



Green shoots of recovery

The University's strategic plan Manchester 2020 lists one of our goals as contributing to the social and economic success of the local, national and international community. Here UniLife looks at how the University is 'making a difference'...

Andrew Amara, a MSc student from Uganda has a simple but massive aim: "Changing the world" as he puts it.

Andrew is studying Global Urban Development and Urban Planning, and came to the University from Uganda on an Alan Gilbert Memorial Scholarship, set up in Professor

Gilbert's memory to fund at least one African student every year.

As he prepares to return to Kampala, his ambitions include helping to combat slums, deal with climate change and tackle the everyday challenges of life in his home capital.

"Now is the perfect time for growth in Uganda," he says

"The existing infrastructure is old, poorly maintained and just can't support the population.

"The government has developed a master-plan to tackle the main problems of housing, sanitation and traffic. It wants sustainable homes that don't collapse, a drainage system that doesn't flood constantly and roads that aren't full of potholes.

"I hope to be part of implementing that plan.

"Being at a world-class university like Manchester has given me an international perspective – a new lens with which to interpret the challenges ahead.

"I've been immersed in a city where much of what I am studying is already in action. Learning has been taken outside the classroom.

"I've discovered how culture and local history can be catalysts for growth; how we need to tackle climate change by changing with the planet instead of trying to stop the planet from changing; how we can work alongside communities and find compromises on both sides.

"Back in Uganda I want to be a consultant for the town planning councils as they seek ways to combat slums. I also hope to begin two community projects for refugees displaced during rebel conflicts. Within ten years I hope I'll be spearheading regional development across the country.

"None of that would be possible without this scholarship – I could never have afforded to come here.

"On a personal level, it has been a fascinating 12 months. The changing seasons – the way people smile more when the sun shines, seeing snow for the first time and the bitterly cold winter, though I won't miss that!"