



Templeton Bulletin

October 2007

Oxford in Africa

Tuesday, October 02, 2007

Templeton MBA student Robert Masinde and three other MBA students have just completed a summer strategic consulting project report, Oxford and SBS in Africa, which could have a significant impact on Oxford's involvement in management education in Africa.

In a globalised world, say the students, the delivery of business education is becoming increasingly intense. With many new and potential clients from emerging nations, Western universities must pay serious consideration to the specific needs and interests of this customer segment to remain competitive in programme delivery and thought leadership.

As far as Africa is concerned, there are many compelling reasons for entering the educational market at this present time, they add. While poverty and underdevelopment remain significant regional challenges, Africa has been moving beyond traditional negative stereotypes due to sustained growth indices, a renewed appetite for political reform and democracy and increased domestic industry and wealth.

Undertaking this project had long been in Robert's mind - the seed having been planted by fellow Kenyan (and Templeton alumna) Adema Sangale, Procter & Gamble's MD in East Africa. Adema, who acted as Robert's 'mentor' during his MBA, felt strongly that he should carry out a project that would encourage Oxford to get more involved in Africa. 'She felt that we had as yet only a scanty presence,' says Robert, 'and that there must be more that could be done.'

Oxford MBA projects are traditionally carried out on behalf of a commissioning organisation to which the resultant report is submitted: in this case Templeton Fellow in Information Management Gerd Islei served as the 'client', working with Adema to devise a new African leadership programme. Sponsorship was provided by Procter & Gamble (through Adema);

The College also provided financial and other support, reflecting the interests of several of its fellows such as Gerd Islei in sustainability and supply chain development, Michael Earl in emerging markets, and Catherine Dolan in fair trade in Africa.

Robert set about hand-picking his team. In this the project was again unusual. In most cases students are assigned to MBA projects well in advance. 'We had a chance to choose who to work with,' says team member Steve Beel. 'Although Robert was late in putting the team together he knew what sort of team was needed and who he was looking for. We ended up with a very good mix - Robert, whose background is banking in Kenya, myself, a Brit with a background in consultancy, another Brit, Emma Caddy, with extensive NGO experience, and Koome Gikunda, a Kenyan who had worked in banking in New York.'

As a starting point they decided to focus on East Africa. Robert explains why: 'Nairobi is a regional hub with the added advantage of being English-speaking. There are a lot of executives working there and several universities. Kenya has one of the highest literacy levels in Africa and of students attending universities abroad.'

After initial desk research, team members spent a month in Nairobi (in Robert's case two months) interviewing a wide range of business and academic leaders, students, politicians and officials. 'It was hard work but definitely good fun - and also an advert for what Oxford can do, say Robert and Steve. 'The name of Oxford opened a lot of doors. We had access to the office of the President and the head of the National Economic Council.' 'Even for me as a Kenyan,' adds Robert, 'that was a real opportunity!'

Three themes dominate their report. The first is a need for greater African exposure and involvement internationally. 'African executives,' says Masinde, 'although often well-trained, need more exposure and access to global networks. They lack a wider forum for getting in touch with other executives and sectors.'

The second is its emphasis on leadership development. While many maintain Africa's real need is for basic training, skills and capital, the team disagrees: 'Everything starts with the leaders. If you're talking about building human capital, when leaders are trained, they can train those under them, and they have greater ability to get more productive people into the economy and retain them – which is a big problem for Africa. Also we wanted to play to Oxford's strengths – its brand, record in leadership and knowledge development and its international relationships and outlook.'

The final feature is gradualism. In their report the team recommends a staged implementation process delivered in partnership with established local universities, achieving 'quick wins' in the next six months through a pilot programme, Executive Education for Aspiring Leaders, and consolidation of nascent alumni chapters to support market entry. In the longer term they argue that an African Business Centre along the lines of the Saïd Business School's recently established Indian Business Centre would offer a compelling initiative for a university with such strong research credentials as Oxford.

The team stresses its expectations – for now - are modest: 'We hope our report will at least raise awareness initially, seed some activities and encourage tie-ups with other research interests in the University. We think we have been realistic and not over-ambitious. It is not easy for us to gauge resources and we know the School has certain horizons and priorities. In terms of research centres China and India may come first but an African Business Centre is a worthwhile aspiration, and we have tried to look ahead and see what steps taken now might help make it a reality in future.' Gerd Islei agrees: 'A broad base of good will has been established and I hope that we can do justice to the wonderful opportunity that this project has helped to create.'

For more information on Gerd's career and research interests see www.templeton.ox.ac.uk/fellowship.

Wedding Bells & Babies

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Congratulations to College Head Groundsman, Nick Bishop, who got married on 15 October in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Wales to Emma Harrison. The happy event was marked by the presentation of a wedding gift to Nick in the College Common Room on 12 October. Nick joined the College in 2005, and Emma also works on college ground maintenance, but at Magdalen - wher Nick first met her.

Congratulations are also in order for College Librarian Lis Yeates, who gave birth to a baby boy, William Robert, on the morning of 30 September. All College Fellows, students and staff whom she served so faithfully and efficiently over the years will join with us in wishing her the very best.

AIDS Study Highlighted

Wednesday, October 03, 2007

The study in August's British Medical Journal, co-authored by College Fellow Dr Paul Montgomery, which found that educational programmes for young people which solely promote abstinence as a way of preventing HIV infection are no more effective than usual services or no treatment at all in preventing HIV infection, continues to be extensively cited.

Already widely reported in the New Scientist, the New York Times, The Australian and the BBC, the study (which calls into question whether state and federal funding for such programmes in the United States could be better spent) has now been featured on The Economist website (http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9831189). To find out more about the original article visit www.bmj.online.

Read more about Paul Montgomery
<http://www.spsw.ox.ac.uk/staff/academic/profile/details/mongomery.html>

Oxford House Price Explosion

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

An article in the Financial Times of 29 September on the 24% increase in Oxford house prices in the last year cites College Fellow in Strategic Leadership Marshall Young in support of its contention that the University had played little part in the property price explosion. The article describes how Young and his family have watched North Oxford develop over the past decade: 'We have lived in this wedge that is just south of Summertown for the past 20 years. Luckily, I came to the University after a spell in industry but most career academics don't have this option - except the few who have become wealthy through university spin-outs. University salaries have no effect on property prices in Oxford. In fact, most young dons can't afford to live within the ring road and the cost of housing is a major deterrent to recruitment.'

Charisma Has Its Dangers

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

A Guardian article of 9 October, 'Fallen Titans Show Charisma is the Most Volatile Stock of All', quotes College Fellow in Strategic Leadership Marshall Young. Exploring the pitfalls of high profile leadership in the wake of the sudden exits of Jean-Pierre Garnier from GlaxoSmithKline and Lord Browne from BP, the article comments that business school academics warn of the dangers to the long-term health of companies posed by ultra-dominant leaders and quotes Marshall: 'The upside of charismatic leadership is that in the short run it can be very effective, encouraging staff and others to buy into future vision and potential change in an organisation. The downside is that a parent-child relationship can develop with staff switching off and not challenging leadership decisions. There is also the danger that charismatic leaders become dangerously egotistical and convinced of their own omnipotence.'

Scenario Master Honoured

Friday, October 12, 2007

Alumnus of the Oxford Scenarios Programme, Paul DiPaola, Senior Project Facilitator, Strategy & Management Solutions with the American International Group, was honoured on 3 October alongside his team with an award from the CEO of the American International Group (AIG), Martin Sullivan, for inventing a process that has had a great impact on operations throughout the group.

The process they designed is now being used also to coordinate all global press releases and corporate communications for AIG, and is also being considered for patents, and Paul feels indebted to the team who taught him here at Oxford for what he learned and was able to apply to several strategic initiatives at AIG: 'Your emphasis on strategic dialogues, learning loops and use of scenarios has been a central element to the main process we designed, and the new analogous communication and reporting processes that we are currently working on,' he writes to College Fellow in Strategic Management, Rafael Ramirez.

Paul also reports that he is delighted to be able to participate in Rafael's forthcoming Oxford Scenarios Masterclass on 26 – 28 November as well as hoping to be in Oxford in February.

Read more on the Masterclass
<http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/execed/open/scenarios-master/>

Faces Old and New at College Dinner

Friday, October 19, 2007

A varied group of some fifty College students – DPhils, MScs and MBAs, among them many new students - was welcomed to the first College Dinner of the new Term by the Dean, Professor Michael Earl, on 18 October. In addition to the students sixteen fellows and members of staff attended, including veteran Fellows, Dorothy Cooke and Glyn Pritchard and newly elected Fellow Felix Reed-Tsochas; Emeritus Fellow Bob Vause; Associate Fellows Napier Collyns and Marc Bertoneche; and Barclay Fellows Richard Greenhalgh and John Sanders.

Images Are the New Words

Monday, October 15, 2007

A paper by College Fellow in Marketing Linda Scott and Patrick Vargas of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 'Writing with Pictures: Toward a Unifying Theory of Consumer Response to Images', argues that images in contemporary consumer culture are an emergent form of writing.

Appearing in the October issue of the Journal of Consumer Research, the paper puts forward the premise is that mass communications technology has created a 'cultural classroom' in which the world's first democratic pictography has developed. They support this argument with a series of experiments that demonstrate contemporary consumers' ability to read pictures - even abstract images - as statements of product features.

'The idea that pictures in commercial communication operate as writing is consistent with the world record, no matter how counterintuitive the notion may first seem,' they write. 'Speaking candidly, we would like to see the treatment of pictures as sensory data atrophy in the literature - the treatment of images as meaningful cultural material has, in our opinion, already shown enough robustness in the rhetorical stream and other studies mentioned above that the older viewpoint is no longer tenable. We are questioning the tacit assumption made by many others that followed - that images affect consumers via emotion or sensation rather than through a coded, conventional system.'

The authors suggest that these findings have significant implications for studies of cognition, culture, and branding, particularly in a global environment where indigenous writing systems vary widely and the 'post-industrial pictography' of the worldwide economy is spreading rapidly.

For more information about the article see the University of Chicago Journals press release,
www.journals.uchicago.edu/press/082907_JCR.html.

Widening the College Circle

Sunday, October 21, 2007

Eighteen Fellows, students and guests came together to attend the first Fellows' Dinner of the new academic year on 11 October. The Dean, Professor Michael Earl, warmly welcomed the Fellows' guests: the Principal of St Hilda's College, Sheila Forbes, (hosted by Fellow in Information Management, David Feeny); Miles Creswell-Turner of Palamon Capital Partners (hosted by Associate Fellow, Fabio Giuseppetti); and the television documentary producer, Patricia Murphy (hosted by Fellow in Employee Relations, Marc Thompson). He also took the opportunity to welcome back Fellow and Professor of Management Studies, Tim Morris, after his sabbatical and went on to highlight the role of the recently launched Fellows' Dinners as events to introduce external friends and contacts to the life and work of the College.

Greeting the Class of '07

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

In his speech of welcome to new students at the Michaelmas Term Induction Day on 3 October, The Dean, Professor Michael Earl, emphasised the multifaceted role the College plays in serving its students and highlighted the journey both the College and its students will be undertaking during this academic year.

Templeton seeks to be a home to its students in various ways, Professor Earl began. Well over half of Templeton's students are now housed in college-owned accommodation. But it also tries to be a home in other senses, providing personal guidance and support and a wide range of sporting and social opportunities. Its cuisine is noted throughout the University, especially its student guest dinners, he added. 'We may be the second youngest and second poorest Oxford college but we are the top in terms of food and hospitality!'

Templeton also offers its students intellectual support and inspiration. In addition to playing a valuable supportive role through its termly feedback sessions called 'Collections', the College organises a wide range of complementary intellectual activities – seminars, 'domus dinners' and outreach lectures. 'We want to work out with you where we can best add value in your academic careers.'

Professor Earl then looked back – and ahead. The College has been engaged in a forty-year 'journey' since its origins in the 1960s as the Oxford Centre for Management Studies (OCMS), its long tenure of responsibility for executive education (until this was handed over in 2005 to the Saïd Business School in order to create an integrated single service business school) to Templeton's current role as a 'pure play' graduate college and its forthcoming merger with Green College.

This, he believed, would result in 'a strong distinctive and competitive college, a contemporary inclusive college in an ancient university with an excellent city centre location and fine architecture, a place of intellectual synergy and excitement.'

He foresaw the College pursuing a role centred 'leadership for a sustainable world', embracing medicine and management, public engagement in the understanding of science and society and the relationship between enterprise and the environment internationally. 'I hope some of you will be able to help us in making this ambition become reality. Welcome to Templeton College, to our transitional year and to the new Green-Templeton College,' he concluded.

Senior Tutor Ian Kessler followed Professor Earl with 'a different speech of welcome', in which he described how students - and his own role - fitted into Oxford's complex structure. In terms of the University he was their 'gatekeeper, advocate and protector'; in terms of the College, their academic 'decision-taker, overseer and confidant'. Vowing 'always to do my best to ensure that your interests are best served in the University', he nevertheless outlined some of the problems confronting students issues of plagiarism and the use of computers, of examinations and sickness, time management and – very importantly – the mutual respect essential in a highly diverse collegiate community. 'Templeton College is also all about involvement and commitment,' he ended. 'It is what you make of it, so make the most of it.'

A talk on health services by the College Doctor, John Sichel, followed. Then, prior to the actual registering of the new students, Administrative Fellow and Director of External Relations, Dorothy Cooke, led a session introducing students to a range of College Fellows (including Dean of Degrees and Fellow in Information Management Gerd Islei; Fellow in Organisational Behaviour and Vice-Chair of the College, Sue Dopson; Lecturer in Complex Systems, Felix Reed-Tsochas, Fellows in Marketing, Linda Scott and Catherine Dolan; Fellow in Evidence-Based Intervention, Paul Montgomery); and Associate Fellow, Peter Snow, all of whom briefly outlined their role and research interests.