



Anthony Farr



Allan Gray Orbis Foundation update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: To achieve its vision of achieving 'long-term economic and societal wealth through the Allan Gray Fellows', Allan Gray Orbis Foundation needs to encourage South Africans to embrace the benefits of an entrepreneurial mindset. Anthony Farr explains what the Foundation has been doing to achieve this end, and gives an update on events and campaigns which have taken place over the last six months.

Allan Gray Orbis Foundation strives to apply its own context to many of the key principles that have proved successful for Allan Gray Limited, so it is not entirely surprising to note the continuity between the ultimate intentions of the company and the Foundation. Allan Gray Limited's mission is 'to create long-term wealth for our clients', while the Foundation's vision is 'to achieve long-term economic and societal wealth through the Allan Gray Fellows'. Allan Gray harnesses the mechanism of its investment expertise and process, while the Foundation's vehicle is the Allan Gray Fellows themselves.

Embracing entrepreneurial thinking

To achieve its vision, the Foundation needs to encourage the country to embrace the benefits of an entrepreneurial mindset. An opportunity to highlight this was provided at the end of November 2010 when the world celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week.

The Foundation participated in a panel discussion on 'Establishing a vibrant, inclusive and values-driven entrepreneurship eco system' and hosted a round table exploring the debate around 'Can entrepreneurship be taught?' In these discussions it was acknowledged that it is crucial for a developing country like South Africa to stimulate an entrepreneurial spirit to achieve economic transformation and a stronger presence in the global economy. While not everyone can be an entrepreneur, the skills and attitudes of an entrepreneurial mindset must be mainstreamed in response to the increased complexity and rate of change in society.

Rounding off 2010

The Foundation's flagship event, the Winter Seminar, was held in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Over four days the Allan Gray Fellows engaged with various dimensions of the Foundation's philosophy, including leadership, economics, community and Africa. Guests from like-minded organisations such as Mandela Rhodes Scholars and Brightest Young Minds delegates, Africa Leadership Academy and Common Purpose were invited on the first day to foster greater interaction across the spectrum of young Southern African leaders. To entrench the Foundation's ethos, a panel discussion was conducted to explore the importance of ethics, including addresses by the Foundation's Chairman Professor Jakes Gerwel and trustee Professor Ndebele.

The year was brought to a close with regional year-end functions for the 210 Allan Gray Fellows. The 36 final year Fellows said their farewells to the undergraduate stage of the Foundation. The words of one Fellow in the closing speech spoke to the essence of the Foundation's values: *'This juncture does not mark the end for us but is essentially the end of the beginning. It is now time for us to write history. The foundations have been solidly laid and the pillars are fully established. Having folded up our sleeves and being ready to selflessly get our hands dirty, we are prepared to innovatively change this society to ensure that excellence is standard, recognising that this endeavour will require courageous commitment.'*

Campaign Dates for 2011

Allan Gray Fellowship : Grade 12 applications close 31 May

Allan Gray Fellowship : First year university applications close 31 August

Allan Gray Scholarship : Grade 6 applications close 30 September (to start high school in 2013)

Thought leadership event for principals and deputies

The three-day Circle of Excellence Strategic Workshop, held at the Royal Bafokeng Nation in August, was a key event of the year. Fifty-three principals and deputies from South Africa's leading schools attended (see photograph).

The overriding theme was on excellence within the school environment in terms of the school itself, the mindset of its learners and how it engages with its community. Guest speakers included educational policy analyst Graeme Bloch and Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi, King of the Bafokeng. One of the highlights was a visit to Lebone II, the Bafokeng's flagship school built at a cost of R460 million.

The response to the event was overwhelming. A well-respected Western Cape principal summed up this enthusiasm: *'I can quite honestly say the conference was the most stimulating and inspiring principals' conference that I have attended. It was fantastic sharing views and thoughts with fellow principals from all those amazing schools.'*

Selection campaigns

The Matric campaign began with the early selection camp, which resulted in 24 initial offers, (see Quarterly Commentary 2, 2010), and ended with selection camps in late September

when a further 26 candidates were offered Allan Gray Fellowships for 2010. Similarly, the university selection campaign was completed in early December. This resulted in an additional 20 Allan Gray Fellowship offers, bringing the total number of new Fellows for placement in 2011 to 70.

The selection campaign for Allan Gray Scholars who will be placed in 2012 has kicked off, and despite the challenges of the national teachers strike, around 2 000 applications were received. Successful applicants completed numeracy and literacy tests. The process continues with interviews and the final stage selection camp in early 2011.

One of the 78 Scholars' stories captures the heart of the programme's intent. Orphaned at the age of nine, this Allan Gray Scholar, along with an older brother and a cousin, has been taken care of by her 73-year old *gogo*. They live together in a tiny house outside Durban where, at times, they are totally dependant on the kindness of others to enjoy a daily meal.

Having completed Grade 9 at Clarendon Girls' High School she is living out her dream of 'attending a good high school, so that I can take care of my grandmother'. In fact she seems destined for much more as evidenced by the fact that despite the challenges she has had to overcome, she continues to excel at school; she is in the top 10 in her grade and has recently participated in the provincial debating trials.



Anthony is a qualified chartered accountant. Prior to joining the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation in 2005 he worked at the Starfish Greathearts Foundation.
