A Snapshot of MSU Involvement in Africa Through the Years

1950s

In 1958, MSU President John Hannah travels to Nigeria to discuss the possibility of MSU collaborating with a proposed new university in that nation.

One of MSU’s first research projects in Africa takes place in 1958 as social science assistant professor John Messenger spends part of the year in Nigeria studying the impact of Christianity on local populations.

The African Studies Center is founded in 1960. The MSU African Studies Center (ASC) is one of nine Title VI National Resource Centers on Africa designated by the U.S. Department of Education, based on the Center’s 150 research faculty providing broad research, teaching, and service on the continent.

In 1960, MSU’s engagement in Africa begins with a partnership to build Africa's first land-grant university, the University of Nigeria (Nsukka).

In 1963, humanities professor Austin Moore travels more than 12,000 miles throughout Africa, a journey that is chronicled in his book “Knight Errant in Africa.”

1960s

In 1960, MSU President John Hannah travels to Nigeria to discuss the possibility of MSU collaborating with a proposed new university in that nation.

1970s

In 1978, MSU becomes the first university in the country to totally divest its portfolio of corporations operating in South Africa.

1980s

In 1980, the Bean/Cowpea Collaborative Research Support Program is established. The CRSP is a research and training program designed to increase the availability of beans and cowpeas (which in the U.S. are mainly black-eyed peas), both of which provide carbohydrates and protein in the diets of subsistence farm families and the urban poor through the world.

In 1980, MSU forms a collaborative relationship with the University of Zimbabwe and becomes the largest U.S. university linkage in Africa.

In 1986, Terrie Taylor from MSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine begins work in Africa to understand cerebral malaria and its severe effects on children. Each year since then she spends six months in Africa based in Blantyre, Malawi and takes more than 20 medical students with her to work on clinical electives.

1990s

Desmond Tutu, a 1984 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and South African anti-apartheid activist, is the keynote speaker at MSU’s undergraduate convocation May 8, 2009. MSU also presents him with an honorary doctor of humane letters degree.

In 1990, the Program on the Lakes of East Africa begins as a research and development project under the MSU African Studies Center. The project is designed to facilitate research, training and service collaboration with the fisheries of Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda.

In 1999, the MSU Press publishes “Letters from Robben Island” by Ahmed Kathrada, a book describing the author’s imprisonment in South Africa with Nelson Mandela and others.

In 1996, Terrie Taylor from MSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine begins work in Africa to understand cerebral malaria and its severe effects on children. Each year since then she spends six months in Africa based in Blantyre, Malawi and takes more than 20 medical students with her to work on clinical electives.

In 1999, the MSU Press publishes “Letters from Robben Island” by Ahmed Kathrada, a book describing the author’s imprisonment in South Africa with Nelson Mandela and others.

In 2000s

In 2001, the Partnerships to Enhance Agriculture in Rwanda through Linkages is launched under the leadership of Dan Clay, director of the Institute of International Agriculture at MSU. PEARL, funded primarily by USAID, works with rural communities across Rwanda to generate income through agricultural product development and market linkages.

In 2008, MSU helps obtain the first magnetic resonance imaging machine for the nation of Malawi.

MSU helps celebrate the 90th birthday of former South African President Nelson Mandela on July 19, 2008, with a specially designed exhibit opening and an announcement of a curatorial fellowship at the Nelson Mandela Museum in Qunu, South Africa. Also that year, MSU awards Mandela an honorary doctor of laws degree.