Her Excellency Ann Harrap

PUBLIC SECTOR COORDINATING AUTHORITY PROFILE: ETHIOPIA

by Lloyd Milliner, Milliner Consultants
Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Each year the Australian Government selects outstanding Africans for Australia Awards in Africa (AAA) development scholarships. The purpose of these awards is to enable students to contribute effectively to their home country's national development program through skills upgrades.

Role and strategy of the Coordinating Authority

Scholarships are delivered in partnership with a Coordinating Authority. A Coordinating Authority is a partner government organisation which coordinates scholarships to the public sector. In the case of Ethiopia, the responsible agency is the Ministry of Education via the Directorate for International Relations and Scholarships, headed by Mr Ato Berecha. The Directorate's role is to ensure that Australia Award opportunities are communicated among public sector agencies such as universities, federal and regional ministries. According to Ato Berecha, "This is the first time that inter-governmental scholarships such as the AAA are distributed in an organised and streamlined fashion through one centralised ministry."

Outlining the Government's human resources capacity building strategy, Ato Berecha explains, "Our plan is to enhance the capacity of our universities to train 23,000 professionals who are able to teach at the highest level over the next five years. At this point we are focusing mainly on our universities because one well-trained teacher can educate another 1,000 young students. Our targets are 70% Masters graduates and 30% PhDs and out of these we want 70% science and technology graduates and 30% social sciences graduates." The Ministry of Education identified clear priority areas for 2013:

(a) road and railway construction engineering, (b) civil engineering, (c) health sciences (e.g. physiology, anatomy, biotechnology, biochemistry) and (d) mining.



Mr Ato Berecha, Director of Ethiopia's Ministry of Education with Australian Ambassador Lisa Filipetto at the cocktail reception in Addis Ababa

Awardees' views

The students are also thrilled to be given this opportunity. For example, Yonathan Minuye is a male lecturer at Bahir Dar University in Amhara Region and is hoping to study for a Masters in Economics (University of Sydney) or Development Economics (University of Queensland). He expects to achieve a thorough understanding and to learn of cutting edge issues in international trade policies so he can help train young Ethiopians to become professionals in this field. Minuye is looking forward to going to Australia to see what it is really like, "I didn't know much about Australia before applying for the scholarship but I learned that it is very multi-cultural. I really want to experience that," he said.

Addis Miniyahal, a female lecturer also at Bahir Dar University is preparing to study for a Masters in Agricultural Economics. Miniyahal expects to attain professional knowledge that will help improve agricultural productivity which she wants to pass on to her students in Ethiopia. "I am hoping to gain much practical knowledge for better understanding," she says. Miniyahal also wants to learn more about Australia's social and economic achievements in a diversified society.

Her Excellency Lisa Filipetto congratulates the 11 Ethiopians who received Australian scholarships in 2011. Australia has increased the total number of long term scholarships to Ethiopians to 22 for 2012, through 18 Masters Awards and 4 PhDs.



Australia's involvement

After a long absence, the Australian Government is happy and proud to be back in Ethiopia, working together with the Ministry of Education towards building a fruitful long-term relationship. Having established a presence in Addis Ababa in January 2011, the Australian Government is already playing its part in building human resource capacity in the country. In October 2011, Australia's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Her Excellency Lisa Filipetto, congratulated the 22 Ethiopian students for receiving their scholarship awards to study in Australia in 2012. It was a proud moment for both Ethiopia and Australia to have achieved this together in partnership. Ato Berecha is already looking forward to strengthening this partnership towards achieving the Ethiopian Government's ambitious human resource capacity building goals.

Ethiopia's response

Ato Berecha expressed much gratitude and appreciation for Australia's significant contribution to this effort. "I really appreciate the assistance Australia is affording us. I am very happy to send our students to Australia because its good reputation in science and technology particularly suits our own national priorities," he said. When asked what he expects from the returning students, Ato Berecha replied, "I expect them to return with new knowledge, appreciation of new technology, some practical experience and an enhanced teaching capacity. This will help in the development of Ethiopia."



Awardee Mehari Arefeaine

Mehari Arefeaine (pictured above), a male lecturer at Mekelle University in Tigray Region, is looking forward to studying for a Masters in Rural Management or Agri-Business. He expects to enrich his knowledge base in these subjects and to gain some practical experience and application through case study work and research. Mehari's vision is to serve Ethiopia by imparting his newly gained knowledge to students in Mekelle and engage in active research. Going to Australia excites him as he is eager to experience "...the openness of the academic staff, students and world class facilities."

Australia Awards in Africa hosts Pre-Departure Briefings for 2012 awardees



Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria, His Excellency Mr Ian McConville addressing the awardees in Abuja



Dr. Arnaldo Brito – Director General: Higher Education, Science & Technology, Cape Verde Coordinating Authority; Ilka Collinson, AusAID Program Manager; Dalia Regina Soares Gomes, Cape Verde Awardee; Eusebio Africano dos Reis Varela, Cape Verde Awardee

**by Lebogang ba ga Lathane
Communications Coordinator
Australia Awards in Africa**

The 2011 round of Pre-Departure Briefings (PDBs) and receptions were held from 4 – 21 October 2011 in Abuja, Accra, Addis Ababa, Lilongwe, Maputo, Nairobi, Port Louis and Pretoria.

The aim of the briefings was to provide a comprehensive report to the 325 awardees currently preparing to commence studies in Australia in 2012. The briefings cover the things they need to do before their departure, as well as providing a detailed overview of what they can expect life to be like when they undertake their studies in Australia.

The PDB in Abuja was attended by awardees from Nigeria and Cameroon. At the session, Nigerian Government representative, Dr P. A. Odiniya, from the office of the Head of Civil Service, told the awardees that their Government was proud of them and that they should remain the stars they are during their studies in Australia, as well as upon their return, to help in building their country.

Dr. Odiniya applauded the Australian Government for its continued commitment to African development; a resolution that was confirmed by the Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria, His Excellency Ian McConville, who said the Australian Government aims to give Africans up to 1000 scholarships per annum by the year 2013. He went further to say, "The number of scholarships awarded in West Africa continues to rise, a clear demonstration of our unwavering commitment to helping build Africa and her people." His Excellency Mr McConville also reminded the awardees of their status as ambassadors of their own countries while studying in Australia and to conduct themselves in a befitting way.

In giving feedback at the end of the sessions, a majority of the awardees were in unison about the importance of these briefings as part of their preparation. Mr Osayande Osagie from Nigeria who attended the briefing in Abuja said he was grateful to AusAID for organising these briefings because life in a foreign country can be daunting. "I really

commend you guys for hosting these briefings, they are extremely important for people like me who have no clue what life is like in Australia," said Osagie.

In Maputo, the briefing was attended by awardees from Angola, Cape Verde and Mozambique, supported by officials from their respective governments. What made the Maputo briefing unique was the fact that in the room next door, there was a workshop for about 40 alumni, and this presented the awardees with an opportunity to engage and get a first-hand account of what to expect in Australia.

The Australia Awards in Africa program offers long term scholarship opportunities (at Masters Level) as well as Short Course Awards of up to three months to Africans from 48 eligible African countries. These scholarships are in priority sectors as advised by the various governments, with the main sectors being: Public Policy, Agriculture/Food Security, Natural Resource Management, Water and Sanitation as well as Public Health.



Awardees from Mozambique, Angola and Cape Verde at the Maputo PDB



His Excellency, Ian McConville with awardees from Nigeria and Cameroon

2011 Pre-Departure Briefings - Picture gallery

Nairobi, Kenya



Accra, Ghana



Lilongwe, Malawi



Pretoria, South Africa



Putting into Practice the Knowledge Gained in Australia

by **Jenkins Flahwor**
Mining Short Course Fellow
Liberia

The offer from the Australian Government to study on a Short Course Award at the University of Sydney was a monumental opportunity in my professional life as it put me in a position to contribute to sustainable development initiatives of post-conflict Liberia. The six-week course in Mining Resources: Sustainable Management of Revenue Flows hosted by the Graduate School of Government at the University of Sydney, was rewarding as it exposed me to various ways in which mining companies consider the interests of Aboriginal communities in which most of these mining operations take place.

Coming from a civil society background, nearly all of the topics covered during the course were significant to my work. Most specifically, topics such as Public Policy, Issues Management, Sustainable Development in the Extractive Industry, Mining Contracts, Resource Fund, Scenario Planning and Strategic Leadership Skills. The knowledge I acquired from these topics has further equipped me with the needed skills and techniques to critically analyse government policies and make suggestions where necessary. I learned the need for civil society organisations to partner with government to provide expert advice in relation to concession agreements signed between governments and multinational companies so as to protect national interest for sustained development and environmental protection.

Additionally, the practical experience I gained through site visits, particularly at the Rio Tinto Operation Centre in Perth, the ALCOA Mine, and the Forstecue Operation Centre, clearly indicates the extent to which Australian mining companies tend to prioritise community interests and benefits in their approach to mining. The direct relationship between mining companies in addressing the development needs of mining in Australia is one thing that one cannot easily forget. This is in contrast to how things are done in Liberia, where mining community benefits have to be provided through government bodies and authorities.

Australia, in my mind, is one of the most outstanding countries in the world with high environmental standards as exemplified by their mining companies. Environmental protection seems to be as important an issue amongst multinational companies as it is in the political scene. The high sense of environmental protection and clean energy is one thing for which ordinary Australians should appreciate their government.

Besides the classroom learning activities during my short course, one of the greatest benefits I got from the program is the networking opportunity I had and the contacts I established with other colleagues from Africa. To date I continue to share professional information and advice with many of them.

The Impact of the knowledge I gained

Whenever we went for site visits to Australian mines and mining operation centres, I felt envious and really saw an opportunity for growth in my country. Furthermore, when I read and heard about the relationships that exist between Aboriginal communities and mining companies in Australia, I wished I was in a position to change the fortunes of Liberia in an instant. Liberia has a population of 3.5 million people and an abundant deposit of iron ore, gold and diamonds, with oil being only recently discovered. Additionally, our vast forest land made us one of the highest exporters of timber prior to the civil war. With all these, our country remains poorly developed. I was constantly reminded of our shortcomings but not deterred, especially when considering that I was empowering myself with the short course I was undertaking at the University of Sydney.

Since finishing my course and returning home, I have decided to establish an organisation that would help complement my Government's effort in the sustainable management of revenue accrued from Liberia's natural resource sector with emphasis on the mining industry. The mining industry has in the past accounted for nearly 60% of Liberia's exports. Currently, the industry has been gradually returning to normalcy with the presence of many multinational corporations.

Also, following my return home, I conducted some research to identify if there was in existence, any advocacy organisation that would help advocate on behalf of mining communities while advancing policy options and suggestions to government for best practice. To date, of the hundreds of civil society and human rights organisations operating in Liberia there are none established exclusively for this purpose, besides the government-sponsored Liberia Extractive Industry-Transparency Initiative (LEITI).

Meanwhile, the Liberia Watch for Sustainable Revenue (LWSR) is being established as a result of lessons I learnt while in Australia. The overall purpose of LWSR as a non-profit organisation is to promote the effective, transparent and accountable management of Liberia's national resources to ensure public good through advocacy and grassroots awareness. Additionally, the organisation intends to create public awareness of the valuable assistance Australia continues to render to Liberia through the Australia Awards in Africa Program.

Since returning to Liberia, plans are underway to incorporate other beneficiaries of the Australia Awards in Africa program hailing from Liberia so as to make this dream a reality.



Jenkins Flahwor, a Liberian national pictured at the University of Sydney, where he completed a six-week mining course in June-July 2011

The Impact of the LONG TERM AWARDS in Kenya



A world renowned author in the early 20th century, Gilbert Chesterton, once said, "Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another." This statement holds true when considering gentlemen like Isaac William Kyalo, a Kenyan national who is an alumnus of Australia Awards in Africa. Kyalo has been working since March 2011 as a Lecturer in Nursing at the Pwani University, in Kilifi, Kenya. He is the inaugural Chair of the Nursing Department at the institution.

Mr Kyalo obtained a Masters degree in International Health from Curtin University, Western Australia in 2009. Upon completing his degree he went back to his employment as a Lecturer at the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC) in 2010. After spending a few months at KMTTC, he received an offer from Pwani University to tutor and chair the Nursing Department. He attributes this to his hard work as well as his qualification from Australia.

Kyalo says his promotion from a training college to a university will enable him to make a positive contribution towards improving his country's health system. "Currently in our country, the demand for medical skills far exceeds the supply. The Award I got from the Australian Government has put me in a prime position to make a meaningful contribution in our health system, especially through my teaching," says Kyalo.

In his current role, Kyalo tutors Nursing, oversees the activities of the Nursing Department and also contributes to the university's policies as an Academic Board Member. Furthermore, he is also responsible for the financial management of his department. He says the most enjoyable part of his job is the work he does with his students. He is passionate about providing training to his students, empowering and readying them for their professional careers.

Kyalo's notable achievement to date is introducing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing course at the university. This module was previously not offered by the university and since his appointment, he has led its design as well as seeing through the approval and adoption process. As a result, the first 26 Nursing students have already been enrolled by the university in October 2011 and 50 more will be starting in January 2012.

"I cannot begin to measure the effect the Award has had on my career, it's simply too great," declares Kyalo. "And for what this has come to mean in my life, I would like to say to AusAID, thank you, thank you, from the bottom of my heart," he adds. Among others, some of the skills he says he gained from his studies in Australia are conducting academic research, data analysis and policy writing skills. In addition to his University duties, Kyalo is currently in the process of preparing his research proposal for his PhD next year.

As proclaimed by Chesterton, Kyalo is passing his education to the next generation through his stellar work.

by Lebogang ba ga Lathane
Communications Coordinator
Australia Awards in Africa

AusAID African Scholarship Awardees lead Africa Day celebrations in Brisbane

Africa Day, May 25 2011 was celebrated for the first time at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane. Australia Awards in Africa awardee Seipati Joyce Ditsoane spoke to the crowd and gave everyone a deeper insight into the meaning of this day for all Africans.

The event was organised by QUT East West, a special part of QUT's Student Support Services which is dedicated to bringing together local and international students. They were assisted by the QUT African Association, a student organisation which brings students of African origin together with those who love Africa at QUT.

The event was a huge success with QUT students and staff moving to the African beat, tasting fabulous food supplied by the local African community and learning more about African cultures.

By Lynda Lawson
Language and Learning Advisor
International Student Services
QUT Brisbane



The impact of the Awards in Mozambique TESTIMONIAL

Compiled by Steve Miller
Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist
Australia Awards in Africa

Understanding the benefits of the AAA Initiative

Over the past 2 months Australia Awards in Africa hosted alumni workshops in five countries – Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya, Zambia and Uganda. In the main, the purpose of the workshops was to interview the alumni and find out what they have done since they returned from their studies in Australia. It was also to establish the benefits of the awards on their work and professional development. There have been some great stories, here is one of them from Mozambique:

Innocencio Banze

After returning from Australia I joined a social program of a mining company operating in Tete, a central province of Mozambique. My main task was to ensure that the program was providing proper agricultural support to the farmers living in the resettlement areas (Agricultural inputs and technical support).

When I began to work in the resettlement area, I was notified that although the region was prone to drought (low rain season), the local farmers were not using drought tolerant crops such as cassava (manioc esculent). The farmers were focused on other crops such as maize, groundnuts, peanuts, etc. that were possible to produce but were susceptible to drought. As a result I always knew they had food shortages. One of my decisions was to introduce cassava to the resettlement area. In order to do this I needed to convince the farmers that cassava was one of the appropriate crops for those agro-ecological conditions. In order to achieve this, my team and I decided to establish demonstration fields in farmers' areas. We did this and the cassava grew well even with little rain.

It was amazing to see how the farmers were surprised with how much food they were storing. Despite the little rain, the plants were still green. The following season these farmers wrote a letter to a social project asking for provision of cassava material to plant. It was fantastic for me and my team to see how rapidly these farmers decided to plant cassava taking into account that farmers usually take time to adapt to new practices and techniques.



Innocencio Banze

ALA Fellowships: African vets visit Australia

In April 2011, the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA), through its consultancy arm, AGWEST International, hosted six veterinarians from Agricultural Ministries in Africa. The vets, three from Botswana and three from Kenya, all made this visit under the AusAID funded Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships program (ALAF).

The training program was aimed at enhancing skills in veterinary epidemiology, risk assessment, monitoring and surveillance and control of zoonotic and animal diseases in the livestock industry. AGWEST International staff assisted in the training.

During the same period, another international African delegation of senior officials from Uganda, Rwanda, Ghana and Ethiopia was also hosted. The objective of the meeting was to expose the delegation to the breadth of production systems within Western Australia and for them to witness first hand, how the resident livestock industries are structured and the current skill levels in the livestock industry.

The delegates had an opportunity to see DAFWA facilities in South Perth and Narrogin, as well as world-class abattoirs, commercial dairy operations and the Muchea Livestock Centre.

A visit to the Kimberly region saw the delegation briefed on the livestock industry and they also visited the Roebuck Plains Export Yards and Roebuck Plains Station.

More African professionals are expected to take up placements in Australia through the ALAF program in 2012. For more information visit the AusAID website at: <http://ausaid.gov.au/scholar/alafellow.cfm>

Alumni Feature



Professor Felix Dakora



...with some of his students in the lab at the Tshwane University of Technology.

"Australian universities are among the best in the world."

"I am who and what I am today because of the training I received in Australia." These are the words of Professor Felix Dakora, a Ghanaian national, twice an AusAID alumnus. He says he is eternally grateful to the Australian government and is even happier to learn that they are offering more scholarships annually to Africans. As far as AusAID alumni go, Professor Dakora is in a special league. He obtained a Masters in Microbiology from the University of Sydney in 1981 and a PhD in Botany from the University of Western Australia in 1989, a rare feat in the life of the Australian Government Scholarships program.

Professor Dakora has 27 years of work experience, which includes 19 years of postdoctoral research in Africa and North America. After completing a BSc (Honours) degree in Agriculture at the University of Ghana in 1977, he joined the Crops Research Institute of Ghana in 1978. Shortly after that, he was awarded an Australian Masters scholarship in Agricultural Microbiology. Upon completing the degree in 1981, he returned to Ghana where he initiated research on biological nitrogen fixation in legumes.

In 1985, he once again left Ghana for Perth, Australia, where he undertook a PhD degree in Botany at the University of Western Australia. His PhD centred on understanding how oxygen regulates nitrogen fixation in root nodules. After completing the PhD in 1989, he was awarded a Fellowship as Visiting Scientist to the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. in the United States of America.

After 4 years of productive research in the United States, Professor Dakora took up a permanent position in the Botany Department of the University of Cape Town, South Africa in March 1993, and rose to Associate Professor in 1997. His responsibilities included designing courses, teaching, research, extension, post-graduate student training and university administration. In July 2002, he joined the Cape Technikon in Cape Town as Professor and Dean of Research and Technology Promotion. Following his stint at Cape Technikon, he held the same position for a year (2005-2006) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, also in Cape Town.

In 2007, he moved on to be a Professor and South African Research Chair in Agrochemurgy and Plant Symbioses in the Chemistry Department of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Pretoria, a position he still holds. Professor Dakora is very passionate about training post-graduate students, and the Research Chair he currently holds allows him to train many Masters and Doctoral students. He is also a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa and a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa.

Professor Dakora believes the training he received from Australia in 1981 and 1989 was world-class. "The Australian universities are among the best in the world. I attribute my current standing in the global scientific community to the excellent university education I received in Australia," declared the Professor. He says he holds Australian institutions in high regard particularly because the training he received has empowered him to propel himself to greater heights as an academic.

Alumni News asked him if he would encourage other Africans to apply for Australia Awards and this is what he had to say; "Oh yes! I'd encourage many Africans to apply to study in Australia because of the very high standards in their university education. Additionally, the people in Australia are very friendly and easy to get along with. It's a great place and the people are not obsessed at all about class or race." He went further to say, "My life in Australia was fantastic. I never once missed home. I love the Aussies because they are so easy-going and accepting of all people. They work hard, and party hard also," added the Professor.

In his leisure, the married father of two likes watching sports, particularly soccer, rugby and athletics. He also goes hiking whenever he can and enjoys a glass of good red wine.

**by Lebogang ba ga Lathane
Communications Coordinator
Australia Awards in Africa**



Dr. Mutale speaking as an alumni guest at the recent Malawi Pre-departure Briefing

“It’s a great opportunity to make a meaningful contribution.”

It is never easy for anyone to leave behind their family and only way of life they know for any length of time. It was equally difficult for Dr. Ernest Mutale of Zambia, who had to leave his family, friends and familiar surroundings to go and study in Australia in 2010.

In his first few weeks, Mutale struggled to adjust to life in Australia because it was the first time he was going to be away from his family for so long. He kept his focus on the reason he was there and knew it would ultimately be good for him and those back home in Zambia. He visited his family every 6 months during his two-year stay in Australia. To keep his sanity he made frequent phone calls to his wife and children, and knowing that they didn’t want for anything kept him going. It went a long way towards giving him the strength he needed to focus on his books.

Dr. Mutale is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding alumni success stories of 2011. He completed his Masters in Public Health at Griffith University, South Bank Campus, Brisbane in July 2011. By his own admission, the joy and satisfaction of successfully completing his course far outweighed the pain he felt when he had to leave his family behind, especially when considering the fact that he was never going to be the same person again, professionally.

His academic results make for intriguing reading. He enrolled for 12 modules in his course and managed to get 4 High Distinctions, 6 Distinctions and 2 Credits. This gave him an average GPA of 6.17 out of the possible 7.0 total. This means he obtained a Distinction degree, which is a minimum of a 6.0 score. Moreover, Mutale was awarded Certificates of Recognition for Academic Excellence in his first year of study, 2010, for both semesters. In the same year, he was also awarded the Griffith Award for academic excellence. He was an excellent student, by anyone’s standards.

Currently employed in the Zambian Ministry of Health as a Medical Officer, Dr. Mutale is responsible for the Chilubi District, where he oversees all the district health activities including the administration and clinical practices. His core responsibilities are maternal and child health activities especially in the areas of TB, HIV/AIDS and child immunisations.

Dr. Mutale spoke to Alumni News

What has the Award done for your professional growth?

It has enabled me to be a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society, Griffith Chamber. It has also paved the way for me to be put on the list of specialists in public health on the Health Professionals Council of Zambia (HPCZ). Last but certainly not least, it has helped me gain a promotion in the form of confirmation to my current position of District Medical Officer.

Are there any projects you’re currently working on that you’re passionate about?

Yes, the project mainly involves establishing and dealing with the factors leading to high cases of diarrhoea in children under the age of 5 years in Chilubi Island.

Is the qualification from Australia helping you in any way on this project?

Yes, very much so. The qualification equipped me with skills in conducting Quantitative Research and management procedures as well as sourcing effective responses in a dynamic healthcare system.

Would you encourage other Africans to apply for and undertake the Awards and why?

Yes, I think it’s a great opportunity for anyone who wants to make a meaningful contribution in their country through their chosen career. Furthermore, the Award ensures that one concentrates mostly on one’s studies instead of looking for temporary and casual jobs to raise funds for tuition and other costs.

How did your family take the news of you being away while studying?

I left my family back home. It was both good and bad news, as I had to leave them for such a long time but for a worthy cause. It was even more difficult due to the fact that it was the first time that I was to be away for that long.

During your studies, how did you find life in Australia?

At first, life in Australia was strange and discouraging because the system was a bit different from that in Zambia, as well as the differences in culture and social dynamics. In time, however, I got used to it and it became like my home away from home. Academically, I was able to understand the system and master it in good time.

How has the whole experience affected you as a person?

It has helped me gain an appreciation for and accommodate people of various backgrounds and different cultures in my life.

If you could say anything to the Australian Government, what would it be?

A very BIG thank you to the Australian Government because the knowledge and experience that I now have will go a long way towards alleviating some of my country’s problems like high disease burden. I am truly grateful for the opportunity.

**by Lebogang ba ga Lathane
Communications Coordinator
Australia Awards in Africa**

Secrets of success: How to obtain an Australian Development Scholarship

The Malawi and Zambia Governments have capitalised well on the extra scholarship opportunities available through Australia Awards in Africa. Each country has received a record-breaking 32 Masters level scholarships. Recently completed competitive selection processes rewarded the excellent performance of the Malawian and Zambian applicants who are now preparing for departure to Australia in January 2012.

So what did these countries do well? Firstly, they had strong promotional processes that spread the word about the opportunities to potential applicants. Secondly, the opportunities were opened up to the private sector and civil society for the first time. With larger numbers of scholarship opportunities available, the Australian Government is encouraging a more inclusive approach to development by expanding the availability of development scholarships beyond the traditional public sector focus. Of the 64 scholars heading to Australia, 84% are from the public sector, 14% from civil society and 2% from the private sector. The group is also perfectly gender balanced with 32 men and 32 women receiving scholarships.

Thirdly, the applicants themselves shone in a very competitive field. Malawi and Zambia together have picked up 20% of the Masters scholarships available across Africa because their applicants were able to articulate clearly their development credentials.



Malawi and Zambia awardees pictured here with the Australian High Commissioner to Malawi and Zambia, His Excellency Mr Matthew Neuhaus with his wife Angela. These awardees attended a two day pre-departure briefing in Malawi on 13-14 October 2011.

Impressive candidates at interview are able to demonstrate a consistency between their area of undergraduate study, their current employment and their plans for how they will use their Masters level studies to increase their effectiveness as leaders of developmental change on their return to Africa. The best interviewees are acutely aware of their country's development plans and the unique contribution they can make to specific areas of these plans. They understand the importance of working with others to bring about change and provide strong examples of how they are active in these areas. Finally, they acknowledge cross cutting issues such as the importance of gender equity to development.

Exemplars of this overall approach are the two Australian Leadership Award Scholars, Tinkhani Grace Khonje of Malawi and Peggy Mumba Mugala of Zambia, pictured below. Africans were eligible to apply for 200 Australian Leadership Award Scholarships for the first time for study opportunities in 2012. Eighteen Africans have been offered these awards, which cover a Masters level degree and additional leadership training.

by Tracey Austwick
First Secretary
Development Scholarships
AusAID, Pretoria



Zambian Coordinating Authority (CA), Mr. Ronald Misapa.
Coordinating Authorities in each country assist with promotions to ensure a competitive field of applications are received.

Leadership Award Scholars



Peggy Mumba Mugala of Zambia and Tinkhani Grace Khonje of Malawi

ALUMNI NEWS

Australia Awards in Africa Newsletter



Australian Government



Australia Awards

DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

The Government of Australia is offering scholarships to citizens of eligible African countries in priority development sectors.

These include Masters level (applications close 28 February 2012) and short term professional development awards of three months or less (applications close 16 December 2011).

For more information please go to
www.adsafrica.com.au

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