

OpenDoor

Issue 17

The magazine for supporters and friends of The Open University

THANK
YOU

YOU HAVE
OPENED UP THE FUTURE

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Throughout the magazine look out for the badges below to find out how donor support has helped open up the future



THANK YOU FOR OPENING UP THE FUTURE

Welcome to the latest edition of Open Door. When we work together as an OU community, I truly believe that there is nothing we cannot achieve. Your continued kindness and the way you come together to support one another – especially during the uncertainty of the past few months – never ceases to amaze and inspire.

Opening up the Future, together

In 2015, the University launched the Open up the Future fundraising campaign with the goal of raising £50 million so we could share the gift of education with those that need it. The campaign centred on four key areas: Opening up OPPORTUNITIES, Opening up MINDS, Opening up THINKING and finally, Opening up LIVES.

It was an ambitious target, yet thanks to your support, I am delighted to share that when the campaign closed in July 2020, we had surpassed this target and raised a total of £60 million. This is a truly incredible achievement and would not have been possible without you – so thank you to everyone who donated and supported the campaign.

Though we have reached a brilliant fundraising milestone – we know there are so many more futures that we can unlock together.

In this issue I'm delighted to introduce the Open Futures Fund, which will continue the legacy of the campaign and make a difference to those who need it most. You can read more on page 4.

I hope you will feel proud to be part of such a wonderful community and enjoy discovering just how much of a difference you continue to make. Your ongoing generosity will allow us to continue breaking down the barriers to education and pursue world-leading research which will change the lives of so many for generations to come.

Thank you so much for all your support, it is greatly valued.

Karen Hart

Karen Hart
Deputy Director
of Development:
Alumni Engagement



TOGETHER WE ARE OPENING UP THE FUTURE: A FANTASTIC £60 MILLION HAS BEEN RAISED - THANK YOU

OPPORTUNITIES



Pioneering scholarships are supporting those who need it most, opening up more futures so that passion and potential do not go to waste. Together, we can unlock more futures and positively change lives, one student at a time.

MINDS



We believe education should be open to all of us, all of the time. With your support, our innovative technology unleashes the power of possibilities. Philanthropic support has made free learning accessible for families, students and educators.



YOU HAVE
OPENED UP
THE FUTURE

THINKING



From Project Deep Blue to our Animal Computer Interaction, our research continues to push the boundaries of what's possible and underpins the teaching we deliver to our students and learners around the globe.

LIVES



The OU family continues our international development work to support millions of teachers and healthcare workers around the world, so that pupils get the best start in life and patients receive the best care.



READ MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR SUPPORT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE
www.giving.open.ac.uk

OPENING FUTURES, CHANGING LIVES

Over 7,000
donated
in the 50th
Anniversary
year to
scholarships
and received
a shield
on the
magnificent
Tree of
Learning



OPENING
UP
OPPORTUNITIES



Transforming lives:
The Carers Scholarships Fund

> **Launched: 2019**
> **50 scholarships so far**

Life can be extremely challenging for unpaid carers at the best of times. Following the pandemic, it has become even more difficult and worrying for those providing care for loved ones. We are committed to supporting carers of all ages to ensure that they receive the support and opportunities they would otherwise miss out on.

In 2019, we offered 50 scholarships for UK-based carers wanting to pursue a qualification. The first year was very popular with more applicants than we were able to offer places to and the first students are due to begin studying in the next academic years 2020/21. We look forward to updating you on their progress.

How the OU made a difference for Karen

Being the sole carer for her disabled daughter didn't stop Karen from signing up for a History degree at the age of 42.

“ I couldn't attend a traditional university, as there was nobody else to look after my children and the higher fees would have made it financially challenging. My daughter Michelle was completely dependent on me for everything; but with the OU I was able to study at home and flexibly, so that I was always there for Michelle. Yes, I was tired, and it took a lot of mental effort, but my studies gave me a respite from my caring responsibilities and a new spark and enthusiasm that filtered through into everything else I did. ”

➔ **LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
CARERS SCHOLARSHIPS FUND**

[alumni.open.ac.uk/campaigns/
the-carers-scholarships-fund](https://alumni.open.ac.uk/campaigns/the-carers-scholarships-fund)

How your support is giving veterans the second chance they deserve:
The Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund

> **Launched: 2018**
> **155 scholarships so far**

We are delighted to let you know that 50 more students will soon be studying with us through the Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund (DVSF) – thanks to your ongoing support.

The DVSF offers a lifeline to those injured in or due to service as they transition to civilian life, with free OU education and wraparound disability and careers support. So far, the OU family have come together to raise funds for 155 scholarships so that disabled veterans can pursue fulfilling careers outside of the military. Thank you, as always, for your continued support in making such a positive impact to so many lives.



From the Forces to the courtroom

When Kate Moth (*pictured above*) was medically discharged from the Army in 2016, she began doubting her sense of self and had no idea what she was supposed to do next. Fast forward a few years and Kate is now studying Law through the DVSF and says that having a positive goal to work towards makes all the difference.

“ I had built up my identity as a person who helped others, not the person who needed help themselves. Now I am working towards a role in the legal sector, where I can provide help to both the serving and veteran military communities. ”

➔ **HELP US TO CHANGE MORE
LIVES THROUGH A SCHOLARSHIP**
alumni.open.ac.uk/campaigns/veterans

The DVSF: made possible
by you and our partners

Launching the DVSF was only possible through the extraordinary ongoing support of our OU family and several organisations. Special thanks to:

- BAE Systems plc for their continued support over the past three years supporting 24 students but also by offering mentoring and work placements that will help veterans to carve out a new career path.
- ABF The Soldiers' Charity for their commitment to support 10 army veteran students and the wider student support function.
- Boeing have supported the scheme over two years, bringing their experience of working with military charities and employing veterans.
- Amey plc and Leidos UK have also given their support along with:

The Chancellor using LIBOR funds, Constance Travis Charitable Trust, Sir Christopher Coville KCB, Englefield Charitable Trust, Lara Cournoyer, Simon Gibson Charitable Trust, The Inman Charity, The 'Lest We Forget' Association, PF Charitable Trust, Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust, The Samuel Storey Family Charitable Trust, Thales Charitable Trust, The Trelux Charitable Trust, The Utley Foundation, The Veterans' Foundation, The Wakeham Trust, William Allen Young Charitable Trust, The Worshipful Company of World Traders Charitable Trust and almost 4,000 OU alumni, supporters and friends.

New bursaries for BAME students

The OU is delighted to announce that it has recently launched 50 Open Futures Bursaries to support new students who identify as being from a Black, Asian, or other minority ethnic (BAME) background. Fifty bursaries of £1,000 were available for the academic year 2020/21, which can be used towards study costs or other living expenses.

This was only possible due to the generosity of Mr Howard and Mrs Elizabeth Brown BA. Elizabeth, an OU alumna and former teacher, and Howard, a former treasurer of the OU, both have a passionate interest in education and generously pledged to support this bursary programme.

➔ **FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT BURSARIES
FOR BAME STUDENTS**

[open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/
open-futures-bame](https://open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/open-futures-bame)



SUPPORTING LEARNERS EVERYWHERE

The ways in which we all live and learn have been transformed since lockdown happened – with the demand for more flexible learning methods more important than ever. As pioneers of distance learning for over 50 years, the OU is proud to be able support families, students and educators with resources to continue learning at home.

We have seen record numbers of visitors flock to OpenLearn, our free online learning platform, with 7 million visitors and over 800,000 course completions, since lockdown began.

Following the sudden closures of universities and schools, our free resources to help educators and other institutions quickly became extremely popular, allowing them to take their teaching online and adapt to new ways of learning. Parents and students were able to access nearly 1,000 free courses from OU academics to help them navigate the new world of home-schooling, with advice and support for students who may be learning online for the first time.

Beyond the home-schooling classroom, furloughed workers and those isolating continue to enrol on OpenLearn and FutureLearn courses to learn languages, take on new skills and explore fascinating subjects.

As the world continues to adapt to the 'new normal', the OU is committed to supporting educators and learners of all ages with tools needed to access and deliver education online. We will continue to launch new courses and share the very latest content with you, our OU family.



The OU has joined forces with MoneySavingExpert to produce this new free course to give you the skills and knowledge to master your finances.

Visit OpenLearn and search Academy of Money



This free course explores resources from the Open University's *Time to Think* project. *Time to Think* is an oral history archive and ongoing collaboration for teaching, research, impact and knowledge exchange between The Open University and people who participated in the *Time to Think* archive. This includes Loyalist and Republican ex-prisoners, OU tutors and office staff and prison staff and governors.

Visit OpenLearn and search Time to Think



Discover something new today

www.open.edu/openlearn

THE FUTURE OF LEARNING 2070

Last year, to celebrate the University's 50th Anniversary, we shared with you some of our academics' exciting predictions for how learning could change over the next fifty years. In our Future of Learning report our experts explained how artificial intelligence could become a part of everyday life for students in 2070 and how picking up new skills in the future could become far quicker thanks to brain-to-brain learning. We also invited our alumni and supporter community to have their say and predict how OU students will be living and learning in the future.

Thank you to everyone who sent in ideas, we received so many creative entries! Here is just one of our favourites - be sure to go online to read more inspirational ideas.

HOLOGRAPHIC TUTORS AND MULTI-LINGUAL LESSONS

Alumna Pamela Wheatley imagines how technology will break down even more barriers...

Fifty years ago, distance learning was introduced to make education available to everyone whatever their circumstances and ability. Since then the world has seen a huge advance in technology, which has enabled people all over the world to benefit from its advances.

In the future, learning will be tailored to suit each individual's needs by using virtual reality programmed for specific subjects. Holograms of tutors will be able to teach and, in the case of scientific subjects, demonstrate experiments enabling the student to understand and know exactly what is required of them. They will then be able to physically demonstrate their understanding by sending their own hologram back to the tutor. Interaction with tutors and other students is, of course, essential and will be achieved by linking up online on a regular basis.

Video games which, at the moment, are used for pleasure, will also be used and will be specifically designed so that students, while playing a game are also learning, using intricate programmes designed to educate students to the utmost level. Virtual reality will assist them, therefore, in experiencing the full understanding of these lectures.

To make sure that students in other countries across the world have unlimited access with no language barriers there will be instantaneous translations of lectures so that everyone will receive the maximum benefit.

Education in the future will truly be a global affair designed to give everyone the ability to think for themselves and so improve the world as a whole.



SEE MORE FANTASTICALLY CREATIVE ENTRIES AND READ THE ACADEMICS' PREDICTIONS

alumni.open.ac.uk



RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The OU's expertise in online learning and teaching methodologies allowed us to stay open throughout lockdown and support our students, families, teachers and other academic institutions through a challenging time. In addition to this, our academics are working hard to develop solutions to the most pressing issues – from meeting local demands for hand sanitiser, to supporting the development of a rapid COVID-19 diagnostic test.

Continuing to stay well

Our academics continue to win new research grant funding and to provide guidance on health and wellbeing.

Researchers in the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies, have provided guidance on home schooling, creative play and on the benefits of shared reading, across families, classrooms and communities.

Academics are also researching whether loneliness has been exacerbated by the pandemic and how well equipped we are to resume life as we once knew it in a world that has changed beyond recognition.

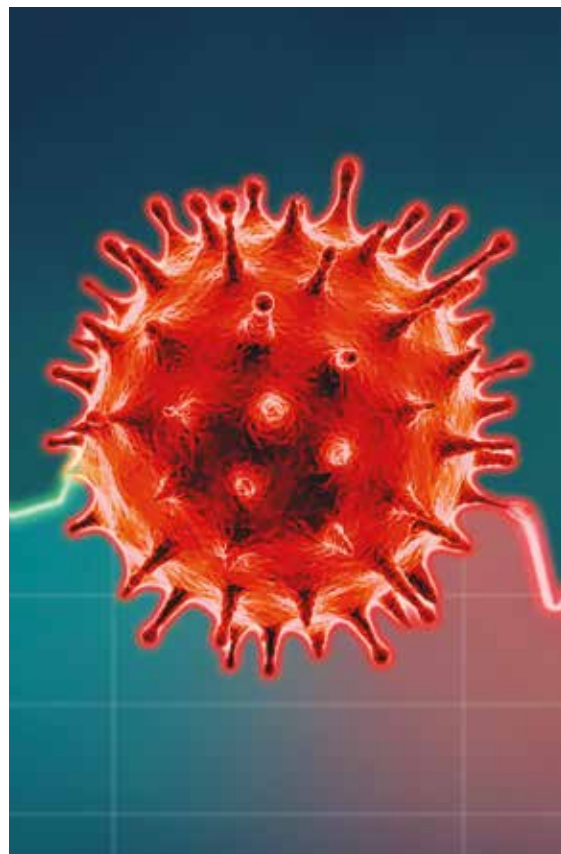


Moving towards recovery

As the world moves tentatively towards recovery, OU academics are looking at the effects and financial, physical and emotional costs of the pandemic.

Sadly, there was a rapid rise in numbers of people in domestic abuse situations seeking help during the UK lockdown. In response to this, The Open University's Open Justice team collaborated with charity *Support Through Court* to launch a free open online resource for learners, themed around domestic abuse. This work was raised by Milton Keynes North MP Ben Everitt during oral questions to the Justice Secretary Robert Buckland MP in the House of Commons on Tuesday 14 July. It was referenced together with Milton Keynes-based charity *MK Act* which offers domestic violence support.

The OU's Faculty of Business and Law is now researching the effects of the pandemic on businesses and their predicted recovery time. A research project, which began in July, led by Professor Elizabeth Daniel, Professor of Information Management, and her collaborators has been awarded a COVID-19 Rapid Response grant of £178,000 by UK Research and Innovation and the Economic and Social Research Council, to consider the impacts of COVID-19 on the self-employed in the UK.



Building on our track record in quality online learning

Not surprisingly, a key area of demand from teachers and education institutions from across the world was and remains the provision of online learning to teachers and parents. Daily mentions of the OU's online learning capabilities have appeared in broadcast and print media since COVID-19 lockdown began in March 2020, which has led to The Guardian doing regular features about teaching online.

An early development is The Skills Toolkit, a new online government platform to support furloughed workers, which features free courses from OpenLearn and FutureLearn. This type of support has been launched across each of the OU's four nations – England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales – and is resulting in wide-reaching engagement and opening up new conversations to more free courses being developed.



Latest: Thank you for supporting students during the pandemic

Thanks to the continued generosity of our alumni community, OU students who have been affected by the pandemic will receive the support needed to continue their life-changing learning.

We are thrilled by how much support and interest the fund has received and a fantastic £105,000 has been raised. We are so grateful for the way you have rallied behind OU students in their time of need – the sense of community and loyalty to students created by the OU family never fails to inspire.

We appreciate that so many of us are now facing challenges and uncertainties we never could have anticipated. By coming together as an OU family, we are ensuring that our University can truly remain open to all, as we have for over 50 years. We are hopeful that despite the current situation and the added difficulties our students are dealing with, they will still be able to achieve their ambitions and complete their qualifications as intended.



New research to keep us safe

Over the past six months, we have had a steady flow of new research projects designed to address various aspects of COVID-19 as the pandemic goes through various phases.

In March 2020, Harith Alani, Professor of Web Science in the OU's Knowledge Media Institute (KMi), secured an EU grant for €2.85 million involving 11 partners including the Red Cross to track the spread of misinformation about COVID-19 on social media. This received widespread coverage on BBC Look East, BBC Three Counties Radio and in The Express and Daily Mail.

A team led by Professor John Domingue, also in KMi, developed the world's first COVID-19 digital immunity passport and have created a prototype mobile phone app that enables instant verification of tamper-proof coronavirus test results and vaccination certificates.



FIND OUT MORE

www.open.ac.uk/courses/coronavirus

HOW FLOODPLAINS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

David Gowing, Professor of Botany at The Open University, explains why floodplain meadows are important and not just a thing of beauty.

Floodplain meadows are the kind of places you visit to reflect, reminisce and become inspired. They blossom in April, May and June and come alive with wildlife and plants, creating an ever-changing kaleidoscope of colour. Not only scenic, but they support a more natural approach to agriculture. Steeped in history, stretching back a thousand years, floodplain meadows once formed the backbone of the rural economy in England and are therefore rich in cultural and social heritage.

The floodplain meadow lifecycle

In late June or early July, floodplain meadows are cut, whilst in their prime, seemingly a devastating loss. However, they are cut back for a reason: to make hay. The hay cut is essential to maintain the meadows' diversity. The meadows quickly bounce back from the cut, much like your garden lawn. They produce flowers again, extending the season for vital pollinators. The harvest provides hay for animals to eat over winter, enabling production of 'grass fed beef'. Cows graze the re-growth and later they eat the dried hay through the winter. A much more sustainable food system than feeding cattle imported grains or home-grown maize, produced at great cost to the environment.

Yet, these meadows are now very rare, lost to the great drive for post-war efficiency. They have been sprayed with selective herbicides to produce pure grass, drained for conversion to arable fields or excavated for the gravel lying beneath them. Seventy per cent of



England's floodplains are now either ploughed fields or grassland with no flowers, offering little wildlife interest and damaging the local environment. A ploughed floodplain pollutes the river with eroded soil and agrochemicals (pesticides and fertilisers).

We now know that these meadows can capture large amounts of carbon in their deep undisturbed soils. They trap nutrient-rich sediments from their rivers during floods and convert it into a hay crop, which is then taken out of the floodplain. As a result, they both clean up the rivers and create space for floodwaters to expand.

A more natural way...

Floodplain meadows are a perfect climate solution, producing sustainable climate-friendly meat. They are a system that will recover after floods and are resilient to drought, a fine example of production working with nature and giving something back to nature, instead of fighting against it. Furthermore, floodplain meadows are one of the UK's most botanically rich habitats.

As we seek to allow floodplains to operate naturally, it is not just the beavers and the trees that will do the work, meadows play a role too, facilitating a gentle return to producing food from a landscape in transition and keeping people connected to the land.

We therefore need to cherish and restore floodplains to their former glory, so we can move towards a food system that is in tune with nature and kinder to the planet.

The OU is the home of the Floodplains Meadows Partnership, an organisation led by OU academics that is focussed on the conservation and restoration of biodiverse wet meadow environments across the UK. For many years the work of the Partnership has been supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This has enabled the team to carry out surveys and visits of meadow sites across the country to offer land-managers and owners' advice on changes to land management that would improve the sites or maintain meadow biodiversity. It has also allowed for knowledge gained by the Partnership to be shared with stakeholders at workshops and conferences.

In response to the pandemic the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has decided to bolster the projects that they support to ensure that they are able to survive the loss of other funding sources or the increased cost of activity. The OU was incredibly grateful to receive a support grant in April to help the Floodplains Meadows Partnership to continue to work to save the meadows which have been decimated by sand and gravel extraction, urban and industrial development and hydrological changes to river floodplains.

The Partnership also received a grant from the Bannister Charitable Trust in June to support the ongoing work. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of the John Ellerman Foundation, the William Dean Trust and our alumni.



New Centre for Languages and Intercultural Communication opens

The Open Centre for Languages and Cultures is the exciting new home for non-accredited language and intercultural communication short courses from The Open University. The initiative will be launched by the School for Languages and Applied Linguistics (LAL) in October 2020 and aims to enable students to study a wide range of language and language-related subjects anywhere in the world, in any time zone, whatever their motivation – leisure, professional development or academic.

It is essentially the one stop shop for engaging with languages, professional communication and intercultural dialogue.

The Centre is specifically designed to be agile and responsive to the needs of learners who want to be part of a global society and is particularly important in light of a continuing declining languages market in the UK. Its approach is designed to reach large numbers of people and build on the OU's founding principles of promoting equality, inclusion, and social justice.

New digital tools hub for FE teachers



The OU is delivering a new online resource platform to support vocational education practitioners. The VocTech Essentials project, funded by Ufi VocTech Trust, will enable educators to easily access digital resources and tools to enhance their teaching.

With time constraints on Further Education teachers, and a seemingly unending list of digital teaching resources to pick from, this project will help educators make informed choices on the best resources to bring their lessons to life. They will be able to see which resources are being used by other teachers, supported by a ratings system that will allow them to recommend resources to achieve specific teaching outcomes.

This platform will target private and public Education and training providers, initially testing and piloting the approach for Functional Skills in Maths and English. We anticipate that it will be expanded into new high-demand subject areas next year. Follow the project on Twitter @Voc_Teach



The Open Centre will offer non-accredited short courses in a range of subjects including modern languages, languages for business and the workplace, and languages for health and social care. From 2021 it will also be leading the way in high quality short courses for academic research methods and pre-session English with International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

Flexibility is at the heart of the Open Centre, therefore students also have the option to turn this learning into accredited learning via the OU's unique Making Your Learning Count module.



Supporting STEM students across Africa



OPITO (the global, not-for-profit, skills body for the energy industry) have supported the international development work of the OU for a number of years. This support has enabled us to improve the educational outcomes of significant numbers of young people around the world.

Currently OPITO are supporting the OU in improving STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) education in Africa. The OpenSTEM Africa (OSA) project aims to address the skills gap in Africa by developing the next generation of STEM industry employees, especially young women and girls. It will encourage pupils to engage in STEM classes by offering additional training to teachers and virtual labs for use in lessons – critical when many schools do not have physical equipment. The virtual labs will be based on the OU's existing OpenSTEM labs which offer students the opportunity to carry out experiments and use equipment without attending a physical laboratory.

SUPPORTING GIRLS' EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

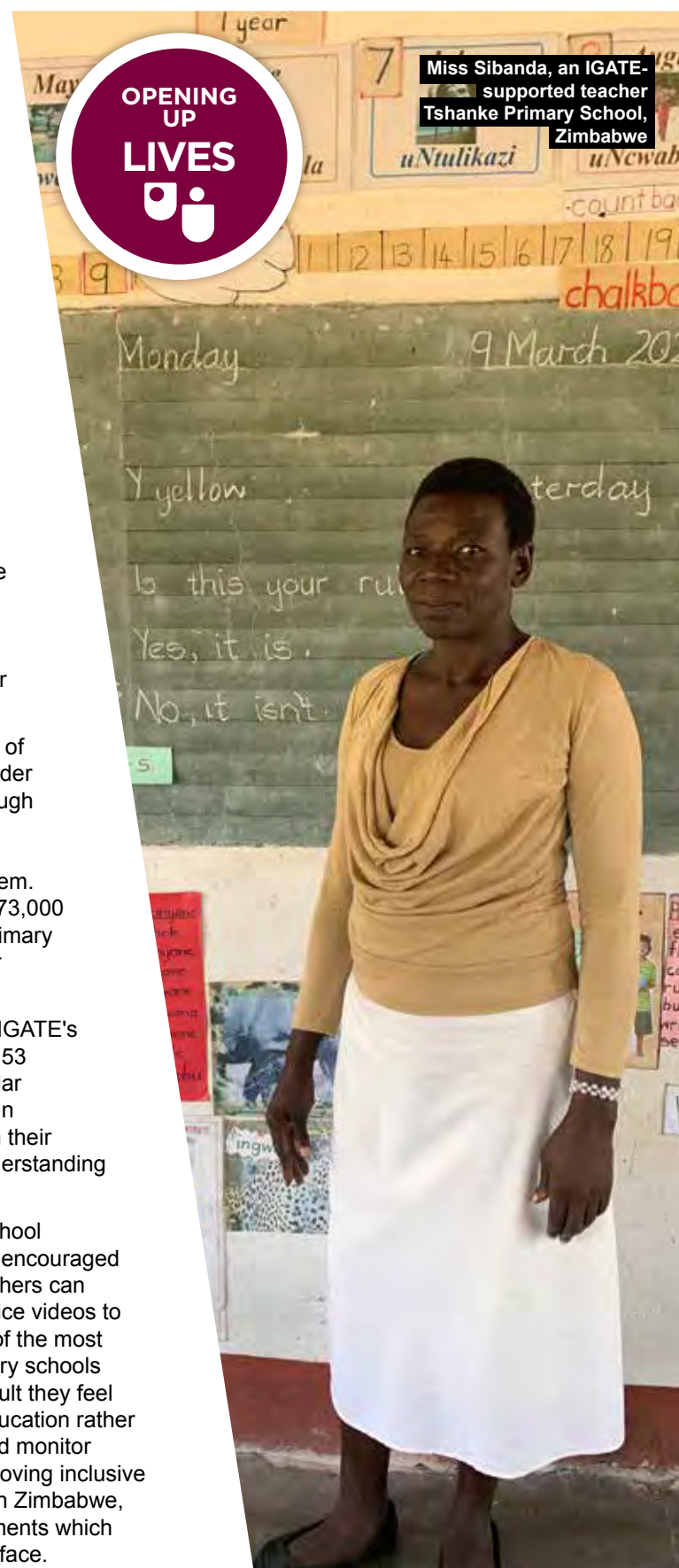
The Open University's international development programmes have been delivering scalable solutions to global challenges for over 20 years. In sub-Saharan Africa, these challenges not only focus on access to quality education, but ensuring children feel safe, valued, supported and included to learn by well-trained teachers.

The OU is the academic lead in three UK Aid funded Girls' Education Challenge programmes across Africa which champion the educational rights of girls. Together with our partners, we are encouraging a change in attitudes and behaviours from teachers, school leaders, community elders, guardians and family members where social norms and cultural traditions often exclude, limit or marginalise girls from formal education, to support more girls to learn. Our solution champions whole school and community engagement, so that barriers faced by learners inside and outside of school can be identified, addressed and overcome to encourage ambition and aspiration in young girls through learning. Our mission is to equip and empower teachers and community educators to educate girls, and break the cycle of low educational attainment for future generations.

In Zimbabwe, OU activity spans 20 districts and one of the programmes of activity is IGATE, Improving Gender Attitudes, Transition and Education Outcomes. Through a consortium led by World Vision, IGATE supports children's foundational literacy and numeracy skills development to boost their confidence and self-esteem. Together, we are improving the life chances of over 73,000 marginalised girls, helping them to transition from primary to post-primary options such as secondary school or community-based learning.

Project activity started in 2017, with the OU leading IGATE's school development programme in 266 primary and 53 secondary schools, producing locally relevant modular resources to enhance the national curriculum with fun and engaging learning activities for teachers to try in their classrooms to improve levels of interactivity and understanding from their pupils.

Through working with District Education Officers, School Leaders and Teacher Development Leads, we have encouraged an ethos of teamwork and togetherness so that teachers can learn from one another, sharing tools and best practice videos to support and improve their classroom practice. One of the most significant changes noted by girls in IGATE secondary schools is the change in their teacher's demeanour, as a result they feel more encouraged to learn and participate in their education rather than on the periphery. As we gather case studies and monitor progress, it is clear that IGATE is demonstrably improving inclusive practice and the teaching of literacy and numeracy in Zimbabwe, enabling schools to be safe and supportive environments which enhance girls' learning in the different contexts they face.



Miss Sibanda, an IGATE-supported teacher
Tshanke Primary School,
Zimbabwe

IGATE in action

In early March, the IGATE project team visited one of the IGATE-supported schools, Tshanke Primary, in the rural district of Nkayi in Zimbabwe. The school runs a food programme to ensure that children are nourished, growing maize, mangoes, avocados and guava in their small garden behind the classrooms. As they are miles from the nearest market, the school often provides the one meal a day that a child will have.

The school has eight teachers and over 440 children to care for. While visiting, the OU team sat in on Miss Sibanda's class where she taught over 80 children aged between six and eight years old. Using IGATE module learning, the class learned about nutrition while developing their literacy skills.

Speaking about her IGATE experience so far, Miss Sibanda noted how her students are engaging with her lessons much more and seem more confident and eager to participate. She is using IGATE diagnostic tools to log her students' progress in different areas, which informs her lesson planning and helps to ensure that every child feels supported and isn't left behind in their learning.

Miss Sibanda and other teachers at the school are also taking part in weekly professional development sessions to focus on IGATE module units and discuss ways in which the curriculum could be brought to life using these resources.

She thanked The Open University, World Vision and the IGATE partnership for helping their school and so many others in Zimbabwe to support learners in realising their potential, remarking at how much more she enjoyed teaching now thanks to the support of the IGATE project.

Response to COVID-19

Shortly after the IGATE academic team returned to the UK, the Government of Zimbabwe (like many others around the world) closed schools in the hope of containing the coronavirus pandemic.

The IGATE consortium of partners – The Open University, World Vision, CARE International, SNV Zimbabwe, Emtongeni and Udaciza – have continued working closely to support teachers and children through this period of uncertainty to mitigate significant disruptions to learning. Whilst the UK transitioned to home-schooling with a number of resources available online for parents to teach with, for so many elsewhere in the world including Zimbabwe, connectivity is very limited and expensive (where technology is available), and it is unfeasible to assume remote/online classroom interactions will be successful at reaching learners in their homes.

IGATE have responded with alternative, accessible ways to deliver our high-quality, supported open and distance learning opportunities, including sharing daily learning activities via WhatsApp across a network of community volunteers (including teachers, School Development Committee members, Community Educators, Girls' Education Champions) to use with young people in their communities. Typically, volunteers gather groups of 2-4 young people together, observing social distancing, to complete an interactive literacy or numeracy practice for 20-30 minutes each day. The level of engagement and response from learners has been inspiring.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE OU'S INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**
www.open.ac.uk/ido



Miss Sibanda with her class
Tshanke Primary School, Zimbabwe

PLANTING A LIFE-CHANGING SEED FOR THE FUTURE

It's always wonderful to hear from alumni about how studying with The Open University helped change their lives. With the OU's alumni family literally spread right across the globe, it's also heartening to know just how many others have been helped, encouraged or inspired by our alumni in so many different ways.

Creating ripples of positive change

Central to our mission is to remain open to all, enabling the OU to help transform the lives of disadvantaged people who might otherwise not get the chance of any further education – people like Taryn featured in this article.

We believe that nobody should be left behind, today or in the future.

Making a difference

One of the very important ways in which we help to fund our scholarships and other programmes is through income received from the gifts our community so generously leave in their Wills.

Many alumni and supporters know that by leaving a gift to the OU in their Will, they are planting a wonderful seed to bear fruit in the future. It will help us continue to transform more lives for generations to come and give future students the opportunity to fulfil their dreams and potential. Today, gifts that we have received in Wills are helping us to remain true to our mission of openness to anyone, anywhere with the desire to learn.

The generosity of our OU family is truly outstanding. Thank you to each and every one of you who has already committed to supporting OU students of the future, allowing them to follow in your footsteps, by leaving a gift in your Will.

If you would like to consider supporting future generations by leaving a gift in your Will, please get in touch and we can provide more information and answer any questions you have.

Simply email our Legacy Team at giving@open.ac.uk or call 01908 659141.

Any communication between us will be treated in complete confidence.



The kindness and generosity of those who have remembered the OU in their Will is honoured with their names inscribed on special plaques displayed in our beautiful legacy garden.



Taryn escaped an abusive relationship by moving into a refuge. Later, while working at a residential school for children with social and emotional needs, she signed up with The Open University to study a BSc in Psychology and become an educational psychologist.

"My life has completely changed. I now have a career which allows me to really make a difference for children and families. Thank you Open University!"

Taryn



A society grows great when we plant trees in whose shade we shall never sit.

Based on a Greek proverb



CELEBRATING OUR NURSES

Nurses play an incredibly important role in providing healthcare across the NHS and in private, voluntary and independent organisations. 2020 has been declared Year of the Nurse and Midwife by the World Health Organisation. Nurses and other front-line staff were the subject of praise from the government and public with the weekly clap for carers, dedicated shopping hours and shared gratitude for their lifesaving work during the midst of the pandemic.

This year, we are celebrating 18 years of nursing studies at The Open University. We are proud to continue to train the next generation of highly skilled healthcare professionals – with over 1,600 learners currently studying with us to achieve their ambition of becoming a nurse.

Working in partnership with over 180 employers to deliver our Registered Nurse and Nursing Associate programmes, the OU method enables healthcare organisations to grow their own nurses from their existing healthcare support workforce, or to recruit new talent through the apprenticeship route in England. For aspiring nurses, our flexible programmes enable them to fit the distance learning theory elements around their work and personal commitments, while the practice-based learning takes place under supervision within their workplace and on placements.



“ Over the last 18 years, the OU has been proud to deliver training to thousands of nurses. This Autumn, our brand-new Future Nurse curriculum will support the next generation of nurses with education in all four fields of nursing: Adult, Children and Young People, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Nursing. **”**

Fary Cachelin, Executive Dean, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies



Learn more

www.open.ac.uk/nursing

ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Our new Postgraduate Certificate in Non-Medical Prescribing and MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice enables nurses and other registered healthcare professionals to develop their practice further.

These programmes prepare Registered Nurses for prescribing responsibilities and to take on advanced roles in their scope of practice, offering career progression and for employers to benefit from the full range of their employee's experience and skills.

Lisa Blake
Nursing student



SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT NURSES

Lisa Blake is in her third year of studies for a BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing. She is one of the thousands of student nurses currently at the OU and splits her week between being a student nurse out on placement and being an Assistant Practitioner at South Wigston Health Centre in Leicester.

“ I have never felt prouder to belong to a profession that believes in each other and in what we do, always trying to do our best in these unprecedented times. I just feel honoured to be a part of patients' lives. ”

Fiona Dobson is a Nursing Staff Tutor at the OU and helps support students like Lisa as they balance their distance and practical learning. She said: “In many ways there are similarities between our programme and traditional programmes, the key difference is that the theory is taught through blended learning and at a distance.”

The OU's unique practice-based learning approach means students are able to stay in work while they study and that employers get to nurture their own workforce. Susan Holmes, Lisa's practice supervisor, said: “The OU have been really supportive. They visited us right at the beginning of this process and told us all exactly what was expected of us and what we would get out of it as a practice. It will certainly benefit us because we are going to employ somebody that we already know and who knows us.”

GET IN TOUCH

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