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# 2016 Canon Collins Trust Alumni Seminar



# Introduction

## Overview

The inaugural Canon Collins Alumni Seminar was held on Saturday 5th November 2016, at the Ford Foundation in Johannesburg. The objective of this gathering was to celebrate, showcase and share the work of Canon Collins Trust alumni who exemplify the spirit and principles of Canon John Collins, in whose honour the Trust was established.

By way of context, Canon Collins South Africa Manager and alumna, Gillian Attwood, provided a brief retrospective look at the history of the Trust and its remarkable founder - Canon John Collins.

While some disregarded Collins as a 'troublesome meddling priest', others recognised him as a revolutionary who dedicated his life to the promotion of social justice and peace. Not only was he the founder of the Trust, he was also the driving force in three very public campaigns: against capital punishment, the nuclear bomb and apartheid.

Collins worked tirelessly to support the South African liberation struggle. He raised tens of millions of pounds for the legal defence and support of activists and their families through the International Defence and Aid Fund – work that, arguably, changed the course of history in southern Africa. Collins was also particularly committed to education and in 1981 set up the Educational Trust for Southern Africa to provide scholarships for political refugees and their families. After his death in 1982, the Trust was renamed as the Canon Collins Educational Trust (CCETSA) in his honour. In 2012, after merging with the Legal Assistance Trust, CCETSA became Canon Collins Educational and Legal Assistance Trust (CCELAT) and expanded its remit to support the Legal Resources Centre in their ground-breaking public litigation work.

Canon Collins provided principled action and a moral voice in a deeply immoral period of our region's history. The relevance of such voices and actions still pertain, and the three Canon Collins Trust alumni who presented their work and views at this seminar provided excellent examples of how Canon Collins' voice and values continue to find resonance 35 years after his death.

The alumni speaking at the event included Dewa Mavhinga, Kealeboga Maphunye, and Onke Mazibuko.



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# Dewa Mavhinga

## Qualifications

- LLM International Human Rights Law, University of Essex (Canon Collins Chevening scholar)
- LLB Law, University of Zimbabwe

## Current Occupation

Dewa is Senior Researcher for Zimbabwe, and Head of the South Africa Office of Human Rights Watch.

## Brief profile

Due to political persecution, Dewa is now based in Johannesburg, rather than Zimbabwe. He has more than 10 years of experience in human rights research and advocacy, specialising in Zimbabwe and southern Africa. Before joining Human Rights Watch, Dewa worked as the Regional Coordinator for Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition based in Johannesburg. In 2012, Dewa co-founded the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, an independent public policy research think-tank based in Harare.

Dewa was a Canon Collins Chevening scholar from 2005 to 2006.

## Key discussion points presented

- Since 2000, when he was President of the SRC at the University of Zimbabwe, Dewa has had a passion for social justice and human rights.
- Studying International Human Rights Law at postgraduate level equipped Dewa with the necessary skills to engage in top-level research and global advocacy for human rights in Zimbabwe.
- After graduating, he joined Human Rights Watch and spearheaded its work to expose human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, documenting these in reports, and pressing the



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Zimbabwean government and other international players to ensure greater protection and promotion of human rights in Zimbabwe.

- Dewa's personal vision is of a culture of respect for human rights in Zimbabwe and southern Africa. Dewa's work and life is committed to supporting the building of strong, democratic institutions to promote and protect human rights.
- In the face of resistance from Zimbabwe's government leaders (who sought to portray human rights as an imposition of western values on Africa), Dewa has consistently demonstrated how the source of human rights values is home-grown. Human rights are reflected in the constitution of Zimbabwe, and in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Dewa advocates for the values and principles that are enshrined in these documents that embody the spirit of African solutions for African problems.
- Other strategies Dewa has used to ensure greater acceptance of human rights by the authorities include demonstrating how the protection of human rights is in the self-interest of the authorities.
- His advocacy work entails gathering hard facts and empirical evidence, ensuring that the human rights discourse is de-politicised and non-partisan.

#### **Academic and professional fields of interest**

- Dewa's interests are in promoting human rights - in Zimbabwe and southern Africa in particular. He has numerous research and media publications, amongst them:
  - "Homeless, Landless, and Destitute": The Plight of Zimbabwe's Tokwe-Mukorsi Flood Victims, February 2015 report  
(<https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/02/03/homeless-landless-and-destitute/plight-zimbabwes-tokwe-mukorsi>)



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flood-victims)

- “The Elephant in the Room”: Reforming Zimbabwe’s Security Sector Ahead of Elections, June 2013 report (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/06/04/elephant-room/reforming-zimbabwes-security-sector-ahead-elections>)
- “Race Against Time”: The Need for Legal and Institutional Reforms Ahead of Zimbabwe Elections, January 2013 report (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/01/10/race-against-time/need-legal-and-institutional-reforms-ahead-zimbabwes-elections>)
- More of his writings can be viewed at <https://www.hrw.org/about/people/dewa-mavhinga>

### Significant achievements

In June 2009, Dewa’s investigations and report, “Diamonds in the Rough”: Human Rights Abuses in Zimbabwe’s Marange Diamond Fields, became the first comprehensive report by an international organization (Human Rights Watch) to expose horrific human rights abuses in Zimbabwe’s newly discovered diamond fields. Subsequent advocacy led to the temporary ban of Marange diamonds by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme resulting in extensive reforms and significant reduction in abuses in the diamond fields.

Between 2009 and 2012, as Regional Coordinator for Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Dewa spearheaded a robust regional campaign for electoral reform and to end political violence in Zimbabwe targeting SADC and Zimbabwe’s neighbours (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, and Malawi) to put pressure on Zimbabwe for positive change. Partly as a result of these campaign efforts, Zimbabwe’s 2013 national elections were largely peaceful, with greatly reduced incidences of violence, although not free and



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fair. From over 200 people killed as a result of political violence in 2008, in 2013 no deaths were recorded on account of political violence.

In October 2015 Dewa researched and documented the scourge of child marriage in Zimbabwe and embarked on an extensive advocacy campaign leading to the banning of child marriage in Zimbabwe in January 2016 by the Constitutional Court. Much work remains to be done to ensure that laws are amended to give effect to the ban on child marriage and to protect the rights of girls and women in Zimbabwe.

*My work and life is  
committed to supporting the  
building of strong,  
democratic institutions to  
promote and protect human  
rights.*

Dewa Mavhinga



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# Kealeboga Maphunye

## Qualifications

- PhD in Government, University of Essex (Canon Collins scholar)
- MPA Public Administration, University of Botswana
- BSc (Hons.) Sociology, University of Zimbabwe

## Current Occupation

Kealeboga is the inaugural WIPHOLD-Brigalia Bam Research Professor and Chair in Electoral Democracy in Africa at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

## Brief profile

Kealeboga has worked:

- At the Botswana Women's Affairs Division, Department of Culture, as an NGO Project Officer
- At the School of Government, University of the Western Cape
- As a researcher - for local municipalities and national government departments, Gauteng Provincial Legislature, the South African Presidency;
- The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC);
- As Director for International Affairs at the Department of Public Service and Administration
- As Manager for Research and Knowledge Management at the IEC.

Kealeboga regularly observes and conducts research on elections, governance and democracy in South Africa and across the continent. He also contributes to public and media debates on issues of elections, democracy and governance in Africa. His current work as Research Professor and Chair at UNISA focuses on research, tuition and supervision, capacity building for electoral officials, and community engagement pertaining to election management in South Africa and continentally. Kealeboga was a Canon Collins scholar from 1998 to 2002



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### Key discussion points presented

- Kealeboga spoke broadly about his work with election management bodies across Africa, the African Union, SADC, political parties, civil society bodies, students, individual election candidates, and communities on election-related and democracy matters.
- In his opening remarks, he asked the audience who they thought would win the impending 2016 US elections. Their mixed opinions were used to illustrate the complexities of working in the area of elections, democracy and governance; where one's credibility depends largely on one's impartiality and a fair assessment of the views of the different elections stakeholders.
- He spoke specifically about his current work training and empowering election officials through Unisa's Management of Democratic Elections in Africa (MDEA) certificate course. His hope is that through this initiative, Africa will address issues election related to electoral violence, political instability and other problems that arise following the appointment of leaders who were not elected according to continental and international election management best practices.
- Kealeboga emphasised the need to balance constitutional rights and freedoms with responsibilities. He talked about the dire consequences of fraudulent elections, and leaders who do not account to the electorates, and how their legitimacy wanes in a climate of undemocratic practices.
- In his view, the lack of comprehensive civic education remains one of the main stumbling blocks to developing active citizens who are vigilant about how they are governed.
- Kealeboga talked of his experience of resistance from public representatives who do not respect democratic public participation and election management instruments. He talked about how this resistance has become widespread, with even



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students and public servants being reluctant to change entrenched practices such as bad time management. He talked about how these bad practices (for example the so-called “African time”) often serve to introduce mediocrity.

- In conclusion, Kealeboga highlighted the fact that the African continent still faces many problems in terms of elections, democracy and governance and much work remains.

### **Academic and professional fields of interest**

Kealeboga’s professional interests include African politics, governance, elections and democratic systems; post-independence administrative/bureaucratic reform in developing countries; comparative politics and public administration; development and underdevelopment, gender and human rights issues in public sector organisations; and human resource management.

He is a member of the South African Association of Public Administration and Management including several South African and international professional bodies, and is widely published.

Two of his recent publications are ‘South Africa-Twenty Years into Democracy: The march to the 2014 elections’ and “Post-Liberation Relapse and Aborted Social Contract? Isaias Afwerki and Eritrea, 1991-2015”.

### **Significant achievements**

Appointment as Senior Research Specialist and Chief Research Specialist by the HSRC (2004-2006), Director for International Affairs (DPSA, 2006-2008), Research and Knowledge Management Manager (IEC of South Africa, 2009-2012), and the inaugural UNISA Chair in Electoral Democracy in Africa (2012-). Being an African Union appointed election observer in Africa.



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# Onke Mazibuko

## Qualifications

- Currently registered for a PhD in Psychology, University of South Africa
- MSc in Public Health – London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Canon Collins scholar)
- MSc Counselling Psychology, University of Fort Hare

## Current Occupation

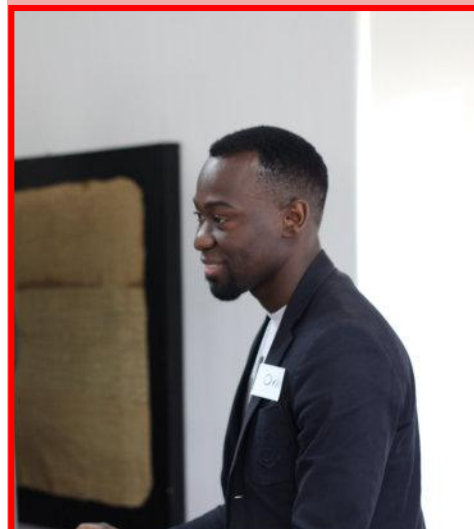
Onke works for the Transnet Foundation as an Operations Manager with a Health Portfolio, and is specifically involved within the Transnet-Phelophepa Health Care Train Project.

## Brief Personal Profile

- Onke is a self-confessed 'social change junkie' whose life course has led him to develop a service mind set.
- Professionally, his work focuses on improving health care access for poor and rural communities.
- In his personal capacity, Onke volunteers with YLED to support the development of skills amongst youth in Gauteng.
- He was a Canon Collins scholar from 2012 to 2014

## Key discussion points presented

- Onke spoke from the heart about the things that really matter to him as a social activist, and how his life's journey is leading him to discover how he can address the social challenges he sees.
- For 5 years, Onke lived aboard the Phelophepa Health Train. The train, sponsored by Transnet, is a mobile health facility offering primary health care services to rural and disadvantaged communities.
- Onke began his career at Transnet Foundation as a psychology intern with aspirations to save world. By the following year, he was managing Phelophepa's entire health care facility, and the



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staff aboard the train.

- For 5 years, Onke (literally) lived, breathed, ate and slept rural health on board the train. This was an immersion, not only in the provision of health care, but also in working with, and teaching others – including interns, students and community members. In the process, Onke learned what leadership, discipline and selfless service really mean.
- While aboard the train, Onke began and completed his Masters in Public Health degree – studying long distance through the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. This gave him the theoretical expertise needed to support his practical work.
- When Onke left the train to take up a position in Transnet’s head office, he experienced severe ‘withdrawal symptoms’ because as he says, “making a difference in people’s lives can be addictive for us social change junkies”.
- Fortunately, he found another avenue to feed his need to facilitate social change. He teamed up with fellow alumnus, Steven Zwane, who runs an NPO called YLED that focuses on giving young people the tools they need to be leaders in their lives, as they go forth into employment.
- Asked by one of the YLED youth what he thought the biggest social problem we face as a society is, his considered response was – a failure of people to regulate their own behaviour. Onke believes that self-regulation failure lies at the heart of many of our social problems.
- While acknowledging the myriad of ways in which structural constraints influence individual behaviour and self-regulation, Onke believes that if individuals are supported to regulate their behaviour better, many of our social ills could be addressed.
- In answer to a follow up question posed by the astute YLED youth - ‘Can we as a society solve our social problems’ – Onke’s reply was reservedly optimistic.



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*“It’s unrealistic to expect that we will have no social problems. But, there is great value in striving towards solving one social problem at a time. Like individuals who are able to address their problems and grow into better people over the course of their lives, societies too can improve. We should find value in striving towards solving one social problem at a time.”*

### **Academic and professional fields of interest**

Academically, Onke is deeply interested in the psychology of individuals and society, His PhD (in progress) is focusing on how people conceptualise health and illness and specifically what internal factors influence health-related decision making and behaviour. The research investigates how individualised strategies of self-regulation battle with cultural beliefs about health and illness.

Professionally, Onke is dedicated to improving access to healthcare in poor and rural communities.

Personally – Onke is a self-confessed ‘social change junkie’ who is currently channelling his addiction by working with YLED to support the development of young people’s leadership and social entrepreneurial talents.

### **Significant achievements**

Living on-board the Transnet-Phelophepa Health Care Train for five years, and successfully managing the hands-on provision of vital primary health care services to rural South Africans.



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# Alumnus Interview...



After the seminar we managed to have a few words with Shaun Ruysenaar, a Canon Collins Alumnus, who also filmed the event.

Shaun has a PhD in African Studies at the School of Social and Political Science which, with the assistance of Canon Collins Trust, he obtained at the University of Edinburgh. Upon his return to South Africa he started working in the policy space but then moved on to strategy and business consulting. He is currently working as a consultant in the private sector but also works with government departments and NGOs, giving them strategic advice on marketing themselves and how to carry out stakeholder analyses, amongst other advisory services.

We asked Shaun a few questions:

## **How do you see yourself as a change maker or contributing to positive change?**

So I'm in an interesting space at the moment for a variety of reasons, but I'll focus on two of my involvements.

First, I work with people who have come through the movement - the ANC movement - and are getting a bit disillusioned with the system as it is, and are looking for avenues and platforms to start engaging as real South Africans. So with that, we've developed something called the Fellows of Fire, which is really a bunch of people (South Africans), going away for a weekend, and talking around the fire; talking openly and honestly about how we deal with life as South Africans. For young folk, I think we're on a different wavelength, but I think for some of the older generations of South Africa, they're still hung up a lot on the race issues, a lot of the institutionalized differences - it's black, it's white, it's this, it's that ... and there's no platforms where people can come together and talk ... and be honest with each other like, "As a black South African, this is how I feel..." and, "...as a white South African this is how I feel..." and once you've done that start going, "Okay, does that feeling mean we necessarily hate each other?" And more often than not, it doesn't. It's just "Wow! I didn't know how you felt."

The other area of my work is with the Da Vinci Business Institute. They are one of the up-and-coming Business Schools in South Africa. We have just launched the Chair of Social Dialogue, under the stewardship of Job Mokgoro, who was one of the main developers of the National School of Government. There are four elements underpinning the Chair: Health, Education, Food Security and Private Public Partnerships, and each of those four are developing into research areas. I chair the Food Security leg of it, which is a good fit in that my Honours and Masters looked at Food Security interventions in South Africa. We're looking at practical dialogue-based interventions where we'll go into a community and say, "Let's talk about what food security means in your context," rather than the top down approach of, "I'm an expert on food security, I know what you need to do." We want communities to talk about it from their grounded perspectives, and then build our expertise into a more holistic solution. This is a passion for me. I feel I've been given a lot - scholarships being one of them, as well as having had the fortune of meeting some high-powered and credible people. So I must give back.

***The speakers were fantastic. They shared their work and gave us some insight into the challenges they face and possible solutions to these challenges. Who stood out for you and why?***

I would have to say Onke, because of his passion and the practicality of what he's doing. I think the health space, along with education, is one of the big issues in South Africa. I strongly believe we need more people doing more practical things like Onke is doing and then we'll start seeing waves of change. I mean there are people doing really good work - but we need more, and with sponsorships through Transnet and some of the big boys, it is possible to make meaningful contributions.

And I really like what he's doing. He's taken what he has studied, matched it with a passion for activism and he's making a difference by merging the two. He's 'got it'. It is sad you don't see him on the news instead of the usual guys. I like his passion, I like his drive - and I think a lot of people responded to that. I had the fortune of filming this event while the speakers were talking, and it was great to see people really locking in. Onke provides an example to what we as alumni and scholars could be doing.

### ***What are your hopes for the Canon Collins Trust?***

I've actually been wondering about this. If you listen to the talks today, clearly Canon Collins Trust is having an immense impact on people. And I am talking BIG! We saw just 3 people here on stage – but there are hundreds of people behind them who have been impacted by what they do. So in future, if we can only go from strength to strength. I know Gillian has put in a lot of work which is great, but I think there is more to do in terms of mobilizing the Canon Collins Trust alumni. I am certain there are more alumni out there who could contribute. The work they're doing is amazing.

I think the impact of being afforded the opportunity to study – here and abroad – provides one with a deeper knowledge and experience of seeing how things function. So, good work guys. Amazing stuff!! (Two thumbs up.)



# Conclusion

As scholars and alumni who have received a Canon Collins scholarship, we not only wear a badge of honour, but also carry a responsibility to continue the legacy of a courageous and morally principled man who dedicated his life to peace and justice.

The work of the alumni presented at this event would have made Canon John Collins proud. Their work exemplifies what he stood for, and demonstrates the positive impact being made by Canon Collins scholars and alumni in their communities and the wider region. We will continue to showcase this work annually, and invite alumni, scholars and friends of the Canon Collins Trust to join us as we build and strengthen this powerful network of change-makers who are committed to social justice.



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