

**ALEXANDER MCLEAN - 2007 BEACON PRIZE WINNER**

22 year old Alexander McLean, Founder & Director of the African Prisons Project, was named as the 2007 Beacon Prize Overall Winner at a Gala Prize Ceremony held on Thursday 22nd November at the Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace, London.

Alexander is the youngest ever recipient of this prestigious award. His family and friends are not surprised at this incredible achievement, being recognition of the amazing work Alexander has achieved since starting his first prison project whilst visiting Uganda aged only 19.

The Beacon Prize Awards honour outstanding individuals who have given money, time or skills to help causes that enrich our communities in a wide variety of powerful ways. The prize ceremony was hosted by Martyn Lewis CBE, who said, *“The Beacon Fellowship Charitable Trust was created to acknowledge exceptional acts of philanthropy with the contribution of time, skills and money... Beacon aims to identify the often unsung heroes of charitable giving, and through them, inspire and encourage a culture of giving in the UK.”*

There were 13 Beacon Prizes awarded on the night, for a variety of categories. Alexander won the Beacon Prize for Young Philanthropist in recognition of his work with the African Prisons Project. He was then named the 2007 Beacon Prize Overall Winner and was presented with a £30,000 cheque by Campbell Robb, Director General of the Cabinet Office - Office of the Third Sector, who stated, *“The African Prisons Project is a truly remarkable venture, helping some of the most vulnerable people in the world. This is exactly the kind of work that the OTS wants to see thrive.”*

The Beacon Prize acknowledged Alexander McLean’s charitable initiative, African Prisons Project, which aims to alleviate the suffering of men, women and children who are prisoners in Africa. Under brutal regimes and in the most squalid conditions, they suffer neglect, malnutrition, inadequate health care and hygiene, and gross overcrowding. Alexander, a recent law graduate, said, *“I am particularly pleased to receive the 2007 Beacon Award. Working with prisoners may not be the most glamorous task - their needs are overwhelming and few organisations are trying to meet them. This award is a tremendous boost for me, the African Prisons Project, and the thousands of prisoners we’ve been assisting.”*

Phil Hope MP, Minister for the Third Sector commented, *“The Beacon Fellows are true ambassadors of philanthropy and an inspiration to others who want to contribute to strengthening their communities by supporting charitable and social causes.”*

*“The achievement of Alexander McLean and his colleagues is outstanding and they have had to overcome numerous hurdles to achieve an incredible feat. Their self-sacrifice to better the lives of those less fortunate is highly commendable”* - Amanda Rose, British High Commission, Nairobi.

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Notes to editors:

Previous Beacon Fellowship recipients include: Sir Bob Geldof and Jamie Oliver OBE. More information about the Beacon Fellowship can be found at [www.beaconfellowship.org.uk](http://www.beaconfellowship.org.uk).

The African Prisons Project was founded in 2004 by Alexander McLean. Whilst volunteering in a hospital in Kampala, Uganda, in his gap year, Alexander met a group of prisoners from Luzira Upper Prison. This prompted him to visit their prison. Disturbed by the conditions which the prisoners had to endure, he returned a few months later to renovate the prison’s infirmary. This has resulted in a significant drop in death rates and since completion of the project by APP the prison service have added an on site laboratory. On completion of the project, Alexander asked the prisoners if there was anything else they needed. The resounding response was education. So he returned for a second time and developed a library with books donated from the UK. This has enabled prisoners to learn to read, to take O Levels and A Levels, and even start a distance learning course with Kampala University. Since then, APP has completed other projects in Uganda, Sierra Leone and Kenya.

**More information about the African Prisons Project, and photographs from the Beacon Prize Ceremony can be found at [www.africanprisons.com](http://www.africanprisons.com). These photos may be freely used by the media.**

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