Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

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Key African role for sports development expert

An academic from Northumbria University, Newcastle will advise a new African organisation on how sport can be used to both alleviate economic and development issues and create entrepreneurial opportunities.

Ruth Crabtree, Director of International Development in Health and Life Sciences, has been invited to join the African Sports Business Association (ASBA) as an advisor.

ASBA works to create sustainable partnerships between global universities

and business schools and universities in Africa. By developing sports business degrees and MBAs for African students, with the support of global sports brands, the association will play a significant role in Africa's growth into a key sports business marketplace.

The association brings together a range of distinguished people in the field of sport from around the world.

Ruth was chosen by Dr Mombi Thairu, ASBA's President and CEO, because of her extensive knowledge, skills, contacts and experience in sports management.

Ruth is internationally recognised as a sport management educator and has developed programmes for several overseas institutes. As an Executive Board Member of the World Association for Sport Management as well as its European counterpart, she has extensive knowledge of sports development globally and access to high profile leaders in sport.

Ruth said: "It's an absolute honour and privilege to be working with such a prestigious group of people. I'm certainly looking forward to gaining a lot of knowledge from them which I can bring back to the University and share with our staff and students, as well as sharing my own expertise with other members of the ASBA in an advisory role.

"This partnership will benefit Northumbria, providing opportunities for student placements in African institutes, business schools and to work with members of the community in sports coaching programmes."

ASBA has set an objective to create 1,000 sports-related business jobs for students from Africa within five years. It will encourage women and girls to participate at every level in sports, promote sports entrepreneurship and progress the development of sports business and sports business education in Africa.

The association is also in the process of establishing the Students and Young Professionals Network (SYPN) for under 30-year-olds. It aims to encourage entrepreneurial thinking and inspire young people to be leaders and proactive change-makers to support an economically stronger Africa.

Dr Thairu, founder of ASBA and President of the International Multicultural Society for Sport and Entertainment (IMSSE), said: “I met Ruth at the World Association for Sport Management (WASM) Summit and was taken aback by her warmth, candor and brilliance. I knew I had met the right person to add to the ASBA leadership team.

“We, at ASBA, feel lucky to have her on our team and we look forward to further collaborations with Northumbria University.”

In her new role as ASBA Advisor, Ruth will share her experience of working on sports education projects in Zambia with Northumbria students. The project sends students and staff to Zambia’s capital city, Lusaka, to deliver sports coaching programmes to children in deprived areas, as well as educating them about issues such as HIV and AIDS through sport.

Ruth added: “The ASBA is just starting out but I envision similar projects to the ones in Zambia. We have seen how sports can be used as an educational and development tool.

“I see my role as a two-way process. Sharing my skills and experience but also learning from people with different cultural backgrounds so that, working together, we can achieve ASBA’s ambitious objectives.”

Ruth will also co-chair ASBA Women Network (WN). Its role is to assist ASBA in encouraging African women to pursue sport business education and get into sport business careers, including launching their own sport businesses.

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