

SOUTH AFRICA & OXFORD



2015/16

Oxford and South Africa: collaborative research and strong personal links

Oxford has particularly strong personal connections with South Africa, having hosted Rhodes scholars from the country since the early 20th century and Oppenheimer scholars since the 1990s. There are about 100 students from South Africa at Oxford in any year and we have nearly 20 members of academic staff from South Africa. The connections are just as deep within the country itself, as the articles over the following pages show. These are just a snapshot of the many research collaborations Oxford academics have established with colleagues in South Africa and of the broad variety of research across disciplines that Oxford academics undertake there. Cooperation runs wide and deep, ranging from doctoral students teaching at Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research, to long-term clinical trials run in partnership with the University of Cape Town, to econometric modelling of the South African economy with colleagues at the University of the Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch University. We look forward to continuing and strengthening these collaborations in the future and to welcoming many more students and scholars from South Africa to Oxford.

Supporting child development in adversity

Oxford is a leader in studying South African children's physical and psychological development, and in informing policy. Working with colleagues at the Africa Centre for Health and Population Studies and University of the Witwatersrand, Professor Alan Stein's research tests strategies for mothers to talk about their HIV status to their children; demonstrates the importance of supporting young children of an HIV-positive mother; and follows cognitive, social and physiological progress through childhood in the Birth to Twenty cohort (Mandela's Children).

Innovations in health care delivery using low-cost technology



*Enrolling a participant into the SMS text Adherence support trial, Cape Town, August 2013
Credit: Allen Jelfhas 2013*

Researchers from the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, and the Department of Social Policy have developed strong collaborations with researchers in the Department of Medicine and Chronic Diseases Initiative for Africa at the University of Cape Town and the South African Medical Research Council.

Internationally leading research includes the development of a low-cost, mobile phone-based diagnostic device, able to identify children with a high risk of having valvular heart disease by analysing the sounds that the heart makes, and the largest trial to date on the use of SMS texts to support adherence to treatment among people with high blood pressure. The Wellcome Institutional Strategic Support Fund has funded an evaluation of the impact of the SMS text intervention (currently in progress) and MRC UK has funded a further study in sub-Saharan Africa using the technology to explore wider scale-up for supporting treatment of type 2 diabetes.



*Credit: Shutterstock/
John-James Gerber*

Tuberculosis Vaccine Trials



Infant being vaccinated at the SATVI trial site in Worcester, South Africa
Credit: SATVI

Oxford's Nuffield Department of Medicine has been working closely with the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative, based at the University of Cape Town, under the leadership of Professor Helen McShane.

SATVI is the largest dedicated TB vaccine research group on the African continent. Professor McShane's group has developed the MVA85A vaccine, which underwent its first efficacy trial in 2009–2012 in collaboration with SATVI, enrolling nearly 3000 South African infants. The vaccine was found to be safe, although did not improve upon BCG-induced protection. A second trial has taken place in collaboration with the Clinical Infectious Diseases Research Initiative, also based at the University of Cape Town, together with Chu Le Dantec in Senegal, in HIV-infected adults, for which results are expected shortly. Oxford and SATVI continue to work closely together in their efforts to develop effective vaccines against TB to impact this global epidemic. Currently, Professor McShane's group is investigating whether delivering a TB vaccine directly into the lungs is a more effective method of vaccination.

Population Ageing in Africa

The African Research on Ageing Network (AFRAN) is run in close collaboration with partners on the African continent by Oxford's Institute of Population Ageing. The Institute investigates demographic change and the impact arising from population ageing across the globe. It makes recommendations for how government, business and society can respond. Through AFRAN the Institute provides a platform for exchange and capacity building between network members and forges collaborative research and training initiatives. AFRAN

is co-ordinated by Dr Jaco Hoffman and the network's main collaborators in South Africa are the Albertina and Walter Sisulu Institute of Ageing in Africa (IAA), University of Cape Town, led by Dr Sebastiana Kalula, and North-West University. In October 2012, the IAA in collaboration with AFRAN and partners hosted the 1st Africa Region Conference of Gerontology and Geriatrics, which brought together 400 researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and civil society and private sector representatives, from 21 countries across Africa and 20 beyond.



AFRAN Research-Policy Dialogue, Abuja, Nigeria (2008) with Dr Jaco Hoffman, Dr Sebastiana Kalula and Professor Monica Ferreira (UCT) and other members from across Africa

T-cell immunity

Professor Philip Goulder focuses his research on the South African HIV epidemic, with the principal goal of understanding the role of T-cell immunity in successful long-term immune control of HIV infection in adults and children. The Goulder Group studies groups of children and adults attending clinics in South Africa, in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, and also in Kimberley, Northern Cape, in addition to smaller cohorts of HIV-infected study subjects attending clinics in the Thames Valley region in the UK. The goal of this work is to define the immune responses that are effective in control of HIV, and that an effective HIV vaccine would need to induce. More recently, the Group has received additional funding to focus on the HIV cure field, by working with HIV-infected infants and older children to explore the potential for eradication of HIV altogether. The Goulder Group's main collaborators in South Africa include, in Durban, Professor Thumbi Ndung'u, at the HIV Pathogenesis Programme, Doris Duke Medical Research Institute, University of KwaZulu-Natal; Dr Alasdair Leslie and Dr Henrik Kloverpris at the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for TB and HIV; Professor Deenan Pillay, Director, Africa Centre for Health and Population Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal; and, in Kimberley, Dr Pieter Jooste, Head, Department of Paediatrics, Kimberley Hospital.

Econometric modelling

Dr Janine Aron and Professor John Muellbauer, Institute for New Economic Thinking at the Oxford Martin School, have collaborated for over a decade with economists at South African universities and the South African Reserve Bank. Recently published research on the effects of exchange rate changes on import prices, the consumer price index and micro-consumer prices in South Africa included Dr Greg Farrell and Dr Kenneth Creamer from the University of the Witwatersrand, and Professor Neil Rankin from Stellenbosch University. This econometric modelling effort involved visits to Oxford by collaborators and presenting at Oxford conferences. Dr Aron and Professor Muellbauer derived the first quarterly household wealth stock data for South Africa, and have researched on inflation, monetary policy, and wealth, credit and consumption, interacting with local academics. Dr Aron also co-edited the book *South African Economic Policy under Democracy*, published by Oxford University Press in 2009, with contributions from leading economists at South African universities, after a conference hosted at Stellenbosch University.

Oxford Human Rights Hub

The Oxford Human Rights Hub (OxHRH) is a network led by Professor Sandra Fredman, herself a South African and a graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand and now the Rhodes Professor of the Laws of the British Commonwealth and the United States at Oxford University, and Honorary Professor of Law at the University of Cape Town. Its mission is to connect academics, practitioners and policy makers working around the world on human rights law issues. In meeting this aim it has developed strong links with several South African universities. It has held international conferences in collaboration with the universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand and regional correspondents from both

UCT and Stellenbosch University frequently contribute to the OxHRH Blog. In addition, OxHRH regularly collaborates on projects with the Democratic Governance and Rights Unit at the University of Cape Town and with the Socio-Economic Rights and Administrative Justice Research Project at Stellenbosch. Justice Dhaya Pillay, an associate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal was a visiting fellow with the OxHRH in 2014, and Justice Kate O'Regan, Honorary Professor at UCT is a frequent visitor to the OxHRH. Currently, the OxHRH is working to develop deeper links with Rhodes University to establish a visiting fellowship programme in collaboration with the Legal Resource Centre in Grahamstown.

Reducing child abuse



Sinovuyo Programme, Eastern Cape 2014

Professor Frances Gardner and Dr Lucie Cluver, from the Centre for Evidence-Based Intervention in the Department of Social Policy and Intervention, are working with Professor Cathy Ward at the University of Cape Town on a suite of randomised controlled trials of programmes to help with parenting and to reduce child abuse for all families in low and middle-income countries. In South Africa the project is called 'Sinovuyo Caring Families Project' and is run in collaboration with the South African Government, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation. The collaborative project includes University of Oxford and University of Cape Town students.

Land degradation in the Karoo



Degraded land in the Karoo

Credit: John Boardman

The Environmental Change Institute's Professor John Boardman, as well as being Honorary Professor in the University of Cape Town's Department of Environmental and Geographical Science, is collaborating with colleagues at the University of Cape Town and Rhodes University, as well as the universities of Sheffield, Northampton and Aberdeen, to study landscape signatures of degradation in the Karoo. Specifically, the researchers are looking at heavily eroded 'badland'

areas and deep gully systems. The co-operative project is investigating these badlands and gullies, changes in degradation over time, the knowledge of farming communities, possibilities for rehabilitation, the impact of erosion on hydrology, rainfall patterns and climate change, and recent environmental change using reservoir sediments. Professor Boardman has also begun a new project on the history and impact of rainfed wheat farming in the Sneeuwberg, South Africa.

African Studies Centre

The links between the African Studies Centre and South Africa are many and varied. The Centre hosted a large conference in April 2014 celebrating 20 years of democracy in South Africa, which was attended by many leading public figures from South Africa, including the then Deputy President, Kgalema Motlanthe, and which drew scholars from around the world. Annually, the African Studies Centre sponsors Oxford doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers to teach at the Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research in East London. The course they teach is loosely based on the Centre's own Master's programme and has been singularly successful. Making use of the Oppenheimer Fund, African Studies invites several South African scholars to spend up to three months with them every year. Professor Adam Habib, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, was a recent Oppenheimer visitor. Most important of all, several students from South Africa come to Oxford every year and enrol in African Studies. The Centre's abiding and deep interest in teaching South Africa stimulates these very fine students to go home and contribute to national development. Finally, the Bodleian Library houses the UK's best collection of South African books, as well as many valuable archives, notably including those of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and the Mandela biographer Anthony Sampson.

Funding and Scholarships



Southern African Scholars in the Rhodes House gardens

Credit: Lee Atherton

The University offers a wide variety of scholarships for graduate students covering fees and living costs: over 900 fully-funded scholarships are available for new masters and doctoral students in 2015–16 from the University, our colleges and supporters. In addition to the Rhodes Scholarships and Oppenheimer Fund Scholarships, South African students are also eligible for other major schemes including the Weidenfeld Scholarships and Leadership Programme, the Chevening Scholarships and the Commonwealth Scholarships. The University's flagship Clarendon Fund Scholarships are also open to applicants from any country, studying any graduate

course. The Funding Search tool (www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/fundingsearch) provides more detail on the scholarships open to graduate applicants from South Africa.

The Oppenheimer Fund's aim is to foster links between Oxford and South African universities. It does this by funding visits for academics between Oxford and South Africa, and providing scholarships for graduate students who have previously studied at South African universities to study at Oxford. The Fund was endowed in 1993 by Harry Frederick Oppenheimer, a South African businessman and philanthropist. Eligible candidates will be considered for the scholarship

automatically if they apply to a graduate course at Oxford by the January deadline. Both prospective students and academic visitors can find more information on the University of Oxford website.

The Rhodes Trust has deep and historic links with South Africa. Established through the legacy of Cecil Rhodes in 1903, nearly 8000 Rhodes Scholars have studied at the University of Oxford from around the world, and each year ten new Scholars arrive in Oxford from Southern Africa. In 2003, the centenary of the Rhodes Trust was marked with the establishment of The Mandela Rhodes Foundation, which offers scholarships to postgraduate African students at South African universities. Back in Oxford, current Rhodes Scholars lead The Rhodes Scholars' Southern Africa Forum which is a charitable organisation dedicated to enacting positive change in Southern Africa.

Oxford University Press Southern Africa

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. The South African branch, which is 74.9% owned by OUP and 25.1% by The Mandela Rhodes Foundation, celebrates its centenary in 2015. OUP is one of the leading educational publishers in South Africa, locally making curriculum-compliant books for school learners in 11 official languages. OUP Southern Africa (OUPSA) also has a strong and reputable local undergraduate higher education textbook programme. In addition, OUPSA and the OUP regional businesses in Africa support teachers and lecturers not only in South Africa but in ten surrounding countries, providing high quality schoolbooks for learners from Botswana to Zimbabwe. The partnership with the Mandela Rhodes Foundation sees surplus from OUP's publishing used to fund Mandela Rhodes Scholarships – allowing South African and African students to study at local universities. As part of its centenary celebrations OUPSA will launch *Every Child Deserves a Dictionary*, donating 20,000 dictionaries to rural schools where children would not otherwise have access to this resource, highlighting Oxford's commitment to South Africa and its people.

STUDENT PROFILE: JOHN EDWARDS, MPhil Development Studies



Hometown:
Cape Town

Previous education and work experience:

I completed my Master's degree in Architecture at the University of Cape Town and then worked as a Project Architect prior to starting my current studies.

Current academic interests/activities:

I am currently studying for an MPhil in Development Studies, supported by the Oppenheimer Fund. My thesis research is on the encampment of Syrian refugees in Turkey and proposes that an investigation into the spatial characteristics of refugee camps can provide useful insights into aspects such as power and the differing political representation of the Syrian refugees, the Turkish host government, and Turkish citizens.

Comments on your Oxford experience so far:

My course has given me a broad theoretical and critical understanding of the field of

development and has helped me to develop a wide range of skills, but above all the course has taught me to look at the world in a more nuanced way. Oxford's diverse international graduate population, also reflected in my department, has led to a rich and stimulating learning environment.

Current extra-curricular activities:

Outside of my academic work, I serve as an elected member of my college's Governing Body (Wolfson) as well as on its Domestic and Premises Committee. It has been great to get involved in the actual day-to-day running of the college and to be able to represent my peers' interests.

Career aspirations following the completion of your course:

I hope to incorporate my past experiences in the built environment with my newly acquired skills in the fields of development and refugee studies by working on post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction and settlement projects in the Middle East. Eventually, I would like to return to South Africa to work for the Department of Human Settlements.