



First graduate



Lenny comes from the Bushbuckridge area of Mpumalanga Province. Supported by WIRHE, she was able to study and graduate from the 2½ year National Diploma in Medical Technology. She is now working in the laboratory of Tintswalo Hospital as a medical technologist.

THANK YOU...

The staff and students of the WIRHE programme would like to extend heartfelt thanks to all of our sponsors and supporters, who have helped so many to realise their dreams.



Faces of WIRHE

WIRHE Students



Cecil Pule
U Limpopo
Medicine
MBChB IV



Tinu Joji
Wits
Medicine
MBBCh II



Lebo Sekgotho
Wits
Physiotherapy
BSc (Physio) IV



Kelebogile Rankhumise
U Pretoria
Medicine
MBChB II

Support our Cause

Possible funders or individuals interested in supporting students, contributing to WIRHE or finding out more about the programme should contact:

Professor Ian Couper, Centre for Rural Health
Wits Medical School, 7 York Road, Parktown,
Johannesburg, 2193, South Africa
Tel. +27 11 717 2602. Email: ian.couper@wits.ac.za

"It is with great pleasure to be given this opportunity to thank your kindness of stepping to my rescue by offering me a chance to pursue with my studies. I would like to thank the whole committee of WIRHE for making a difference in my studies and life as a whole."

THE WIRHE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Turning Dreams into Reality!

Students interested in applying for the WIRHE Scholarship should contact:

Nontsikelelo Sondzaba, Tel. +27 11 717 2091
Email: Nontsikelelo.Sondzaba@wits.ac.za

Our Sponsors

Swiss South Africa Cooperation Initiative (SSACI)
North West Department of Health
Aspen Pharmacare
Dr Marion Bergman
Novartis

The WIRHE Scholarship Programme

Centre for Rural Health
Wits Medical School, 7 York Road, Parktown,
Johannesburg, 2193, South Africa
Tel. +27 11 717 2602. Email: ian.couper@wits.ac.za

The WIRHE scholarship (pronounced "wire") supports students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds to fulfill their aspirations of a career in the health care sector.

W I R H E
The Wits Initiative for Rural Health Education



The Wits Initiative for Rural Health Education (WIRHE) was launched in 2002 in order to support financially disadvantaged students from the rural areas of South Africa to study health sciences. Its goal is to assist the development of human resources for health care in the targeted areas. This is a long-term strategy based on the evidence that rural origin is a strong predictor of future rural practise, with the right support.

With the support of the Swiss South Africa Cooperation Initiative (SSACI), WIRHE initially aimed at supporting 20 students in 2 pilot sites, in North West and Limpopo provinces, and subsequently Mpumalanga province. Following an agreement with the North West Department of Health, WIRHE is now mainly supporting rural students from the North West province. With a population of 2,4 million people, of whom over 65% are rural, North West province has the lowest doctor to population and other health professional to population ratios in the country.

Scholarships are offered to students in collaboration with the North West Department of Health. Students are chosen by a district based committee on the basis of their human resource needs and must work in these districts during vacations and year for year upon completion of their studies.

Though the majority of recipients of the WIRHE scholarship study at Wits University, an increased number of WIRHE students have been supported at the University of Limpopo (Medunsa campus) and the University of Pretoria through the North West Scholarship programme component.

The scholarship is available to students who wish to enroll for one of the following health science degrees: medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

In 2007, WIRHE received the prestigious Wits Vice-Chancellor's Award for Academic Citizenship (Team) in recognition of the contribution it is making to the development of young South Africans.

There are currently 47 students enrolled in the programme, the number being dependent on available funds. The cost of medical training is about R80 000 per student per annum, including tuition, residence and books.

To qualify for this scholarship students need to meet the following criteria:

- They must be a permanent resident in the district in which they are applying (currently in the North West province)
- They must be eligible for (and subsequently obtain) admission to the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Witwatersrand, University of Limpopo or University of Pretoria, which serve the province.
- They must be willing to serve the community by working for the health service in the sub-district they are from during their studies and after they are qualified.
- They must have insufficient independent financial support to pay for their own studies.



WIRHE Student Enrolment (2009)

Degree	Number	%
Medicine	28	60
Occupational Therapy	7	15
Pharmacy	5	11
Physiotherapy	3	6
Dietetics	2	4
Nursing	1	2
Dentistry	1	2

Letter of Appreciation

"It is with sincere gratitude that I hereby acknowledge and appreciate your financial assistance. This noble gesture has indeed brought relief as far as financial constraints are concerned. Not only has it given me an opportunity to further my studies, but it has also introduced me to one of the most challenging and influential places in South Africa. This has given me a new perspective of things, and has helped me to mature in a whole lot of areas, including giving me an insight into the kind of person I really am. It is undoubtedly an open secret that without your generosity, all this would have been limited, or rather impossible."

BSc Pharmacy student, Wits

Home Grown Solutions

The model provides a way of developing home-grown professionals for the health service who are committed and loyal to the districts they come from. The project does not rely only on a legal contract but through development of relationship and support of students, together with vacation service in local health facilities, ensures they are committed to the districts they come from by the time they graduate.

A mentorship programme developed specifically for those students who need additional support involves them meeting with one of the coordinators on a monthly basis to discuss their academic progress, study plan, and challenges and to set assessment targets.