

OpenDoor

Issue 19

The magazine for supporters and friends of The Open University



The Open
University

Your support continues to rewrite futures

Welcome to the latest edition of Open Door, the magazine dedicated to you, the OU's wonderful family of generous supporters and donors.

In this issue, we have much to celebrate. Firstly, we are delighted to share the success of our first ever Giving Day. In July, over 1,500 members of the OU family came together and raised thousands for our Open Futures Fund. The Giving Day was an incredible opportunity for alumni, students and staff, to come together across 36 fantastic hours to rewrite futures, by providing more life-changing scholarships and bursaries. You can read more about it on page 6.

You can also discover more about some of the innovative projects you've been supporting over the years, including Animal Computer Interaction (page 8) and our important International Development work (page 10).

We wanted to share these fantastic developments as they are made possible by your support and generosity – the difference being made to so many lives and communities is inspiring and demonstrates the collective power of philanthropy.

As ever, we are so grateful for your continued support. You are helping people transform their lives for a brighter future.

Thank you.

Karen Hart

Karen Hart
Deputy
Director of
Development



Inside your Open Door

- 3** The latest DVSF news
Opera star, Laura Wright, becomes an ambassador for the Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund.
- 4** Charlotte feels like a lottery winner
Carer Charlotte can finally achieve her dream of a degree. Read her story.
- 5** Legacy shines a light for refugees
Honouring the memory of Heidi Hillman, a Jewish refugee and passionate advocate of life-long learning.
- 6** Giving Day
Celebrating the OU's inaugural Giving Day – a huge success thanks to your support.
- 8** Helping dogs improve lives
How innovative research is helping to improve people's lives and detect cancer.
- 10** Making the world of difference
How you've helped teachers in sub-Saharan Africa and India improve the quality of education.
- 12** Tackling Racism
How the OU and Santander Universities plan to tackle racial inequalities in higher education.

On the cover


A medical detection dog; part of the Animal Computer Interaction research - read more on page 8.

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Opera star Laura Wright becomes new DVSF ambassador

The Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund (DVSF) provides free Open University education for disabled veterans and is fortunate to have the support of its ambassadors, each and every one of whom play a vital role in championing the Fund and the impact it is having. The latest ambassador to join the OU family and help us spread the word about the DVSF is the acclaimed mezzo-soprano, Laura Wright.

A regular presenter on the BBC's Songs of Praise, Laura became one of the decade's biggest selling artists after she won the BBC's Chorister of the Year in 2005. She's now a successful English mezzo-soprano and became the England Rugby team's first ever official singer. Laura wants to do more to help veterans and is excited to be a DVSF ambassador, believing the key is rehabilitation.

“ We need to give military veterans as much help as possible, and that's why the DVSF is so important.

I know from teaching – I run around eight singing workshops a week for the Soldier's Arts Academy – that for so many of them it is a case of rehabilitating into society again. They've said to me that the music we share together is a form of rehabilitation.

Laura Wright

”

With Laura's help, the scholarships programme will be promoted to even more people, especially those who need support and direction: "Scholarships like those offered by The Open University are so vital because they give much needed focus and direction, which leads to greater confidence and new opportunities," says Laura.

Giving veterans a new sense of purpose

There are estimated to be around 2.6 million veterans living in the UK who have served in the Armed Forces and dedicated their lives to the safety of the Nation. Veterans whose lives are changed due to being disabled in or due to military service, can often find themselves unprepared for life outside the military.

That's why, in 2018, the OU launched the UK's first Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund. Since it began, we're proud to say that the Fund has supported over 160 disabled veterans, injured in or due to service, begin their OU journey, helping them to acquire new skills, knowledge and career opportunities. We are delighted that 50 more will be beginning their studies in October.

Why military veterans need our help

According to the Career Transition Partnership annual statistics, veterans are significantly less likely to have a degree than their non-veteran counterparts, which could leave them at a disadvantage in the jobs market. In addition, a report by Deloitte shows an estimated 44% of disabled veterans find it difficult to find a fulfilling, sustainable job.

We are working to change that. The DVSF offers scholarships, and recipients have their fees waived. Successful applicants are also offered further specialist careers and disability support, alongside free study. This is to give them the best possible chance at preparing them for life outside the military.

Laura even got involved in our Giving Day by tweeting her support and encouraging her followers to get involved!

LauraWright @thelaurawright · Jul 7

I am a proud Ambassador for the Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund at The Open University that offers free education to our military heroes. The OU are currently raising money for the Fund as part of their 1st Giving Day

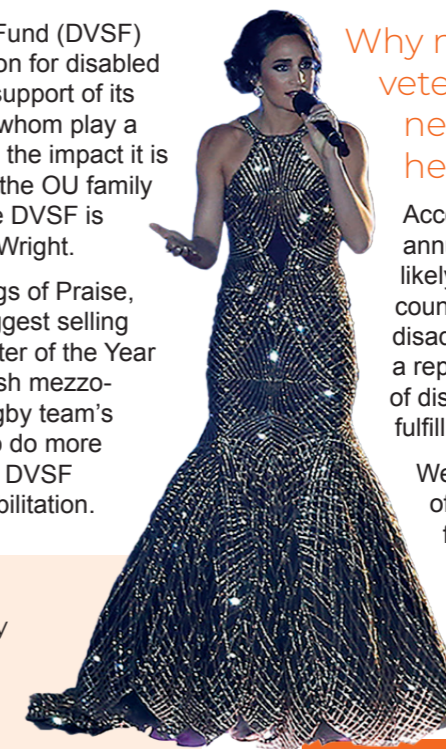
As Laura says: "Military veterans have been trained to have focus and drive but so many lose that when they leave service, and it can be especially daunting for those with a disability. The DVSF gives purpose and drive back into their lives, it adds to their credentials, and improves their chances of a career that's long lasting."

Thank you

We'd like to say a big thanks to Laura for becoming our latest DVSF ambassador, and to all of you who have supported the Fund with your generous donations. Your commitment to supporting students is inspiring and is helping disabled veterans find purpose in life outside of the military.

Learn more about the Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund

www.bit.ly/OU-DVSF





Carer Charlotte feels like a lottery winner

Did you know that 3 out of 5 of us will become a carer at some point in our lives? Carers are often pushed beyond their limits emotionally, physically and financially – in many cases to the detriment of their own health and wellbeing. It's a selfless role and one that requires such commitment and dedication.

Many carers are forced to put their own careers and ambitions on hold, they just don't have the time or money to study for higher education. For young carers it can mean they are twice as likely to not be in education, putting them at risk of unemployment as they lack the skills and confidence required to enter the workforce.

The Carers Scholarships Fund recognises this and was created to provide opportunities to those caring for others. By October 2021 the Fund will have provided 90 full OU scholarships to carers, which has been made possible by the continued support of the OU family. These scholarships help alleviate the financial barriers, allowing carers to gain valuable skills and access life-changing education.

Receiving a scholarship changes lives, and none more so than for Charlotte* who was awarded one of the first Carers Scholarships from the OU in 2020.

"I was absolutely ecstatic when I heard that I had been successful" said Charlotte. "I have never won the lottery, but I can only compare what I felt with that! To be given such a fantastic opportunity was more than I could have hoped for."

Charlotte is the main carer in her family, supporting her mum with a severe brain injury, cognitive impairment and recurring depression, her dad who has autism and has recently had to reduce his work hours, and a

younger sister with autism, ADHD, significant learning difficulties, anxiety and chronic depression. Charlotte is responsible for getting her sister to school every day, takes both her mum and dad to medical appointments and on family visits. She still finds the time to go shopping with her sister when she is well enough, and fit in her own studies too. Charlotte suffers from health problems herself, including ADHD, autism and anxiety, but she hasn't let that stop her from focussing on her dreams.

“ Given my own difficulties and my family circumstances, the OU was the only way I would be able to undertake a degree course. Because of my autism I have difficulties with literal understanding in many subjects, but I have always enjoyed and understood maths. ”

Her dream of achieving a degree in Mathematics had always been a personal goal, and she knows that it will give her a head start with finding a satisfying career in the future. The flexibility of studying with the OU allows her to fit her studies around her caring responsibilities, removing a huge amount of stress she would otherwise have faced.

Charlotte is mindful that many carers like herself have challenging lives, providing countless unpaid hours caring for their family and friends. Caring often comes with financial hardship, but the Carers Scholarships Fund can take away the financial worry for some of these carers, and, as Charlotte says, "a scholarship is a huge act of recognition and kindness to the people who care selflessly for others."

Since launching the Carers Scholarships Fund, more carers have applied to study with us than we have scholarship places for. With your continued support, we can make more scholarship places available so that carers like Charlotte do not miss out on the opportunity to pursue their dreams of education.

Support more carers today
www.open.ac.uk/donate

*Charlotte's name has been changed to protect her privacy.

Legacy shines a light on education for refugees



Heidi Hillman

Gifts in Wills make a real difference to the lives of so many and in helping the OU to be open to all. We are very grateful to those that have already remembered The Open University with a gift in their Will.

Here, we share the remarkable story of Heidi Hillman who left a legacy in her Will to the University. Heidi had a real zest for learning, and was a curious, generous, and creative individual. She was also passionate about breaking down barriers to education and shared the OU's mission of being 'open to all' regardless of people's background.

A Jewish refugee, Heidi fled Nazi Austria in 1939 to start a new life in the UK with her family. The increasing persecution of Jews in Germany and Austria in the 1930s prompted their escape to find freedom and safe asylum. Her sisters were sent to Britain via the Kindertransport, and Heidi and her mother followed several months later in Spring 1939. A qualified dentist, Heidi's father tried to gather the credentials required to practice in London, but it would be several years until he managed to establish himself and build up a practice. His clients included members of the Freud family and many notable actors and musicians. At the end of the war, Heidi and her family decided to stay in London and eventually secured permanent residence. In 1947 they were granted British nationality, and shortly afterwards, Heidi's father Henry became a dentist with the NHS.

Heidi left school aged sixteen and worked as an editor on various journals, and then as a teaching assistant while raising her two sons. Decades later, she signed up to The Open University to study Humanities with Art History, graduating at the age of 63 – a very proud day for Heidi and her family!

A passionate advocate of life-long learning, she was always seeking new ways to learn, hone her artistic skills, improve her education, and build her confidence. She understood the importance of learning, how it makes people more tolerant of others, and how it can open the door to new opportunities.

To honour Heidi's legacy, a conference was held on 14 June 2021 in Wales to coincide with Refugee Week. It brought together refugees and asylum seekers, and the policymakers, education and employment providers that support them. As a proud graduate of the OU, Heidi's journey from refugee to OU mature student and graduate was illustrated in a short film at the start of the conference, to honour her memory and generous gift.

During the conference, participants, many of whom were forced migrants themselves, were encouraged to share insights, including the main obstacles they face when it comes to learning and employment. Constructive solutions and recommendations were made and will soon appear in a report.

As the recent plight of Afghans shows, refugees and asylum seekers often arrive in the UK following traumatic experiences in their countries of origin and while travelling to the UK. The OU is working to earn the status of a University of Sanctuary and to ensure that we remain open to all and foster a culture of welcome and hospitality to refugees.

Wales is hoping to become the UK's first Nation of Sanctuary, which is why Wales proved an important place to host the event. However, the impact of Heidi's legacy is UK-wide. Her legacy will help the OU create a welcoming culture for refugee students, widening access to education. Both Heidi's gift and the conference itself will play a vital role in the OU's application to earn the status of University of Sanctuary.

We are so grateful to Heidi for leaving a legacy to the OU – we believe the conference had a huge impact and will help highlight the obstacles refugees face in accessing higher education and solutions. As a valued member of our OU family, you'll know that the OU has a crucial role to play in making education accessible and inclusive to all. It's because of Heidi, and other members of our alumni family who have incredible stories of resilience despite adversity, that we strive to be better and ensure we honour our commitment of being open to all.

Due to the pandemic we have been unable to unveil Heidi's plaque in our Legacy Garden but if, like Heidi, you decide to leave a gift in your Will to the OU – or if you have already done so – we'd welcome the opportunity to talk to you about being recognised on a special plaque, to be displayed in our beautiful Legacy Garden when your gift is received.

Contact us for an informal chat to find out more about legacies

giving@open.ac.uk
01908 659 141

Watch the conference

www.bit.ly/HEFFMconference

A short film about Heidi's life

www.bit.ly/heidihillman



Heidi reunited with her father



OU GIVING DAY

thank you

On 6 and 7 July 2021, the OU family made history. Over 1,500 alumni, staff and students came together to support the University's first ever Giving Day, an exciting 36-hour challenge to raise money for the Open Futures Fund.

Together the incredible OU family raised a fantastic £158,560! All of your amazing support means that even more life-changing scholarships and bursaries can be provided to students who would otherwise miss out on education.

Thanks to you, more disabled veterans, carers and students from disadvantaged backgrounds will have the opportunity to rewrite their futures.



We are so grateful to you for supporting our first ever



Giving Day and making it such a success, through a period of significant adversity for many. Thanks to your generosity that helps in breaking down the barriers to education, many individuals will see their dreams come true.

Jhumar Johnson
Director of the Vice-Chancellor's Office



36 hours to rewrite futures

From the moment the countdown clock started for the inaugural OU Giving Day, our brilliant community stepped up. From making your donations, to taking on your own fundraising challenges and encouraging your friends and family to get involved – the OU family came out in force!

There were also several match-funding challenges that popped up throughout the Giving Day to help your gifts go even further. We are so proud that donors helped to achieve every challenge and made sure that every extra penny of match and challenge funding was fully unlocked. Thank you to everyone who supported the day and came together to show that the collective power of philanthropy can truly rewrite futures.

£158,560



raised in 36 hours

1,500+



donors from across the OU family

One special element of the day was a range of match and challenge funding to make your gifts go even further, including an **opportunity to triple donations** to the Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund.

Rewriting futures one student at a time

We believe that where you start in life shouldn't limit where you go. That everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. That's why the Open Futures Fund was created; to provide a range of scholarships and bursaries for students who may otherwise miss out on life-changing learning.

With your continued support, including the incredible amount raised during our first Giving Day, together we can continue to break down the barriers to education. Your gifts are helping disabled veterans to rebuild their lives following difficult challenges and ensuring that selfless carers don't have to give up on their ambitions. Your generosity also offers students a lifeline and ensures we can provide essential financial assistance that allows them to continue working towards their dreams.

On behalf of all the current and future students whose lives will be forever changed due to your generosity – we would like to say a huge **thank you!**

BRADLEY'S STORY

How Futuremakers helped make the Giving Day a success

To support the Giving Day, some people chose to donate, others chose to be Futuremakers. These volunteer fundraisers organised their own activities to raise money for life-changing scholarships and bursaries. From online quizzes to nature walks, Futuremakers found imaginative ways to raise awareness and donations within their own communities.

PhD student Bradley Neal volunteered as a Futuremaker and chose to take part in this year's Giving Day – to help break down the barriers that are holding people back from achieving their goals.

For his fundraising activity, he applied skills from his BSc in Environmental Science with the OU, along with his passion for the natural world, and performed a 'walking' taxonomy lesson, which he documented on Twitter.

"The most exciting thing about being a Futuremaker was to share my passion for our natural world, and the pride I have at sharing skills I've learnt during both of my degrees, as well as showing off the unbelievable wealth of stunning semi-natural spaces we have in Milton Keynes. The world will be a better place when the barriers to education are removed, and the Giving Day is a step towards that."



I was motivated to become a Futuremaker to support an institution I love and encourage others to see what an amazing community the OU Family is.



Bradley Neal
PhD Student



Bradley walked through Tattenhoe Valley and Howe Park Wood and identified anything interesting he encountered on his path. "It was so fun, I saw lots and learnt plenty too. The best part was discovering something new, an absolutely stunning meadow of Betony (pictured above), indicating this area is probably very old. I also managed to triple my target, while encouraging people to donate to a compelling cause. I have plans to do this again next year, with at least one zoologist (my best buddy, Ellen!) and a handful of other fantastic ecologists I am friends with."

If you're thinking of being a Futuremaker for next year's OU Giving Day, Bradley has one piece of advice. "Just have fun with it. I picked something I thought I was good at, and other people might enjoy. My idea was unconventional, but it convinced enough people that it was a fun enough idea to support Giving Day which was of course the purpose of it to begin with."

In being a Futuremaker and raising money for the Open Futures Fund, Bradley is helping give others the opportunity to succeed. "To be awarded a scholarship is life-changing in itself, so I hoped my contribution could support funding an education for someone who really needs it."

Are you interested in getting involved next year, or want to know more about being a Futuremaker?

Learn more and register your interest

www.bit.ly/registerfuturemaker

Helping dogs to improve and save lives



Saving lives: developing a canine interface to detect cancer

Did you know that a dog's nose has the power to sniff out cancer? Research shows that dogs can be trained to successfully recognise the odour of a range of diseases, sniffing out even the smallest trace in the human body. With the correct training and tools, medical detection dogs could lead to breakthroughs in how and when patients are diagnosed with life-threatening diseases such as cancer and Parkinson's disease. This has the power to improve early diagnosis and ultimately, save more lives.

Though dogs have the power to sniff out certain diseases with incredible reliability, finding ways to communicate this to humans is still a key challenge. That's where your support is making all the difference. A team of OU academics are developing ground-breaking technology which could prove vital in the fight against cancer.

Medical Detection Dogs, the world pioneer of bio-detection with dogs, working in collaboration with the OU's ACI (Animal Computer Interaction) team, have developed a canine-centred interface that enables medical detection dogs to communicate their findings more accurately. As previously the dogs were only enabled to respond to cell samples with a 'yes' or 'no', Professor Clara Mancini and the ACI Lab team are developing solutions, including utilising machine learning, that will allow detection dogs to 'speak' with bio-detection teams like never before. This includes using neural networks (or computing systems that mimic animal brains), a project OU MSc student Lucy Withington is exploring that could not only improve the reliability of diagnosis, but one day allow dogs to signal the stage of the disease.

The generosity of OU alumni is helping this pioneering research to continue. Thanks to you, the team have been able to develop a second generation of their technology which has already provided positive results that can pave the way for future breakthroughs. Your support is helping researchers to explore just what is possible and we cannot thank you enough.



Dogs can sniff an odour diluted **1 - 2 parts per trillion**

That's the equivalent of smelling one teaspoon of sugar in two Olympic-sized swimming pools!

Dogs can detect prostate cancer at **90% reliability**

Source: Medical Detection Dogs



An example of the switches and interfaces used to help assistance dogs assist their human companions

How your support is helping

Many are affected by cancer or disability at some stage. Thanks to your ongoing support, the OU can continue to work alongside these incredible animals on two innovative research projects.

With your help, we have made incredible progress in pushing the boundaries of what's possible. Donor support for this innovative research has meant we can get closer to a future where more patients' lives can be saved through early disease detection and where more people with disabilities can live independently alongside their canine companions.

Together, you are making a real difference to so many lives – both canine and human.

Improving lives: helping dogs support people with disabilities

Over 11 million people in the UK have a disability, which is why mobility assistance dogs are vital when it comes to improving the wellbeing and lives of individuals. These specially trained dogs help people operate a range of domestic devices such as washing machines, light switches, and door handles, enabling people to go about their daily tasks with relative ease and confidence. However, there is one major flaw – most of these devices are designed for humans.

In collaboration with Dogs for Good, the OU ACI Lab researchers are addressing this issue. They are designing switches and interfaces that complement the sensory, cognitive and physical characteristics of dogs, making them easier for dogs to use.

Thanks to the generosity of OU alumni and a research grant from PetPlan Charitable Trust, OU Doctoral student Luisa Ruge has developed wireless controls which enable mobility assistance dogs to better support their human companions. The controls allow dogs to wirelessly operate lights and domestic appliances such as kettles. Findings show that the new controls are not only significantly quicker for the dogs to learn and interact with successfully, but that they help strengthen the bond between human and dog.

The OU has hosted a workshop, organised by Dr Patrizia Paci, to present the controls to service providers and prospective users to gain vital feedback. Based on this, they have now adapted the wireless controls so more households with mobility assistance dogs can use them and have developed a wired version of the controls for the operation of automatic doors in public buildings. The next step is to explore possible routes for the large-scale production and distribution of both the wireless controls to households, and for the installation of the wired controls in public buildings in Milton Keynes and other cities. So far, the results have been hugely encouraging and findings suggest that the controls can significantly improve the dogs' working conditions, training times and performance. This will benefit these hard-working animals and the individuals who rely on them.

A huge thanks to the OU family for your continued interest and support of this project. The work being done is truly life-changing, and your support is helping to provide dogs with the right tools to significantly improve the lives of those who need them most.



Bio-detection interface that dogs can use to signal whether disease is detected



For more information

www.open.ac.uk/blogs/ACI

Making the world of difference

For over 20 years, the OU has been working in partnership with governments, NGOs, funding institutions and local partners to deliver unique global development programmes.

The OU family has helped bring these projects to life and made an incredible difference to many thousands of lives. We are delighted to bring you an update on some of the exciting projects that you have helped make happen.



Teacher Education in sub-Saharan Africa - supporting teachers to achieve quality education for all

In sub-Saharan Africa, 30 million children never have the chance to start primary school. Those who do attend often have untrained teachers, who are doing everything they can, but who don't have the teaching skills to offer them a better future. To get the training they urgently need, most teachers would have to leave their current learners without a teacher, move away from their families and find the money for college. School-based learning offers the solution, as teachers can stay in their communities and apply everything they learn the next day in class to support their learners.

For over 15 years, the TESSA network has been dedicated to improving the quality of teaching by supporting teachers and teacher educators to develop more participatory approaches in the classroom. At its heart is a bank of Open Education Resources (OER). These resources provide teachers with a whole host of ways to deliver engaging and exciting teaching to primary school pupils that will help improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The resources are co-created with African partners to ensure they are relevant to the children and are available in four languages, both online and offline.

“What I have learnt in this course is to think out of the box. I have learned different ways of teaching children a story and how to get everyone involved during storytelling by improving the children's reading skills by using all the strategies of introducing early reading to children.”

TESSA Course Participant

Thanks to the generous support of OU alumni and partners, TESSA resources have reached over 1.7 million teachers and teacher educators across 14 African countries. Recently, alumni support has been able to provide small grants to TESSA partners across Africa to help them develop their teaching practice and champion TESSA resources to colleagues.

In Zambia, Charles, a Ministry of Education Officer, used a small TESSA grant to set up a programme to train teachers on how to use TESSA resources in their regular teacher group meetings, allowing them to improve the quality of their teaching in the classroom.



Charles now oversees teacher professional development in Zambia's Eastern Province continuing to champion TESSA resources.

In Kenya, Florence, a university lecturer in Education, used a small grant to run a series of workshops to help teachers across 53 schools develop more learner-centred approaches to teaching. Florence reported that, as a result of this work, teachers were using more group and pair work in class, and children were more engaged with lessons.

One of the outcomes of the small-grant programme has been to build capacity amongst the partners. Four TESSA colleagues acted as online facilitators for a recent presentation of TESSA online courses. None of them had ever worked in this capacity before. They were supported and trained by the TESSA team and are now in a position to actively support online learning effectively. In the context of the current pandemic, when many African universities have moved their teaching online, this sort of expertise represents a very valuable contribution.

Thanks to your generosity, TESSA has transformed the quality of education for so many.



Improving the quality of teaching to change the classroom experience of millions of pupils

TESS-India's main purpose was to improve the quality of education for hundreds of thousands of children through an open curriculum framework running from 2012-2019. Thanks to your support, over 1 million educators have benefited from the initiative.

One of the most important components of TESS-India is a toolkit of Open Education Resources (OER). What makes the initiative so unique, is its multilingual and accessible approach that can be easily adapted to local need, which varies considerably across the country.

Since the project began, the impact has led to:

- Increased levels of teacher motivation and greater pupil enjoyment and engagement in learning
- Over 50,000 teacher educators and teachers participated in a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).
- TESS-India's OERs have been implemented across seven priority states, reaching more than 1 million teachers and teacher educators

Pivoting learning for out-of-school girls during COVID-19



SAGE is a five-year programme seeking to benefit adolescent girls in Zimbabwe who are no longer in education. The aim is to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, support their transition to education, training or employment, and equip them with life skills.

To date, over 6,000 girls in 11 of Zimbabwe's poorest districts have been re-engaged back into learning. So far, the programme has benefitted girls from a range of backgrounds including those with disabilities and those who have never been to school.

The programme content and learning activities are directly tailored to the girls' social contexts and life objectives and designed to encourage collaborative peer-to-peer learning. Furthermore, the programme provides regular interaction and contact with over 350 Community Educators, Learning Assistants and school buddy teachers.

Prior to COVID-19, the facilitated teaching and learning took place across 88 community-based learning hubs. The pandemic led to closure of the hubs and unprecedented challenges for the programme, leading to the OU team repurposing existing module materials to support new modes of learning for the girls. These flexible patterns of teaching and learning are now embedded into the programme, offering alternative pathways for the girls.

Consequently, the SAGE materials have come to form the key evidence base for the country's Non-Formal Education policy, and in May 2021, were formally approved by Zimbabwe's Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education/UNICEF to support the country's two million out-of-school children.

A learner having a phone conversation with her Community Educator



“I was married young and dropped out of school, this programme has helped me to re-join education.”

SAGE participant

Thanks to the ongoing support of the OU family, more life-changing opportunities have been provided to out-of-school adolescent girls in Zimbabwe and throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

Union Black: Tackling Racism in Higher Education

Universities UK's 'Tackling racial harassment in higher education' report (November 2020) shone a spotlight on the perpetuation of racial inequalities at an institutional level across the sector, highlighting issues such as harassment and microaggressions. It called on universities to improve racial literacy amongst senior leaders, staff and students, with critics calling for meaningful action.

In response, The Open University and Santander Universities (a global funding and strategic support initiative for higher education) have partnered to create an educational resource to improve understanding and awareness of subjects such as anti-racism, intersectionality and unconscious bias. 'Union Black: Britain's black cultures and steps to anti-racism' is an online course designed to drive cultural change across our Higher Education community, exploring black cultures in the UK and dispelling myths in order to inform, challenge and contribute to the anti-racism agenda. Packed full of compelling content from contributors, including David Lammy, Baroness Shami Chakrabarti, Kwame Kwei-Armah, Kelechi Okafor, David James and many more, Union Black will be available for free on FutureLearn to students and staff at UK universities for the next three years.

A steering group comprising senior leaders and students across the sector, including Baroness Valerie Amos and Karen Blackett, worked closely with a team of subject and online teaching experts - led by the OU's Professor Marcia Wilson, Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - to develop a dynamic and thought-provoking learning experience that empowers participants to develop their own commitments to lasting change.

The course launches in September 2021, with the chance for students to be awarded one of a hundred Santander Universities grants of £500 each upon successfully completing the course. Grant recipients will also have the chance to attend a live Union Black celebration event.



Tackling racial harassment in higher education



Read the report

www.bit.ly/tacklingracismreport



Union Black: Britain's black cultures and steps to anti-racism

September 2021

Ayo Akinwolere, a well-known television personality since his time on Blue Peter, will join Union Black as course presenter.



“ I'm really looking forward to taking part in the course. It has been a mission of mine for many years to equal the playing field within society. The more we have meaningful conversations, the better we can understand where we're lacking and furthermore implement the real change that's needed. ”



Join us at our next online event: **Open Door Live**

Wednesday 13th October
12.00 - 13.00



Find out more and register

alumni.open.ac.uk/opendoorlive