

2021-23 Strategy



The story so far

The year 2021 is the Canon Collins Trust's 40th Anniversary and there is much to celebrate about how the Trust has evolved during that time. What started as a response to Apartheid-era repression, with scholarships awarded to exiled South Africans and Namibians with the potential to become leaders in the future, has evolved into a southern Africa region-wide programme of support to change-makers who are passionate about social justice.

Some 4,000 scholarships later, and the roll-call of Alumni includes Tito Mboweni (SA's Minister of Finance), Janet Love (former director of the Legal Resources Centre and now Vice Chair of the Electoral Commission in SA), and Sipho Pityana, businessman and outspoken critic of former SA president Jacob Zuma. Less publicly known, but no less formidable alumni include Dewa Mavhinga (director of Human Rights Watch in the region) and Joana Mamombe, Zimbabwe's youngest opposition MP, who is sadly still regularly harassed and imprisoned for her political activism.

As is evident from the above, the Canon Collins Trust is good at nurturing and catalysing natural leaders who can bring positive change to society. We also cultivate networks of like-minded individuals, and alongside our support of carefully chosen civil society partner organisations, we build a community of change agents. An example is the Legal Resources Centre in SA, with whom the Trust has had a special relationship for many years, made stronger by our 2012 merger with the Legal Assistance Trust, giving rise to our present name.

The story so far would not be complete without reference to the impact that Covid-19 has had on the Trust. Many of the Trust's plans for 2020 – and as seems likely, also 2021 – have been derailed. This global pandemic has not only prevented many gatherings (of scholars, alumni and supporters) which are the foundations for building a community of change-makers, but it has also begun to starve the organisation of financial support. Creativity in overcoming these challenges and seeking new sources of funding will be essential in the years covered by this Strategic Plan.

How we see ourselves and the future

We believe strongly that the Trust is **still relevant today**. The high demand for our own unique brand of scholarships is proof of that, and the extraordinary and innovative work undertaken by scholars and alumni – sometimes with the direct support of the Trust – underlines this.

The reason **why** the Trust exists, and remains relevant, is bound up with its 40-year legacy of building a community of change agents across the southern Africa region. We support the development of people who are advocates for human rights, social justice and a more equal society. We use scholarships as a vehicle to empower those individuals. Their impact lies in the collective influence they have on social injustices: the people and communities whose lives they touch over time.

The Trust's **Theory of Change remains valid**. Our three core activities (scholarships; support for civil society; and building a community of scholars, alumni, researchers, civil society partners and allies) are how Canon Collins directly stimulates and catalyses change. We recognise however that change is complex and takes place in a range of ways and at a range of levels, some of which are within our control, but some are not.

It follows that the Trust's **impact** in southern Africa lies mainly in the positive social change brought about by **those we support** – which can be very broad. Those who are lawyers or campaigners or policy-makers, for example, might measure their influence by the number of community members benefiting from case law or a new policy adopted by government. Quantifying each individual's reach is extremely challenging, but the indicators are strong: the stories gathered from many individuals over time provide solid evidence of the positive changes brought about by those supported by the Trust.

In the period of this new strategy, we will be emphasising two aspects strongly. Firstly, that the Trust has a renowned reputation for identifying and supporting **leaders** in the fight against injustice, and secondly that **building a community** of change-makers is absolutely central to what we do. We believe that to remain relevant and impactful, we should continue to **focus our efforts on social justice and critical social and environmental issues**, many of which have been exposed or exacerbated by Covid-19. These include gender and wealth inequalities; the global climate crisis, and equitable access to justice and education.

Overview of the 2021-23 strategic framework

This Strategic Plan presents a new streamlined approach, with three over-arching objectives. The aim is to move away from multiple goals and promote a more integrated way of working. Our strategy combines focusing on activities we know work well and developing new approaches that allow us to operate more efficiently. Underpinning everything is a major step-change in the way the Trust is funded, and in the way the Trust is perceived.

The Trust's 40th Anniversary gives us an opportunity to engage with our stakeholders and supporters afresh, although the world-wide coronavirus pandemic will undoubtedly change the nature of such engagement. Customary activities (such as fundraising and scholar and alumni events) will need to be reimagined to sustain meaningful connections. The Anniversary officially falls in 2021, but government restrictions mean that events and celebrations will also take place in 2022.

It is important to note that in the previous strategic plan there was an explicit reference to supporting transformation in Zimbabwe. Though not as overtly expressed in this plan, this aim remains fundamental to our work. The human rights space for ordinary people in Zimbabwe continues to shrink, and the need for further funding for solidarity work with defenders of democracy there is more urgent than ever.

Strategic objective 1:

Identify and support leaders and activists who can effect social change

Overall aim: To continue to offer and improve our higher education scholarships to selected change agents who have the potential to advance social justice and contribute to our vision of a just and free society in southern Africa.

This means:

- Ensuring our scholarships and selection processes focus on critical social issues, such as universal access to quality education; economic justice and the fairer distribution of resources; climate and environmental justice; gender equality; disability; and a free and independent media, among others.
- Collaborating with progressive civil society organisations on identified issues to enhance our scholarship programme, for example through paid placements or internships, collaboration on scholarship selection
- Ensuring scholarship support and funding remains relevant and be agile enough to address scholars' changing needs and circumstances, and the contexts at South African HEI's.
- Strengthening our approaches and procedures for partnering with external scholarship agencies who seek our expertise.

KPIs:

- At least 50 new scholars are awarded scholarships annually;
- At least one new programme announced annually (e.g. Climate Change scholarship to be announced for 2022);
- Six-month paid Internships added to at least 5% of scholarships year on year from 2021;
- Additional support (e.g. financial/software/interpreter etc.) is offered to all scholars declaring a disability.

Strategic objective 2:

Build and strengthen the Canon Collins network as a driver of social change

Overall aim: To continue growing a vibrant community of scholars, alumni and civil society organisations driving social change work, thus increasing our impact.

This means:

- Building a strong sense of identity amongst Canon Collins Scholars and Alumni as valued members of the CCELAT Network.
- Actively engaging scholars and alumni in evolving a network where they continue to learn from each other, and find support to further their personal and professional endeavors, and their social justice work.
- Engaging civil society partners in the CCELAT network to strengthen learning, connection and commitment of members to collectively advancing social justice.
- Building a strong community where all network members (scholars, alumni, staff, trustees and CSO partners) find ways to collaborate and increase impact.

KPIs:

- At least 100 scholars and alumni meet for a minimum of one annual networking event;
- Alumni ‘Champions’ are active in at least six countries;
- In the quest to learn more about their impact, at least 25 alumni upload their profiles to the website annually;
- Meaningful new partnerships are established with at least two civil society organisations by 2023.

Strategic objective 3:

Strengthen communications and generate income

Overall aim: To ensure the Canon Collins Trust is adequately resourced and remains viable as an impactful, dynamic, and efficient organisation.

This means:

- More powerfully communicating what we do, i.e. developing a culture of stories of change and finding ways of measuring societal impact, which go beyond the recording of scholar numbers. This will help raise the profile of the Trust, particularly among supporter and direct stakeholders.
- Building on our existing presence in the news and digital media by continuing to develop stories of success and celebrating the achievements of members of our community, particularly during our 40th anniversary year. Partnerships with the media in South Africa will help to ensure that our legacy is recognised.
- Protecting our valuable assets by keeping existing donors onside and enthusiastic about our work. When donors' commitment to the Trust ends, we will look for suitable alternatives.
- Increasing our revenue from legacies, from alumni giving back to the programme, and from the business community (especially in South Africa).
- Seeking out new funding streams and opportunities to 'sell' our services to other governments and scholarship providers.
- Seeking and securing funding to increase scholarship opportunities for all southern African citizens.

KPIs

- A steady monthly stream of thought leader articles, historical narratives and podcasts etc. appearing in national media, especially throughout the 40th Anniversary year;
- A user-friendly website delivering on all three Objectives further developed and operational by 2022;
- Through the promotion of legacies, at least 20 new bequests to the Trust are signed into Wills by the end of the Strategy period;
- At least £100,000 (R2m) in new funding is raised per annum from 2022, comprising alumni contributions, corporate support, trust funding and events income.

If you share our vision, join us on our journey!

- ❖ Overall income requirement: GBP £1 million or ZAR 20 million per annum
- ❖ Individual scholarships: GBP £5,000 or ZAR 100,000 per scholar per year of study (average)
- ❖ A typical Masters course in SA is 2 years, and PhD funding is for up to 3 years.
- ❖ The Canon Collins Trust has no government funding or endowment income and is 100% reliant on donations.

How to contact the Canon Collins Educational and Legal Assistance Trust:

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