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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Scholars Program

# LEAD INNOVATE SUSTAIN

Towards a Decade  
of **Excellence**





A publication  
by the International Office  
at the University of Cape Town, 2023

# Towards a Decade of Excellence

We are delighted with our progress towards a decade of excellence in the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program between the University of Cape Town and the Mastercard Foundation, which began in 2014. The initiative aimed at promoting access to education for academically talented youth from the African continent who face social and economic barriers but have shown a strong sense of social responsibility to transform and make a positive impact within their communities. The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program will enable over 400 young Africans to take up undergraduate and postgraduate studies at UCT.

We recognise the profound impact that the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has had in transforming the lives of students, their communities and society broadly. Whilst some of our alumni have gone on to pursue further studies at top universities, many of them hold eminent positions in NGOs, national and global agencies as well as governments. This augurs well for our common desire to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Lead. Innovate. Sustain. These are the thematic in this reflective report that capture the achievements and transformative journeys of some Mastercard Foundation Scholars, whilst many others will feature in subsequent publications. Furthermore, it illustrates the impact they are making as young leaders contributing to social and economic progress in shaping the future of the African continent. Through creativity, courage, determination and dedication, many of our Scholars have been catalysts for change through their work as innovators and entrepreneurs in producing sustainable solutions for Africa. Herein, the Scholar reflections not only speak to academic achievement but personal motivation and aspirations for a better life that empowers the most vulnerable youth to succeed. Towards that end, our staff have professionally and faithfully walked alongside the Scholars to support them in rising resiliently to meet their destiny.

We thank the team at the UCT International Office who have worked successfully and meticulously to implement the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program since inception. Through their commitment with a wide range of partners, we are proud to have empowered a group of leaders who are making a difference in transforming our continent.

We are enormously grateful to the Mastercard Foundation for its confidence in partnering with UCT to develop Africa's next-generation leaders. We appreciate your continued investment in education, and share this publication with all of our stakeholders in conveying the hope that our Scholars evoke in making the world better.

Thank you.

Vice-Chancellor *Interim*, Prof. Daya Reddy

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sue Harrison

Director Internationalisation, Dr. Quinton Johnson



Prof. Daya Reddy  
Vice-Chancellor *Interim*



Prof. Sue Harrison  
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## Scholars Program

# Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program

The largest scholarship and leadership initiative of its kind in Africa, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program prepares talented and diverse young people with a commitment to giving back with the skills and mindsets they need to pursue their aspirations and enrich their communities. The Scholars Program is more than just a scholarship. It offers mentoring, leadership skills development, tutoring, internship opportunities, and career services in addition to covering tuition and basic living expenses. Implemented through a Pan-African and global network of more than 40 universities and non-governmental organizations, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program is strengthening the higher education ecosystem by encouraging inclusion and accessibility, innovation in teaching and learning, research and collaboration across critical sectors and stakeholders.

## About the Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation is a registered Canadian charity and one of the largest foundations in the world. It works with visionary organizations to advance education and financial inclusion to enable young people in Africa and Indigenous youth in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work. Established in 2006 through the generosity of Mastercard when it became a public company, the Foundation is an independent organization separate from the company, with offices in Toronto, Kigali, Accra, Nairobi, Kampala, Lagos, Dakar, and Addis Ababa. Its policies, operations, and program decisions are determined by the Foundation's Board of Directors and leadership. For more information on the Foundation, please visit [www.mastercardfdn.org](http://www.mastercardfdn.org).

## Scholarships Profile



### Gender

**156** Female  
**186** Male



### 342 Scholarships awarded to date

**73** Undergraduates  
**269** Postgraduates  
↳ **208** Masters  
**61** Honours



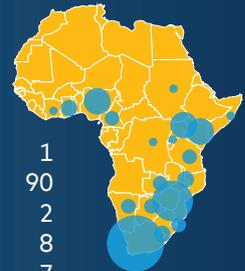
### Scholars per faculty

Commerce	<b>24</b>	Humanities	<b>96</b>
Engineering	<b>100</b>	Law	<b>37</b>
Health Science	<b>34</b>	Science	<b>51</b>



### Scholars per country

Botswana	7	Somalia	1
Cameroon	3	South Africa	90
Cote D'Ivoire	1	Sudan	2
DRC	1	Swaziland	8
Ghana	13	Tanzania	7
Kenya	33	Uganda	15
Lesotho	18	Zambia	7
Malawi	17	Zimbabwe	72
Mauritius	2		
Namibia	9		
Nigeria	35		
Rwanda	1		





UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
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# University of Cape Town

Unleash human potential for a fair and just society

The University of Cape Town's vision is to be an inclusive, research-intensive African university that addresses the challenges of our time with cutting-edge teaching, research and facilities. We are committed to promoting transformation, to working tirelessly to guarantee the sustainability of our institution and to ensuring excellence in all we do.

UCT has a proud tradition of academic excellence and is currently the top-rated university in Africa and one of the top-rated universities in the world. Our researchers continue to develop African-based solutions to global problems, including issues relating to climate change, urbanisation, safety and security, education and health. Many UCT researchers are recognised as world leaders in their fields and thus able to expose students to front-line scholarly work and research discoveries.

Beyond the mandate of excellent scholarship, the university also encourages students to build their leadership and service skills, inviting them to participate in the many volunteer projects taking place in the local communities. There are over 100 societies and 40 sports clubs on campus where students can broaden their interests and share their talents or give something back to the institution by serving in student governance.

We are proud of our vibrant, diverse, cosmopolitan community – a staff and student cohort from every imaginable community in South Africa and more than 100 countries across Africa and the rest of the world. Every person has something to contribute to UCT's quality and growth, and our goal is to ensure that everyone feels at home during their time here.



# Academic Excellence

Academic excellence sets Mastercard Foundation Scholars apart and gives them the competitive edge in today's job market. As top performers academically, our graduates are highly sought after, making a world of opportunity available to them.



## Ms Carol Ojwang

Manager: Africa Partnerships and Programmes, LLM in International Law

“ The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program supports the next generation of ethical transformative leaders to co-create innovative solutions that will drive socio-economic development across Africa. It provides outstanding academically talented young people quality education, which builds Africa's educational capacity for impact and sustainable growth within local and global communities. Mastercard Foundation Scholars are young leaders inspiring other leaders through academic excellence to make the world a better place. ”





## Jacob Gizamba

Master of Public Health, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, 2020, Uganda

I have always harboured a profound passion for pursuing a career in academia, and the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at UCT has played a pivotal role in allowing me to realise this aspiration. I completed my master's at UCT and I am now doing a PhD in Population Health and Place at the University of Southern California (USC).

My path feels much more secure now, but it wasn't always this way – at times competing in this academic race and achieving my lofty hopes and dreams seemed insurmountable.

*But today, my hopes and dreams are on the cusp of becoming a reality.*

Along with easing the financial pressure of study, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program created opportunities for me to engage with diverse scholars

and faculty members. I was able to make the most of these chances and served as the academic chair for the Postgraduate Health Sciences Students Council for 18 months, advocating for students in my department.

My master's research focused on assessing the prevalence of leptospirosis in the Western Cape and encouraged the surveillance of the disease among high-risk groups such as those living in townships, densely populated areas and prisons. I also researched the burden of non-communicable diseases on those living with HIV, identifying strategies to overcome barriers to healthcare access for NCDs among women. Currently, my PhD research focuses on eliminating viral hepatitis.

My achievements have meant a lot to me, but their impact extends much wider than my own life. I state this with utmost humility: I have had the privilege of being regarded as a role model by numerous teenagers in my community who see my diligence, perseverance, resilience and excellence. Whenever I am in Uganda, I dedicate time to visiting schools and to encourage them to pursue their dreams.



## Amandla Mvimbi

MSc Electrical Engineering, 2023, Lesotho

As the first in my family to pursue higher education at university, not only has the financial support of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program been invaluable, but equally the range of support programmes it offered and the connection to a network of scholars from similar circumstances.

I graduated valedictorian of my high school and made the Dean's Merit List and I became a Golden Key International Honour Society member during my BSc in Mechatronics Engineering at UCT. And beyond academics, I'm very proud to have earned a UCT Plus bronze award for role modelling leadership.

*This genuinely incredible opportunity would not have been attainable without the generous support of the Mastercard Foundation.*



Today, I'm pursuing an MSc in Engineering at UCT and I am lucky to have the chance to collaborate with CERN, a globally renowned centre for scientific research.

Ultimately, I would like to channel my success toward important development issues that affect life on the continent – things like inadequate transport systems, poor power and water supply, and the lack of mineral processing capabilities that compels countries to export raw materials without realising their full benefit in both profit and employment.



## Tinashe Ngwenya

MSc Mechanical Engineering, 2021, Botswana

As the first in my family to attend university, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program allowed me to embark on uncharted territory through education. And since this opportunity, I've been able to seize every other opportunity in my path.

Following my master's at UCT, I went on to do a Master of Research in Future Propulsion and Power at the University of Cambridge. I am now pursuing a PhD. in engineering science at the University of Oxford, designing more resilient cooling schemes for future Rolls Royce engines.

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program provided the means for me to undertake an academic career, but also helped to equip me with the skills to navigate the journey.

*Through this unique programme's many development courses, I was able to become competitive on the global stage.*

Alongside my studies, I am employed as a part-time junior Aerothermal Engineer at Qdot Technology in Oxford, working with a team to develop an aircraft powered by sustainable hydrogen fuel cell energy. But I'm also determined to encourage to affect those back home who faced similar challenges. I developed EduTech, a start-up in Botswana to innovate educational solutions through tech to improve access for all students – regardless of where they come from.



## Jessica Kanyemba

BSc Genetics with Human Anatomy and Physiology, 2021, Namibia

I'm just over halfway through my bachelor's degree and I am thriving in my genetics and human anatomy programme. In 2021

and 2022 I made the Dean's Merit list and finished in the top 15% of my major. I was also accepted into the prestigious Golden Key International Honour Society.

I never imagined being so stimulated, challenged and rewarded by my studies – but I nearly missed the opportunity.

*If it was not for the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, my life would not be as it is – I would be at home struggling.*

Thanks to the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, I am able to pursue my dream of progressing Africa-centred genetics research and solutions. With my degree, I hope to found the first institute of genetics in my home county of Namibia, which currently has no such focused research body or related university department. With a mandate to train students in the sciences and to provide genetic counselling, I hope to create employment opportunities while progressing research outputs and health outcomes on the continent.

Thanks to my scholarship, I have the capacity to cultivate myself holistically – and to pay it forward by helping others do the same. Every day I learn something new – and all the knowledge and opportunities I've been given will eventually allow me to set up a research company to further benefit the lives of Africans.

## Paul Kuodi

Master of Public Health, 2018, Uganda

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program catalysed my academic career, allowing me to pursue a Master of Public Health at UCT, which I achieved with distinction.

*It's not overstating its influence to say that the scholarship has empowered me to break free from the constraints of my circumstances and forever altered the trajectory of my life.*

Since leaving UCT, I went on to pursue a PhD in Population Health at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, which I'm currently completing. While studying, I am active in my field, to impact the healthcare system in Kenya and advocating for the wellbeing of marginalised groups. As programme



manager at the US-based non-profit Last Mile 4D, I focus on designing innovative health and safety interventions for women and girls in remote and underserved regions. My work aims to strengthen community development, address the root causes of poverty and combat the harmful practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). So far, in this role, I've been able to reach more than 3000 girls with education materials that teach about the dangers of FGM.

I'm proud of what I've achieved and ever-conscious that without the scholarship, my life and career would look very different. The Scholars Program arrived as a beacon of hope, sweeping away obstacles and illuminating a path towards success.



## Tendai Mbanje

LLM in Human Rights Law, 2018, Zimbabwe

Passionate about social justice, transformation and political development through the realisation of human rights, since my undergraduate studies I have been pursuing my goal of becoming a human rights expert. Along the way, I've been affirmed with several merits, including being a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society. Currently, I am pursuing a PhD in human rights law at the University of Pretoria while working at the university's Centre for Human Rights.

*The global Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program opened a door for endless opportunities including international working opportunities, but there have been plenty of challenges along the way.*

Although I was offered a position with the African Union in Banjul, The Gambia following my LLM, it was a tough transition – Banjul is hot, the economic conditions are very hard and the country is poor. For two years I lived apart from friends and family, ate different foods and navigated another culture.

Through it, I gained valuable experience working on human rights issues and returned to South Africa to undertake my doctorate. While I currently study, I am also working as a legal researcher for the Democracy and Civic Engagement Unit and consulting at the Southern African Liaison Office on a project for COMESA countries. With all this exposure to the diversity of African cultures and legal contexts I am determined to equip myself to confront human rights issues on the continent.



# Leadership

Transformative leaders drive change with purpose. The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program develops transformative leadership capacity in young people who will continue to inspire and achieve change in their contexts through their desire to create sustainable solutions to society's developmental challenges.



## Mr Xolani Mkoba

Programme Coordinator, BA Hons Public Management

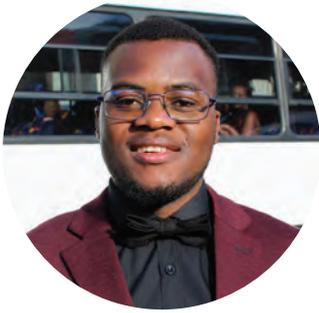
“ At the heart of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program lies the commitment to enabling access to quality education. By providing scholarships and support services, the Program empowers scholars from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue higher education, unlocking doors to academic excellence and leadership that were once beyond their reach. ”

## Ms Fahmza Jaffar

Finance Manager, PGDip Management Practise

“ As the world continues to become more interconnected, we aim to create global leaders who are agile and resilient with a global digital mindset that fosters innovation through relationship building across cultural divides. ”





## Law Mugadhuyi

Master of Public Health, 2023, Zimbabwe

When I first arrived at UCT to pursue my undergraduate studies in social work I was overwhelmed by the pressures of this new opportunity and its academic standards. With the help of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program network, however, I found an anchoring and was able to adapt.

*The experience has given me a great deal of resilience – and I believe it is that resilience that motivates me to continue with my educational endeavours.*

Today I am in my first year pursuing a master's in public health. As I study it's important for me to actively apply what I'm learning. As a project organiser for Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO), I plan and facilitate workshops to teach life skills, including conflict resolution, stress management and relationship building using a cognitive behavioural approach. I'm assisting other communities in Cape Town as well by designing church activities that educate high school students on the importance of mental health.

I credit the Foundation for not only its financial support, but the connections it created that have allowed me to develop holistically. It has also given me a family. Meeting and connecting with well-informed, culturally varied, and sophisticated individuals has been nothing but a blessing – all thanks to the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program.

## Albert Mutangi

BSc Chemical Engineering, 2021, Zimbabwe

When I got notice I had been accepted into the Scholars Program at UCT, my life instantly changed. My first week as a full-time financially supported student at UCT was a revelation – I had time and capacity to do much more than I ever thought. I was able to concentrate on the academic side of my experience and demonstrate my leadership potential to my lecturers and classmates. Being appointed class representative in two of my courses not only challenged me to refine my ability to lead, it opened me up to the languages and cultures of my diverse student cohort. The Program's leadership camp with UCT's then vice-chancellor Mamokgethi Phakeng stands out as a pivotal moment. The VC shared her own journey into academia and leadership, along with valuable insights

about the strengths a good leader should cultivate.

It shaped the way I see myself

and made me determined to make education accessible for students from my community back home in Zimbabwe.

*Being the first person to make it to university has been the greatest achievement of my family, but it's also been a tunnel with light made for everyone – especially my siblings who are going to follow my path.*





## Bright Tetteh

MCom Economics, specialising in Economic Science, 2020, Ghana

Effective leadership is often about what is demonstrated, rather than what is dictated. For the youth of my community back home in rural Ghana, my journey from the village to UCT has been a profound lesson about the possibilities that are available through education. The fact that I continue to pursue further study opportunities – first at the University of Alicante in Spain doing a QED/PhD in economics, and later this year as a researcher in Italy – shows how learning can be a life-long journey that unlocks the world.

But it’s also important for me to make an impact beyond my academic pursuits. While pursuing a master’s at UCT, I co-founded Learn a Skill, a project aimed at school dropouts from my home village that facilitates vocational and technical skills trainings and entrepreneurship

development. At its core, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program recognises that learning is a vital tool for life – not just academic settings – empowering people to thrive regardless of their circumstances or opportunities.

*The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has been rewarding and it has heightened the leadership part of me to another level – I see leadership as part of my life, and it is becoming more natural for me.*

My ongoing work and research into the intersections between climate change, agriculture and environmental sustainability have also broadened the scope of my influence, aiming at reducing poverty and ensuring food security year around.





## Takudzwa Chitsiga

MSc Chemical Engineering, 2022, Zimbabwe

Through the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program I have not only found meaningful support and connections, but I have also been able to facilitate this experience for others as well. Serving as secretary general of the Scholars Council, I have cultivated vital leadership skills like active listening, inclusivity and fostering a collaborative environment, empowering others to make their own impact.

*As a leader, I strive to ensure every scholar feels valued and supported, resulting in increased engagement and participation in community service projects.*

I have used my scholarship and connections to contribute to academic journals and attend conferences, sharing my research findings and staying up to date with the latest developments in my field, which has positioned me at the forefront of my discipline.

Ultimately, I hope to use my studies and experience as a student leader to promote broad access to affordable, reliable energy and advance the fight against climate change. My master's dissertation focuses on renewable energy optimisation and integration, addressing key challenges of sustainable development in Africa and abroad.

## Luzuko Dazela

LLM in Mineral and Petroleum Extraction and Use, 2023, South Africa

Although I have just begun my journey undertaking my master's in law at UCT, I've already been able to connect with several initiatives that allow me to use my gifts and further my ambitions. I am currently leading the research and campaign development team for Amnesty UCT, which seeks to protect the human rights of the UCT populace. I'm part of the Black Lawyers' Association Student Chapter at UCT (BLASC), which aims to promote, advocate and advance the rights of students of colour on campus.

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at UCT has helped me develop transformative leadership skills by actively encouraging participation in leadership initiatives and organisations. The Foundation facilitates participation by sponsoring students' joining fees for university organisations, while also inspiring students through organising diverse leaders to come and speak.



Where I come from in the rural Eastern Cape, stories like mine are rare. Gaining financial independence from my family through the scholarship has allowed me the freedom to fully pursue my passion for social justice and set a course of giving back. Ultimately, I hope to enable sustainable development in my home province by educating locals in socio-legal and socio-environmental issues related to mining and the environment.

But the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has also affirmed me in a very personal way.

*It has resulted in a new belief that we, as the Bizana community, are deserving of opportunities, and with hard work, we can also go far in this life.*

# Community Engagement

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program enables deserving young people to give back to their communities and participate in community service initiatives that improve the lives of others. The scholars embrace responsibility to transform and lead socio-economic progress to reduce poverty and provide hope within their communities.



## Mr Sikhulile Khoza

Administrative Assistant, BSc Civil Engineering

“ Community engagement is an integral part of the mission of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program. Through various initiatives, it encourages scholars to actively participate in community services, volunteering and social impact projects. By fostering a culture of giving back, the Program aims to create educated and socially responsible leaders who are dedicated to making a positive difference in their communities and beyond. ”





## Chwayita Ntwasa

MA Social Development, 2021, South Africa

With an undergraduate degree in politics and economics, I've studied the complex forces that underpin South Africa's inequalities; growing up in Langa, I've also experienced them first hand. With a master's in social development, I hope to be part of a movement to reimagine township life. I hope for a township life that is filled with hope and opportunity, rather than violence, lack of opportunity and discouragement. And to fulfil this dream I want to start a school in Langa that not only focuses on academic progression, but also caters for the overall emotional and physical needs of children.

I am already working towards this goal by focusing on youth development, research and education. I founded an extracurricular programme that provides a safe space for children to explore their spirituality as well as build healthy relationships with one another. It also helps them to chart

a pathway for the future, offering tutoring, mentorship and connections to scholarship opportunities.

The support of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has been a lifeline, allowing me to continue my studies and invest my time in extracurricular activities that give back – but I've also received much from my involvement with the Langa youth.

*It has fulfilled my passion for making a positive impact and changing my community for the better, and it motivates me to become a person that children can look up to.*

The children give me a lot of joy and encourage me to keep facing my own hardships.

## Kabeli Mohapi

MSc Chemical Engineering, 2023, Lesotho

Although they never finished school themselves, my single mother and grandmother always stressed the importance of education. And witnessing their steady determination and sacrifice to provide me with the best possible opportunities inspired me to excel academically.

*As I became more aware of the challenges faced by my community, like the lack of clean water and the need for development in important processing industries, my desire to make a difference deepened.*



The scholarship has given me the chance to grow my vision for thriving rural communities and cultivate the vital practical skills to help me affect the necessary change. This is my first year in the Scholars Program and I'm immersing myself in environmental work that has significant social implications; my research project aims to address issues around sustainable consumption patterns in the minerals industry by promoting the circular economy and better waste management processes.

Beyond academics, I intend to take advantage of the leadership opportunities available through the Program – while also ensuring my studies are a bridge to my community back home.



## Amanda Mathe

MSc Biomedical Engineering, 2023, Zimbabwe

I am driven to work on the forefront of medical solutions that can address some of the continent's most pressing health challenges, which is why I'm pursuing my master's in biomedical engineering. I hope to position myself with scarce and necessary skills to play a key role in this area in the future – but I'm also equally eager to make an impact in my community at home, right now. I'm in the process of establishing a non-profit organisation in Zimbabwe that is focused on educating girls about feminine hygiene, particularly menstrual hygiene, empowering them with knowledge about proper menstrual care using reusable sanitary products. Inspired by the impactful work of other Foundation scholars in their respective communities, I want to empower girls in mine

to ensure they have access to necessary information and resources for their well-being.

*My own early exposure to the sciences and the doors the Program has opened for me have also motivated me to take part in initiatives within my department that also encourages biomedical engineering and STEM in high schools.*

Working with students has been truly gratifying – witnessing their enthusiasm and growth. Mentorship plays such a significant role in guiding young girls to overcome their daily challenges.





## Siphamandla Ngwenya

MSc Clinical Sciences and Immunology, 2023, South Africa

From a young age, I was fascinated with the natural world and the workings of the human body.

Coming from a rural village, where little was known about the biological and physiological sciences, I saw becoming a medical doctor as the only way to explore these interests further. Imagine how disheartened I was when my medical school applications were rejected – despite having a great academic record. Instead, I was accepted to study medical sciences.

Although unexpected, this track propelled my curiosity even further, opening my eyes to the possibilities that impactful opportunities research could offer. I felt a yearning to actively contribute to the vast tapestry of scientific knowledge and soon realised that being a medical scientist would suit me much better than becoming a physician.

Today, I'm pursuing a master's in clinical sciences and immunology and I am energised by the prospect of pushing the boundaries of human understanding. But my interests are not purely academic. I always hope to remain connected with the underlying purpose of research, which is to advance knowledge and improve life for all. As a member of the Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO) at UCT, I'm able to contribute to causes that promote health and wellbeing in society like teaching digital literacy among learners and violence prevention. Witnessing the transformation of students as they acquire new skills, embrace digital platforms and discover their unique talents has been immensely gratifying.

*It has filled me with gratitude to get the opportunity to be part of something greater than myself.*





## Travimadox Webb

BSc Electrical & Computer Engineering, 2021, Kenya

Although I dreamt of pursuing electrical and computer engineering as a high school student, the path seemed out of reach. The Scholars Program was a gateway into a previously impossible future.

*I have also witnessed the power of education and sustainable solutions in bridging gaps and uplifting communities.*

Since my studies began in 2021, I have leveraged this opportunity to advocate for the environment and support marginalised communities. Partnering with Project90 by 2030, I've been able to use my engineering skills to develop

sustainable energy solutions, designing and building solar power banks for communities, and educating them about renewable energy solutions. My experiences working with and in communities has deepened my understanding of society's socioeconomic disparities and environmental challenges and fuelled my commitment to social responsibility.

While I believe in promoting clean energy and remain committed to the climate agenda and the future of our planet, I'm also mindful of the value of youth investing in their individual futures. By providing academic assistance and tutoring to students in my community and fostering an environment of learning, I aim to inspire them to see beyond their current circumstances and visualise a future filled with opportunities.

## Thabile Manzi

MA in Criminal Justice Social Work, 2023, South Africa

While I was working as an intern social worker at a local police station in Cape Town, I realised there is a crucial gap in the system where cases that require forensic interviews receive inadequate attention. This, and my growing passion for helping the vulnerable children I encountered, is what prompted me to apply for a Master's in Criminal Justice Social Work at UCT.

*Children are our future – we know this – and we can help shape a better future by providing early intervention for social ills that hinder their development and limit their potential.*



By providing not just financial aid alone but a platform to encounter the world through other scholars and support programmes, I have seen how the backing of the Mastercard Foundation ignites possibilities for students and reinforces their belonging – regardless of their background. We are all treated as equals, whose individual well-being is equally valued as we navigate academics.

Through the care I've been given, I've been inspired to return to my community with my knowledge and skills. With my involvement with purpose-driven organisations on campus like Amnesty UCT, which is dedicated to advocating for and educating people on their rights, I'm also growing more firm in my ability to be an agent for change.



## Athini Mabandla

MA specialising in Gender Transformation, 2023, South Africa

I come from a community that believes education is only for those who are rich, and those who are poor are not worthy of it. But I have proven to them that we all worthy of getting a good education.

Today I'm on a path of pursuing a master's degree, but after high school I considered jumping straight into the workforce to start earning for my family. But my grandmother convinced me to go to university instead, and I was able to secure bursaries that allowed me to complete an undergraduate and honours degree.

Still, it wasn't until the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program that I felt I had all the tools I needed to succeed. I remember when I received my first-ever laptop from the Foundation – I was crying because it was the biggest gift I have ever received in my life.

With the scholarship provision, I can go to bed without worrying about food, focusing entirely on my studies and on driving a culture of hope and support for continued education in township schools. Because they are so overburdened and stretched for resources, black township high schools don't have time to care about what happens to a child after high school – the focus is on pass rates, rather than motivating individuals.

Next year I plan to dedicate most of my time to mentoring township matrics and helping them apply for university. But helping them navigate the system is one thing.

*Most important is helping them believe in themselves – that whatever dream they have can come to reality despite their background and living conditions.*



# Entrepreneurship and Development

Entrepreneurship helps Mastercard Foundation Scholars to channel their curiosity towards valuable and meaningful contributions to their local communities. It is a platform for scholars to exercise transformative leadership to create ground-breaking discoveries that are key to resolving the continent's challenges.



## Ms Mugove Chiwashira

Careers and Internships Coordinator, LLB Bachelor of Laws

“*Entrepreneurship is critical in addressing real needs in our society and empowers our scholars to develop contextualised solutions to African problems. It allows our scholars to imagine a better continent, to shape the future of Africa and its people, and plays a role in catalysing economic opportunities for others. Entrepreneurship has the power to change our perspectives – the future is bright!*”

The image displays three screenshots of the Kude mobile app interface on a red background with a map pattern. The first screenshot shows a search screen with fields for 'Start location' and 'End location', a 'Search' button, and a keyboard. The second screenshot shows a list of 'All Locations' with columns for location names and fares. The third screenshot shows a route from Century City to Wynberg with a fare of R 12, a 10-minute travel time, and a 7km distance. A circular portrait of Eugene Fotso Simo is overlaid on the right side of the app screenshots.

**Search for the price by location**

**Over 100+ locations in the app**

Eugene Fotso Simo created Kude, a mobile app for the mini-bus taxi market. The app provides users with information about fares, routes, stops, and tips on using taxis safely. It also gives users information related to their chosen route, such as position of taxi stops, enabling users to plan their next taxi trip better.

## Michael Mutava

MCom in Applied Economics, 2017, Kenya

The greatest benefit I experienced of being part of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program was a change in mindset.

*I was really able to reinvent myself from a mere job seeker to a seller of skills.*

I've been able to grow my leadership and communication skills through participating in organisations like the Scholars Council, exercising my voice in a public setting, practicing diplomacy and balancing the interests of diverse stakeholders. All of this has allowed me to enter the world post-academics with confidence.



Since graduating from UCT, I have worked for the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance and I am now a research fellow at the New South Institute in Johannesburg, tackling issues that relate to migration in Africa.

While I enjoy my research, I have also been eager to apply my skills and knowledge toward my own venture. In 2020, I received funding from the Scholars Entrepreneurship Fund (SEF) to set up an apiary, a project that has not only plunged me in beekeeping and entrepreneurship, but also shown me that there are numerous ways of remaining engaged, enthusiastic and to contribute to society.



## Abulmajid Aminu

MSc Environmental Science, 2017, Nigeria

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program was not just an opportunity, but rather a cornerstone for me to achieve all that life can offer. The programmes I took part in during my time as a scholar not only allowed me to excel in my studies in environmental science, but also ignited my desire to use business as a tool for sustainable upliftment.

I had access to a variety of opportunities that allowed me to develop leadership, networking and entrepreneurship skills – which I then parlayed into a business partnership in Nigeria. Without the burden of paying back student loans post-graduation, I was able to risk becoming a

project manager in a developing business, overseeing real estate, facility management and construction projects. The Scholars Program taught me to integrate social and environmental consciousness into business activities, which has contributed to my leadership quality and to becoming more sustainably business-minded. Ultimately, I would like to help others become generational thinkers.

*I want to encourage people to lead with forethought to make Africa rise again through entrepreneurial activities and technical skills.*



## Lieketseng Sekoto

MSc Audiology, 2020, Lesotho

The financial challenges I faced at the end of my undergraduate studies, coupled with my inability to secure a clinical internship as an undergrad, threatened my chances of finding a job once I'd earned my BSc. The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program was a timely lifeline, allowing me to go deeper into my field while enabling chances for crucial hands-on experience. But undertaking studies in 2020 meant further setbacks – especially with my research, which investigated identity construction among deaf adolescents and required that I meet participants face-to-face. My research activities were halted several times because of the risks of COVID-19 infections, costing me precious time. I was able to make the most of the few opportunities I did have though, and secured an extension to complete my work, finally graduating in 2022 with distinction. The resilience and resourcefulness I had cultivated would come in handy in the next chapter of

my life post-graduation when, although I was offered a job in an audiology clinic in Botswana, circumstances prevented me from taking it up. Instead, I am now channelling my inner entrepreneur and I am in the process of setting up my audiology practice in Lesotho: LS Ear Solutions. The practice already provides basic ear healthcare services to an area that is underserved by the country's healthcare system. Through innovative and tele-audiology-based services, I intend to make audiology care more accessible to all Basotho, especially those in remote areas.

The experience has uncovered a passion for entrepreneurship that I didn't know existed, and I am more inspired than ever to monetise my skills.

*I am well on my way to being a serial entrepreneur, who will bring positive change to my community – and it's exciting.*



Ama & Peeps

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On this YouTube channel you will join Ama Pertunia Mutheiwana on a journey to create unity and change in society. In order to survive these challenges, we ought to stand together (unite) and at the same time understand the need to be flexible (change). This is simply because a changing world requires a change in the way we do things.



## Evidence James

LLM in Tax Law, 2019, Zimbabwe

Striving for academic excellence has always been a priority for me. I graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of

Fort Hare and later in the top 15% of my class from my Master of Tax Law programme at UCT.

But alongside my studies, it has always been important to me to nurture my own businesses – small ventures that have spanned construction and retail. The Mastercard Foundation scholarship gave me the latitude to focus on my studies, while providing chances for invaluable personal growth and enhancing my leadership capacity. It created a skills-building platform that unlocked the person that was yet to be revealed in me.

While at UCT I also served as chair of the Enactus UCT Corporate Relations sub-committee, a student-led

organisation that encourages social entrepreneurship. I was able to build on the entrepreneurial workshops and training through the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program to pilot a fast-food restaurant as my first formal venture. Today, I am in the process of registering my own business advisory and consulting company, offering both business and tax services. I'm also busy establishing a public benefit organisation for the regulation of tax professionals in Zimbabwe.

While academics has been central to my own growth and success, I believe entrepreneurship has the power to catalyse growth for even the most marginalised. It can reach and empower uneducated, poor and youth populations that are continuously excluded and exploited.

*All people, regardless of social standing, deserve a decent livelihood.*



The idea of designer Grace Adotey's Soigné Afrique is to present traditional Ankara fabrics in trendy and casual fashion pieces that do not only come at affordable prices, but are made at the click of a button. The brand's mission is to provide a new lens through which people can appreciate their African culture by showcasing the beauty of African fabrics in the clothing they wear.

# Sustainability and Innovation

Mastercard Foundation Scholars are championing the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals through research, innovation and impactful projects that focus on solving pressing world problems to create a sustainable and just future.



## Mr Riyaadh Fakier

Finance and Administrative Officer, Certificate in Business Management and Financial Management

“ The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program aligns with the Africa 2063 Agenda, which aims to address various social, economic and environmental challenges through a particularly African lens. Students are encouraged to acquire knowledge and expertise that can contribute to sustainable development and address pressing challenges in their communities. ”

## Ms Ielhaam Adam

Finance Administrator, National Senior Certificate

“ The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program is a global initiative which provides scholars with the perfect opportunity to make change happen across Africa. The Mastercard Foundation actively supports innovation by providing scholars with much needed assistance and encourages the focus on seizing Africa's economic challenges. ”





## Jeff Watitwa

MSc Electrical Engineering, 2018, Kenya

Growing up in a village in rural Kenya, I faced financial constraints and few opportunities to further my education. The Mastercard

Foundation Scholars Program was life changing. The scholarship opened doors that were previously closed to me, offering a world-class education and comprehensive support services. I was able to deepen my knowledge of sustainable energy, while developing personally.

*Beyond academics, the scholarship nurtured a strong sense of social responsibility within me.*

Engaging in community initiatives and service-learning opportunities, I've been able to apply my knowledge and skills to make a positive impact. Following my studies, I worked as a financial analyst and trader and then moved

into the sustainable transport sector as a business development associate for an electric motorbike start up in Nairobi. But full-time employment hasn't stood in the way of pursuing entrepreneurial ventures of my own, including an organic vegetable farm and a rabbit farm.

I'm now successfully supplying local markets and restaurants, while discovering new local premium markets. I am most proud of providing my community with nutritious food and employment, while also promoting sustainable farming practices.

I'm determined to advance greener transport while also contributing toward other goals on the African Union Agenda 2063 – from affordable clean energy to food security. And going forward, I plan to expand and improve my ventures, scaling up production and exploring new market opportunities.





## Paulina Naupu

MSc Molecular and Cell Biology, 2018, Namibia

After graduating with a master's in 2019, I felt poised to take on the world – full of ambition and optimism. I was convinced that my dream job was just around the corner. I didn't foresee the tempestuous storm of unemployment that awaited me.

COVID-19 destroyed my plans to secure gainful employment following university and, at first, I was disheartened. Then I realised I had options. Drawing on my experience in the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program I decided to volunteer. With the help of a transition stipend from the Foundation, I was able to offer my time and skills to assist a local diagnostic lab in Namibia, meeting the urgent need for additional laboratory personnel during the pandemic.

*The experience not only gave me a sense of purpose during a difficult time, but also opened new doors.*

Solidifying my passion for advancing diagnostic capabilities, I then sought a position as a research fellow at the Namibia Institute of Pathology Limited where I currently work on genome sequencing – which is vital to understanding genetic variation and identifying disease markers. Outside the lab, I'm also involved in an innovative project that seeks to address the implications of climate change on small-scale farmers in drought-prone regions by providing them with a resilient source of animal feed. The initiative introduces Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM) plants as a sustainable solution to the limited availability of animal fodder during droughts. The plants possess drought-resistant characteristics and exhibit the unique ability to thrive in water-scarce environments.

Through this project, we aim to contribute to building a more sustainable and equitable future for rural livestock farmers in Namibia, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and fostering resilience in agricultural practices.



## Stephanie Achieng

MSc Environmental Management, 2017, Kenya

I am the last of four siblings and the first university graduate in my family. Growing up, I watched my single mother work tirelessly as an office secretary, trying to stretch her salary of 180 USD across the entire household each month.

*I was driven to succeed and get a quality education, as I saw that was my only way out of economic hardships.*

With the support of the Kenyan government, I was able to attend Kenyatta University to study environmental sciences. Then, as a recipient of the Mastercard Foundation scholarship I was able to be fully supported for my master's programme, freeing me to get involved with programmes that aligned with my values and interests.



While at UCT I joined UN Women as a partnerships and resource mobilisation consultant, liaising with the African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Because of my involvement, I was head-hunted by the United Nations and now work for the United Nations Development Programme as a climate change and gender specialist, focusing on developing contexts.

Working on climate change concerns spanning climate security, adaptation and gender, I am actively contributing toward the UN SDGs – specifically SDG 5, Gender Equality and SDG 13, Climate Action – and the AU Agenda 2063. Meanwhile, I am also setting up my own consultancy firm, specialising in development research in Africa that will hopefully inform crucial Afro-centric policy.



## Tinashe Kagande

MEng Telecommunications, 2020, Zimbabwe

Coming from a small village in Zimbabwe, I had few chances to hone my interests in science and engineering. With the Mastercard Foundation scholarship I was able to immerse myself in my studies, seek internships, leadership programmes and community engagement opportunities – all of which solidified my commitment to personal growth and social change.

*Through this significant Scholarship Program, I gained access to resources, mentors and networks that shaped me into a confident and capable individual.*

It broadened my horizons, exposing me to diverse perspectives and fostering a global mindset.

I've since been able to seek out impactful projects within my field and I'm currently involved with AI for Africa, a project that leverages artificial intelligence to address social and environmental challenges on the continent. Collaborating with local communities, researchers and policymakers, I help develop AI solutions for resource optimisation, healthcare and agriculture.

I have been given the tools, knowledge and platform to pursue my passions and contribute meaningfully to society – and I'm determined to make the most of it.



## Obvious Terrence Mutambara

LLM in Mineral and Petroleum Extraction and Use, 2020, Zimbabwe

The opportunities that the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program made available to me opened doors for me personally, while also marking a new chapter in law within the mining and energy sector.

*My area of specialisation is still very new, and it coincided with the government initiative of transforming these sectors by 2030.*

My skills have become extremely valuable, allowing me to secure employment at one of the best law firms in Zimbabwe. Alongside this, the research I've done into

the environmental implications of hydraulic fracturing in South Africa has been especially useful in determining truly sustainable energy solutions.

Meanwhile, my farming ventures in Nyabira, Zimbabwe are expanding food sources and employment opportunities in this rural community – especially for women, who make up three quarters of my employees. The farm is directly contributing toward food security and nutrition – both of which are vital to Agenda 2063 – but also to expanding educational opportunities. Given how education unlocked my own potential, I'm mindful of providing others with the opportunity to grow as well and I set aside a portion of my farm proceeds to go toward school fees for the children of my employees.

## Mohale Moshoeshoe

MSc Electrical Engineering, 2022, Lesotho

Too often scholars who are determined to achieve and who possess the gifts to do so simply lack awareness about how to reach their goals – this was the case for me. Growing up in rural Lesotho, I saw no evidence of anyone achieving a career in engineering, and yet I always wanted to be one so I could be involved in large-scale technological projects. Not knowing a single person in this profession, however, this dream seemed far-fetched.

I studied hard, however, attended university and completed undergraduate studies in engineering. With a clearer idea of my career pathway, and a passion to play a role in elevating Africa's power issues, I hoped to study further, doing my master's specialising in renewable energy. Funding from the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program allowed

me to progress down this path, while also refining crucial skills that will help me lead others and impact energy transformation at scale. I have taken several mentorship positions within my engineering and built environment faculty, as well as Lesotho students association.

*The holistic growth the Program has allowed amounts to a power-filled trajectory that's illuminating the way for my own community.*

My journey has been inspirational to those who have observed my academic trajectory so far – especially those who know my humble background.



## Chukwudi Nwaigwe

MSc Biological Sciences, 2022, Nigeria

*From the moment I set foot on campus, I was embraced by a vibrant community of scholars, mentors and advisors who believed in my potential and encouraged me to strive for excellence.*

Although I only recently joined the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, I've been able to immerse myself in its opportunities; I've attended international workshops and seminars in my field, expanding my perspective and strengthening my network of like-minded researchers. Thanks to the Program's focus on developing leadership skills, I have the confidence to step into new roles too, like serving as secretary general of UCT's Nigerian Student Society.

By volunteering to assist colleagues with field and laboratory sampling, I've been exposed to new research questions and

methods. I'm participating in a plastic research project between South Africa and Norway to determine the origin of plastic bottles in the value chain between the countries. This project uses innovative tracking methods and requires excellent collaboration between researchers – it's exciting to be working with cutting-edge technology on such an urgent issue.

My research interests also relate to land-based challenges too, and explore the opportunities and obstacles of urban agriculture in Nigeria – a topic that's close to home. I'm keen to address the big global questions of climate change and poverty, but I also want my success to touch young people who are finding their way right now. I have had the privilege of making a tangible impact on the lives of young people – especially through mentoring potential scholars back home, which is immediately gratifying.



# Dedications



**Chwayita Ntwasa**  
Masters in Social Development, 2021

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to expand my skills, reach for my goals, and impact my community.



**Sinelizwi Malindi**  
MSc in Geomatics, 2023

The scholarship has ensured that I have all the resources I need to continue studying, and I am extremely grateful.



**Mfundo Eugene Mabuza**  
BSc Honours in Biological Sciences, 2023

This scholarship has not only eased the financial burden of pursuing higher education but has also opened doors to endless possibilities that I could only imagine before.



**Adebowale Adeniran**  
MSc Mechanical Engineering, 2022

The Scholars Program has welcomed me into a vibrant community of scholars, mentors, and like-minded individuals dedicated to making a positive difference in the world.



**Amanda Mathe**  
MSc Biomedical Engineering, 2023

The overall support offered by the Foundation has equipped me to excel in my studies and personal growth.



**Sidney Muchemwa**  
MSc Occupational Therapy, 2022

I've gained critical skills at a world-class university. I hope to pay this forward by impacting other people's lives as much as the Program impacted mine.



**Nthabiseng Mashale**  
LLM Commercial Law, 2023

Your generous support means more to me than words can express. Your belief in my potential and willingness to invest in my education has inspired me immensely.



**Luxolo Tomsana**  
LLM in International Trade Law, 2023

The Scholars Program seeks to give back to society by means of scaling the inequality caused by educational imbalance. Ngiyathokoza Mastercard Foundation.



**Jessica Kanyemba**  
BSc Genetics with Human Anatomy and Physiology, 2021

I am determined to become the founder of the first genetic research lab in my home country. I extend all my love and deep appreciation to the Mastercard Foundation.



**Jacob Aketch**  
MSc (Eng) Mechanical Engineering, 2022

This has been a catapult of momentum in the direction I always envisioned – building my technical expertise in renewable energies and using my expertise more effectively.



**Thabiso Khuzwayo**  
BA (Hons) Linguistics, 2023

I'm learning about humanity and looking out for other people – and I have encountered the most incredible, diverse people!



**Rosely Chitaunhike**  
BSocSc (Hons) Psychology, 2023

Your investment in my education has instilled in me a sense of responsibility to give back to the community and help others realise their dreams as well.



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