

# Change the World through International Scholarships



## Development Policy and Practice at The Open University

The world is changing rapidly. The steady rise of Asia and the shift of power from West to East has resulted in a significant shift in the traditional dynamics of power and finance. Together with the growth and diversification of some African economies, traditional thinking that has long underpinned the practice of international development is quickly changing.

### The Challenge

International development professionals must rethink the theories, solutions and models, which form the basis of international development studies. How development cooperation is delivered, by whom, to whom and



via what means, are questions international development organisations will be tackling in the years to come.

Currently, many existing international development

professionals have come from outside the developing regions that they work with. This results in a lack of personal experience concerning the particular region's needs, strengths or weaknesses. This can lead to ineffective policies that fail to address the true needs of a region or country.

To face these challenges, we therefore require:

1. Professionals who have completed postgraduate training from an institution with expertise in international development.
2. Analysts who originate from and continue to work within the developing world.

The Open University's Development Policy and Practice PhD Scholarship will provide just such professionals.

## The Open University's Development Policy and Practice Scholarships

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2014, the OU's PhD in Development Policy and Practice (DPP) recognises and actively tackles the numerous challenges facing international development today. Based within the Development Policy and Practice Centre, our PhD programme challenges traditional thinking about international development - what it is, who drives it, and where and how it happens - to help create more effective development interventions. Our research programme is driven by a desire to generate real improvements in the lives and prospects of people across the globe.

Over the last 30 years, the OU has successfully trained more than fifty DPP doctoral students from developing countries, who have gone on to make a significant impact on international development policy and strategy. It is crucial that the OU continues to train these analysts, if we are to face the global challenges surrounding development goals and issues.

### Supporting Our Students

However, as the majority of our students come from the developing world, finding the funds to support their study is highly problematic. We are therefore setting up a DPP PhD International Scholarship Fund. This will support students from the developing world to study for a PhD in DPP with us, for three years, at our award winning campus in Milton Keynes.

By joining our vibrant research community, each student will not only gain the skills required for a PhD, but will build up a network of peers, some of whom will be fellow DPP International Scholars, with whom they can share ideas and develop new initiatives. The fund will also support students to travel to the developing world to undertake fieldwork, lasting for anything up to a year. It is our aim that this fund will provide a fantastic opportunity not only for the student, but will also contribute to the rich fabric of the OU itself and the international development community at large.

## The PhD Programme

The OU's PhD programme in DPP is challenging and successful. It encourages graduates to undertake research that informs policy and practice in ways that will have positive effect: we do not believe in theory for theory's sake, but in how theory helps ideas succeed in the 'real' world. We therefore work closely with organisations from the developing world and feed into their agendas, rather than imposing our own objectives onto them.

The employment rate of our graduates is extremely high and the professional roles played by our doctoral researchers on graduation include a wide range of academic posts, plus major policy and management posts around the world.

## Case Study – Dr Ann Kingiri

PhD research students have been able to influence international organisations such as the World Bank, the UN, the African Union and the African Centre for Technology Studies, as well as national organisations that work internationally, such as the Cooperative College in Manchester.

Take the case of Dr Ann Kingiri who completed her PhD in 2009, entitled "An Enquiry into Biosafety Regulations Implementation in Kenya: Perspectives and Roles of Scientists". Ann decided to pursue a PhD because of the challenging environment she found herself in as a biotechnology regulatory officer. She was required to provide policy guidance on highly technical subjects, which often attracted non-technical judgments. She was awarded an OU PhD studentship through the ESRC-funded Innogen research centre.

While at the OU, Ann was able to connect with key actors in the policy and private arena, and found opportunities to present her research at policy workshops and academic conferences, both in Europe and Africa. Additionally, she was supported to do field work in Kenya, which provided an opportunity to understand the context as a researcher.

Upon successful completion of her studies, Ann returned to Kenya where she is currently coordinating Science Technology and Innovation (STI) related research at the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Kenya as their Research Director. Ann is responsible for leading research which supports the STI policy oriented capacity building, policy outreach and advocacy in Africa for inclusive and sustainable development.



## Kick-Starting the Fund: Professor David Wield, Professor of Innovation and Development

Professor David Wield has kindly made a generous donation of £10,000 to initialise the DPP International Scholarship Fund.

'I am very happy to make a donation. I think that investing in scholarships of this type will not only allow good students from developing countries to benefit but also help to maintain the excellence of the OU.'

## How you can support us

The cost for a three-year full-time studentship is £60,000. Having received an initial donation of £10,000 from Professor David Wield, we are now urgently seeking to raise the outstanding amount for our first scholarship, with the help of friends and supporters of the OU.

We would be delighted if you would consider a donation towards the DPP PhD International Scholarship Fund.

We thank you in advance for your support.