



# GIVING@UCT

The University of Cape Town Donor Newsletter

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> FOCUS ON REGULAR GIVING



'Generosity', says Khalil Gibran, 'is not giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is giving me that which you need more than I do'. Not only does this convey how philanthropy can be a force for good but it also captures how, through the power of regular giving, we can become philanthropists who can make a difference in the world.

Not many of us are in a position where we can make a single major gift. But most of us can make donations on a regular basis if we believe that the cause that we are contributing towards is worthy enough.

In this edition of Giving@UCT, we highlight how regular giving contributes towards growing the university's funding pool and provides the university with a constant (and reliable) source of income that it can use to plan for its various programmes over a longer period of time. Consistent regular giving by a significant number of donors

is to philanthropy what compound interest is to investing, the eighth wonder of the world, as Einstein once described it. In regular giving, your donations combine with the donations of many others to build up more resources and provide more opportunities for growing numbers who benefit from the many programmes of the university.

I would encourage you therefore to seriously consider becoming a regular donor to UCT. It is not the size or amount of your donation which only makes the difference. It is the commitment you show to changing the lives of others, improving the quality of the academic experience UCT provides, and ensuring that the university continues to remain the leading African university in the world.

## DR RUSSELL ALLY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI DEPARTMENT

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The Maitri Trust is a first time donor to the University of Cape Town through their support for the Grade R Maths Programme



materials and resources developed are informed by current research and theory into how children develop Mathematics concepts and how best to facilitate the learning of these concepts.

The Maitri Trust, based in Edinburgh, Scotland, and founded in 2006, recognises that school enrolment rates have increased considerably in countries with emerging market economies. However, many more children are leaving school without mastering basic mathematics and literacy skills. Much emphasis is therefore placed on helping to improve the quality of education and driving systemic change through the training of teachers, Headteachers and government education officials.

This is how the Schools Development Unit aims to make an impact, since the Grade R Maths Programme provides comprehensive training for Foundation Phase Subject Advisors, education practitioners and teachers. Programme materials are also specifically created to be stimulating and interactive, so that children are able to try out new knowledge and skills without fear of making mistakes. This is possible when teachers encourage learners to be curious, motivating them to try and to believe that they can succeed.

As a first time donor to the University of Cape Town, The Maitri Trust now joins our valued community of donors who help advance our strategic initiatives towards making impactful change. Elma Philanthropies pledged the matching donation. The Zenex Foundation, along with a host of individuals and family trusts have also donated to Grade R Maths.

With these partnerships of support, programmes such as Grade R Maths are able to expand and develop their work, reaching more teachers and children as both direct and indirect beneficiaries. Tackling the problem of education inequality is a complex challenge but through investing in partnerships of support, it is hoped that our response may be all the more successful.

## > THE MAITRI TRUST

# BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS IN MATHEMATICS

With a keen focus on improving the quality of school education, to eradicate poverty and reinforce social equality, The Maitri Trust shares an inspiring synergy with UCT's Schools Development Unit. The Trust's generous donation of R2 million is a significant boost to the work carried out by the Unit's Grade R Maths Programme.

Located at some of the poorest public schools and pre-schools in the Western Cape, Grade R Maths is based on the understanding that laying a firm foundation in a child's early schooling years, particularly with the basic concepts of Mathematics, is essential for academic success in later years. The Schools Development Unit provides teachers with added knowledge and understanding of the development of core Mathematics concepts that underpin the curriculum in Grade R, and model appropriate play-based classroom methodologies for implementing the Grade R curriculum. The

# INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ACADEMICS

## ZIMINGONAPHAKADE SIGENU on the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Programme

As a teenager, Zimingonaphakade Sigenu never considered the possibility of pursuing a career in academia but her exceptional performance at UCT prompted her Language in Humanities lecturer to think otherwise. After nudging her to apply for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Programme, Zimingonaphakade was sceptical about her chances of selection. Three days after being interviewed, however, she was pleasantly surprised to receive the good news about her induction into a new world of opportunities.

Since 2002, the Mellon Mays Programme at UCT has identified and supported exceptional students towards becoming scholars of the highest distinction. Each year a new cohort of five students are selected at the cusp of postgraduate study to begin sharpening their research talents towards a possible career in academia. Generously funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, a longstanding donor to the university, the initiative provides regular and structured programming. Fellows receive stipends for term time research activities and further support for summer vacation research projects, faculty mentoring, and partial repayment of undergraduate student loans.

While Zimingonaphakade explains that she never considered herself an exceptional student, she always adopted an attitude of working hard and working consistently. As a learner at Luhlaza High School in Khayelitsha, she was selected to be part UCT's 100-Up Programme that is managed by the university's Schools Improvement Initiative. 100-Up, which is largely donor-funded, aims to address the under-representation at universities by targeting Grade 10-12 school learners from neighbourhoods that struggle with socio-economic adversity. The programme coaches and mentors candidates in order that they can compete on a more even plane with youth from more affluent neighbourhoods for places at university.



As she reflects on her experience thus far on the Mellon Mays Programme, Zimingonaphakade speaks of discovering new opportunities: "I am excited about the possibility of being an academic. I never thought about this before, but then Mellon Mays arrived and now I am able to compete with students whom I previously thought were in a different and better league." Zimingonaphakade admits that transitioning to university life was a huge challenge, especially in her first year, because no-one in her family had attended university before. Initiatives such as the 100-Up Plus programme, which supports students from 100-Up when they are on campus, helped to put her in touch with the resources necessary to strengthen her academic pursuits.

As she stands on the brink of a new chapter of her university career, preparing for postgraduate study, Zimingonaphakade speaks with a deep sense of gratitude about the support she has received: "People who donate to the programmes that benefit us students are really driving change. They not only motivate and inspire us but also enable us to access new worlds."



# the LONGEVITY<sup>of</sup> REGULAR GIVING

The age-old wisdom of the Bondei proverb “sticks in a bundle cannot break” holds true for the practice of regular giving. When our individual efforts come together, we are stronger and more resilient in terms of building sustainability over a long period of time. Our dedicated community of donors who give to UCT on a monthly basis also help to secure predictable support that goes a long way in the planning of development initiatives. Over the past three years, this community has grown to almost 520 individuals who give an average total of just over R2million per year, which not only helps support the various strategic projects but also contributes towards growing the university’s endowment.

Every contribution therefore makes a significant impact on the lives of beneficiaries such as student bursary recipients, academics who pioneer public benefit initiatives, and those are empowered through community development. While large once-off donations play a vital role in providing the capital needed to establish such projects, regular giving brings sustainable support through the compounded efforts of individuals who have committed over a renewable three to five year period.

**THE ANNUAL APPEAL** is one of the most popular means by which donors pledge or renew their giving to UCT. It not only draws support from local donors but also from those alumni and friends who are based in the regions managed by our international offices: USA, Canada, UK, and Australia. The Appeal is sent out at the end of each year and while it highlights key focus areas, such as student financial aid, residence capacity, or schools education improvement projects, donors choose any cause that resonates with their own social concerns.

**AFFINITY GROUPS** also attract a large number of donors who give regularly to causes that resonate with a special interest, such as residences or faculty-specific appeals. One of the most well-known examples of an affinity group is the Spirit of 68. It is conceptualised around a research award for postgraduate students and commemorates protest action on campus in 1968 that defended the appointment of Archie Mafeje as an academic at UCT against the apartheid government’s demand to withdraw the job offer on grounds of his race.



**Student caller, Pinky Radebe, connects with alumni at the 2017 Phonathon**

**THE ANNUAL UCT PHONATHON** aims to connect current students with those who have already graduated, bridging the time divide of the university's history as students hear from alumni about their experiences and give them an idea of what may have changed or simply become legendary on campus. It is also an opportunity for alumni to pledge financial support to their alma mater. This year, the phonathon reached 4868 alumni and raised R483 000 in pledges from 152 donors.

**THE STAFF APPEAL** has attracted significant contributions from UCT staff members, a group of donors who also include alumni who now work at the university

either as support or academic staff. The generosity of staff donors is a unique expression of commitment that goes far beyond the job merits of key performance areas. The staff appeal is also an annual invitation that goes out to all staff and each year yields a growing number of regular staff donors. This year's appeal saw a 39% increase in staff who have become new regular donors.

**THE ENDOWMENT** is often mistaken as an exclusive opportunity for large gifts but regular giving towards the endowment is an important means of building this investment from a large community of donors. The value of a strong endowment for a university is that it allows flexibility, especially in the face of declining government subsidies, to respond to wherever the need is greatest. The cumulative impact of donations over a number of years, from many individual donors, is such that we are able to stand as a stronger community providing more than we can imagine on our own.

Thanks to the generous contributions of our UCT donor community, our endowment is now at R633million and we hope to grow this investment to R1billion through the Distinguishing UCT Campaign which marks UCT's 2018 centenary celebrations as a degree-issuing university.



**A large portion of donor funding benefits students through bursaries and scholarships. Pictured above are postgraduate students from the Faculty of Science.**



Oasis Group Holdings CEO, Adam Ebrahim, addressing bursary recipients at a reception hosted by the company

# OASIS GROUP HOLDINGS

## ALUMNI HELPING TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE STUDENT FUNDING

A space of calm, tranquillity, and sustenance, is conjured up by the idea of an oasis. Company CEO, Adam Ebrahim, of Oasis Group Holdings explains that this is the spirit in which he set up the asset management firm with two of his brothers twenty years ago, all of them UCT alumni. With a comprehensive giving portfolio, Oasis not only shares its value through educational initiatives but also contributes towards public healthcare facilities, as well as homes for children and the aged.

Oasis' deep commitment to education is embodied in its investments into this sector and under their watch, the company has engaged with projects that encompass early childhood development facilities as well as secondary and tertiary level initiatives. Earlier this year, the brothers made a generous donation of R10 million to the University of Cape Town as part of the company's commitment to building sustainable solutions to the student funding crisis that threatens the future of our country's talented youth. Through this multi-pronged funding approach, they express the hope that this donation will reinforce efforts to "address inequality and strengthen a competitive workforce, leaving nobody behind."

Over the next five years, an annual R2 million allocation of the fund from Oasis will be used to support: The First Year Experience Programme, hosted by UCT's Centre for

Higher Education Development (CHED) which provides comprehensive support to all first year students, from mentoring to tutoring and career pathing, so that students are empowered to perform at their optimal capacity; Undergraduate Bursaries which provide financial support for student fees across a wide range of disciplines; and Postgraduate Bursaries that will provide exceptional students with opportunities for Masters and Doctoral qualifications.

Education has always been a pivotal value for Adam and his brothers, who were students at UCT during the turbulent years of our country's history in the 1970's and 1980's. In the context of country-wide university and school boycotts at the time, they took on the initiative, along with 150 other UCT Students, of hosting free "Saturday Schools" at three locations across Cape Town for approximately 3000 students who participated in the boycotts. The initiative helped ensure that while taking up the struggle, students still kept up with the curriculum and passed their examinations.

While the struggle for equality of education opportunities still continues in many respects, it is through building strong partnerships of support that more of our country's talented youth will be able to fulfil their academic and career pursuits. The brothers are enthused by the remarkable capacities that bursary recipients demonstrate, not only in their academic aptitudes but also their drive to be innovative leaders. To this extent, they consider it an imperative that the business sector "plays a strong role in supporting our universities so that we produce more outstanding professionals and continue to be a globally competitive society."

## FOCUS ON THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Our community of alumni and donors in the United States have a significant impact on UCT's development work. The University of Cape Town Fund, Inc. has since 1984 been operating as an independent non-profit organisation to support fundraising efforts from the United States to UCT. The Fund promotes awareness and support for UCT among alumni, individual donors, corporations and foundations within that region.

Among the highlights of the Fund is an initiative to support the digital map collections at UCT Libraries. The William and Yvonne Jacobson Digital Africana Program is a collaborative initiative between the University of Cape Town and Stanford University, whereby a selection of African historical maps held at UCT's Special Collections department is made available through the Maps of Africa site and the UCT Libraries' website. Similarly, digitised maps from the Stanford University Collection are accessible through the UCT Libraries' discovery platform.

The initiative was made possible through the generosity of Bill Jacobson and his wife, Yvonne. Bill is a UCT alumnus, B. Com and LLB, and was also awarded a scholarship to Stanford University where he completed an MBA. Now settled in San Francisco Bay, he heads up an investment and property management company. Apart from also being an accomplished tennis player and tech enthusiast, Bill explains that maps have always been an important part of his life: "I developed a love of history and politics at UCT, which in turn propelled me into collecting old maps... I bought my first antique map in London in 1959. My interest in antique African maps culminated in about 1999 when I learned of Dr. Oscar Norwich's death in South Africa. His widow Rose said that she was interested in selling his collection, and I negotiated the sale to Stanford University Libraries, and co-funded the purchase."

He continues, "My interest went beyond the maps alone, and we arranged an exhibit of the maps and a wide array of historic exploration literature, for which I also wrote my book, *The Rediscovery of Africa, 1300 to 1900*. I was attracted by the Stanford Libraries' efforts to digitize all their map collections to make them available

to many more scholars, and supported this effort and their state-of-the-art map room. Since then, I have come the full circle by helping fund the digital map library at UCT, and encouraging the collaboration between these two outstanding universities in the digitization of historic materials and the use of contemporary technologies to share this information worldwide."

Bill is excited about the progress of the initiative at UCT: "We are planning to create a geospatial center in the libraries, to encourage the use of geo-referenced mapping for many contemporary activities such as urban planning, mining, agriculture, the military, law and custom, population densities, energy, the environment, and industrial development. Today, geospatial research and development helps define a great university."

Contributions, such as those of the William and Yvonne Jacobson Digital Africana Program, are among the many generous efforts by donors and alumni in North America. Through these efforts, UCT's generation of new knowledge is enabled to make a bigger impact on our world.

*With thanks to Meg Cotner for providing content*



Bill Jacobson is a donor to the digital map collections at UCT Libraries

# WHY I AM GIVING@UCT

## MFUNDO THWALA

Looking at UCT from both sides, as a scholarship beneficiary and now a regular donor, Mfundo Thwala is excited about being able to help afford other students the opportunities he received. He explains that, having grown up in Newcastle KwaZulu/Natal, making the transition to a university in a new province was at first a challenge but he soon found numerous opportunities to optimise his study and career aspirations.

One of these opportunities was being selected to participate in the Dell Young Leaders Programme. Funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the initiative identifies exceptionally talented students towards the end of their first year of studies and provides comprehensive support throughout the rest of their university experience, to graduation and employment. Mfundo recalls that being on the programme felt like being “being part of a family on campus, even to the extent that being away from home was bearable.”

Given the exposure to industry and career mentoring that Mfundo experienced at UCT, he was already able to secure his first job by December of the year that he completed his degree. As a Bachelor of Business Science Student, majoring in Finance and Accounting, he had always hoped to build a career in the burgeoning business sector. After working for The Foschini Group as a Trainee Planner, during his first year out of university, he moved on to join Lindt and Sprüngli South Africa where now works as an Assistant Financial Accountant.

During his student years Mfundo actively engaged in activities, such as the annual UCT Phonathon, that heightened his sense of the impact that individual donors

make on the university’s advancement objectives. He also enjoyed the experience of connecting with alumni who shared their stories of student life and offered valuable advice on what to consider for a fulfilling career.

During the most recent UCT Phonathon this year, Mfundo was pleasantly surprised when he received a call and found himself looking at UCT from the perspective of both an alumnus and new donor: “I decided to become a regular giver, rather than make a once-off donation, because this means I can support the university over a long period of time. The scarcity of funds for tertiary education is a personal battle and therefore it is not only up to the government to tackle this issue, but it is also up to us to ensure that our very own brothers and sisters are looked after, and afforded an opportunity to advance themselves. Our individual contributions, when joined together, can change many lives.”



**EDITOR** Merlin Ince  
**DESIGN** Lara van Otterlo  
**PHOTOGRAPHS** Michael Hammond  
Robyn Walker

For further information or to make a financial gift to the University of Cape Town, please contact us through [giving@uct.ac.za](mailto:giving@uct.ac.za)

**DEVELOPMENT & ALUMNI DEPARTMENT**  
University of Cape Town Lower Campus, Rondebosch,  
7700, Western Cape, South Africa  
[www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)