York St John is helping Kenyan universities to improve their students' learning experience through a programme to develop high-quality academic practice in learning and teaching in Higher Education.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dianne Willcocks confers PCAP awards at Kabarak University

Professor Dianne Willcocks flew to Kenya in July to celebrate the first successful cohort of PCAP (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice) in Sub Saharan Africa. Accompanied by Dr Mike Calvert, Course Leader and Professor Christy Adair, Course Tutor, the Vice Chancellor travelled to Nakuru in the Rift Valley to Kabarak University which had hosted the project involving four Kenyan universities.

The ceremony had as chief guest the past president, Arap Moi, who is the Chancellor of Kabarak University. The PCAP students were awarded their certificates as well as recognition as Fellows of the HEA (Higher Education Academy). HEA recognition for overseas students had been recently obtained thanks to pressure from the Vice Chancellor who is a member of the HEA board.

At the ceremony attended by over 80 people, ex-president Moi was full of praise for the programme and stated:

"I wish to congratulate the PCAP graduands for the successful completion of their course. Academicians are expected to keep learning and creating new knowledge and this is what you are doing. This shows the depth of dedication you have in fostering quality education in your various disciplines and universities as well as developing yourselves as scholars."

PCAP Kenya has been followed by PCAP Rwanda and recently Dr David Moulds secured a further British Council grant for York St John to work with five Nairobi universities. 35 PCAP students have now started on that programme which culminates in another conference in Nairobi in July 2010. A representative from each of the universities will visit York in November for two weeks.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dianne Willcocks with (from left) the Past President and Chancellor of Kabarak University Arap Moi, Vice Chancellor of Kabarak University, Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Dr Mike Calvert and (far right) Deputy Vice Chancellor of Egerton University

Professor David Maughan Brown presents a paper on challenges facing Higher Education

Last year, Vice Chancellor Professor David Maughan Brown presented a paper on the challenges facing Higher Education in developing countries. At the workshop in Nairobi, representatives from 18 Kenyan universities, the Kenyan High Commission and the Kenyan Ministry of Education discussed the outcomes of the first PCAP initiative. During his presentation, Professor Maughan Brown stressed the need for truly cooperative projects between Western universities and partners in Africa.

Professor David Maughan Brown and Dr Mike Calvert with students at the workshop in Nairobi

Student exchange with Kenya

In 2010 York St John students will have the opportunity to spend part of their degree at USIU in Nairobi.

Courses in Tourism Management, Psychology and Counselling will be available and give adventurous students in these areas a chance to enhance their degree by getting a new perspective on their studies.

York St John in Kenya

Student scholarships and exchanges

SPARK extends its reach

The Development Office has raised funds for three scholarships to award to students who will join us in September.

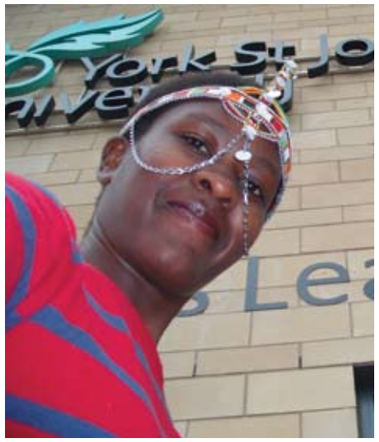
Kenya SPARK scholarship

The Kenya SPARK scholarship is awarded to a graduate from one of York St John's partners in Kenya. It gives full tuition fee waiver and £8,000 towards expenses for studying on a one-year taught Masters programme. The scholarship is awarded based on academic excellence, as shown in the application and reference from the candidate's university. For 2009–10, the scholarship has been awarded to Eannes G Ongus, a graduate from USIU (United States International University) in Nairobi for a place on the Masters in Leadership and Management.

Inspire scholarship

The Inspire scholarship is awarded to the applicant 'with the most inspiring life story that demonstrates the importance of education' as demonstrated through the submission of a 2,000 word narrative. It gives up to two years tuition fee waiver and a total of £7,000 as a contribution to subsistence over the two year period of study.

The first recipient of the award is Valentine Nkoyo, currently a student at Kabarak University in Kenya, She will enter year two of the BA (Hons) Business Management degree in September. As part of the scholarship experience, Valentine will work with the Development Office to raise funds for future scholars.



Valentine Nkoyo, who returns in September

Professor Christy Adair researches native African dance on location in Kenya

Through her involvement with PCAP, Christy Adair has developed links with the dance community throughout Kenya. She has engaged in research with performers, dance companies and a range of artists, spending almost three months on projects in Kenya.

Research highlights include a meeting with choreographers directing a dance training initiative at the 'Go Down Centre' in Nairobi, where, as a result, Christy hopes to run workshops on critical responses to dance as part of a festival in November. She also attended the National Music Festival in Mombasa; a huge event held across a number of venues with entrants from schools throughout Kenya. Her work is also expanding into Tanzania with meetings set up with several contemporary dance groups to further her research. USIU have also invited her to present a paper as part of their 'Black History Month' in February 2010.

York St John International Scholarship

In addition to the two scholarships from the Development Office, a third Kenyan student has been awarded one of the five international scholarships available to international students next year.

Mary Okumu will take up her place on the MA Counselling degree with a full tuition fee waiver scholarship. Mary has a degree in Guidance and Counselling from the University of Eastern Africa, where she worked especially with individuals who have been affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. In order to obtain the award, Mary submitted a special essay, explaining the main issues to be considered in internationalising a University and how she would use her study abroad in the UK to contribute to the positive effects of internationalisation.

The Scholarships and Prizes Committee considered all applications and awarded her one of the scholarships. Others will go to students from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and the USA. The Committee also approved a Palestine scholarship, awarding tuition fee waiver and a contribution towards living expenses from the Development Office. Khawla Mohammed Badwan will come onto the MA TESOL in September, having completed her BA and Teaching Diploma at the Islamic University of Gaza, a university which suffered considerable damage to its infrastructure during the Israeli invasion.