

# News from the German Rhodes community



Newsletter of the Association of German Rhodes Scholars  
May 2016

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# Foreword of the President

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By Hans-Paul Bürkner

Germany & St Catherine's 1976

Dear Fellow Rhodes Scholars,

Any successful institution or initiative has to deal with its legacies and build its future. This is of course also true for the Rhodes Trust and the Rhodes Scholarships.

The lively discussion both internally and in the media of the legacy of Cecil Rhodes, his attitudes and his actions, has required us and also enabled us to deal with our history and more broadly with the colonial history. Many Rhodes Scholars and many others have contributed to the discussions in emotional and also thoughtful ways. It is not possible to summarize the discussion or even to come to a final conclusion. I will certainly not make any such attempt. But I personally was very encouraged by the discussion. We need to confront our history continuously and be willing to re-evaluate it in the light of new revelations but also in the light of the changing values in the societies we live in. Removing names and statues will not help us in this process, while that may appear as an easy solution. Rather, we will have to deal with the wrongs and rights of our past for ever.

Many of us are reminded of the enormous power of scholarship programs by the increasing number of special programs that are being installed. The Rhodes Scholarships have served as a model for the Marshall Scholarships, the Gates Scholarships for Cambridge and the Schwarzman Scholarships for Tsinghua University in Beijing. Just recently, Nike founder Philip Knight and Stanford's outgoing President John Hennessy established a scholarship program for Stanford, with very similar objectives and structures as the Rhodes Scholarship. Clearly, all these programs are testament to the achievements of the many Rhodes Scholars and of the University of Oxford.

The Rhodes Trust is further expanding its reach. In a globalized world, it is great to see that we have the first four Rhodes Scholars from China and two new scholarships for the United Arab Emirates. With roughly six billion people in the emerging markets and just one billion people in the so-called developed world it is very natural that also the composition of the Rhodes Scholarships increasingly reflects the expansion of the world economy to the East and the South and to ensure that the future leaders from around the world will meet in Oxford.

# Foreword of the President

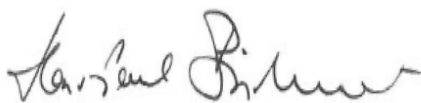
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Closer to home, it is good to see that the German Rhodes Scholar Community continues to be active. We met for our traditional Oxford Dinner last November in Berlin, as always right after the two new German Rhodes Scholars for the Class of 2016 had been selected. On the suggestion of Christian Thorun, we cooked our dinner together with a Chef. It was not only a very good four-course dinner but also enabled a lively interaction between the various participants. The current German Ambassador to India Martin Ney (Germany and Merton 1981) gave last year's German Rhodes Lecture on "The Nuremberg Principles and Modern International Law", which was followed by an intense discussion. In addition, there were a few informal get-to-gathers arranged privately by various Rhodes Scholars in Germany.

Finally, I would like to mention again our fundraising effort. The German Rhodes Scholar community continues to have the highest participation rate worldwide. But the average donation is clearly below what we get from most other major countries. So I would like to ask you again to make a contribution to the Rhodes Trust, ideally before the end of the academic year on June 30th, 2016. It is really crucial that we up our game in this dimension in order to preserve the two German Rhodes Scholarships that we have at present, as Charles Conn pointed out in the conference call he had with the German Group in November.

This newsletter features interviews with the two new German Rhodes Scholars and one of our alumni, an update from two of our Scholars in residence about their experience in Oxford, a report of last year's German Rhodes Lecture, and an account of our fundraising activities. In addition, Christian Thorun (Germany and St Antony's 2001) writes about his path from Oxford to becoming an entrepreneur and establishing his own consulting company in the consumer policy space. We will use the Newsletter in the future even more as a platform for Rhodes Scholars to describe their paths and current activities.

Warm regards,



**Hans-Paul Bürkner**

President – Association of German  
Rhodes Scholars  
Chairman of The Boston Consulting Group  
(Germany & St Catherine's 1976)



# The 2015 German Rhodes Lecture

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By Anne Roemer-Mahler  
Germany and St Antony's 2003

"The Nuremberg Principles and Modern International Law" was the topic of last year's German Rhodes Lecture delivered by the current German ambassador to India, Dr Martin Ney. In a fascinating talk, Martin Ney laid out the development of legal philosophy on what is considered a legitimate war, and discussed the evolution of international law from antiquity to the creation of the International Criminal Court. The "Nuremberg Principles", which formed the basis for the Nuremberg trials in 1945, are a key milestone in this development. Indeed, as Martin Ney emphasized, they can be considered revolutionary in that they demanded, for the first time, that individuals who committed crimes against international law should no longer go unpunished. Following the talk, Rhodes Scholars, alumni and guests discussed some of challenges for the future of international criminal law today, such as the growing role of private organizations in war and violent conflict, cyber warfare, and the opposition of key global powers, such as China and the US, to the International Criminal Court. The German Rhodes Lecture addressed a crucial dimension of today's globalizing world and it was also extremely timely. Just a week after speaking at Rhodes House, Martin Ney attended the opening ceremony of the International



Nuremberg Principles Academy at the historic site of the Nuremberg Trials. The Academy provides a forum for research and dialogue, where researchers, practitioners, representatives of civil society from all over the world can meet to exchange views and have free and open discussions. In this function, Martin Ney emphasized in Oxford, the International Nuremberg Principles Academic will help promote the acceptance of international criminal law around the world. Martin Ney has had a long and distinguished career in the German Foreign Office. Before his appointment as German Ambassador to India last year, he was the legal adviser at the German Foreign Office, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Ambassador and Senior Deputy High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, and the European Correspondent of the Foreign Office coordinating the German input to the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU.

# Fundraising Report

By Claus-Jörg Rüttsch  
Germany & University 1974

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In 2015, our fundraising activities in Germany were again aimed at gathering momentum and making progress toward the goal of raising the capital for the two German Rhodes Scholarships over five years (£3.6 mio.). Last year we continued to focus our activities on three different target groups: the Rhodes alumni, wealthy individuals as potential sponsors, and large German foundations.

## Alumni

The fundraising efforts initiated in Germany among Rhodes alumni have generally been successful. By midyear 2015, the German Rhodes Scholars achieved, for the second year running, the highest participation rate of Rhodes Scholars making a donation to Rhodes Trust, and they tied for the highest participation rate for the calendar year 2015 together with the USA.

We are grateful that this was made possible by many German Rhodes Scholars giving small and medium amounts, totaling just below £ 200.000, which is an encouraging result. However, the overall sum does not allow us to reach the target of raising the capital for the two German Rhodes Scholarships over five years. As you have seen from the communications from Rhodes House, the donations of alumni in Germany are monitored closely, and we will try to keep them high in future.

### What can you do?

To maintain the momentum and show our support for the German Rhodes Scholarships, we ask you to continue to make donations, either as actual payments within your means to the account of the German Association of Rhodes Scholars or as pledges under the new Legacy Match. We need to further increase our participation rate and total payments further reflecting the German alumni commitment to the Rhodes Scholarships and to Rhodes Trust. Any development is noticed by Rhodes House and the Trustees as we saw recently.

# Wealthy Individuals

The last Newsletter outlined our plan to find potential donors through personal contacts and suggested that the more people were involved the more contacts we might get. However, we did not receive any proposal for a prospective donor. While the fundraising team tried to talk to wealthy individuals, our contacts did not reach the intended goals.

## What can you do?

If you have suggestions or contacts that might help us to interest a wealthy individual in sponsoring a Rhodes Scholar with a lump sum or for a set time period, please get in touch and we will pursue this lead together with you or on our own, depending on your preference.

# Large German Foundations

The picture for fundraising efforts directed at large foundations in Germany is similar. We sent letters to foundations that are actively supporting research and/or education at university level, and we appealed to them to discuss with us possibilities of collaboration, pointing out the advantages of an Oxford education as well as the access to the international Rhodes Scholars network. The response to our letters and calls was friendly, but overall unsuccessful.

## What can you do?

Any support you could give to open a dialogue with a large foundation would be much appreciated. Large foundations have a management which is very skilled at blocking requests for support and collaboration, but if we could enter into a dialogue, the benefits could be great.

# Outlook

At this stage we will continue to encourage donations by alumni and to pursue opportunities with the two other target groups whenever they arise. We are working in close collaboration with Rhodes House and know that, if an opportunity arose, the Warden or a Trustee would be willing to come to Germany to demonstrate support from Rhodes House.

For further information, comments or questions, please contact:  
Dr. Claus-Jörg Rüttsch, [claus.rue@gmail.com](mailto:claus.rue@gmail.com)

# From NGO Activism to Business Entrepreneurship

Learnings from a Rhodes Scholar who founded his own institute

By Christian Thorun  
Germany & St Antony's 2001

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What to do next? That was the question that I asked myself in the year 2009 after I completed my DPhil in International Relations in Oxford and after working for an NGO on consumer policy issues in Germany for three years. Should I continue my career working for a German ministry? Should I “switch sides” and work for a company or should I apply to a consultancy?

In my decision I was torn between my desire to work on societal issues and my wish to act much more entrepreneurial than I could when working in the public sector. In that period I joined a conference where Muhammad Yunus spoke about his concept of Social Business. (Yunus was awarded the Noble Peace Prize for his concepts of microcredit and -finance in the year 2006.)

His idea of tackling societal issues not with state regulation, but with entrepreneurial concepts struck me. But the idea also posed a challenge to me: What societal problem could I imagine that could be addressed by means of entrepreneurial ideas? While many societal problems and entrepreneurial projects came to my

mind, the ideas did not match. At the end, it became clear to me that that I wouldn't be able to create a social business. But why shouldn't I create a “normal” business? My hope was that by learning more about business entrepreneurship, I would later on be able to match societal issues and business ideas eventually founding a social business.

## Establishing the Institute for Consumer Policy

In 2010 I began to set-up the Institute for Consumer Policy. The institute supports policymakers, associations and companies in operating effective consumer policy by conducting research and evaluations as well as by developing consumer policy strategies and tools. The background to this idea was simple: While the policy-field of consumer policy had gained prominence during the last decade, there did not exist a think-tank landscape comparable to other policy-fields such as foreign policy or environmental policy. Hence I would have a niche. And with my academic background and with my experience in consumer issues that I gained working for the NGO, I had the skills and network to be successful.



# From NGO Activism to Business Entrepreneurship

## *Continued*

Now six years later, the institute works for German ministries, European institutions and companies. We are still small, but the issues we are dealing with are exciting and they are becoming even more relevant.

### Lessons learned

So what are the lessons that I have learned so far?

First, founding an institute alone might not be the best option – but to find a companion is quite a task. Initially I was trying to find a companion to create the institute, but it was much more difficult than expected. What did I have to offer other than an idea? Even worse, I did not have a first client or sponsor. All my friends had great positions earning good money in reputable institutions, why should they team up with me? When I now see young entrepreneurs in their early twenties, I envy them: What do they and their companions have to lose? Hence, my first lesson is that, if I had the chance to redo the foundation, I would start this endeavour earlier in life.

Second, while one has to bear many things in mind when one creates a company and while this might seem extremely bureaucratic at times (tax issues, developing a corporate design and website etc.), this is all manageable and much of it can be delegated. So, the bureaucratic side of the foundation and the operation of a company should not be a reason not to create one's own company.

Third, client-specific non-replicable services might not be the best product and service to offer. Currently the institute offers very tailored services to its clients. This has advantages and disadvantages: The advantage is that this sophistication makes the institute very distinct and sets it apart from other competitors. The disadvantage is that most of its projects are *sui generis* – they cannot be replicated. While I don't want to always execute the same approach to leverage "economies of scale", it is quite clear to me that I will need to get a better balance regarding client-tailored vs. replicable services. My learning is that one should spend much more time in business development thinking about "standardized products and services".

Fourth, different skills in the team are essential. I am a social scientist and did not study business administration. I don't have a lot of theoretical background when it comes to questions such as company development, reaching out to investors, setting up a proper sales and marketing strategy. While all this is no rocket-science – at least not for a small company, it is important to have a team with a good mix of different skills.

Finally, equally as the digitalization transforms our private lives, it changes the way in which businesses could and should be run. The different



# From NGO Activism to Business Entrepreneurship

## *Continued*

implications of digitalization also pose a wide-range of questions that an Institute for Consumer Policy should be focusing on. Keeping up to speed with these developments is a constant challenge and one needs to make a very conscious effort to take the time to be ahead of things.

### Conclusion

In conclusion: There were times during these past six years when I asked myself whether all the extra-hours were worth the learning experience. But when I weighted the pros and cons of entrepreneurship my conclusion was always the same: Yes, it was worth it. Where would I find a position that would give me so much freedom to do what I believed was right? Where would I find a place where I would not have to struggle with management decision that I disagreed with? And most importantly, where would I find a work that would make me deal with so many issues that are of importance to me?

And what about the initial desire to set up a social business? I still haven't been able to fully connect the dots. If you should have an idea – let's join forces!

PS: I am always looking out for people who are curious and want to understand the social world and its current challenges and solutions better. So please check out the institute's website at [www.conpolicy.de](http://www.conpolicy.de) and let us talk!



**Christian Thorun**

Germany & St Antony's 2001

# Two New German Scholars Elect

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By Julie Kratz

Germany & Linacre 2010

## Tim Rudner

Scholar-Elect 2016

### Short biography:

Tim (\*1991) grew up in Cologne and studies applied mathematics and economics at Yale University. He has also spent a term abroad at the University of Cambridge studying philosophy. Tim has conducted research on financial crises, international trade theory, and long-run economic growth models. In his spare time, he works as a tutor, serves on various university committees, and is involved in mentoring programs for students from low-income families. At Oxford, he plans to pursue an MSc in Applied Statistics and an MSc in Mathematical Modelling and Scientific Computing in preparation for a research career in economics.



**Tim Rudner**

### How did you hear about the Rhodes Scholarship?

I first heard about the Rhodes Scholarship from Ela Naegele (Rhodes Class of 2013) sometime during my first year at Yale.

### What was your first reaction after receiving the Scholarship?

I was so impressed by the other candidates that, when the committee announced their decision, I was just about lost for words, and it took me a moment to process the news. Once it had sunk in, I immediately called my mother and my girlfriend – without their help and support this would not have been possible!

### What does being a Rhodes Scholar mean to you?

Receiving the scholarship is both a privilege and a responsibility. To me, it means fully taking advantage of the opportunities afforded to us through this special honor and using them to give back to and make a positive impact on our communities and the world.

### How are you planning to contribute to fighting the world's fight?

I believe that providing access to education is the most crucial factor in reducing inequality around the world. As an aspiring academic, I hope to make education more accessible to less privileged members of our communities.

# Tim Rudner

## Continued

What image do you connect with the University of Oxford?

Intellectual vibrancy in and outside of the class room.

Why did you choose to study statistics and mathematics in Oxford?

I wish to help make the mathematical foundations of economic theory and the tools used in economic analysis sounder. I believe that this can only be achieved with a strong background in mathematics. I also hope to benefit from Oxford's exceptional interdisciplinary research institutes that link mathematics, statistics, and economics.

To get to know you as a person a bit better, please tell us what is your idea of a perfect day?

To me, a truly perfect day would be one on which I wholeheartedly feel the world is going in the right direction.

What is one of your most favorite books and why?

Albert Camus' "The Myth of Sisyphus." I've found Camus' philosophy extremely humbling and instructive in the most nihilist and directionless moments of my life.

Last but not least, what is the best advice you ever received and who gave it to you?

"Egal was passiert: So wie es kommt, ist es gerade richtig." – My mother

# Luca Springer

Scholar-Elect 2016

## Short biography:

Luca (\*1993) was born in Berlin and later moved to Vienna. He is currently a senior in the Dual BA Program between Columbia University and Sciences Po Paris, pursuing two bachelor degrees with specialization in Politics, Law and Economics and Philosophy and Business Management. Luca has acted as student representative at both universities and is a member of Columbia's Honor Society. In his spare time he competitively plays basketball. At Oxford, he will pursue a MSc in Global Governance & Diplomacy and a Master of Public Policy.



**Luca Springer**

## How did you hear about the Rhodes Scholarship?

I attended an information session on fellowship and scholarship opportunities at Columbia University. Studying at Oxford has always been a dream of mine; the spirit of the Rhodes Scholarship inspired and motivated me to apply.

## What was your first reaction after receiving the Scholarship?

Overwhelming happiness! After congratulating Tim and thanking the committee, I called my family and friends to inform them about the wonderful news.

## What does being a Rhodes Scholar mean to you?

Being a part of a community that inspires, influences, and motivates each other in order to have a meaningful impact on the world we live in.

## How are you planning to contribute to fighting the world's fight?

I hope to fight the world's fight by becoming a politician, aspiring to replace parochialism with openness, intolerance with multiculturalism, and rigidity with modernization. It is my dream to contribute to fostering a more inclusive European society.

## What image do you connect with the University of Oxford?

An aesthetically breathtaking academic paradise.

## Why did you choose to study public policy in Oxford?

I believe that throughout the tenure of my Rhodes stipend, the outstanding training of the MPP and the GGD will prepare me for a career in politics and extend the theoretical foundation of my undergraduate experience to effectively take action in the landscape of European politics.

# Luca Springer

## *Continued*

To get to know you as a person a bit better, please tell us what is your idea of a perfect day?

Waking up early to go for a run in Central Park, followed by a brunch with a group of close friends.

Spending the day working on a project that I am passionate about and seeing the impact towards a meaningful cause. Enjoying the evening cooking and having a family dinner at home.

**What is one of your most favorite books and why?**

I truly love Goethe's "The Sorrows of

Young Werther", for it illustrates the power written words can have on society. Goethe's beautiful prose makes me go back to this work on a regular basis. I also enjoy Jules Massenet's opera version of the piece.

**Last but not least, what is the best advice you ever received and who gave it to you?**

"Do good for the sake of doing good - not for the sake of praise and admiration" – A dear friend and mentor

## Reflections from a first-year Scholar

By Friederike Reuter  
Germany & Lincoln 2015

It is exam time in Oxford. There is barely any free desk space in Lincoln library, an 18th century church remodeled to house book shelves and study spaces, as I work my way through binders of notes on economic models. While I piece together how economists model the outcomes that arise from the decisions taken by many agents, it may also be a good time to reflect about my time in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar.

The “macroeconomics” of my Rhodes universe suggest that it has been quite a turbulent year. By the time I arrived in Oxford, the Rhodes Must Fall movement had made waves from South Africa to Oxford, demanding the fall of Oriel College’s Cecil Rhodes statue and (not to forget) an effort of the University of Oxford to decolonize its curriculum and to admit more students and faculty from ethnic minorities. Fortunately, the Rhodes Trust emerged unscathed, although individual scholars were attacked and harassed by the media.

Shortly after Oriel College had announced that the statue would remain in place, the next macroeconomic shock hit: David Cameron announced the date of the referendum on Britain’s membership in



**Friederike Reuter**

the EU. Since then, many of the most influential politicians have visited Oxford to sway voters one way or another (for example, in just one week this term, Sir John Major, John Kerry and Jeroen Dijsselbloem are announced to speak at the Oxford Union). I have attended many talks and debates and eagerly discussed the issue with friends and locals. It is certainly an exciting time to be in the United Kingdom and to participate in the public discourse. Hopefully, I am convincing my British and Commonwealth friends who are entitled to vote to make the “right” choice in June.

With regards to the “microeconomics” of my experience here in Oxford, my transition into the academic life here in Oxford has fortunately been much

# Reflections from a first-year Scholar

## *Continued*

smoother and yet challenging and stimulating. The first year of my course, the MPhil in economics, has focused on the foundations of economic theory (precisely, microeconomic, macroeconomic theory and econometrics). Thus, I have become proficient in the current methods of economics and learnt how to critically assess economic models.

Beyond my coursework, I have earned a blues as a member of the Oxford University Ladies Golfing Society and have studied a fourth language, Spanish. In addition, I designed an impact evaluation and led a research trip to India as part of the Oxford Microfinance Initiative, a student pro-bono consulting group. Our team has partnered with a small Indian microfinance institution to help evaluate the health and socioeconomic impact of a water and sanitation microcredit. Together with another student from Oxford and volunteers from India, I surveyed the microfinance organization's female borrowers in Assam. This trip was an unforgettable experience, not just because I experienced an earthquake of 6.7 on the Richter scale, but primarily because I learnt so much about India by traveling through Assam, talking to locals and discussing India's economic potential and challenges with the survey volunteers who also became my friends. When I returned to Oxford, I was thankful to be able to share my experiences with my close friends from the Indian Rhodes community. The Rhodes community has certainly been the biggest asset to my time at Oxford. Since I have arrived in this

small university town, Rhodes House has been a constant source of inspiration and motivation. The diversity of the Rhodes Scholars and their involvement in innumerable causes is unique for such a small community of young adults. In addition, the support of the wonderful staff of Rhodes House greatly contributes towards making our experience of being a Rhodes Scholar as transformative as possible.

Also thanks to the support of the Warden and staff of Rhodes House, a group of scholars and I have launched the Rhodes Economics Forum this year with the objective of organizing more structured discussions and events on economic issues at Rhodes House. Last term, we held our first Scholar discussion group on post-crisis macroeconomic policy, which was well attended by economists and non-economists alike. This term, we are excited to host our first speakers, the distinguished Sir Paul Collier and renowned Professor Richard Portes.

As the end of this academic year draws to a close, I look forward to soon moving to a house with four other Rhodes Scholars, each of us hailing from a different continent. Our front door sign will read "Welcome" in five different languages. I have no doubt that our friendships will span time and space, and all thanks to the Rhodes Scholarship.



# Oxford's new Rhodes community

By Lukas Lange

Germany and Magdalen 2015

The look and feel of the City of Dreaming Spires has barely changed over the past century, but you probably would not recognize Oxford's Rhodes community anymore, even if you were here just ten years ago.

Last December, I participated in a "scholars calling" initiative for the trust's most recent fundraising effort. Together with many other current scholars, every evening for two weeks, we called alumni from all constituencies and talked to them about what being part of the Rhodes Community in Oxford means today. All conversations were unique in their own right, but the one common theme was: things have changed a lot. Not many years ago, scholars went to Rhodes House twice during their time studying here, for the coming up and the going down dinner. Now, South Parks Road is frequented by sitting scholars every day. From smaller events such as discussion groups on good governance, brown bag lunches on artificial intelligence and lectures on climate change, to bigger events like the "First & Second Year Retreats" – weekend-long seminars at Rhodes House on topics such as diversity, leadership and ethics –, there are always plenty of reasons to stay close to Milner Hall.

In addition to events led by alumni and Rhodes House staff, I was able to take advantage of a whole range of thought-provoking activities offered for Rhodes Scholars. These included an incredible week-long trip to Israel, which taught me countless things



**Lukas Lange**

about the region, local politics and Palestinian & Israeli culture, as well as a phenomenal journalism workshop, which gave me new insights into how to contribute to public discussions by pitching, reporting and writing stories. What's more, there have been plenty of ways for me to combine my passion for technology and the life sciences with the Rhodes community. Together with Rhodes House staff members and other scholars in Oxford, we are working on putting together the second Rhodes BioMedicine Conference later this year. The goal of the conference is to bring together Rhodes Scholars from all years interested in healthcare and biotechnology from industry, the startup world and academia in an informal setting to brainstorm ideas, for personal mentorship and to discuss the future of the field. The sheer number of inspiring people I got to know during those condensed two days was phenomenal. I am hoping to continue that experience this year. Aside from new friendships, I was able to take away a great deal of stimulating thoughts from the

# Oxford's new Rhodes community

## *Continued*

weekend for my work on genetics and bioinformatics. While some questions I ponder over were answered, many more were raised: In 20 years, are we still going to see a doctor for every medical condition we have? How can we use new knowledge about our genome to improve medical care? Why does governmental investment into healthcare innovation differ so drastically among developed countries?

To discuss questions like these, exchange new ideas and reminisce about days gone by in Oxford, I am looking forward to meeting many more of you in person. After all, there is only so much you can get across on an old cell phone, sitting in the Rosebery Library at 10:00 p.m.

# Alumni Profile: Heidi Stöckl, Germany and Nuffield 2006

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By Anne Roemer-Mahler  
Germany and St Antony's 2003

**Current job title:** Lecturer in Social Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

## Short biography:

Heidi Stöckl grew up on a farm in Martinsried, a small village near Munich. Her interest in human rights developed early in life and was sustained through her studies of political science in Munich, Seoul and Berlin. Several internships with Amnesty International, UNIFEM, the GTZ and an Uzbek Anti-Human trafficking NGO led her to focus on preventing and addressing violence against women. For her DPhil, she conducted the first prevalence study on intimate partner violence during pregnancy in Germany. Heidi Stöckl now lives in Munich with her partner and two sons Johann and Arthur, still working for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



**Heidi Stöckl**

## Thinking back to your time as a Rhodes Scholar in Oxford, what memories come to your mind?

Most of my memories center on college life as we were a tight community in Nuffield College with only 75 students a year. I have very fond memories of the lunches in Nuffield, as we had an informal policy to sit next to whoever was there already, which prevented the formation of small groups and led to unusual friendships. I also had tea in college nearly every afternoon where I could just take a relaxed break with friends, some of whom have been in Nuffield with me from the start, or get rid of my most pressing statistics

questions. I particularly miss the Port Meadows, with its freely rooming cows and horses and its geese and swans. What an incredibly beautiful, peaceful place!

## What was the greatest challenge you experienced in Oxford?

The struggle to find the right PhD supervisor for my subject as there was not a keen interest in sociology, where I did my MSc at that time, to supervise a DPhil on intimate partner violence. It was a difficult time but I received a lot of assistance, also from Mary Eaton in Rhodes House. It really helped to discuss it with a variety of people, who often had similar experiences. In the end, by changing to the Department

# Alumni Profile: Heidi Stöckl

## Continued

of Social Policy and Evidence-based Social Intervention I not only gained two supportive DPhil supervisors, I also found my intellectual home and got exposed to ideas and methods I am still using.

**Can you briefly describe your current work for us?**

My passion is to prevent and address violence against women and children. My current work is concerned with the prevalence, risk factors and health effects of intimate partner violence, the design and evaluation of intervention studies to address intimate partner violence in low and middle income countries, the estimation of intimate partner homicide and who murders children, and human trafficking. While my work is focused on low and middle income countries, especially Tanzania and South Africa, I also do a lot of work globally or in Europe.

**What aspects of your work do you enjoy the most?**

I am quite fortunate, as I enjoy nearly all parts of my work. I love to immerse myself in the analysis of data and to get every little detail right when collecting data as I now do for a global systematic review on child homicide perpetrators. I like the planning of studies and to get an overview of all the opportunities and difficulties. Plus, I really enjoy working with colleagues from Tanzania, South Africa and of course our great team at LSHTM. Grant writing can be tiring and time consuming, but at the same time it is a great opportunity to evaluate where I stand, what impact my work will have and for whom it will be useful. At LSHTM, we are lucky to

have a very diverse student body from all over the world, so the teaching is also often rewarding and thought provoking.

**You collaborated on a report by the World Health Organization on violence against women, which found that more than one third of all women worldwide are victims of physical or sexual violence. What are the causes underlying such shocking levels of violence?**

The high prevalence of intimate partner violence worldwide was still shocking for us, even though we knew that the percentage is going to be high. One of the main driver of intimate partner violence that also explain the geographical variation are norms related to male authority over female behavior, norms justifying wife beating and the extent to which law and practice disadvantage women compared to men in access to land, property and other productive resources. Another universal predictor for both perpetration and experience of partner violence is exposure to family violence during childhood, either through witnessing the beating of their mother, child sexual abuse or excessive corporal punishment.

**Is the WHO report a sign that the issue is receiving more political attention?**

**And what can be done to help prevent intimate partner violence?**

Two big questions. Regarding the political attention, yes, the issue is receiving more attention, for example, reducing violence against women became one of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is really important, as the many forms of

# Alumni Profile: Heidi Stöckl

## Continued

violence against women do not only serious human rights violations, they also constitute a huge burden on the health of the individual and society. On the other hand, there is a backlash against the topic, so there is a constant struggle to keep it on the political agenda and to get sufficient funds for its prevention. Although more work is needed, we now have a couple of promising interventions to address intimate partner violence, for example the community based intervention SASA! In Uganda, IMAGE, a microfinance plus gender training intervention tested in South Africa that halved past year experiences of intimate partner violence among participants or empowerment interventions in antenatal care tested in the UK or Hong Kong. Work is now done to evaluate these interventions in different settings.

### What direction will your research take you in next?

Currently I have two dreams. One is to expand my work on intimate partner and child homicide and to conduct a cross-country study in Europe on the risk factors for different kind of family homicides to advice prevention strategies, ideally by developing a tool to be used by the police and the health sector to assess danger in cases of domestic violence. The second dream is to investigate the pathways leading to intimate partner violence in low and middle income countries, by conducting a longitudinal study on violence against women.

### What does 'fighting the world's fight' mean to you?

To do my best, within my capacity, to make the world a better place. To work towards the right of every woman and girl, men and boy to live a life free of violence. For myself, it also means to live my life according to principles of fairness, responsibility, openness and compassion and to teach my two adorable sons the same.

### If you could send a message back to your younger self, what advice would it contain?

Don't be shy or give room to self-doubt. Be bold, stay true to yourself and take advantage of opportunities that are given to you as they always lead to more options, ideas and chances.

# How to Get and Stay in Touch

To get in touch please contact our Vice President

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*As a Rhodes  
Scholar living in  
Germany...*

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... join us at one of this year's events

*As a German  
Rhodes Scholar  
living abroad...*

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... get actively involved to keep our community vibrant and alive

*As a German  
Scholar in residence  
in Oxford...*

... make a donation – no matter how large or small

Contact: Anne Roemer-Mahler  
Germany & St Antony's 2003  
Vice President, Association of German Rhodes Scholar  
[anne.roemer-mahler@gmail.com](mailto:anne.roemer-mahler@gmail.com)



Vereinigung der Deutschen Rhodes Scholars e.V.

Vereinigung Deutscher Rhodes Scholars e.V.  
c/o David Klemm  
Dachbergstraße 52  
65812 Bad Soden

## Spendenformular

**JA**, ich möchte die Vereinigung Deutscher Rhodes Scholars e.V. ab sofort mit einer regelmäßigen Spende unterstützen. Die Spende wird vollständig zur Förderung des Rhodes Trusts verwendet.

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c/o David Klemm  
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