

## **The Living History Project: Genetic Ancestry Testing at UKZN Pmb.**

In October 2007, the Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives liaised with the African Genome Education Institute (AGEI) and Ancestry 24.com to conduct a DNA Ancestry Testing on the UKZN Pmb Campus. Dr Wilmot James, Executive Director of the AGEI, and Heeran Makkan of the Wits Human Genomic Diversity and Disease Research Unit (HGDDRU) visited the campus in order to take cheek swab samples from 98 participants. The results were brought in March 2008 by Prof. Himla Soodyall of the HGDDRU. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) test results were given to both men and women, and Y chromosome test results were given to men. The mtDNA is inherited through the matriline, and is passed on through the mothers. The Y chromosome is passed down through the fathers.

The sample consisted of 98 individuals from 15 different countries, including 11 African countries (South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia and Rwanda) and New Zealand, USA, Cuba and Romania, reflecting the varied student and staff population of UKZN. The results showed participants from which area of the world their ancestors of 17,000 to 100,000 years ago had probably originated. Modern people still carry this ancient inheritance in the cells of their bodies. The data will be added to the AGEI database.

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### Attachments:

- The Living History Project Report by Prof. Himla Soodyall
- Photograph