

think global

big questions,
real-world answers

South Bank



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EST 1892



On the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, we remember one LSBU student who made the ultimate sacrifice

We will remember them...



In memoriam

Albert Edward Knight (pictured above), known as Bert, lived in Fulham, worked at Southwark Town Hall and studied at the then Borough Polytechnic. He enlisted in early September 1914 and fought with the 17th Royal Fusiliers, dying of his wounds on 3 November 1916 aged 32. This photograph, along with a longer newspaper cutting now also stored in the LSBU archives, was sent to the Polytechnic by Corporal Knight's brother shortly after Bert's death. A man of 'genial sunny disposition' with 'a host of friends', Bert's 'delicate physical condition' meant he could have avoided military service. He joined up anyway. His name appears, along with the other LSBU students and staff killed between 1914 and 1918, on the memorial in the Borough Road Building.

DIED FROM WOUNDS
KNIGHT—CORPORAL A. E. (BERT) KNIGHT, 17th Royal Fusiliers, son of Mr. William Knight, of 17 Radipole-road, wounded in recent fighting, has since died in hospital on Nov. 3rd. 973

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Welcome to the autumn edition of *South Bank* magazine. With plans under way for a new Centre for Social Justice and Global Responsibility at LSBU, our focus this issue is on global challenges, and how our community is working to tackle some of the big issues that face us today.

Appropriately for an issue with an international flavour, we kick off with entrepreneurial double act, partners in business – and life – Rotsen Ibarra and Katherine Delgado (page 6), whose restaurant Petare is putting Venezuelan food on the map. On page 8, expert in international law Professor Craig Barker of the School of Law and Social Sciences makes the case against Boris Becker and his recent claim for diplomatic immunity. Next, we cross to South Africa, where Anne Harriss of the School of Health and Social Care is using her expertise in healthcare to improve the lives of people in remote Limpopo province (page 11).

Hot on the heels of Universities Minister Sam Gyimah's call for a fresh focus on student mental health and wellbeing, our main feature (page 14) takes a timely look at inclusive education. Widening participation has long been a priority for LSBU – now, the focus is expanding to include ensuring that every member of our diverse community is given the opportunity to make the most of their time at university and realise their potential.

On page 22, we look at how LSBU is responding to a very different global challenge: supporting volunteers dealing with disasters and emergencies such as this summer's wildfires in Greece. Then, for an example of a cool head in a crisis, look no further than our profile of Edna Adan Ismail (page 26). A pioneer in so many ways, she is now working to transform healthcare and education in her native Somalia. Truly inspirational, Edna is a worthy recipient of an honorary doctorate from our School of Health and Social Care.

Finally, we return to the issue of education with Fiona Morey (page 30), the new principal of Lambeth College, who tells us about her plans as the College joins the LSBU family of educational institutions, and explains why she believes that education has the power to transform lives.

As ever, we'd love to hear your thoughts on the stories in the magazine and, indeed, anything else. Do keep in touch.

Olivia Rainford | Head of Alumni and Development

inside

06 – what we've learned

Partners in both business and life, Rotsen Ibarra and Katherine Delgado on arepas and admin

08 – opinion

Professor Craig Barker gives his verdict on the strange case of Boris Becker

11 – education in action

LSBU's Anne Harriss is using her expertise in healthcare to change lives in a remote part of South Africa

30 – five minutes with...

Fiona Morey, principal of Lambeth College, the latest addition to the LSBU family of institutions

// If we give people the skills to go back and teach others, we're significantly increasing our reach
Anne Harriss

14



22



26



features

14 – big issue

With inclusive education rising up the agenda for universities, we meet the LSBU alumni and staff working to create an environment where everyone can thrive

22 – when disaster strikes

A new online training course for civil protection volunteers aims to help them work smarter together

26 – force of nature

Midwife, politician, campaigner, pioneer: now Edna Adan Ismail is transforming healthcare and education in war-torn Somalia

// To get them to realise their potential, we need to create a learning environment where people from all backgrounds feel that they belong
Professor Nicki Martin

what we've learned

Rotsen Ibarra (BA BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, 2014) and partner Katherine Delgado have turned their passion for arepas, the street food of their native Venezuela, into a thriving business, Petare. The couple tell us what they've learned along the way...

There's a positive in every experience.

We were delighted when we secured a spot on Lower Marsh market near Waterloo station, after six months' searching. In the event, we lost money every time we did it, but it helped raise our profile. A company called Antic London, which opens pubs in up-and-coming parts of the city, heard about us, and invited us to some of their pop-up events. Suddenly, we were on the map.

Be clear about what you want – and go for it.

Our ultimate goal was to be part of Street Feast, which has really pioneered the whole street food scene in London. We had some contacts there from pre-Petare days and we kept emailing them until they agreed to come and try our food. They loved it, and invited us for a trial. That went so well that they asked us to be part of their new site at Hawker House in Canada Water. We've been there for three years now.

Always have an open mind. As part of Street Feast, we had the opportunity to collaborate with the chef Neil Rankin. Working with him was a total eye-opener. He had such great ideas about how to present the food and how to work more efficiently. Suddenly we were serving more customers in the same time, and making more money.

Keep changing, all the time. People at Street Feast don't want to fill up at one stall, they want to try lots of different dishes. So we've made our arepas smaller. We fry them now too, instead of charring them. It's quicker and it's tastier. We're constantly launching

new fillings, like our vegan recipe with avocado, cassava and plantain. If you want people to keep coming back for more, you've got to mix it up a bit.

New challenges keep you fresh.

Launching Petare at Pop Brixton is a big step for us. It's our opportunity to test the Petare concept as a restaurant. We're used to churning out 300 arepas an hour on a market stall. Here, the pace is slower, and we have to explore different ways of making money rather than through sheer volume.

If there is such a thing as work/life balance, we haven't found it yet!

Running your own business is pretty all consuming. Petare is a family business – we're in it together. We also have a three-year-old child, so there's really no let-up. You need to be prepared to make sacrifices to achieve your goals.

If you're setting up a business, do the boring stuff first.

If we could go back in time, we'd register for VAT and organise payroll and pensions on day one. If you wait, you'll find yourself having to deal with them when the business is taking off and you're being pulled in all directions. That's what's happening to us right now! Get a good accountant right from the start, and pay them to make your life easier.

Whatever you're doing, keep learning.

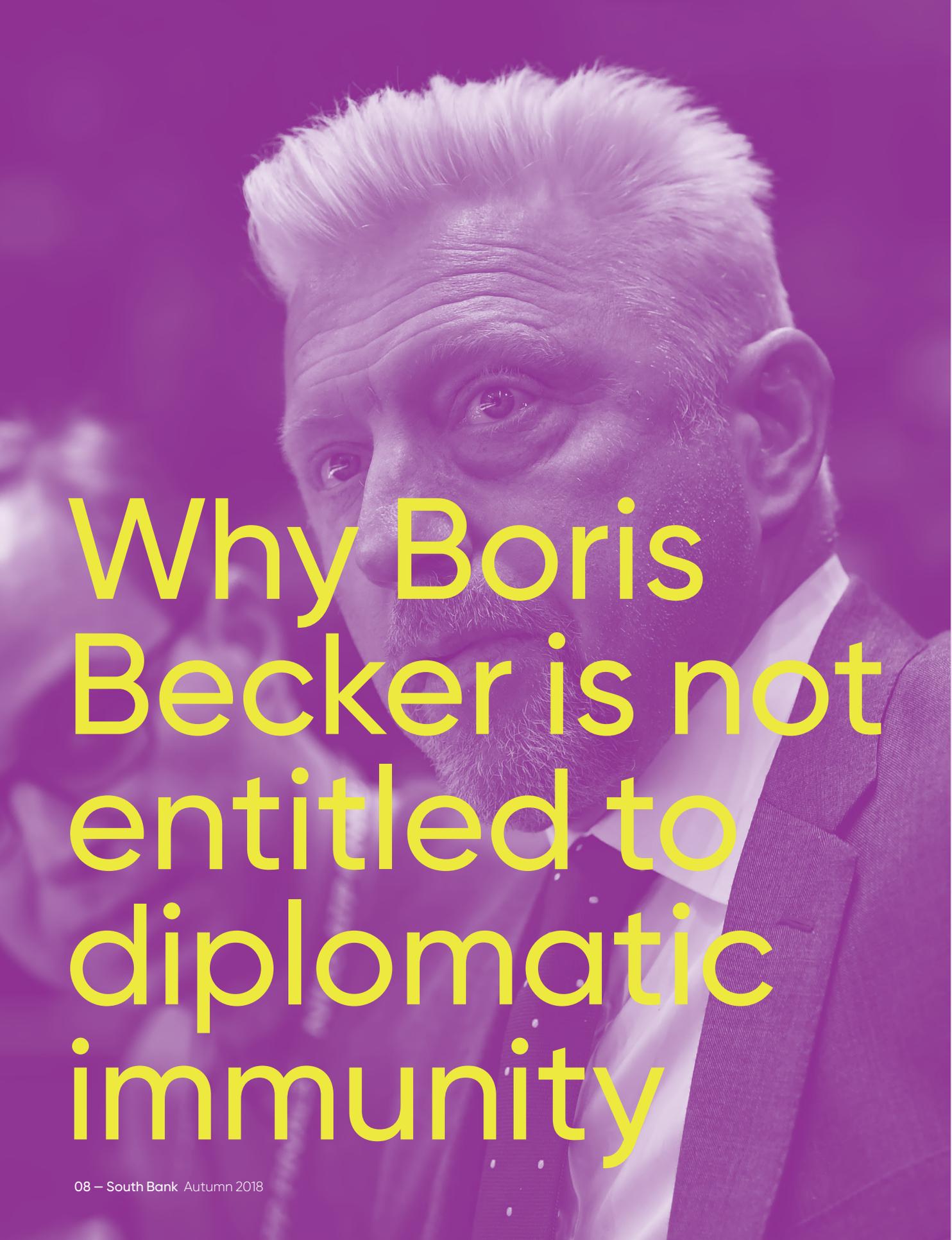
The book *Rich Dad Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki is a big influence on the way we approach the business. Some of his ideas, that money can set you free, and that you should work to learn rather than earn, really resonate with us. These are things that we try to keep in mind.

Rotsen and Katherine were supported by LSBU's Graduate Entrepreneurship Scheme. Find out more at www.lsbu.ac.uk/student-life/student-enterprise/graduate-entrepreneur-scheme Instagram @petareuk

Running your own business is pretty all consuming. Petare is a family business – we're in it together

what we've learned
Rotsen Ibarra & Katherine Delgado



A close-up portrait of Boris Becker, a man with short, light-colored hair and a goatee, wearing a dark suit jacket, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

Why Boris Becker is not entitled to diplomatic immunity



Professor Craig Barker, Dean of the School of Law and Social Sciences, explains why even the biggest sporting idols are not above the law

As a teenager I was a bit of a tennis junkie. My local courts were a stone's throw from my house and my friends and I spent many hours during the summer holidays working on our lobs, passing shots and volleys. During Wimbledon fortnight we watched every available minute of coverage.

In the summer of 1985, I was spellbound by the spectacle of a player, who at just 17 was a year younger than me, literally throwing himself around Centre Court to become the youngest ever Wimbledon Men's Singles champion. He was brash, unconventional, athletic and engaging – a sporting role model extraordinaire. His name, of course, was Boris Becker. Little could I have imagined when enjoying that record-breaking victory that, some 33 years later, I would be contacted out of the blue by the BBC, Sky and the German broadcaster ZBF to comment on Becker's claim to diplomatic immunity.

To give a bit of context, my career as an international law academic has focused on diplomatic law and immunities from jurisdiction. My PhD was a critical examination of the UK's

response to the 1984 killing of WPC Yvonne Fletcher by shots fired from the Libyan Embassy in London, and I have gone on to publish books and articles on the historical development of diplomatic law, the protection of diplomatic personnel and the immunities claimed by former heads of state including General Augusto Pinochet of Chile and Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia. I have done a number of media interviews on these and other matters of international law – but the case of Becker's claim to diplomatic immunity is one of the strangest I've ever encountered.

Off-court success

On the face of it, Becker has been as successful off the court as he was on it, as a businessman, broadcaster and coach – most notably with Novak Djokovic. He has been head of men's tennis at the German Tennis Federation, and even had a stint as a professional poker player. But his luck ran out in June 2017, when he was declared bankrupt by a British court in respect of a debt owed to

the private bank Arbuthnot Latham. It was following an attempt to enforce that bankruptcy order that Becker sought to claim diplomatic immunity in June of this year.

Becker asserted that he had been appointed to the role of Sports, Humanitarian and Cultural Attaché for the Central African Republic (CAR) to the European Union in April 2018. His lawyers argued that he could not be subject to legal proceedings unless his immunity was waived by the president of the CAR. It is undoubtedly true that, if Becker had been formally appointed to this or a similar diplomatic role and, if that appointment had been accepted by the EU, then he would be entitled to the full immunity accorded by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 to diplomatic personnel.

Diplomatic immunity has developed over many hundreds of years, and is enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. It provides complete immunity from the criminal jurisdiction and near absolute immunity from the civil jurisdiction of the state in which the diplomat is serving, and >

opinion

Professor Craig Barker



many thousands rely on it in order to perform their daily functions. More importantly, diplomats, as representatives of foreign states, are often targeted for political reasons, and many hundreds have been killed or badly injured as a result. Diplomatic law provides some level of protection in a hostile environment.

The right balance

Inevitably, abuses do hit the headlines from time to time, the murder of WPC Fletcher being the most obvious example. But it is extremely rare. The Convention itself provides a range of remedies for abuse, including the possibility of expulsion from the receiving state and action being taken in the sending state. Overall, the balance of immunity against abuse is about right and has changed little since the institution began.

Becker's claim to diplomatic immunity, along with recent similar claims by others seeking to avoid the proper processes of the law for personal reasons, is both illegitimate and potentially very dangerous. One apparently straightforward response might well be to question the appointment in the first place.

However, this would potentially result in properly accredited diplomats being hauled before the courts and having their immunity removed on the grounds that their appointment was a sham. Such an approach has recently been rejected by the UK's Court of Appeal in a case concerning Mohammed Al-Juffali, a Saudi diplomat representing St Lucia at the International Maritime Organisation in London, who was

“Becker's claim to diplomatic immunity, along with recent similar claims by others seeking to avoid the proper processes of the law for personal reasons, is both illegitimate and potentially very dangerous”



attempting to use his diplomatic immunity to avoid facing divorce proceedings brought by his wife, the ex-model Christina Estrada.

Instead, we should turn to the Convention, Article 31(1)(c) of which makes it clear that a diplomat does not enjoy immunity from the civil and administrative jurisdiction of the receiving state in relation to any professional commercial activity exercised by the diplomat in the receiving state outside his official functions. Becker's claim to immunity in respect of bankruptcy proceedings for commercial activities that took place long before his alleged appointment, in my view, fall clearly within this exception. I would hope that a British court would deny him immunity for these reasons.

Double fault

Since my various appearances on national and international media in relation to the Becker case, the government of the CAR has denied that Becker's post was intended to be one that attracted diplomatic immunity, reportedly alleging that Becker's diplomatic passport was a fake. This allegation is of vital importance, given that the immunity in question is not that of Becker personally but is accorded to him through his association with the CAR. If they are denying his appointment and questioning his possession of a diplomatic passport, it is unlikely that any claim to immunity will be successful. This, ultimately, is likely to prove to be the most damaging double fault of Becker's career. ■



A common thread
A chance encounter
in South Africa taught
LSBU's Anne Harriss
that, sometimes, the
most powerful learning
experiences take
place way beyond
the lecture theatre

If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,' says the African proverb. It would be an apt motto for the project that Anne Harriss, course director of LSBU's Occupational Health programme, has been leading in remote Limpopo province, in northern South Africa, for close to 20 years. 'What really makes me proud,' says Anne, 'is seeing how the influence of the project has spread further than I ever could have imagined.'

The story begins back in 2001, when Anne – who was born in Uganda, but has spent most of her life in the UK – and her husband spent a few days in a safari lodge at the end of

a South African holiday. 'The lodge was beautiful,' she says, 'but I found it impossible to turn a blind eye to the poverty all around us. Limpopo province is one of the poorest parts of South Africa, and HIV and associated health problems are rife.'

During her stay, Anne visited the Mogalakwena project, established by South African academic and social entrepreneur Dr Elbé Coetsee. The aim is to 'uplift' the local community by creating employment opportunities for local women – noted for their incredible needlework and embroidery skills (see opposite) – and providing access to education and basic >



//
This project is about giving people the tools they need to change their own lives for the better

Clockwise from top: The women of the Mogalakwena Foundation often take village life as the theme for their embroidery work; the Foundation also produces woven furniture for Italian designer Paola Lenti; Helen Parsons (L) and Anne Harriss (R); embroidered cushions



healthcare. 'What Elbé was doing really resonated with me,' says Anne. 'We struck up a friendship and agreed that I would come back the next year and help with Mogalakwena's health promotion activities.'

Anne delivered that first session on the final day of her holiday the following year, using materials she had brought with her from London. 'Life in Limpopo is risky,' she says. 'Accidents involving crocodiles, snakes and scorpions, or open fires, are common. So we focused on accident prevention, first aid and basic infection control. It was challenging – no one had English as their first language and some didn't

speak it at all. Those that did helped with translation, and we also used lots of role play and games.'

Positive reaction

The reaction to the initial session was so positive that Anne has been back virtually every year since, often persuading friends and colleagues from LSBU's nursing programmes, such as Helen Parsons (MSc Occupational Health and Safety, 2009), to join her (see opposite). The Mogalakwena Development Foundation provides teaching space and accommodation, while Anne and her colleagues fund their own travel and materials.

Over the years, the workshops have evolved to cover topics including basic home nursing for people with long-term health conditions such as AIDS and TB, and healthy lifestyles. Anne doesn't shy away from tackling the difficult subjects. 'We talk to teenagers about safe sex, HIV and AIDS,' she says. 'It's vital that they have this information, but often their teachers are too embarrassed to discuss it with them.'

Anne has also incorporated a 'train the trainers' element into the workshops. 'This is difficult terrain,' she says. 'There's no public transport, and it's hard for people to get here. If we give them the skills to go back and teach others,

Helen Parsons

(MSc OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, 2009) is Service Manager, Occupational Health and Wellbeing at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. She recently returned from her fifth visit to the Mogalakwena project

When I enrolled at LSBU,

I was working for Virgin Atlantic. Anne's an aviation nerd, so that's how we first got talking. When she found out I was also a trained HIV specialist nurse, she asked if I'd like to join her in South Africa. I jumped at the chance.

'That was five years ago, and since then I've been back every year. Each time we add to our basic programme and adapt it to what the delegates tell us they need. Working for Virgin, I developed a good knowledge of tropical medicine, so we've added a strand on how delegates

can protect themselves from common waterborne diseases such as bilharzia.

'This is a society that really does value education. Sometimes people will walk two hours to get here and two hours home again. That's very humbling. It's also wonderful to see how the delegates support each other. We have everything from high school students planning to go on to study medicine, to people who are completely illiterate. But it works. We make use of a lot of visual teaching techniques, as well as hands-on, practical exercises.

'In terms of my own teaching, it's definitely made a difference. I'm really careful now not to assume a baseline level of knowledge, and to tailor what I'm doing to the needs and knowledge of the person I'm teaching. It's also vital to remember that just because someone says they know something, it doesn't mean they do. I always try

to get across the idea that clever people ask questions. That's particularly challenging in South Africa, where rote learning is still the norm in schools. But it's relevant here in the UK, too. And I think I've got better at spotting the person that's sitting back and not interacting, and drawing them in.

'It's been incredibly rewarding. One woman who I taught in my first year came back again for a refresher because she got a job, and part of the reason she got that job was the certificate she'd gained from us. Now we see her friends coming along too. That's the kind of ripple effect we're aiming for. Would I go again? Like a shot, if Anne asks me! Just try keeping me away.'

Find out more about the work of the Mogalakwena Development Foundation at www.mogalakwena.com

we're significantly increasing our reach. To date we've had more than 300 people attend the workshops in person – but the number that have actually benefited from the learning is a lot higher than that.'

It's hard to measure the success of the project in any formal way. 'Some people have attended every single workshop,' says Anne. 'We see that as a pretty strong indication that we're on the right track.' It's abundantly clear, though, that the impact goes much further than this: one delegate has already gone on to train as an assistant paramedic, while others have become community health workers and trainers.

Perhaps the most striking example of the 'upliftment' principle in action is that of Pietnett Sepela. 'Pietnett had worked as a gardener at the lodge where I stayed on that first visit to Limpopo,' says Anne. 'She came to all our early workshops and went on to set up Matome, a pre-school project that now cares for more than 75 children, including many orphans and many whose lives have been touched by HIV. To me, she is the epitome of leadership in action – someone who, despite incredibly limited resources, is making a huge difference to the community.'

Over two decades, Anne has seen major changes in the region. 'Access

to education has improved, people are more able to speak English, they're using smartphones to access the internet. They're asking more searching questions, and it's satisfying to be able to give them the answers they need.'

For Anne, the connection has only grown stronger with time. 'Professionally it's always interesting to get another perspective, but what really drives me is the chance to play a part in the wider work that Elbé and her family are doing. It's about giving people the tools they need to change their own lives for the better. As my hero Nelson Mandela put it, "A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination."'



We're in this together
As pressure grows
on universities to prioritise
students' mental health
and wellbeing, what does
it take to create a truly
inclusive environment?





Coming to university can – and should – be a life-changing experience. It's a unique opportunity not only to gain knowledge, but to build confidence,

create networks and develop skills: in short, to lay the foundations for a happy and rewarding life.

Over the past 20 years, huge progress has been made in widening participation. Statistics abound, but to give just two examples, 18-year-olds from the most disadvantaged areas in England are now 82% more likely to enter higher education than in 2006, and the proportion of students from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds rose by nearly 50% between 2007 and 2016.

But creating a more diverse student population is only part of the story. Those BME students might be getting through the gates, but they are still significantly less likely to gain a top degree. And both students from disadvantaged backgrounds and mature students are still more likely than other groups to drop out. Simply getting people in is not enough; they must be given the support they need to get on. That means addressing the inequality in opportunities that is currently preventing many – even academic high-achievers – from realising their potential, both at university and beyond.

On the eve of the 2018/19 academic year, the Minister of State for Universities Sam Gyimah called on



'I'm not interested in anything that's not going to make a difference to people's lives'

Professor Nicki Martin is committed to finding more effective ways to assist autistic people – and to involve them in shaping their own provision

Arguably, autism is only a disability in a disabling environment,' says Professor Nicki Martin. 'My research shows that what autistic individuals find frustrating are ambiguous expectations around academic work, complicated admin systems and specific practical and sensory obstacles – for example, a lack of quiet places to work. Any institution can easily overcome those challenges – it just takes a bit of effort.'

Underpinning all of Nicki's work is, first, a commitment to making sure it can be

applied practically. 'I'm not interested in anything that's not going to make a difference to people's lives,' she says. Second is the principle of 'Nothing about us without us' – that autistic people should be directly involved in research about autism, and in shaping their own provision.

A case in point is the Cygnet project, a two-year mentoring scheme for autistic adults which grew out of a report by the National Audit Office that identified a lack of services and highlighted some alarming statistics: just 12%

of respondents were in full-time paid employment, and 70% identified as having mental health problems.

'We wanted to see if mentoring could help autistic people cope better with navigating social life, managing their practical and financial affairs, accessing education and training, finding work and maintaining their health,' says Nicki. 'They were free to set their own goals – and the findings showed that this made a real difference to the scheme's impact.'

The programme is now being further developed

Inclusion is high on the agenda for Professor Nicki Martin (left) and Gianna Knowles of the School of Law and Social Sciences

universities to prioritise students' mental health and wellbeing, describing the issue as 'non-negotiable' and charging senior leaders to make it their 'number one priority'. The risk is that, without the right support, people will under-achieve, take longer to get their degree – incurring more debt – and fail to develop the soft skills that make them attractive to employers. They may even drop out altogether.

A universal approach

It's an issue that is already high on the agenda at LSBU. 'The conversation is definitely starting to shift beyond getting people into university,' says Nicki Martin, Professor of Social Justice and Inclusive Education. 'We're realising that to get them to stay, and to realise their potential, we need to create a learning environment where people from all backgrounds feel that they belong.'

Nicki, who specialises in working with autistic students and academics (see below), is currently working on a project looking at universal design for learning, funded by the Society for Research in Higher Education. 'Universal design is a grand-sounding title for a very simple concept,' she says. 'It means examining what you're doing and asking yourself, does this include everyone? Often, it comes down to taking very simple, practical steps: providing lecture

notes ahead of time in an accessible format; holding the conference in a ground-floor room; or making sure there's a crèche.'

Embracing diversity and promoting inclusion benefits everyone by helping to create an open, dynamic environment where ideas flow and people can express themselves – and, of course, realise their potential. The principle is well understood at LSBU and, as Nicki Martin points out, practical changes made for one group can bring wider benefits too. 'Working with autistic students at Cambridge University, alongside Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, we developed an acronym, REAL, which stands for **R**eliable, **E**mpathic, **A**nticipatory and **L**ogical. If everyone stated clearly what they planned to do, then did it, and if we simplified our systems, life would be a lot easier for everyone, not just autistic people.'

For Gianna Knowles, Associate Professor in Educational Studies, whose background includes 12 years' teaching in primary schools across England, the steady move of inclusion up the agenda is a sign that universities are starting to catch up with schools. 'The conversations I'm having with colleagues now are the same as the ones I was having in schools 15 or 20 years ago,' Gianna says. 'When the inclusion agenda hit schools in the late 90s, teachers were saying, "It's impossible! We can't do that." Now it's an integral part of the culture.' >

by Employment Autism, a charity that aims to increase the number of autistic people in successful employment, while one of the Cygnet mentors, alumna Sarah McCulloch, has now set up a social enterprise for autistic people, Autistic Empire (see pages 20–21).

Meanwhile Nicki, along with Dr Damian Milton who teaches on LSBU's MA Education (Autism) programme and is himself autistic, has been instrumental in establishing the Participatory Autism Research Collective (PARC),

which brings together researchers, practitioners and autistic people. 'Our vision is of a future where autistic people are fully involved in the design and delivery of research, and the practical interventions that result from it,' says Damian. 'We believe this is the key to achieving real social and cultural change.'

Nicki and Damian are also involved, along with LSBU researchers Joanna Krupa and Sally Brett (EdD, 2018), an expert in non-verbal communication, in a project called the Sensory School. This aims to find

practical ways to improve the environment for autistic pupils in a group of schools in south London. The team included at least one autistic researcher.

One of the project outputs is a resource pack, which will now be updated regularly with input from both the schools and LSBU. 'Here in the Education Division we're working with people who are going out into schools,' Nicki points out. 'Direct experience is invaluable in informing our own teaching and making sure we know what's happening on the ground.'

Nicki Martin sits on the steering group of charity Employment Autism, which will launch fully in the next few months, with the vision of a future where autistic people are valued and welcomed in the workplace. If you have any advice or experiences to share, email info@employmentautism.net CareTrade, based at LSBU's Clarence Centre, is also supporting young adults with autism into training and employment. To find out more about their work, email judith.kerem@caretradeuk.org

Of course, it's not just about special educational needs – or disability, or race, or social background, for that matter. The scope of the book Gianna is compiling with the aim of supporting tutors in higher education – who, as she points out, may not have been trained to work with students with specific needs or impairments – includes working with previously looked-after children, anxiety and LGBTQI+. It also includes a chapter by alumna Verena West, now a supervising tutor at LSBU, whose research interests are shaped by her own experiences of being the first in her family to attend university (see opposite).

Open to everyone

The book is underpinned by the social model of disability and disadvantage, which posits that the challenges and difficulties people encounter result from the way society is organised, rather than from any impairment or difference. It's an idea that underpins the University's own approach to providing support for staff and students too. 'Rather than making exceptions for people and singling them out, we want to make sure that teaching and learning is open to everyone from the start,' says Tom Crawshaw, a Disability Adviser in the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support team. 'That's universal design in practice. Get it right from the start, then you don't need to keep going back to make adjustments.'

A recent session, titled 'A Switch in Time', focused on identifying simple changes that staff could make. 'The "switch" might be as simple as changing the way they provide lecture notes, or rethinking the cultural references they're using in their teaching,' says Tom. 'Often, wider change comes from those individual conversations – what makes life easier for one person makes life easier for everyone.'

Tom cites changes in funding as a driver – but also an example of where economic necessity has actually delivered positive change. 'The government used to pay for people to come in and take notes for disabled students,' he says. 'Now the onus is on us to make our learning materials accessible. Technology helps, of course. But the fact is, having someone sitting there taking notes for you sets you apart. If you can listen and participate in the same way as everyone else, you're much more engaged and involved.'

For Zoë Leadley-Meade, course director for LSBU's BA (Hons) Education Studies (see below), those two words – engagement and involvement – are key. 'We need to get away from the idea that there's such a thing as a typical university student,' she says, 'and from the idea only certain people need help. Everyone needs it at some point and it's our job to build strong relationships, so that people feel confident to ask. Studying is hard. Being at university is hard. We don't want anyone to feel like they're on their own.' >



'How can we support our students to do their best?'

Zoë Leadley-Meade, course director BA (Hons) Education Studies, and Andrew Read, Head of Education, are finding practical ways to promote inclusion at LSBU

Our starting point is, assume nothing,' says Zoë Leadley-Meade (MA Education Studies, 2015). 'Someone might be doing brilliantly academically but still need help with other aspects of their lives.'

Arriving at LSBU from a career as a secondary school teacher, Zoë was struck by how students were expected to be independent right from the start. 'In schools, a lot of time is spent preparing pupils for university,' she says. 'But people here don't always come via that route. We needed to ask ourselves, "How can we support our students to do their best?"'

The first step was to introduce an 'audit' – a face-to-face meeting with each new student, which includes a short writing test designed to highlight any literacy needs. Students are given feedback at their first meeting with their personal tutor. 'Building that relationship is so important in getting rid of the stigma that can still go along with asking for help,' says Zoë.

Personal tutors also have a key role to play in another aspect of the team's work:

making the assessment process more transparent. 'As academics, we tend to speak in code,' says Andrew Read. 'It's all very well telling someone they need to develop their arguments more, but unless they're steeped in the academic world, that's not going to mean much to them.'

Now, students at the start of their second year sit down with their personal tutor to look at their first-year marks, discuss their goals and identify specific areas for development. 'I feel we have a moral responsibility,' says Andrew. 'We've taken them on because they have the potential to do well. We can't just say, "It's sink or swim".'

Zoë's priority this year is to get more students involved in sharing their experiences with their peers. 'That's much more powerful than hearing it from a lecturer,' she says. For Andrew, it's about continuing to build momentum. 'The first group of students to benefit from these initiatives have done really well,' he says. 'Our diverse population is completing their degrees, and getting great results.'



'Learning how your peers think is so valuable'
Verena West (DipPsych, 2018) is a supervising tutor in the Education Studies division, assessing and mentoring students alongside her own research work

I was the first person in my family to go into HE, so I'm particularly interested in how that impacts on students' experience of university, and how it intersects with other factors such as race and social class.

My research for the chapter I'm contributing to Gianna Knowles' book threw up some interesting insights. I spoke to BME students from a range of different backgrounds, including some whose parents had been to university. Common themes were feelings of isolation, otherness and a sense that other students seemed

to know their way around already. There was also a tendency to only seek help when they reached crisis point. It was less that there was a stigma attached to it, and more that they either weren't aware of the support available or didn't feel they were entitled to it.

Where the student is also the first in the family to go into higher education, the difference in social and cultural capital grows even wider. Attempts to get involved in freshers' week events, and engage with societies can take them out of their comfort zone. This, combined with pressure from families to do well, may

lead them to sideline the social side of university life. Then later on, when they're struggling with work, they may not have a network of peers to support them. That's when students are at risk of dropping out.

I think there are a number of solutions that could be explored. Where first-year students are going into halls of residence, for example, universities could try to group them with students who have similar interests or are on their course. Budding and mentoring systems can help enormously too, and Student Unions could work to build stronger links

with student societies to promote the help available and advertise events such as mental health week.

Tutors could set collaborative assignments early on in the course to encourage students – who might very well still be living at home – to come in and connect with others on their course. There was also a tendency among those I interviewed to need more support from their lecturers, because they hadn't developed effective peer study support networks. The experience of learning how your peers think, find information and approach their work is so valuable.'

'I want this to be the go-to community for autistic people'

With her new business Autistic Empire, Sarah McCulloch (MSc OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, 2015) aims to create a space where autistic people can connect – and take control

It's bombastic, it's loud, it's in your face: it's the Autistic Empire, and it's coming your way. 'We deliberately set out to be hard to ignore,' says occupational therapist and founder of the Autistic Empire Sarah McCulloch. 'When you're autistic, you're always "other", and that can be very damaging psychologically. The message I want to send out is, "Being autistic is awesome. You're autistic, and you're awesome. Be proud, don't hide away."'

The idea for the Autistic Empire – which will provide opportunities for networking, training, sharing experiences and promoting businesses, among other things – crystallised during Sarah's time at LSBU. 'I was already working for an autistic social organisation when the opportunity came up to take part in Project Cygnet with Professor Nicki Martin. I jumped at it. I knew about my own experiences of being autistic and those of my friends, but I wanted to learn as much as I could about the challenges other people were facing.'

The main issue facing Sarah's mentee – who she saw regularly for a year – was lack of self-esteem compounded by social isolation. 'It's a huge issue for many autistic people,' she says. 'As children they may be afraid, or display challenging behaviour, and they don't get to interact with their peers. They never learn social skills, and so end up becoming lonely, isolated adults. It's not that they don't want to make friends – they literally don't know how.'

If the fledgling Empire was to have a constitution, social interaction would be at its heart. The plan is to start by

creating online communities but in future Sarah hopes to move offline: 'I want people to be able to meet in the real world, in a safe space, where they can learn how to communicate and make friends.'

The Cygnet project demonstrated the value of this kind of face-to-face contact, she says – but also pointed up a chronic lack of provision. 'Before he met me, the only person my mentee talked to was his mum,' she says. 'Just meeting someone else made a huge difference to his confidence. It helped him to see himself as an individual, rather than just as someone else's problem. The number of people that end up in that situation is terrifying.'

Positive role models

Initially, Sarah plans to create a peer-to-peer platform, where all 'citizens' can register to access informal mentoring and other low-cost resources. Eventually, she would like to create a more formal programme, training her own team of Autistic Empire mentors. 'There are autistic people out there holding down great jobs and in happy relationships,' she says. 'I want other people, who may be struggling, to benefit from their experiences and have access to those positive role models.'

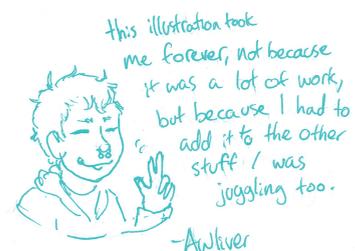
The Autistic Empire website also features news, a podcast, and an interactive test for autism. 'It's not perfect, but it's the standard test and very widely used,' says Sarah. 'I think this is the only place where it's available in its entirety online.' She is currently working on developing alternative methods of assessment,

focusing on sensory experiences rather than behaviours and routines.

Then there's the shop – a region of the Empire close to Sarah's heart. 'A lot of shops for autistic people really major on the disability/aid thing,' she says. 'I didn't want to do that. I wanted to provide useful products, but I also wanted to reclaim and celebrate our identity and provide a platform for autistic artists such as Drawliver, aka Awlie [see below]. It feels like the autistic economy is split between economically inactive autistic people, and the non-autistic businesses trying to make money out of us. I want us to reclaim that space, and promote our own work.'

So where does Sarah see the Autistic Empire in five years' time? Perhaps not surprisingly, her vision is an ambitious one. 'I want this to be a proud, imperial collective, and the go-to community for autistic people in the UK. Then we'll start looking at global expansion. It is an Empire, after all! I want autistic people to feel, this really is my world. I'm not on the sidelines, I'm right at the centre.' ■

Visit Sarah's world and see more of Awlie's work at www.autisticempire.com and @awliepop



// Being autistic is awesome. You're autistic, and you're awesome. Be proud, don't hide away





When disaster strikes

Volunteers have a vital part to play in responding to major incidents. Now a new online course aims to help them work smarter – and safer – together



As wildfires raged along the coast of eastern Greece at the height of this summer's heatwave, volunteers from dozens of local, national and international organisations worked alongside firefighters battling to control the flames and deal with the aftermath of the disaster. And when a powerful earthquake hit the Perugia region of central Italy in summer 2016, Italy's Civil Protection Department estimated that of the 5,400 people working under its control, more than half were volunteers.

When disaster strikes on this scale, it can be hard for the emergency services of a single country to cope. Since 2001, government and volunteer agencies in Europe have come together to deal with crises under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. But up to now, there has been no single framework for volunteers, with countries operating their own processes and systems.

Now, a new EU-funded programme, CiProVoT, or Civil Protection Volunteers Training (ciprovot-project.eu), in which LSBU is a lead partner, aims to provide

high-quality, accessible training for volunteers in Europe. The aim? To ensure that everyone working in these risky situations starts with a common baseline of knowledge and a shared understanding of how to operate, and keep themselves safe.

Taher Khan (BSc Information Technology, 2017) heads up the LSBU team, alongside Professor Tasos Dagiuklas. Based in the University's Smart Internet Technologies Lab, Taher and his colleagues are responsible for all technical aspects of the CiProVoT project, including delivering the final product – a MOOC, or massive open online course.

'I've always been interested in how technology can help people in extreme situations,' Taher says. 'My final undergraduate project was a search and rescue app. Now we're working with partners from Greece, Portugal, Italy and Belgium to create something that will hopefully make a real difference to how effectively we're able to respond to emergencies.'

The team has recently returned from a trip to Greece to meet up with the

Real-world solutions

CiProVoT delegates **Mohammed Islam (BSc Engineering Product Design, 2018)** and **Ismail Miah (BSc Product Design, 2018)** have both chosen to create products specifically designed for use in developing countries and in the wake of natural disasters. Mohammed's device aims to tackle deadly diseases such as malaria and zika by reducing the number of mosquitoes in populated areas. Mosquitoes use the CO₂ in our exhaled breath and our body heat to track us down. The machine works by replicating this to lure the insects in, then killing them with an electronic zapper. The CO₂ is created by combining sodium bicarbonate and citric acid – both safe, non-toxic ingredients. Meanwhile, Ismail set out to tackle health problems linked to poor sanitation by developing the Ecloo. This eco-friendly squat toilet is made from widely available materials, including bamboo, and also converts human waste into fertiliser. Find out more at www.riadulislam.com and www.ismailmiah.com



other partners to test and validate the work done so far. Each project partner was asked to take along a group of volunteers, including a mix of experts and those with more limited experience of disaster management, to test out an early version of the course and give their feedback.

Drawing on experience

The LSBU delegates included recent product design graduates Mohammed Islam, Ismail Miah and Yahya Sheikh, Dr Sara Hasani of the School of Business, whose work focuses on decision-making in disaster management (see below), and LSBU's Safety and Resilience Adviser Luke Fletcher, who is also a member of the Southwark Borough Resilience Forum.

As a graduate in Disaster Management and Emergency Planning and a disaster volunteer himself – he spent time in New York in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, and has

co-ordinated training exercises for major oil and gas incidents around the world – Luke has plenty of experience, including of how poor communication and lack of a shared knowledge base can impede work on the ground.

'Typically, you'll have lots of volunteers from different agencies and different countries converging in one place,' he says. 'Some of them might specialise in the same things, and without effective communication and co-ordination, you get duplication. In Haiti in 2017, for example, different search and rescue teams were going in and searching the same buildings. In a life-and-death situation, you can't waste time and resources in that way.'

Lack of experience and preparation can also lead volunteers into some tricky situations. 'People volunteer because they want to put their skills – whether in nursing, engineering, mountain rescue, administration or caring for people by say, cooking or looking after children – to good use,' says Luke. 'But that doesn't necessarily mean they're ready for the realities of being in a disaster zone.'

Now, the project partners will go away and reflect on the feedback they've been given. Key points include ensuring that more elements of the course are practical and relate directly to work on the ground. Delegates also wanted to know more about the technological support available to them as volunteers and how to develop their coping skills. 'It's tough,' says Luke. 'Volunteers will often see things and have experiences that are very distressing. Knowing where to go for help and support to build your own personal resilience is vital.'

For Taher Khan, the real strength of CiProVoT is the way in which information and feedback are being shared at every step. 'From a technical point of view, the project is about deploying the latest in communication technology and data management,' he says. 'But it's the continuous input from disaster management experts and volunteers themselves that make it so valuable. There is no one better placed to help us create a resource that makes a real difference to those working on the ground.' ■

On the front line

LSBU's disaster and emergency planning experts (L to R): Luke Fletcher, Dr Sara Hasani, Taher Khan and Dr Tasos Dagiuklas

LSBU's Dr Sara Hasani is developing an app that will provide essential information for emergency responders

Whenever disaster hits, a huge amount of data is generated and stored: on the nature of the event, its precise location, and its impact on people and infrastructure. All this information is hugely valuable to emergency response teams working on the ground – but how to access it in a timely and user-friendly way?

'The chances of saving lives are highest in the first 72 hours after a disaster,' says Dr Sara

Hasani (pictured left), a senior lecturer in project management within the School of Business and a specialist in applying decision-making tools and techniques in disaster management. 'But that's too soon for official data to be available. And while data on previous disasters does exist, and is often very helpful, it can be difficult for people working in the field to access and navigate.'

Now, Sara is developing an app, PREDIS, designed

to address that information gap. Emergency responders are prompted to provide simple, intuitive inputs via their mobile phones. The app then analyses data from previous emergency situations to predict the likely impact – including numbers of casualties and displaced people – supporting better planning and use of resources.

The recent CiProVoT meeting in Greece gave Sara – who is also working on content for the MOOC

– a chance to gather feedback on the app. Now the priorities are to make the interface more user-friendly and secure commercial backing.

'The feedback was really positive,' says Sara. 'People told us that there's nothing like this available in the humanitarian field. I really believe that PREDIS can make a positive difference to our ability to deal effectively with disasters.'



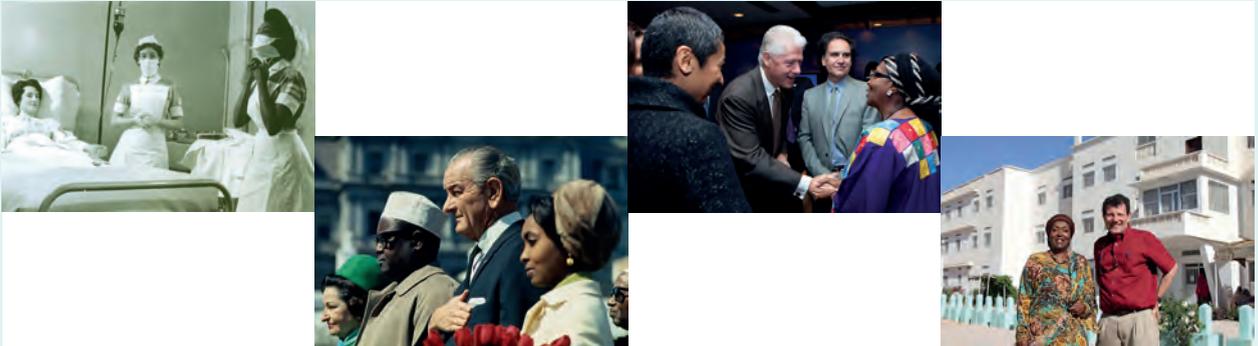
Midwife, teacher, campaigner, politician, pioneer – Edna Adan Ismail (NURSING, 1956) is all these things and more. Now, through the hospital and university she built herself, she is working to transform healthcare and education and build a brighter future for her homeland

Force of nature

What do you do when the hospital you've been building from scratch, in a country reduced to rubble by years of internal conflict, is abruptly commandeered by brutal warlords? The answer is simple, or at least it is if you're Edna Adan Ismail, who was recently awarded an honorary doctorate by LSBU's School of Health and Social Care. While a less determined person might have given up, or looked for other ways to fulfil their philanthropic urges, she found another plot of land – and started all over again.

Fifteen years on, her eponymous hospital – located in Hargeisa, capital of the self-declared state of Somaliland – deals with patients from across the Horn of Africa. It offers diagnostic laboratory facilities, an emergency blood bank and diagnosis and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS. Oh, and it has also safely delivered more than 22,000 babies in a country with some of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world.

If all that weren't enough, the hospital now has offspring of its own in the form of a university. >



To date, some 1,500 students have studied nursing, midwifery, public health, nutrition, veterinary health, pharmacy, laboratory work and medicine, and there are plans to branch out into teacher training. The hospital has an active teaching function too: Edna is working with the Somali Ministry of Health, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to achieve her goal of training 1,000 midwives along with other health professionals.

Breaking the mould

So, who is the woman behind these astonishing achievements? Meeting Edna in person, the sheer drive and force of personality required to get educated, carve out a professional career and hold down a series of senior government posts in a country where women have long been expected to aspire to nothing beyond marriage and children radiate from her. At the beginning of her ninth decade, she has the energy of someone half her age, and the charisma of a superstar.

Growing up in what was then British Somaliland, Edna has a long track record of challenging expectations.

'Girls didn't go to school,' she says of her childhood. 'But my parents were literate, and our house was full of books. My father invited the local boys to come and sit on our verandah after school, and hired a tutor to help them with their homework. That's where I first began to decipher the mysteries of reading and writing. Eventually I was sent to school in Djibouti, in French Somaliland, where my aunt was a teacher.'

She was also fascinated by medicine from an early age. 'My father was a doctor, and I'd work with him in his hospital whenever I could,' she says. 'There were no bandages, so one of my jobs was to cut sheets into strips, boil them, iron them and roll them up. If he had to go away, he'd leave me notes: make sure they feed this child properly, or remove those sutures. He'd share his frustrations too, about the lack of materials and poor facilities. I promised myself that one day I would create the kind of hospital my father would have loved to work in.'

In the early 1950s, Edna won a scholarship from the British government to come to London to study pre-nursing at the then Borough Polytechnic

– the first Somali woman to study abroad. She lived in digs, and gained experience of various nursing specialisms by working in hospitals across the capital. Initially, her plan was to specialise in surgery.

'It was the one time I remember my father really questioning one of my decisions,' Edna recalls. 'He said, yes, surgery is great. But what are you going to do for the women back home in Somaliland who need you at the most vulnerable time in their lives? And I thought, after all the opportunities and the freedom I've had, I should think about giving something back. So I did Part 1 and fell in love with midwifery.'

Edna returned to Somaliland at a critical point in the country's history. In 1960, it had gained independence, and optimism was very much in the air. Nevertheless, the challenges Edna's father had faced in trying to practise medicine were still very much in evidence. 'There was very little infrastructure,' she recalls. 'And nursing as a profession simply didn't exist. They literally didn't know what to do with me, and I worked without a salary for almost two years.'

// Nursing as a profession simply didn't exist. They literally didn't know what to do with me, and I worked without a salary for almost two years

A life's work

L to R: Edna as a student nurse in London, 1959; with her then husband Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, visiting President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House, 1968; with former US president Bill Clinton at a meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative, New York; with Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Nicholas Kristof at her hospital in Hargeisa

It's difficult to change a system by yourself, even if you do have higher than average levels of grit and determination. So Edna, who had trained as a schoolteacher before leaving for London, turned her attention to training others to become nurses. In the mid-1960s, she joined the UN and spent time teaching midwives in Tripoli, Libya on behalf of the WHO. When her new husband, the politician Mohamed Egal, was elected prime minister, the couple returned to Somaliland, this time to Mogadishu.

'Of course everyone expected me to give up work,' says Edna. 'But I didn't. I realised that as First Lady, I had a platform that I could use to bring about change. I started training the auxiliaries in the government hospital to take better care of the women. Then I began inviting some of my former pupils to come in and help me, just to write down names and fill in forms. Their families didn't want them to get involved with the patients. But slowly, slowly, they began to get interested and excited by the possibilities. Of that first group, five got scholarships to study in England, and three came back to work here in

Somaliland. That's really how nursing in this country got started.'

In 1976, the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party came to power, and Edna returned to work for the WHO where she remained during the subsequent years of political turmoil and conflict. When she retired in 1997, she came back to Somaliland to build her hospital: an ambitious goal in a country devastated by civil war, with no infrastructure, no access to materials and no construction industry.

Opening doors

Achieving her vision took nearly everything Edna had. She even camped out in the building site for eight months. 'I put in all my savings from my years working with the UN, and the proceeds from selling my jewellery and my car – plus donations from the local community and from the diaspora worldwide,' she says. 'All the people telling me it wasn't possible just made me more determined. I always kept that picture in my mind of the woman who is smelly, who is bleeding, who doesn't have anywhere else to go. That's the person I want to help.'

But the story doesn't end there. Just months after the hospital opened, in 2002, Edna was asked to go to South Africa to represent her country at the launch of NEPAD, an economic development initiative by the African Union. When she returned, the new president asked her to take over the Ministry for Social Affairs – the first time a woman had taken on such a senior role. 'I said no!', she recalls. 'I'd waited so long for my hospital and I felt like a mother with a new baby. Then the

president's wife called me and said the magic words: "Remember, you'll be opening the door for other women." So I agreed to split my time 50/50.'

Edna served as Foreign Minister too, before stepping down in 2006 to focus once more on her hospital and, now, her university. She is also a tireless campaigner on female genital mutilation (FGM). 'It's still a taboo subject here,' she says. 'But I've been through it myself and someone had to talk about it. This year, our religious leaders have finally issued a fatwa outlawing one type of FGM. It's not enough, but it's a start.'

In the meantime, Edna has plenty to occupy her. When *South Bank* meets her, she is heading straight from the LSBU campus to Westminster, and then on to Switzerland and New York to speak, meet, network and, of course, raise funds to support her work. 'It's never-ending,' she says. 'I'll be carrying two huge boxes of sutures home with me on the plane. The excess baggage people love me! Somebody gave me a beautiful designer handbag too. So I've swapped that for 200 paediatric colostomy bags. Much less glamorous, but far more useful.'

It's a pretty neat summary of the values that have guided Edna's life. 'I was born with a strong desire to fix things,' she says. 'Why should I have downtime? When I need to recharge my batteries, I go out to my family's camel farms and feed the newborn calves – that's very therapeutic. But I don't take much time off. I'm 81 this year, and I don't have time to waste. There are still so many things I want to do. Holidays can wait.' ■

// I always kept that picture in my mind of the woman who is smelly, who is bleeding, who doesn't have anywhere else to go. That's the person I want to help

Read more about Edna's work at www.ednahospital.org. You can also find out more about LSBU's honorary awards at www.lsbu.ac.uk/about-us/people/honorary-awards-ceremony Look out for more profiles of honorary award winners in future issues.

Five minutes with...

Fiona Morey, the new principal at Lambeth College, the latest addition to LSBU's family of educational institutions

Tell us a bit about Lambeth College...

Lambeth College has a very long history – it actually dates back to 1856 – and has always been embedded in the local community. In the past few years, it's seen a real shift to focus on employability, which obviously ties in very nicely with our partnership with LSBU. Currently we have around 1,500 students aged 16–18 and around 10,000 adult learners, studying everything from basic English and maths to vocational careers and access courses designed to help them get ready for university. Every year, more than 100 of our students progress to university studying in fields including medicine, dentistry, engineering and more.

What will the partnership with LSBU look like in practice?

The aim is to smooth the transition from college to university. I think we're very good at doing that earlier in the journey – say, from nursery to primary, or primary to secondary school – but when it comes to making the big leap to higher education, there's not much of a safety net. We're going to be focusing on two main areas: ensuring that there's academic alignment between our two institutions; and strengthening the pastoral side. We're also putting some very practical initiatives in place: our access courses include opportunities to experience university life, for example,

and there is also priority access to courses at LSBU for all our students.

What about those students who might not be thinking about university?

Raising aspirations and awareness is very much part of what we're doing. The message is: just because you're studying vocational or technical subjects, it doesn't mean you can't go on to get high-level qualifications and be a successful professional. Just as at LSBU, all our teaching is directly linked to what employers need. Now we're going to work on supporting the transition from technical into professional learning, and really opening the doors to those graduate-level careers.

Tell us about your own background...

I wasn't really very engaged at school, but everything changed for me when I went to college. I went on to do a degree in film and drama, but after graduating I went into teaching and I've stayed there ever since. For me, it really is a vocation.

What appealed to you about this role?

There's a real sense at the moment of things coming together. The vision for LSBU as a civic university, providing high-quality education that equips people for the real world, is something that really inspires me and it's amazing to be part of it. Also, I think the timing

is right. There's a real commitment in government now to promoting professional and technical education, and a sense that its value is finally being recognised. It's the right time to be doing the right thing.

What inspires you?

It might sound like a bit of a cliché, but it really is the power of education to transform lives. My mother did an access course, and I honestly don't think I would have gone to university if I hadn't had her as a role model. When the new access course students arrived at the start of this term, we asked them all to write down their personal ambitions. Someone wrote, 'To become a pharmacist, and make my son proud'. For me that sums it up. You can change one person's life and that's amazing – but it's only the start. ■

The LSBU family of educational institutions includes the South Bank University Academy of Engineering, South Bank Engineering University Technical College and South Bank University Enterprise Ltd, as well as the University itself. Lambeth College will join the group in January 2019. The aim is to improve access to further and higher education for people in south London. Read more at www.lsbu.ac.uk/about-us/community-engagement/our-family



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