

2017 Better World Showcase

Demonstrating how the Faculty of Science & Engineering is Making a Difference

Two decades of outreach and development work in Africa

Schools of
**Chemistry and
Materials**

Nominee
**Prof Paul
O'Brien (Staff)**

Nominated for
**Outstanding
Contribution to
Equality &
Diversity**

Initiative

Starting 20 years ago with the democratisation of South Africa, Professor Paul O'Brien has worked with several African countries. His work has helped change the lives of many of Africa's young scientists with alumni from his group holding academic and other posts in South Africa (>10) Tanzania, Ghana and the Cameroon. Paul has been working collaboratively with historically black universities in South Africa in order to build excellence in both teaching and research. He has also raised well over £2 million in support of his work to change the lives of many people. This year he received a CBE for his services to science and engineering.

How Paul Made a Difference

Paul was invited in 1996 to lead a Royal Society/NRF programme for Historically Black Universities which had started to support the dawn of democracy in South Africa. This project ran for nearly 12 years and brought over £700,000 pounds of funding to South Africa and led to over 12 alumni holding substantive posts in South Africa in academia or research. He has continued to work in South Africa and was a founding member and advisor to the South African Nanotechnology Initiative SANI. Instrumental in bringing the International Conference on Coordination Chemistry to the country in 2006 he also helped organise the first international workshop at The University of Zululand in 2008, bringing Harry Kroto to the country. He has supported the Chemical Society in South Africa and the RSC SA section lecturing extensively, he has worked with SCI-Bono in Johannesburg, lectured at SciFest and toured the country lecturing supporting the SANI initiative. Most recently he has obtained a new £1.15M grant from the Royal Society and DFID for capacity building in South Africa, Ghana and the Cameroon. He typically visits the country once or twice a year. In the new programme 50% of the participants are also female.



<http://man.ac.uk/YAp58z>

Vote for the person or project you feel
doing the most to Make a Difference



Vote