

Some of East Africa's brightest and best take centre stage at LSE

Lalji PfAL Scholarship recipient, Moses Mpungu hopes he and his colleagues can follow in the tradition of other world leaders who studied at LSE.

There has been a strong East African flavour on the LSE campus this term, mostly due to 26 students from Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan studying for Masters degrees in the Department of International Development.




The 26 Lalji PfAL Scholarship recipients pose with Firoz Lalji (centre) and academics from LSE's Department of International Development

The students are recipients of the **Lalji PfAL Scholarships**. Initially Firoz and Najma Lalji, through the Programme for African Leadership (PfAL) Foundation, pledged 15 scholarships. The interest was overwhelming and the standard of applicants so high that LSE generously agreed to fund a number of additional places. In the end 27 scholarships were awarded in total, however sadly one of the awarded scholars had to withdraw for personal reasons.

The students are pursuing programmes in either the MSc in Development Management or the MSc in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies (IDHE). In addition, they will participate in a series of workshops, lectures and seminars focusing on African leadership and the challenges and opportunities facing the continent.

For Ugandan Moses Mpungu, a desk officer for Peace and Security in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the timing of the scholarships was just right. "Having worked for the Foreign Ministry for three years and gaining experience in post-conflict reconstruction, I immediately saw a direct relation between the MSc programme in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies and my work. I wanted to improve my knowledge within this field, so that when I go back I can make a better contribution to my country."

Mpungu is already gaining knowledge that he can put to good use when he returns home. "I think knowledge of how to manage with disasters has been a missing element in my work over the last few years. When I go back, I hope to develop ways of incorporating it into the Ministry. There is no link between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Disaster Department within the 

Minister's office. I want to create that link so that the Ministry can have a contribution in times of disaster.”

16 of the 26 scholarship recipients are from Uganda, so it is no surprise to hear Mpungu describe these scholarships as the best thing to have happened to Uganda in recent times. “It is a blessing because not every Ugandan can study at LSE. This School has a tradition of producing leaders who have done great things for their nations. By the time my colleagues and I go back, we will also be in the position to contribute something special to our countries.”

Mpungu, who harbours ambitions of being an Ambassador one day, would also like to see students from other African countries benefit from the programme. “I would love for the Lalji PfAL Scholarships to continue and attract students from other parts of Africa, not necessarily Uganda, Kenya or South Sudan, but other regions as well. Africa needs a change right now, so if we have people from different parts of Africa who can change it, the continent will be a better place.”

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