FALL 2013 An African Movie and Dialogue
No More Selections! We Want Elections!

Monday, September 16
3:20-4:40pm
Livingston Hall, Livingston Student Center

Join us for this unique opportunity to see the historic 2005 Liberian elections documentary and to have a discussion with the filmmakers, James Emmanuel Roberts and Sengbe Kona Khasu! In 2005, the Liberian people took to the polls to vote for a president. It would be the nation’s first democratic elections since the bloody coup of 1980 followed by apocalyptic years of war. For most Liberians, it would also be the first time in their lives to have and exercise the civil right to vote. Almost six years in post-production, NO MORE SELECTIONS! WE WANT ELECTIONS! (Lamplighter Films and Town Crier Filmworks co-production, 55 minutes, Liberia, in Liberian English with English subtitles) is an unfiltered account seen through the passionate, fearless eyes of the voters. The film takes us through the first round of voting into the run-off, when misunderstanding of the 50%+1 majority constitutional rule almost torpedoed the elections. We experience the presidential debates, the fanfare and jubilation of party parades, the verbose speeches, and charges and countercharges politicians often leveled against each other. Emphasizing the voices of Liberia’s largely unheard majority, the film chronicles this amazing story, capturing the hopes of a people struggling to rise and rebuild from a difficult past.
Letter from the Director, Ousseina Alidou

Greetings!

The academic year 2013-2014 is offering CAS much to celebrate. On the Faculty side, we begin with Dr. Julie Livingston (History) who has received two prestigious awards: the Wellcome Medal for Anthropology as Applied to Medical Problems, by the Royal Anthropological Institute, and the MacArthur Genius Fellowship Award. Dr. Dorothy Hodgson (Anthropology) was awarded a Residential Fellowship (June 2013) at the Rockefeller Bellagio Center and a Faculty Fellowship (2013-2014) from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support her writing of her new book, Gender, Law and the Problem of Culture: Maasai Struggles for Gender Justice. Additionally her recent book, Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World (Indiana University Press, April 2011), was awarded Honorable Mention for the Senior Book Prize of the American Ethnological Society. Dr. Susan Martin-Márquez (Cinema Studies; Spanish and Portuguese; and Comparative Literature) was awarded the National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for academic year 2013-2014 to work on her book project, Radical Filmmakers at the TransAtlantic Crossroads: New Cinemas and Networks of Exchange in the Long 1960s. Dr. Richard Schroeder’s (Geography) book, Africa After Apartheid: South Africa, Race and Nation in Tanzania (Indiana University Press, September 2012) won the Association of American Geographers Meridian Book Award for outstanding scholarly work in geography. Dr. Angelique Haugerud (Anthropology) and her new book, No Billionaire Left Behind: Satirical Activism in America (Stanford University Press, April 2013), are featured in the latest issue of Rutgers Focus magazine.

Congratulations to Rick Schroeder, Julie Livingston, and David Hughes (Anthropology) for their promotion to Full Professor and to Samah Selim (African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures) and Genese Sodikoff (Sociology and Anthropology) for their promotions to Associate Professor.


The CAS Community is proud of the outstanding accomplishments of our graduate affiliates. We congratulate Dr. Lincoln Addison (Anthropology) for his successful April 4, 2013 defense of his dissertation titled, Delegated Despotism: Labor, Sex and Spirituality in a South African Border Farm and Dr. Omotayo Jolaosho (Anthropology) for her successful April 25, 2013 defense of her dissertation titled, ‘You Can’t Go to War without a Song': Performance and Community Mobilization in Post-Apartheid South Africa. We also congratulate both Dr. Addison for his post-doctoral fellowship at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada and Dr. Jolaosho for her post-doctoral Humanities fellowship at the University of California, Merced.

Congratulations to Siad Darwish (Anthropology), David Ferring (Geography), and Chikanele Okoye (Division of Global Affairs) for winning their 2013 CAS Graduate Enhancement Awards for their pre-dissertation doctoral research in Tunisia, Ghana, and Nigeria respectively. Congratulations to Ijeoma Unachuku (Public Health) and Jeanifer Uwaechie (Public Health) for winning CAS Undergraduate Awards for their great work in African Studies. Congratulations to Helen Olsen (Geography) for winning the African Studies Association Royal Morocco Travel
Award for her graduate work in Sierra Leone. The Centers for Global Advancement and International affairs, in conjunction with CAS, sponsored the 2013 African Studies Association Annual Conference Graduate Awards. We congratulate Helen Olsen, Chikanele Okoye, and Katie Orlemanski (Anthropology) on their terrific applications and awards.

The CAS contribution to the internationalization of Rutgers University is revealed by the number of international visiting scholars hosted by the center and our active engagement with Africa-based institutions. In the Summer 2013, CAS hosted two visiting faculty from the University of Kodougou, Burkina Faso namely Pr. Afsata Paré-Kaboré (Educational Psychologist) and Pr. Francois Sawadogo (Cognitive Scientist) who explored partnership opportunities with the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, the Program in Cognitive Science, and Cinema Studies. In the Spring 2013, CAS hosted Dr. Olivier Walther, an economic geographer from the Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies (CEPS) in Luxembourg. Dr. Walther taught a course on African geography in the Department of Geography at Rutgers University-New Brunswick and is currently a visiting Assistant Professor at the Division of Global Affairs, Rutgers-Newark.

Professor Abena P. A. Busia (Chair, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies) and I attended June 24-26, 2013 the second phase of the CAS Rutgers partnership with UNESCO BREDA on developing a curriculum titled, “Gender and Transformative Leadership Curriculum for African Universities and NGOs.” The partnership was initiated to support African universities which are implementing gender programs for higher education, communities, and national leaders. The report on what has been achieved and on what remains to be done is available on the UNESCO website. We recently attended as respondents the “UNESCO High Ministerial Conference on Culture, Creativity, and Youth Employment in Africa” at Cape Verde November 26-30, 2013.

This summer we are launching the Senegal International Service Learning Program, June 14-July 14, 2014. We are counting on the support of all faculty and students to publicize the program and assist in recruiting students! Many thanks to Kaay Fecc and to UNESCO BREDA for their crucial support in the development of this program.

Even though they have passed we continue to celebrate the monumental accomplishments that their lives brought to our world. We mourn the passing of African writers and artists whose works are foundational in African and Diaspora studies: on March 21, 2013 Chinua Achebe, the father of modern African literature, died at age 82. On September 21, 2013 Professor Koffi Awoonor, Ghanaian novelist and poet, died, a victim of the Al Shabab terrorist attack of the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya. We also mourn the loss of friends in our CAS community. On June 25, 2013 Melody Corry, program manager at the Rutgers School of Nursing’s François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) Center in Tanzania, and a treasured member of the team there, passed away. On July 19, 2013 we mourned with the Morgan Family the loss of Hebert L. Morgan known as Karim Abdul Rahman, a renowned saxophonist who used his music to advocate for social justice. May their souls rest in peace.

Our sincerest gratitude to faculty, students and to our Friends of Africa for their continued support of the work of CAS. We are deeply grateful to the many wonderful writers who have contributed to this issue.

Best wishes and peace to All!

Ousseina Alidou (CAS Director) and Renée Larrier (CAS Associate Director)
The African Studies Association

Abdi Ismail Samatar, the President of the African Studies Association, a Professor of Geography at the University of Minnesota, and research fellow at the University of Pretoria, delivered the 8th Annual African Studies Association Presidential Lecture at Rutgers on April 24, 2013. He has summarized his lecture below.

The Piracy of the Rich and the Poor in Somalia
By Abdi Ismail Samatar

Somali pirates have been a thorn in the side of the international community. It is now estimated that global piracy costs the world $7 billion a year. Frustrated by the failure to eliminate piracy in the strategic Somali waters the UN has enacted several resolutions empowering the international community to actively participate in securing this area. Despite the UN/NATO’s efforts piracy incidents have reached a new zenith in 2011.

The militarist UN/NATO’s strategy has been ineffective because it poorly understood the causes of piracy. Those concerned with piracy catalog the cultural and geographic conditions that facilitate piracy without knowing how those conditions were created and the motives of different pirates. An alternative understanding of piracy evaluates the evolution of the conditions, the actors involved, the motivation of various pirates, and how those circumstances are sustained. This approach provides better tools to dissect the reality of piracy in Somalia.

A world map showing the incidence of piracy demonstrates two facts: a) that the main piracy areas are in the Malacca Straits, the Bay of Bengal, the Somali coast, Nigeria, and Caribbean coast of Latin America; and b) that Somalia is the only country where piracy did not exist when it had a government. Therefore, I think the absence of the state is the critical factor that has enabled piracy to grow in Somali waters. A careful study of piracy off the Somali coast led me to identify four types of pirates in Somalia waters: political, resource, defensive, and ransom pirates. Each group has unique objectives and motivation.

Political pirates were the first to appear and were members of oppositional political movement against the Somali military dictatorship. The Somali National Movement (SNM) warned ships to avoid Somali ports and then hijacked two ships carrying supplies to Somalia in 1989/90. Their objective was to deny supplies to the regime rather than profit from piracy. Political piracy vanished with the regime’s collapse in 1990. Afterwards, foreign fishing fleets invaded Somali waters to exploit rich fishing resources while others used the unguarded coast as a waste dump. These are resource pirates since they pillage Somali marine wealth. Fishing communities watch as factory ships plundered their resources. Members of the former Somali coast guard challenged these predators and seized several fishing trawlers before fishermen joined the fray. These are defensive pirates whose aim is to stop the trespassers rather than collect booty. As the struggle between resource pirates and indigenous people unfolded Somali criminals seized the opportunity to hijack some of the 30,000 merchant ships plying Somali waters every year. These criminals masqueraded as local fisherman, but they are ransom pirates who are motivated by the desire for loot.

NATO and other navies in the region have treated all Somalis as criminals, while protecting resource pirates. Similarly, the UN has targeted Somalis without any distinction between criminals and defenders of local resources. From Somali perspective the uneven treatment of resource and ransom pirates smacks of injustice and is the reason why the international community failed to bring the population onboard in the struggle against ransom pirates. Somalis view the problem differently. First, they deem the major powers to have collaborated with corrupt politicians/
warlords who destroyed the state, and consider the absence of government to be the cause of piracy. Second, most Somalis feel that those concerned about piracy are disingenuous since they mischaracterize as pirates local resource defenders while protecting fish pirates. Consequently, Somalis are alienated and this is why they do not heed the world’s call.

An alternative to current anti-piracy strategy will involve two coordinated steps. First, since piracy was absent from the Somali coast when there was a functioning government; it will be wise if the international community collaborates with civic Somalis in rebuilding the state. Such an effort will create opportunities for Somalis in their country, protect their resource from predators, and destroy the safe havens of ransom pirates. Second, the UN can put an addendum to the existing resolutions and empower NATO and others to expel resource pirates from Somali waters. This should be accompanied by modest aid for local fisherman to reconstruct their trade while a trust-building campaign between Somalis and the international community is launched. We think this strategy will quickly eradicate ransom pirates’ refuge and motivate the local population to cooperate with the world community. Such a strategy will make Somali waters safe, reduce shipping insurance and the security costs, and build social capital between the population and the world community. The UN is at the rudder to steer this alternative route. Will it lead?

The African Studies Association staff, Professor Edward Ramsamy (Africana Studies), CAS Director Ousseina Alidou and students happily seize an opportunity to pose with Professor Abdi Samatar. Professor Samatar is pictured in the center, wearing a red shirt.
November 21st – 24th, 2013
Mobility, Migration and Flows

Marriott Baltimore Waterfront Hotel, 700 Aliceanna Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

This event is open to members of the ASA, and to all those with a scholarly interest in Africa.
For more information, please visit www.africanstudies.org
Years ago I stayed up late one night to watch a televised interview of Toni Morrison. Asked if she would ever stop “writing about race” and “enter the mainstream” by introducing white characters into her fiction, Morrison demurred. She observed that such questions are never posed to white writers, adding, “I have spent my entire writing life trying to make sure that the white gaze was not the dominant one in my books. And the people who helped me most to arrive at that kind of language were African writers, Chinua Achebe [and others]....”

I was enthralled. The first black female Nobel Laureate—whose mesmerizing prose portraying the extraordinary lives of “ordinary” black people in America made me shake my head in wonder—proclaimed African writers, Chinua Achebe foremost among them, to be the founts from which she drew liberating inspiration. I heard echoes of sentiments expressed by Claude Ake, one of Achebe’s countrymen, who once remarked that, while Africa might be considered marginal in the global hierarchy of power, what is key is that Africans are not marginal to themselves.

Inspired by Morrison’s interview, I invited her to the Africa-America Institute’s (AAI) 16th Annual Awards dinner honoring Chinua Achebe, then a professor at Bard College. And because it was Achebe who was being celebrated, Morrison accepted! At the event, Professor Achebe displayed characteristic warmth, humor, and erudition, and Morrison’s eloquent introduction did him justice. It was a moving and memorable occasion.

Discovering his imprint on Morrison, deepened my appreciation of Achebe’s far-reaching influence, and the potential for cultivating an expansive sense of being African-American, while learning from the multifarious experiences of being African.

In addition to his brilliant novels, Chinua Achebe’s intellectual curiosity and astute powers of observation were evident to me from his enthusiasm for engaging the globally-dispersed African diaspora.

In his essay paying tribute to another among my favorite writers, “The Day I Finally Met James Baldwin,” Achebe asserts that: “The difference between Baldwin and some of his critics is that he was not scared of anybody or anything. He was not even scared of Africa.” To grasp the full import of this, you have to read Achebe’s entire essay.

The point here is that Chinua Achebe had the integrity, depth of insight, and imagination to participate in probing and candid discussions of the predicament of Africans and people of African descent within and outside the Continent. Mindful of the experiential and perceptual differences wrought by slavery’s legacy, he deliberately embraced, learned, and imparted lessons, from it all.

For modeling the capacity to be at ease with ones humanity, I feel I owe Chinua Achebe a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. I say this not because he is no longer with us in the flesh, but rather because his contribution endures, extending beyond me to my daughter and to generations unborn.

Mora McLean is a visiting scholar at CAS and President Emerita of the Africa-America Institute.
Probably like many in this room, I first encountered Achebe when I first read *Things Fall Apart* though I don’t remember when that "encounter" was; I feel like I’ve known it all my life. I do remember well when I first met Achebe in person. It was quite to my surprise at the very first exhibition of the now distinguished, then recently graduated from Yale, artist art historian and curator Richard Powell, at a gallery on Catherine Street in New York. I met him my first year in this country, when teaching at Yale. When he learned that I had landed a job at Rutgers, he encouraged me to attend his opening, it was October 1981. I remember at some point during the evening, returning to a print hanging at the entrance to the gallery. It is a piece that so struck me I now own it. It was one of the first works of contemporary art that I ever bought. I was standing beside Hazel Carby contemplating the piece (a complex piece of three figures at a kitchen table, one of them a self-portrait of the artist turned away from the other two people in the group) when a soft voice at my right shoulders said, “That is one of those pieces that makes you want to talk to the artist and ask them what was going on that made them capture that moment that way”, or words to that effect. I’m sure you all have had similar moments: you spend your life wanting to meet someone you admire and suddenly they show up, in my case there quietly at my shoulder was the great man himself, a guest of the late Melvin Dixon, walking like a regular person amongst us, admiring the works, and you’re completely tongue tied and stupid, at least I was. I felt all intelligent thought freeze.

Fortunately that first impression of me was not to be the last because we “met” next through poetry. Though I don’t recall how the conversation came about, Achebe was still at that time editing “Okike” and he invited me to submit my work for consideration, which I did. A long silence followed. Then In 1982, the BBC World Service ran a poetry competition for new poetry from Africa. At that time no one outside my family had yet seen my poems and fearful I sent them off to that completion. The award winning poems were published in the Heinemann African Writer Series as “Summer Fires: New Poetry from Africa” after the poem that actually won the competition, one of whose judges was the great Poet Jack Mapanje, and my little poems were included in that collection. Thus three years before I was ever published as a critic, or a year before I even formerly received my doctorate from Oxford, I appeared first in print to the world as a poet.

More important at this juncture is that *before* the announcement of the winners of that competition, Achebe had selected my poems for publication in *Okike*, something about which I am very proud. (It is only the vagaries of publishing in Africa that led to the volume of *Okike* in which my poems appeared coming out after the publication of *Summer Fires.*)
I speak here as one of Achebe’s literary daughters. He was a father to all of us. And like many in this room, I have my own memories: breaking bread with him at an African literature conference; Accompanying him to the Library at UCLA to see the egungun masquerade; walking down the street and having coffee after a lecture in New York; meeting his daughter Nwando for the first time; but my proudest moment was that day in 2008, when at the end of the 2-day conference, celebrating the publication of Things Fall Apart I had the opportunity to be the praise poet as he walked on stage for the interview which ended the conference. I have revisited here the poem I read on that occasion, changing the words a little for then we were celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Okonkwo, now we give thanks for the life of his creator. The Achebe image credits are: Southern World Art News for the portrait; Anchor Books for the Things Fall Apart book cover; and BBC News for the Achebe funeral procession picture.

A Poet Daughter’s Farewell: Still Morning Yet  (for Chinua Achebe in grateful memory)

You are was well known throughout the seven continents
And even beyond.
Your fame rests on solid personal achievements:
More than fifty years ago you brought honour us, your people,
By conjouring up the man who could throw Amalinze the Cat.
This much we have said, so much else followed:

Through you we realized
Balance is necessary, but difficult.
Your progeny all of us,
No longer at ease in any dispensations
Old or new, for the arrows of old gods
Full of hope, still meet impediments;
Like a man of the people and the girls at war, we all learned
What the trouble is with us.
And your lessons did not fail.

In the ageless cycle of the time of the anthills
You recorded new poems in an ancient language;
In the evening wisdom of encroaching savannahs
You crafted new language for old stories;
As the moon encircles the changing earth
Our stories must map uncharted territories
And though some died in your shadow, many of us thrived
Because you showed us a way:

And now in the measure of transcendence
And the time of all classics
Things have come together:
No longer in exile, it is morning yet
On your new creation day you have crossed the river home,
Where for you, always,
There was a country.

These words are an edited, corrected version of the words I spoke at the African Literature Association’s Memorial to Chinua Achebe on March 21 in Charleston, South Carolina. On that occasion I read the poem as originally written which can be found in my collection Traces of a Life, Ayebia Clarke Publishing: London, 2008.

Abena P.A. Busia, pictured above, is the Chair of the Women’s and Gender Studies Department. For her full bio please visit womens-studies.rutgers.edu/faculty/graduate-faculty/219.
Janet Adekola Honors Chinua Achebe and the Importance of His Work

Chinua Achebe is known as the Father of African literature. This title is one in which he deserves. He used his writing as a way to reclaim and redefine Africa, to change the image that mainstream and historical portrayals of Africa depicted. He believed that people should accept that colonization occurred and that Africans had to adapt to the changes that came along with it, however he also believed that they should be proud of their history, their culture, and use the effects colonization had on their people for their benefit. Although he was no longer living full-time in Nigeria, he was still writing works that integrated traditional language, culture, and the African experience into his work. His writing was a direct rebuttal against the history of Africa from the white man’s perspective which was limited, fabricated, and subjective. For this reason he is one of the great African writers from the past and present, and his work will continue as such moving into the future of African literature.

Many thanks to Ph.D. Candidate Bojana Coulibaly (Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures) for encouraging her students to write about Chinua Achebe. Janet Adekola is an undergraduate in the School of Nursing, majoring in Nursing and in African and African American Studies.

The Morgan Family Mourns the Loss of Herbert L. Morgan, Jr.

CAS extends sincerest condolences to Pamela Morgan, the Executive Director of Women in Media-Newark and a treasured member of our CAS community, and her family, for the loss of her husband Herbert L. Morgan, Jr.

The family shared this message at the funeral service:

On July 19, 2013, after a lengthy illness, Herbert Morgan, also known as Karim Abdul Rahman, returned to Almighty God Allah, surrounded by his family. Families celebrate men like Herb. He relished in his relationship with his wife, his children, and his grandchildren. He served his family by demonstrating the importance of believing in Almighty God and committing to a strong work ethic.

A saxophonist for over almost 70 years, Herb’s approach to life was as it was with his music. He read the music as laid out on the page but he also improvised and added riffs to make the songs of life more interesting. He played many genres of music over his career including jazz, blues, folk music, orchestral music, and R&B.

He believed in the importance of using his music not only to entertain but also to advocate for political and social justice. He defended those who he believed were wronged and valued honest truth above all. Those who knew Herb knew that he was the epitome of cool; however his calm belied a strong passion for right. While always brutally blunt and forthright, he always delivered his honest truth with a trademark catch phrase and a healthy dose of humor.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of over 40 years Pamela, son Talib (Ayanna), daughters Fatimah (Alfred), Zahrah (Quahim), Nafeesah (Keith), grandsons Alfred, Joseph, and Kai, granddaughters Naimah, Taliyah, Farrah, Soheila, sister-in-laws Arlene, Renee (Willie), and a host of other family and friends.
FXB Center Technical Assistance Projects in Cameroon and Tanzania
By Virginia Allread, FXB Center Global Program Director and
Mary Jo Hoyt, FXB Center Director of Education and Capacity Development

With an HIV prevalence estimated at 4.3% in the adult population and 6.6% among pregnant women tested during antenatal care (UNAIDS), Cameroon’s HIV epidemic isn’t the worst in Africa. But consider the HIV epidemiology in context: Cameroon has the ninth highest maternal mortality ratio in the world (782 deaths per 100,000 live births). The maternal mortality has actually increased since the late 1980s, possibly because more than 14% of maternal deaths were HIV-related. A Cameroon woman’s lifetime risk of dying during pregnancy, childbirth or shortly thereafter is one in 31. Access to HIV-related services and services that prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) remains limited. The most recent data indicate that PMTCT coverage is only 30% (UNAIDS, 2009). While family planning is recognized as one of the four pillars of a comprehensive approach to preventing HIV infection in infants and young children and in preventing maternal mortality, only 14.4% of married women (aged 15-49) in Cameroon were using contraception regularly.

As part of Cameroon’s effort to reduce (by 2015) by two thirds the mortality rate of children under five and by 75% the maternal mortality ratio as compared to current data, the Department of Family Health (DFH) approached the François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) Center, a Center of the School of Nursing within the Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences in Newark, to assist with developing a curriculum for training of healthcare providers. Staff at the FXB Center have been working closely with professionals at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon as well as Department of Family Health (DFH) in the Cameroon Ministry of Public Health to develop a curriculum that supports the integration of family planning, PMTCT, and emergency obstetric and neonatal care services into all primary care health facilities. The nearly-complete curriculum includes twenty one modules, the PMTCT and emergency obstetric and neonatal care modules were pilot tested in late July/August of this year. If all modules are taught, the classroom component of the training is two weeks long. The curriculum supports an integrated approach, in other words, healthcare providers offering care to any patient (for example a pregnant woman) will have the skills to screen that client for HIV, provide family planning advice and be able to provide the care needed to prevent or treat a wide range of life-threatening obstetric conditions. The DFH expects that an integrated approach will help people access the care they need and support the country to meet its health-related targets.

Tanzania has one of the highest rates of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. However, the rate of mother-to-child transmission has dropped from 29% in 2009 to 15% in 2012 (UNAIDS, 2013). In 2000, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in collaboration with UNICEF established the five initial PMTCT pilot sites. Since then, the Government of Tanzania has been scaling up the program for Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) mainly through
integration of a package of PMTCT services in routine Maternal and Child Health services. By December 2011, 96% of facilities had integrated PMTCT in routine ANC, delivery and post natal care services; about 64% of estimated HIV infected pregnant women and 56% of HIV-exposed infants received antiretrovirals for PMTCT and 19% of pregnant women with advanced HIV infection started lifelong antiretroviral treatment.

The FXB Center was awarded five-year funding from the CDC in 2002 and again in 2007 for provision of technical assistance to the PMTCT Unit of the MoHSW to support the ongoing scale-up and strengthening of PMTCT services across the country. FXB Center support is focused on the development of national guidelines, training materials, and healthcare worker job aids; building effective mechanisms for disseminating information and resources across regions; and on revising and refining program monitoring and evaluation. One recent outcome of the FXB Center collaboration with the MoHSW has been the development and launch of a national PMTCT website (pmtct.or.tz). The website serves as an easily accessible and centralized national resource center serving the MoHSW, implementing partners and healthcare workers in the field. The site offers an online repository of up-to-date information, news, literature, and resources as well as an online centralized mechanism for interactive communication. The MoHSW expects this important resource to serve a critical role in strengthening PMTCT services across the country to facilitating collaboration, coordination, and the sharing of critical information.

The FXB Center project in Tanzania was developed and implemented by Melody Corry, a treasured member of the FXB Center team who died on June 25, 2013. Melody deeply valued her role in working with the CDC and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in supporting PMTCT services in Tanzania. The FXB Center team is proud to carry on her work in this important effort. For more information about the FXB Center’s work in Africa, please contact Virginia Allread: allreavi@sn.rutgers.edu.

The Rutgers Faculty and Staff Bulletin circulated the following announcement to the Rutgers community:

Melody Corry, 42, passed away on June 25, 2013. Corry worked as a program manager at the Rutgers School of Nursing's François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) Center in Tanzania, and was a treasured member of the FXB center team who made important contributions to the work of the center in Newark and in Tanzania. Corry deeply valued her role in supporting the CDC and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in developing guidelines and training materials to support services aimed at the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Tanzania. She is survived by her husband, Stephan Schwander, her daughter Freia Schwander, and many members of her extended family in the United States, Uganda, and Germany. She will be greatly missed. Donations may be made in Corry's name to the following organizations: The Creative Education Foundation, Foundation of Zanzibar; www.cefzanzibar.com (cefzanzibar@gmail.com; baraka@zanlink.com) or Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair, 67 Church Street, Montclair, New Jersey 07042.
Dear CAS Community, The Visual History Archive, to which Rutgers has a subscription, now includes the Rwandan Tutsi Genocide collection. There are 58 video oral histories from Tutsi survivors and seven oral histories from rescuer and aid providers. I am happy to let you know that these testimonies have recently been supplemented with in-depth indexing, making them easier to search and view. If you haven’t seen them yet, please visit www.libraries.rutgers.edu/indexes/vha. Note: All users, Rutgers or non-Rutgers, must create a personal account with the VHA to watch the videos. Additionally, if you do not have a Rutgers NetID, you will have to view the testimonies on-site at any campus library. Please visit the African Studies Guide (libguides.rutgers.edu/Africa) for many resources on African History, Current Events, Arts, Literature and Cultures, and Social Science Disciplines. Best Wishes, Melissa

EVENT NEWS
Our Spring 2013 Conference Highlight!

“Writing Through the Visual/Virtual: Inscribing Language, Literature, and Culture in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean”

This March 7-9, 2013 conference at Rutgers University (New Brunswick) was designed to foster trans-disciplinary understanding of the complex interplay between language/literature/arts and the visual and virtual domains of expressive culture in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean. It explored the varied patterns of cultural, and especially writing, formations and practices arising from contemporary and historical forces that have impacted on the cultures and peoples of this trans-Atlantic region that includes countries such as Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Comoro Islands, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (DR), Dominica, Guadeloupe, Guiana, Haiti, Louisiana (USA), Mali, Martinique, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Seychelles. Special attention was paid to how scripts, though appearing to be merely decorative in function, are often used by artists and performers in the production of material and non-material culture to tell “stories” of great significance, co-mingling words and images in a way that leads to a creative synthesis that links the local and the global, the “classical” and the “popular” in new ways.

Speakers included faculty from the Université Abdou Moumouni in Niger, Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal, University of Cairo, University of Tanzania, Boston University, Georgia State, Seton Hall, St. Catherine, Lehman, Marymount Manhattan, and Mount Holyoke; graduate students from Yale, Maryland, Nebraska, Paris, and Tulane; independent scholars from France, Egypt, and New Jersey; dancers and a filmmaker from Senegal whose visit was facilitated by Gacirah Diagne and by the office of Congressman Rush Holt, and local performance artists originally from Guinea, but now living New York and New Brunswick. Rutgers professors from a broad range of departments and units participated (Africana Studies, AMESALL, Anthropology, Dance, French, History, Women’s and Gender Studies, the Graduate School of Education, Bloustein School, and the Zimmerli) serving as panelists as well as panel chairs. Rutgers undergraduates were also well represented: RU Wanawake organized and modeled in a fabulous fashion show that featured many stunning African textiles and fashion, while students enrolled in “African Folklore,” “African Short Story,” “Francophone Cultures,” “Women Writers of Africa,” and “Introduction to the Modern Middle East” were in attendance, as the conference was integrated into the course curriculum.
Some events—the fashion show and performances by Guinean artists Sanoussy Diallo and Fatou Dangoura--were targeted toward undergraduates in particular. The exchange worked two ways as dancers/choreographers Hardo Ka and Gnagna Gueye visited three dance classes accompanied by Chair Julia Ritter and Gnagna performed in “Women and Contemporary Issues/The Life of Sarah Baartman,” a Women’s and Gender Studies course taught by Chair Abena P. A. Busia. Shikaorsor and Rita Ademu-John of Awujoh Enterprises catered the delicious African food buffet at our opening reception at the Zimmerli Museum, while Senegalese musician Malang Jobarteh played the kora (a West African harp with 21 strings, and a large calabash gourd body) beautifully. Kim Pernice (photographer and staff member at the Rutgers Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs) displayed captivating photographs from Sri Lanka, South Sudan, and Zambia. Special thanks to Professor Jean-Baptiste Sourou for posting his wonderful conference pictures and blog: http://www.sourou-onsite.com/rutgers-west-africa-and-the-caribbean-in-the-snow.

The fabulous chairs and presenters included: (ruafrika.rutgers.edu/wvv/panelists.html)
Session 1 A: “Inscribing Popular Culture: From Recipes to Bandes Dessinées”
Chair Meredith Turshen (Rutgers University) and panelists Barbara M. Cooper (Rutgers University), Julie Huntington (Marymount Manhattan College), Edwige Sylvestre-Debeze (independent scholar), and Maha Gad El Hak (University of Cairo, Egypt)

Session 1B: “Transmuting Culture, (Trans)forming Identities: Literary, Graphic and Kinetic Dynamics in Francophone West Africa”
Chair Bojana Coulibaly (Rutgers University), Abdoulaye Elimane Kane (Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal), Oumar Diogoye Diouf (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Amany Shawky Mokhtar (freelance translator, Alexandria, Egypt), Jean-Baptiste Sourou (Saint Augustine University of Tanzania) and Bojana Coulibaly

Session 2A: “Intersections of Text and Image: Haiti and Morocco”
Chair Gabrielle Civil (St. Catherine University), Donna Gustafson (Rutgers University), Jean Herald Legagneur (Université Paris-est, France), Usha Rungoo (Yale University), Gabrielle Civil, and Vladimir Cybil Charlier

Session 2B: “Writing (On) the Body”
Chair Yveline Alexis (Rutgers University), Simone J. Alexander (Seton Hall University), Gladys M. Francis (Georgia State University), and Enock Aloo (Rutgers University)

Session 3A: “Xessal: Gender, Depigmentation, and Public Health”
Chair Petra Robinson (Rutgers University) and Senegalese filmmaker Khadiata Pouye presented her documentary on skin bleaching, “Cette couleur qui me dérange.”

Session 3B: “Words, Scripts, Language”
Chair Nadia Guessous (Rutgers University), Becky Schulties (Rutgers University), Meghan Tinsley (Boston University), Laurence Jay-Rayon (Ph.D. in Translation Studies), and Marshall L. Smith, III (Tulane University)

Session 4A: “Visual and Verbal Artistry: Text(ile)s as Epistemology”
Chair Bertrade Ngo-Ngijol Banoum (Lehman College-CUNY), Anne Patricia Rice (Lehman College-CUNY), Amanda Gilvin (Mount Holyoke College), Boureima Alpha Gado (University Abdou Moumouni, Niamey, Niger), and Bertrade Ngo-Ngijol Banoum

Session 4B: “Forming Caribbean Francophone Cultural Individualities and Identities”
Chair Valérie Orlando, Khady Diène, Nathan Dize, Phuong Hoang, and Annie Rehill (all from the University of Maryland)
“Writing Through the Visual/Virtual” Snapshots (captions are from left to right)

RU-Wanawake models
Khardiata Pouye and Ousseina Alidou
Malang Jobarteh
Ousseina Alidou and Hardo Ka

Khardiata Pouye, Rokhaya Fall Diawara, and Simone Alexander
Amanda Gilvin, Boureima Alpha Gado, Anne Patricia Rice, and Bertrade Ngo-Ngijol Banoum
Boureima Alpha Gado, Maha Gad El Hak, Gnagna Gueye, Hardo Ka, and Jean-Baptiste Sourou

Abena P.A. Busia and Renée Larrier
Boureima Alpha Gado, Khardiata Pouye, Jean-Baptiste Sourou, Gnagna Gueye, Hardo Ka, Alamin Mazrui, Salma Mazrui, Ousseina Alidou
Gnagna Gueye and Hardo Ka

Abena P.A. Busia, Donna Gustafson and Fakhri Haghani
Partial group pic
Hardo Ka
With vibrant colors, exquisite food and heavy discussion, the University’s Center for African Studies’ conference on written and visual arts expressed African culture in a new light. The center’s conference “Writing Through the Visual/Virtual: Inscribing Language, Literature, and Culture in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean” highlighted French-speaking countries in Africa and the Caribbean this past weekend to emphasize the importance of writing, literature and the arts, said Renée Larrier, Associate Director of the center.

“There are all different kinds of writing,” Larrier said. “Writing on the body — the body as a writing instrument … That’s what the dancers are going to talk about. There’s also a film about how skin bleaching erases race — again with the idea of writing.”

More than 40 professors and performers with passions for music, tradition, unity, and change travelled from as far away as Senegal and as close as Newark to attend the three-day event. Ousseina Alidou, the Director of the Center for African Studies, said showcasing the commonalities and differences between African and American aesthetics should produce growth and learning. She expressed thanks for the support of the office of Rep. Rush Holt, D-N.J.

“We bring all this culture to Rutgers to show that New Jersey is a diverse state,” she said. “Through different aspects of art, we can be broadened. This is cultural diplomacy at work.”

The conference began Thursday night at the Zimmerli Art Museum on the College Avenue campus — centering on culture, arts and fanfare. Malang Jobarteh, a Senegalese musician, commenced the reception by playing the kora, a harp-like instrument from Senegal. Shikaorsor Ademu-John catered the event with food from his company, Awujoh Enterprises.

“Allow Africa to your dinner table,” he said. “It is a [continent] so rich in many cultures and many languages, but we can unite through many of the foods that are common to us.”

The night ended with the conference’s keynote speaker Rokhaya Diawara presenting on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. She used a series of children’s books called Bouba and Zaza to examine the questions children ask about their environment and the answers they need to know.

The conference moved to the Rutgers University Inn and Conference Center on Douglass campus Friday where photographer Kim Pernice showcased pictures that captured people in Sri Lanka, South Sudan, and Zambia carrying out everyday, relatable tasks — such as holding babies or playing with family members.

The panels were left open to discussion, and Senegalese filmmaker Khardiata Pouye’s presentation on skin bleaching triggered debate. Her film, “Cette Couleur Qui Me Derange,” focuses on African women who bleach their skin. Pouye believes the practice is an attempt to erase their racial identities in order to become more Western.

Abena Busia, Chair, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, agreed with Pouye’s argument. “We have spaces where we sing and dance, and we manage to transmit our dances and managing our sense of style and fashion. So why can’t we change this aspect?”
RU Wanawake, a student organization that focuses on women of African descent, also held a fashion show at the Douglass Campus Center, displaying traditional and contemporary African clothing.

On Saturday, performance artist Fatou Dangoura staged a short solo play about a girl whose stepmother forces her not to attend school. Diallo Sanoussy Gallice Jr., Guinean poet, musical artist and activist performed a set of songs and poetry that portrayed the troubles of immigrants coming to America.

“‘They come to America with all these dreams, but guess what happens? Deception,’” Diallo said. “Parents send all their money aside to send their son to America with the expectation that in five years he will become very successful. The son — five, ten years later — is the same. No change.”

Contemporary dancer Hardo Ka Ado performed all three nights of the conference. Ka, originally from Senegal, worked under American dance legend Bill Jones. He said he uses his skills as a platform to show students that dance and literacy go hand in hand — dancers must effectively convey a message to an audience. His dances convey messages of life, death, and his love for his family and his country.

“Africa is not only trees. It is not only animals,” he said. “Africa is the people. I’m not Africa. I am a human being. I am me … I don’t want labels or genres. I am Ado.”

The conference ended in a showcase at the Loree Dance Theater on Douglass campus featuring Ado, Gallice, Jr. and Dangoura (Fatou Dangoura is pictured to the right), which earned a standing ovation from their audience.

Karima Meyake, a French student visiting the United States for spring break, said she enjoyed the conference’s display of diversity.

“There are universities here that teach about the African culture, but we don’t have that in France. ... We don’t have that much unity in France,” she said.

Irene Grace, a visitor from Pittsburgh, heard about the event from a friend involved in African dance. “The instruments used throughout this weekend are so beautiful. The food was exquisite, the abundance of different tastes,” she said. “Everything was popping.” Please also see page 10 of the April 2013 issue of Black Voice Carta Latina for more of Ijeoma’s conference coverage.

Ijeoma Unachukwu is pictured with CAS Director Ousseina Alidou, receiving a CAS award for her outstanding conference coverage in The Daily Targum and in Black Voice Carta Latina, and for her excellent transcription of Dance Department’s Jeff Friedman’s interview of Senegalese dancer Hardo Ka. Congratulations, Ijeoma! We thank you for your terrific work!
Hardo Ka, a professional dancer from Senegal, performed a captivating dance solo on March 8, 2013 in the Rutgers Douglass Campus Center’s Trays Hall for the CAS conference, “Writing Through the Visual/Virtual: Inscribing Language, Literature, and Culture in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean.” Professor Jeff Friedman of the Dance Department conducted the following interview after the solo for our audience. We thank Jeff and Hardo for sharing these thoughts!

JEFF FRIEDMAN: The first thing for me which is so important is that when dance appears at the university it is a new idea, relatively speaking. The idea that embodied knowledge is valued in the university, which has [been in existence] for over 1000 years in the western world; embodied knowledge really has [suffered from] a Descartian split between the mind and body. The idea that embodied knowledge would be here [at the university] is a new idea. So it’s important to acknowledge that, when somebody walks into the door and gives us [such a performance, the event] has a very big context, meaningful for me because it brings body into the room. This is first very important. Second for me, it is very compelling for Hardo to [begin by] staying by the doorway because for me it invokes the questions of a liminal space. Maybe many of you know this already but for those of you who aren’t familiar with the term: liminal space. [allow me to explain]. My background is actually in architecture rather than dance, so I like when the two things come together. The threshold [of a door] is liminal. Literally, you’re neither in nor out when you’re on the threshold, so it’s a very special space, this liminal space. The body in the university actually generates that [same condition], which is actually a very creative and generative space; also, to some degree, a rather dangerous space, because it is a space for transformation. In many African rites of passage, birth, puberty, marriage, death, and maybe some other [experiences] as well, there is a [ritualized] liminal space created for that dangerous transformation from one space to the next. Dance, music, and the visual arts are often a key component of how that transformation happens. So Hardo was standing by the door, and I was feeling this very strongly that we now had this liminal space in the room. That liminal space is figurative, in the sense, [it is] the University, now being in a dangerous moment when the body enters, and also literally, because the threshold of the doors are actually there [where] he was standing. This provides us with an opportunity to have an unusual experience: Hardo has created an opportunity for us to step into that space with him. That space gives us a chance to encounter the palpability of the body because the movement he is doing is allowing us to do it with him; that’s the skill of the dancer who provides us with that experience that we had tonight.

Part of what I felt was happening was first of all a very smart performance because he knew where the lights were [in the room] and went to them and used them in a very theatrical way. He also had the prop which he used in many different ways. In each location of the light we had a chance to see a new state of energy being evoked in different parts of the room and also the use of the prop in that moment as well. So, for me, there was a way the liminal space was being enlarged away from the actual threshold to make the whole room a threshold for us. I don’t know how you felt but people had to move a little bit [during the performance] and give Hardo room to move around. There was a little bit of danger in that situation: “Am I going to be able to give Hardo what he needs?” [Speaking to an audience member:] There was a moment when he almost came onto your chair. There’s a way in which, in those moments, each individual has to engage with the dangerous transformational quality of that liminal space. Once he [arrived under] every light in the room and then walked down the center, he had basically made the whole room that kind of space for us and we enter in that state of energy with him. That palpability [I mentioned before] is no longer generated only with Hardo but it becomes a conversation among all of us as
we see how other people respond and how we respond. That dialogue is a very important aspect of performance where the presence of the room is engaged fully. We’re not passive anymore. We have to be engaged in the experience and that Hardo was courageous enough to allow us to engage with you.

I also want to just talk briefly about stillness because, again, a very smart performer knows when it is time to be still and allow the energy to vibrate around him. He has created energy in the space. We are now a part of that energy and then there is a moment of stillness that allows us to feel and consider and reflect on that energy. I think that’s an important part of the transformational liminal space we were in, that we needed time to consider it and reflect on it and absorb it and, to some degree, become one part of it. The various stillnesses are also for me very strong.

The last thing I want to say is that there is a quality of contingency in the whole experience. By contingency, I’m talking about the fact that anything can happen at any point and that this performer allowed you to step into that space and become more present. To me, that is actually the transformation that I think was created in the room: that we have all become more present because we have [been given] the space to do that [through Hardo’s performance].

[To Hardo] We talked briefly beforehand about the dedication you make for the dance. Do you want to say a little bit about that?

HARDO: He asked me why I start. When I go to perform, I try to collect my ancestors. He asked me and [I told] him what I really try and connect. I connect with my children. I connect with the image of all my children and my wife before going on stage. I connect with them. I feel more power when I connect with my children and my wife. And my motivation is my family. My ancestors, I don’t know them. I know them, yes, but really I know my children. As me, my children. My wife is also me. My ancestors. My children, I know them. They ask me my motivation. I say this.

FRIEDMAN: Something for me that is very strong is this idea that, for Hardo, his future is in the form of his children. They’re very present and I think we talked about the present already [in my previous remarks], but the future is also invoked in your dedication of your dance to the future. Then I want to ask you about your teachers. Who are in the immediate paths?

HARDO: It is a whole long story, but I will try. I [was] only 15 years year old and then I tried to dance. I saw the dance of the town. Traditional dance, we don’t learn it; you have to see it. I always looked for something else and I tried to dance the Michael Jackson dance when I was young. I see TV, MTV, MC Hammer. I tried to dance these. At school, people want to see something they know. Michael Jackson is popular, but they don’t know his dance. So I show them and I was very popular in the small town that I lived. Schools always called me to come when they had school party or school celebrations and I come to perform Michael Jackson or MC Hammer.

After I read a book and they say there’s one big school of contemporary dance in Africa, in Senegal. I say “Ah! This happens?” And I wrote them saying, I want to come and learn what this new dance is. They tell me to come. When I went there, I met many choreographers. I met some choreographer: Susanne Linke from Germany and from France, Bena Monte. [Another choreographer] from the U.S. told me, “Ah, Hardo, you could be a good contemporary dancer”. I say, “Ah. Okay.” He said, “Now, you need to go to learn because you know that if you want to become a passionate dancer, you need to learn.”

After three months or so, I went to Dakar. Dakar is the capital, and it is a cosmopolitan town. All the ethnic dance is in Dakar. All the dances from U.S., from Belgium, from Paris. All of this you have in Dakar. I got to practice, [and] to learn and learn and learn. I have one choreographer from
France come to Dakar to make a piece. He came to take two dancers from Senegal, two from Nigeria and four dancers in Europe. He wanted to make a piece with four black people who never go outside Senegal or Africa and four black people who never come to Africa in Europe. When I auditioned, they took me. I went in 2000. I made six pieces with this choreographer. It was only supposed to be for one but I stayed with him for six works. I was lucky to go everywhere in the world to see what’s happening. I went everywhere. I came to the U.S. in 2008 and after I said, “Okay. I want now not to dance for people, but to dance for me because I feel something around the world and I want to make something.” It was very hard for me to do something because I’ve seen many very big, good things and many big choreographers. I say, “What can I do? I don’t have these same basics as they do in classical dancing.” I know how to dance well and I’ve seen many good choreographers and good dancers. I like dance and I just want to do something and I don’t want to do what I learned before. Traditional dance, I know it; I can do it.

I always want to do something else, not the same. If everybody puts on the same clothes, I don’t want the same clothes. In my family, when I was young, my father had many children in the house because the brother of my father gave him his children, the sister of my father gave her children. In the whole house, we have 15 children in the house and in those days my father went and bought blue clothes for everybody. Everyone put on his clothes, and here, I didn’t put on the clothes. I never wore the clothes. I would wait until all the clothes are dirty and then I use it. It’s just . . . I always want to be different. Not to do like everybody, but to do what I feel, to be free. This freedom, I have it in contemporary dance. In terms of choreography, I have room to be free. I want really to be free and this is why I try to do contemporary dance. For me, this is the space of freedom for the contemporary dance.

This solo, I made it in 2010 because I waited for such long time. I started going everywhere in Europe, since 2000. Only in 2010 I started doing something, but I don’t want to do what I see. I see everywhere. I always try and I say, “This is not mine, this I know.” After each, you have nothing, because everything, you look, you say this man did it like me, and it was crazy. Little by little, I get one minute, two minutes. And, you know, I have 20 minutes. When I use the cloth [prop], it’s just about my grandmother. My grandma lived with me. Me, I don’t live with my parents. When I had a little money with my wife, we went to a small village and we bought land, and we built a house. We took our grandmamma to us, not to my parents. We lived together for eight years. In 2008 she got sick and it’s only me taking care of her and paying everything, only me. I always feel she will die. And when I sleep I always dream my grandma . . . she’ll die. She was sick and, sometimes, I needed to carry her to go to the hospital and I always dream she was dead, but she was alive. For two years I always feel like she’s going to die; I feel it. I need to dance, because my dance happens to have my grandma, and when I dance, I feel something about my other family. My other family is my wife, my children. In 2010 I start this solo, won a big festival [prize] in Dakar, and my grandmother died in September. This solo for me talks about all this life and death and everything.

Sometimes in this solo, I take this cloth prop, and I look like a woman. I am the only man for my family. My parents, my father had four wives. All the wives had girl children, no boys. All girls. I was the only man in this house. I was brought up in a family were there was only women. Yes, for me, it’s why I want to say thanks for women because, for me, I feel [both] man and woman. I feel some parts are man, some parts are woman. I feel it inside me. When I dance I want to say this: ‘I am Hardo, but I am man and woman also.’ Most other times, men, they don’t want to show their femininity, they always want to say, ‘Yes. I am a man.’ For me, contemporary dance is a space for showing this. I say ‘Ah, yes. I am a human being. I am good and bad. I am a man and a woman. I am nice. I am handsome and I am ugly too.’ This, for me, this is life. And why do we want to show only one part, but not the other part? For me, this is a big mistake, and this is why sometimes, when I am dancing, I take [movements] like a woman. In one of the parts [of the solo], I look like a Muslim, because I am religious. I partake. I like all the religions and this traveling has allowed me
to experience and embrace the others. I am Muslim, I partake. Each day I pray five times and, when I do this, I make this prayer [motioning to head] on the floor. I can’t ignore that. It’s part of my life. It’s why I want this, not to do [exactly] like Muslim prayer, but to signify it. For me, this solo is a beginning for me. It’s a question for me. The question of what is man, what are women? What is life, what is death? We know we are going to die, so why are we alive? This is the question for me. Traveling and having experiences with many people, and seeing the diversity of people through those journeys, I have those encounters with the other. When you travel, you see what is a human being because you are strong. You are strong and you see people more strong than you. You are poor, you see people more poor than you. You are rich, and you see people more rich than you. I feel a need to [say:] trust yourself and trust what you are. Don’t look and say, “He’s very beautiful or a very good dancer.” Look and respect, but you are what you are. You don’t need to look. You respect, but you are what you are and that is why I want to experience this solo and try to go more to find what is inside of me, to find what is Hardo. When I come here, I don’t come here just to show I am an African dancer and I can dance African dance. You know this, you have seen since 100 years, you can see African dance, you can see everything. But Africa is not only African dance, only sun, only tree, only animals. Africa is the people. I’m not Africa. I am a human being. I am Hardo.

Dr. Jeff Friedman is Associate Professor of Dance Studies at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. His teaching and research interests include dance history, dance as a subject of cultural studies research and, in particular, using qualitative oral histories as a mode of documentation for dance research. Jeff will be presenting his research in Boston, Istanbul, Vienna, Salzburg and Israel next year while on sabbatical.


Hardo Ka is pictured dancing at the Rutgers Loree Dance Theater March 9, 2013.
As the Department of African Middle Eastern South Asian Languages and Literature develops, more and more exciting events and symposiums have come to light. This spring, the Center for African Studies has brought to us the conference “Writing Through the Visual/Virtual: Inscribing Language, Literature, and Culture in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean.” The conference showcased that francophone African countries, or African countries, for that matter, are not all alike. They are distinct with flavor and culture that is all their own. During the opening ceremonies, this was best shown in the diversity of francophone African countries.

The opening ceremonies began with the Director of the Center for African Studies, Professor Alidou. She began by thanking everyone who came out to the conference and everyone who helped to develop the conference in French. This brought an air of authenticity to the event, conveying the efforts of the conference and giving a welcome in the language of the subject of the night. To help in bringing this cultural aspect alive for the audience around me, I did my best to translate French into English so those who sat next to me understood the words of the delightful speaker, Professor Alidou. Though there were people that did not understand the language, it was best kept in French as it set the cultural tone of the night.

After Professor Alidou spoke, we all sat down to eat African food from various countries and cultures. This aspect gave us the opportunity not only to see francophone Africa through our eyes, but also to experience francophone Africa through our other senses. We could smell the delicious flavors of the food, taste the medley of sweet, spicy, and savory, as well as experience the variety of textures that comes from francophone African food. As we ate, we could see those around us, adorned in traditional francophone African clothing; bright and vibrant with color. We could also hear the sound of the West African harp, called a kora, played by the Senegalese musician Malang Jobarteh. The music was saturated with a diversity of complexly beautiful tones.

The last cultural display of francophone Africa at the opening ceremonies was the dancer from Senegal. Through dramatic movements and gestures, he brought us into the world of Senegalese dance. Each movement was bursting with meaning, as though the dancer was trying to tell us a story. Each movement was representative of a phrase and the series of movements told us a story. More dramatic movements were there to express the more exciting parts of the story whereas the more calm movements meant to show a more relaxing stage. We could also see, through his transition of wrapping the sheet around his body, the different modes and stages that the dancer performed. Each different style represented something different and gave a new meaning to the dance that was performed.

Through a wide range of sights, tastes, smells, and sounds we could experience francophone Africa at the opening ceremony. It was a delightful array of different cultures blended into one to make for an astonishing event. Francophone Africa had arrived at Rutgers University! The Center for African Studies truly did a fantastic job showcasing the best of French speaking African countries and made an event that everyone there clearly enjoyed.

The closing ceremonies of the “Writing Through the Visual/Virtual: Inscribing Language, Literature, and Culture in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean” were held at the Loree Dance Theater. It was a riveting end to a fantastic conference with performers from Guinea (a monologue by Fatou Dangoura and songs by Gallice Sanoussy, Jr.) and Senegal (dance by Hardo Ka). Each performer brought not only their acting, poetry, music, and dance, but a story to be told and heard through the arts. Their stories were not just of their countries and cultures, but the clash of
cultures. They talked about their people’s experience when coming to America in regards to employment, education, and general welfare. It was an eye opening experience to hear and see each performer express their sentiments. I have focused my review on Gallice’s artistry.

The first performer Sanoussy Gallice Jr. Diallo (visit him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GalliceJr224) is from Guinea and spoke about the political troubles of Guineans coming to the United States. He shared this experience through poetry and rap music quite colorfully with injections of explanation in between. His first song explained how many Guinean youth feel they have to leave their country for a better life. They see their government as corrupt and look elsewhere for opportunity. They often identify the United States as a land of golden opportunity and head there with ambitions to have a better life for themselves and their families.

However, he then showed us how this golden opportunity is not as easy as it seems and quite possibly nonexistent. Many Guinean youth do not receive their papers and must work under the table for money. Their rent is sky high and their lives become miserable, more miserable than under the corrupt government of their home country. Their dreams of becoming something and helping their families start to seem distant in this foreign country that they do not understand.

His next work expressed the struggle that Guinean youth face working so hard in under the table jobs and how this leads to the youth wondering why they ever left their country to go to America. They see a lot of corruption that might even be worse than in their home country and long to go back to their families. Even though they sacrifice so much, this new country, the United States, still does not recognize their hard work and gives these hard working immigrants papers to work towards citizenship. Their new government fails them and leaves them stranded in an awful reality that they will never live up to the dreams of their families.

Lastly, the Guinean artist ended on a note of the worst case scenario for the Guinean youth. Not only do they not live up to the dreams of their families and instead can barely survive, but they are shot, innocently, by the police. The youth come to America for a better life only to be killed. He concluded with a song on the hope for the future and expressed a desire to reform the immigration laws in the United States, to make getting papers for hardworking immigrants an easier process.

The artist really brought to life the political struggles of moving from Africa to the United States. It was this emotion and passion that tied together the whole of the conference in the closing ceremonies. The closing performers were brave and confident individuals who were willing to put their cultural backgrounds and their lives on a pedestal so that we, as outsiders, could understand and experience what being from francophone Africa meant to them. It was a truly riveting adventure to be there as these individuals shared their stories through art. Education is not only in books and classrooms, it is also found in the people around you. It is the community that holds us together and through our own and other communities sharing cultures across borders, we can learn so much from each other.

Kaitlin D’Agostino wrote about the conference in the course “African Short Stories” taught by Bojana Coulibaly in the Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures.
At the conference “Writing Through the Visual/Virtual: Inscribing Language, Literature, and Culture in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean” I had the pleasure of taking part in a panel discussion related to how texts and images are interrelated in Haitian and Moroccan art. We covered a variety of topics, thanks to engaging presentations by Donna Gustafson, Jean Herald Legagneur, Usha Rungoo, Gabrielle Civil, and Vladimir Cybil Charlier. Overall, I learned a tremendous amount, since I was not too familiar with Haitian or Moroccan arts and literatures until I attended this conference.

Donna Gustafson, the curator for the Zimmerli Museum, presented “Writing on the Visual: Lalla Essaydi’s ‘Les Femmes du Maroc’” from the works of Lalla Essaydi, a Moroccan-born artist. In these photographs, Essaydi presents women, in particular poses, with an intricate Arabic text written all over their bodies. Two things struck me when viewing these works. For one, to see text within an image itself implies a host of things. First, as the speaker pointed out, the Arabic text here is very hard to decipher. Even for people who speak and write in Arabic fluently, the text is purposefully difficult to read. As a result, there is a commentary on how the meaning of pictures translates imperfectly to us through language. In other words, images are inherently somewhat untranslatable, which allows for multiple meanings and interpretations that may differ from the authorial intent. Second, the fact that the texts were written on these women’s bodies presents the idea of how inscription is not limited to a pen on paper. Inscription on the body represents a veritable text, which, in a way, becomes a part of the person on whom words are inscribed. I may be straying outside Ms. Gustafson’s ideas, but I think the same untranslatability of images can be applied to the human condition. A sloppily written Arabic text on the body, just like the complex nature of the human condition, resists translation; these words represent “whispers of meanings just outside of our reach” as the speaker put it.

I will only briefly mention the discussion lead by Jean Herald Legagneur, since I did have some trouble understanding his interpretation, without understanding many of the references he was making to notable Haitian art. Essentially, he discussed Les Noces de Cana, by Wilson Bigaud, which depicts Jesus’s miracle of transforming water into wine. What I thought was fascinating about his presentation was how some colors in the piece are indicative of what he called “la quotidienneté haïtienne” which means Haitian everydayness. Haitian culture defines itself through color in a way that I do not see as much in other cultures. Certain bright shades of red, in particular, are found on the streets of Haiti, and Bigaud juxtaposes these colors with this religious scene; he mixes “les objets profanes et sacrés.” White, a more sacred color, is found in the center where the miracle takes place. This interplay between color, sacredness, and everydayness was fascinating.

Usha Rungoo focused on Dany Laferrière’s Comment faire l’amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer, with particular emphasis on Matisse’s Grand intérieur rouge, a famous painting which appears on the cover of the book. The painting is described at some points during the book, in addition to appearing on the cover, which results in a rich intertextuality between the two works. In this way, we can observe how images can come out of texts, and how texts can come out of images. An analysis of the image reveals how this particular painting makes statements that directly apply to the story and to the protagonist, Rangoo says, which acts as an excellent supplement to the description of the image in the text. Also, Rangoo stated that “la profondeur est trouvée dans le spectateur, pas dans l’auteur” which suggests that our translation of the image and our translation of the description of the image in the text are actually more important than what the author originally intended. By separating the author from his text, readers are invited to embrace the idea that despite an author choosing this painting for the cover and incorporating it in...
the text, there remains an untranslatability (just like what Gustafson suggested), which allows for multiple avenues of interpretation. Rangoo also said, “les livres viennent de moi, et je viens de mes livres” which reinforces the interaction and necessary rupture between an author and his text. The text may come from an author, and the author also simultaneously comes from the text through authorial intent; however, there is no established absolute ownership in either direction.

Finally, Gabrielle Civil and Vladimir Cybil Charlier both presented their collaborative work, *Tourist Art: Navigating the Visual/ Virtual in a Haitian Fine Arts Book*. In their presentation, they actually performed the work, through Ms. Civil's dancing, poetic speaking, and Ms. Charlier's musicality. This was wonderful to see! It truly brought the text to life and showed that texts can come from the body too; every performance of their book is a slightly different text, with deeper layers of meaning that complement their written work. In this way, Ms. Civil investigates what she calls new figures of the self, and how one can transform the virtual to the actual. The focus of their poetry and art was on the tourist art that comes out of Haiti and goes into Santa Dominica in the Dominican Republic. When Haitian art is sold in Santa Dominica, it is often a perverted form of art that tries to mimic Santa Dominican aesthetics, and in doing so, loses much of its Haitian-ness. Artists in Haiti mass produce these paintings, often leaving them without an author, and try to sell enough to support themselves and their families. Interestingly, this also affects the fine art market in Haiti. With few formal institutions for art in the country, the fine art market is taken underground, where it has less exposure than the tourist art. This directly contrasts big cities in America like New York City, which place fine art on a pedestal.

Overall, I was so happy with the way this conference turned out. As a French literature major, I was particularly excited to converse with Haitian speakers in their native language, and had a great conversation with some of the other attendees. Unfortunately, there wasn’t too much time for questions, and the one suggestion I would make would be to allow for 20-25 minutes of conversation among all of the panelists and the audience; the 15 minutes we did have flew by too quickly! The conference also brought in many concepts that we discussed during class, particularly intertextuality and alternate forms of writing. I strongly believe that inviting speakers from around the world broadens our understanding of language, art, and literature in a way that is impossible to replicate in the classroom. I am thankful for the invitation to attend!
While I expected my experience at the conference to be eye opening, I never realized how much I could learn through having fun and experiencing a culture with which I was unfamiliar. As I entered the downstairs area of the Zimmerli Museum for the opening reception and keynote address, I was immediately stimulated by the beautiful and unfamiliar sound of the kora. The traditional harp instrument used in West Africa has a very unique and alluring resonation that really set the mood for the beginning of the conference. I felt myself immersed in a sound quite unlike any other that I had heard before, and it was only the start of my enlightening journey.

Following the announcements for the commencement of the ceremony, we were encouraged to try a wide assortment of traditional African cuisine. Though I’m a bit of a picky eater and was wary of the dishes that I didn’t recognize, I resolved to at least try a small amount of each of the foods that I didn’t recognize. The food was absolutely delicious and I had to go back for seconds! Since I’m a vegetarian it can be difficult to find delicious vegetarian cuisine as many meals tend to be focused around a meat dish, but I was extremely satisfied with the diverse flavors of the vegetarian dishes. Mixing the sweet and tangy sauces with the rice made my meal both delicious and quite filling.

Once we had food in our stomachs the main event was set to start. Following all of the introductory remarks, Hardo Ka delighted the audience with a brief preview of the dance performance that he was set to present on Friday and Saturday. He performed a brief and very unique interpretive dance for us. It was very clear that his movements were thought out to the most minute detail, from the flexing of his back muscles to the moving of the tips of his fingers. The dance that he performed was very focused on the small details, and the rhythm of his performance was even more impressive due to the room being completely silent. This was only a preview of his forthcoming performances, a preview which left the audience wanting more.

Following this performance the keynote speaker, Rokhaya Fall Diawara, delivered her address. Her lecture focused on the field of early childhood development and education in Africa. Though I was aware that there were numerous issues pertaining to early childhood education in Africa, I did not understand the true depth of these issues until Ms. Diawara provided the statistics breaking down literacy rates and school attendance in the region. The fact that many children live in situations whereby they are denied access to primary school is most certainly a tragedy, but the numbers I was most shocked by were the literacy rates. Ms. Diawara stated that even after completing primary school, only around 60% of students are considered literate. This shows a huge issue in the structure and methods of educating children in these countries.

Ms. Diawara’s noble work seeks to combat these inconsistencies and she has been dedicated towards educating the youth of Africa through alternative methods. The key to a successful education is making knowledge easily understood and interesting to those who seek it. By making children want to seek an education and learn in their own fun way, they will develop stronger reading skills and an understanding of the power of knowledge. This is exactly what UNESCO’s and ADEA’s Bouba and Zaza program seeks to do. Bouba and Zaza are two characters used to making education fun for African youth, in many different formats including notebooks, textbooks, and a cartoon that all teach important subjects to children. Bouba and Zaza doesn’t only focus on the typical academic subjects that would concern most youth demographics around the world. Rather, the videos specifically target controversial topics that remain unaddressed in the school system. Topics include environmental protection, racism, unity, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. By focusing on topics such as these, children can learn more
practical knowledge, which is extremely important to the way they make decisions about their everyday life. By targeting this specific type of everyday knowledge that many parents and educators avoid addressing, the *Bouba and Zaza* program is extremely beneficial to children and their early development.

It was great to see the initiative for education in Africa that has been addressed by competent professionals such as Ms. Diawara. I am confident that with her help and the help of her colleagues, the African education crisis can be combated and the literacy rates and understanding of the importance of education can be increased.

During the closing performances of the conference, Fatou Dangoura acted in her one-woman play, *Mama, I dream I can attend School in America*. This play drew attention to the privilege of receiving a good education in Guinea. Her performance drew a sharp contrast between the attitudes towards education in western countries and in Africa. Whereas in the United States many children complain and make up any excuse possible to avoid going to school, since it is the norm, in Africa, some children have to fight tooth and nail to receive a good education. In her play, Fatou Dangoura plays two separate roles. Her first is a typical American high school student who makes up any excuse possible to avoid her responsibility of attending school. She treats it as many American students do, a task that one is forced to complete even though no one really wants to. Because of the circumstances and attitudes surrounding education in the United States, a public education is not only available to everyone, but forced on children whether they want it or not. As a result, American youth don’t see education as a privilege, but rather they attend class as a chore. As the play goes on, Fatou Dangoura switches roles to that of a student in Africa who desperately wants to attend school. However, her stepmother will not allow her to “waste her time” on an education because she relies on her to do the chores around the house. The play reaches its climax when her argument in favor of going to school is met by physical abuse by her stepmother as she cries out in anguish, “all I wanted was to go to school.” This play sheds light on the privilege of education, and how different cultures determine its value.

Following this performance, Hardo Ka performed a unique dance routine in the same style of the preview he gave the audience before the keynote speech. His movements were very well choreographed and it was definitely something I had never seen before. As he matched his movements to the beats of the drum, it was clear that Hardo Ka was paying attention to every twitch of his muscles, sometimes using large sweeping motions with his whole body, sometimes making very minute adjustments with only his upper or lower body. Seeing such a unique performance was very inspiring as it expanded my views on different genres of dance performance as a whole in addition to opening a window to a new culture that I was unfamiliar with before.

All in all I had a wonderful experience at the parts of the conference that I was able to attend. Experiencing cultures that one is unfamiliar with is always a great educational experience, and learning about the crises in Africa, and the selfless people that are combating them for the greater good, was nothing less than inspiring. The food was delicious, the speeches were fascinating, and the performances were extremely stimulating. I hope that the AMESALL department will continue in its support of events like these as I plan on attending many more. I am thankful for the opportunity I was given in attending this conference and learning so much.

Adam Schefflan graduated in May 2013 from the School of Arts and Sciences Honors program Magna Cum Laude with a double major in AMESALL and Linguistics and a minor in Chinese. He is currently working in the field of translation, as he is proficient in English, Hebrew, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish.
Rutgers Plays Role in Keeping Endangered African Languages Alive
Linguists work to preserve cultural heritage and uncover how brain processes language
By Carrie Stetler

This article originally appeared in the July 9, 2013 issue of Rutgers Today.

Every 14 days, a language dies, according to Rutgers linguist Akinbiyi Akinlabi. And soon, the Nigerian language of Defaka, now spoken by only 50 people, could be one of them. But if Akinlabi, a professor in the university’s Department of Linguistics in the School of Arts and Sciences (pictured to the right with Linguistics Professor Ken Safir; photo credit Kyle Sweet) has his way, Defaka, will at least be documented before it fades completely.

“If a language isn’t actively spoken outside the home, it disappears,” says Akinlabi, who is originally from Nigeria and is president of the World Congress of African Linguistics. He has been researching Defaka since 2007, although he isn’t a native speaker of the language.

Akinlabi is the organizer of the Rutgers-affiliated African Linguistics School, where some of the top linguists in the U.S. will volunteer this month to teach African linguists techniques that could help preserve some of Africa’s dying languages. The three-week program has been held since 2009, and this is the first year it is being organized and partially funded by Rutgers. The linguistics department raises some of the funds from donations, including grants from organizations like the Carnegie Foundation, which chipped in $17,000.

More than 2,300 languages are spoken in Africa, more than on any other continent, because over thousands of years Africans often migrated to villages that were isolated from each other, with few means of travel, says Akinlabi.

Today several obscure languages are endangered because they have been abandoned for those spoken by the majority of the regional population or for languages such as French and English, which afford Africans greater economic opportunities, says Akinlabi.

According to UNESCO, 96 percent of the world’s languages are spoken by only 4 percent of its population, and most don’t exist on the Internet. For that reason, Google is interested in the work of Rutgers linguists, says Ken Safir, head of the linguistics department.

The damage caused by losing a language can be measured in many ways, according to Safir and Akinlabi.

“Language is a big part of our sense of ourselves,” says Safir. “One reason to preserve language is the cultural knowledge it transmits. Whole cultures will be destroyed in ways that will never be reclaimed. It’s also an important part of understanding the local ecology. Information about plants and wildlife are lost when natives of the area no longer speak the language.”

But the linguists have a mission that transcends preserving cultural identity. They are trying to unlock the mystery of how the brain works.
“How much of language is innate?” asks Safir. “Most of us in the linguistics department believe there is a part of the brain that is in charge of learning language and every human has that device.” Research on obscure or endangered languages helps linguists better understand which aspects of language are universal and which are variable. “Each language tells us a little bit about what we know the brain is capable of producing,” adds Akinlabi, who also studies a subset of African languages called ljiod, which includes Defaka.

Although the need to research little-known African languages is great, there is a shortage of African linguists and up-to-date teaching and training methods for those who work in the field, says Akinlabi. Many endangered languages are spoken by fewer than 5,000 people and have fallen out of public circulation. They aren’t used in the marketplace, in the schools, or in radio broadcasts. Some have no alphabet, and for most, the rules that govern grammar and syntax have never been written down, says Akinlabi.

The greatest threat to a language is parents no longer speaking it with their children, often because it can’t help them get jobs or an education.

Many students at the African Linguistics School are native speakers of vanishing languages and play an important role in the effort to keep them alive, says Akinlabi. The linguist conducted his research with William Bennett, who received his doctorate at Rutgers and will be teaching at the linguistics school.

“We can hopefully preserve information that will allow the languages to be revitalized, or at least have them remembered,” says Akinlabi.

Mamadou Bassene, a Rutgers postdoctoral fellow from Senegal, is documenting his own tribal language, Joola Eegimaa, now spoken by an estimated 7,000 people. Bassene, who worked with Safir and Rutgers linguistics professor Mark Baker during his research on syntax, has spent many hours interviewing speakers of Joola Eegimaa to learn whether they can shed light on the unwritten, unarticulated nuances of the language that are learned instinctively.

“I used to spend hours on Skype talking to my uncles and cousins, asking, ‘What does it mean if I say it this way?’ and ‘If you say it this other way, will people understand you?’ ” says Bassene.

Sometimes his relatives were puzzled by all the questions.

“My aunt said, ‘Why do you have to do that? You speak the language,’ “ he says. “And I answered, ‘Because I have to do it as an observer, too. I have to figure out how to explain certain things.’ If the rules of this language can be written down, it’s more likely that it can be kept alive or at least taught for the sake of posterity.”

In the photo above Akinbiyi Akinlabi, who organizes the African linguistics school program in Nigeria, is pictured far right, with students Inoma Essien, far left, and Ebi Obikudo. Photo credit Akinbiyi Akinlabi
On Wednesday, March 13, 2013 the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) organized a panel discussion with women human rights defenders working to advance women’s rights in peace and development in Africa.

Journalist and women’s rights activist Jolly Kamuntu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Hon. Hannah Lona Bona Numaya Bakheit Koroo of South Sudan, and Ruth Ochieng, Director of ISIS-WICCE (pictured to the right), successfully mobilized women in Uganda to engender the peace process between the Ugandan government and the Lord’s Resistance Army. Ruth is also active in the African Partnership for Women’s Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women and Girls (AMANITARE) and the International Coordinating Committee of Women Human Rights Defenders. The panel was moderated by Radhika Balakrishnan, Executive Director of CWGL and professor in Women’s and Gender Studies.

Violence against women is in part about power and control, and is further complicated by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination related to class, race, and sexuality. The panelists highlighted the issue of violence against women as both a public health problem and a violation of women’s human rights.

Women human rights defenders (WHRDs) work to strengthen democracy in their countries. They support those who are not otherwise heard by government institutions and they work to ensure that authorities at all levels are held to account for human rights violations. WHRDs, simply because of who they are and the work they do, often challenge accepted socio-cultural norms, traditions, and stereotypes about what it means to be a woman; in other words, through their actions they question traditional notions of femininity, and by extension, the role and status of women in society.

WHRDs are targets of violence, both because of their gender and because of their activities in defense of human rights. They are often exposed to gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, and denied support, protection, and redress due in part, to discrimination. In fact impunity reigns.

As we have been witnessing recently, the use of violence to achieve political goals has profound gendered implications - from violence that target women prior to and during elections, to harassment, sexuality baiting, and virginity testing of female protesters and WHRDs.

Violence against women has multiplier effects in the economic and political spheres. In the context of armed conflicts, where militarization and violence are even more pervasive, and violent forms of masculinity are rewarded, women are commonly subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence in attempts to humiliate the enemy.

As women who are engaged in struggle to promote women’s rights and social justice in their countries, the panelists are both subject to violence and work to defend the human rights of others in the face of violence.

Savi Bisnath, Ph.D. is the Associate Director of the Center for Women’s Global Leadership.
RU-Wanawake, the organization of African women at Rutgers University, holds a university-wide “Honoring the African Woman” banquet every year. This year, the students surprised their advisor Cheryl Wilson (pictured left) with a special ceremony honoring her.

“I became acquainted with Ms. Wilson a few years ago when I first joined RU-Wanawake,” said Winnie Mororo ’13. “As President, I’ve become even closer with her as she has aided me with many organizational functions. Although she advises many multicultural organizations here at Rutgers, every time, she goes beyond her duties as just an advisor. She’s a sister, a mother, and a mentor.”

Mororo was then joined on stage by the leaders of other student organizations who also shared words of thanks and appreciation. Student representatives of organizations such as the Black Men’s Collective, Educational Opportunity Program Student Association, Haitian Association of Rutgers University, LLEGO, Minority Association of Pre-Health Students, and the West Indian Student Organization, all took turns paying tribute to Ms. Wilson for the work she’s done on behalf of the multicultural student organizations at Rutgers over the years.

“The students really pulled one over on me this time; I was totally caught off-guard,” Wilson said.

“But as I’ve said before, their academic success as students followed by their success in leadership when they graduate is thanks enough. That’s all I want for them.”

“I think I speak for everyone when I say that Cheryl’s work is appreciated both in respect to what she does for organizations and in how she contributes her positive energies to us,” said Ashley Otto ’13, President of the United Black Council, the umbrella governing body over all of the Black student organizations at Rutgers. “She has definitely been my go-to person as a student leader this year.”

“We are grateful to Cheryl for her work with our students and with CAS in general,” said RU-Wanawakes’s faculty/staff advisor and CAS Director, Dr. Oussenia Alidou. “We congratulate her for this GREAT honor!”

Wilson accepted the flowers and plaque with words of advice for all of the students in attendance:

“While you’re here, academics always come first – don’t support every event at the expense of your grades; because that’s the primary reason you’re here – to get the best education and the highest grade point average that you can,” she said.

Cheryl Wilson is Student Life’s Associate Director of Multicultural Student Involvement.
Anthropology Dissertation Successes: Addison and Jolaosho

Lincoln Addison successfully defended his dissertation entitled, *Labor, Sex and Spirituality on a South African Border Farm*. He has accepted a post-doctoral fellowship at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. He will be based in the International Development Studies department, and conducting research on the impacts of genetically modified crops in Uganda. Omotayo Jolaosho successfully defended her dissertation entitled, "You Can't Go to War Without Song:" *Performance and Community Mobilization in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. She has accepted a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in Digital Humanities and Public Humanities at the University of California, Merced's Center for the Humanities, where she will pursue research related to the center’s theme: "The World Upside Down: Topsy Turvy" (crha.ucmerced.edu/Merced_Humanities_Fellows). Tayo will write for our Spring 2014 issue, reflecting on her doctoral journey. Congratulations Dr. Addison and Dr. Jolaosho!

Reports from CAS 2013 Graduate Enhancement Awardees Darwish, Ferring, and Okoye

Anthropology Doctoral Candidate Siad Darwish Explores Water Rights in Tunisia

In the water riots that broke during my visit to Tunisia last summer a newspaper article appeared whose heading read: “Water for Phosphate, Not People.” Despite what everybody in the capital Tunis had told me, Tunisia had water problems, problems that manifested in shortages and subsequent riots in Gafsa, only 180 miles south of the capital. Gafsa is Tunisia’s phosphate mining region; phosphate is the country’s largest commodity and one of the most water intensive minerals to extract. The mines operated throughout the shortages, leaving miners in the paradoxical position to work with water all day, only to return to homes that were cut off from water supplies for weeks and that in the scorching heat of Tunisia’s summer.

Following these experiences, I am interested in the question of how material and symbolic struggles over water are implicated into local and global struggles over natural resources and how these tensions find representation in the political arena. You see water is subject to strife. Embedded in the threat of scarcity the idiom of the “water war” is constantly invoked by scholarly literature and the popular media. However as is clear from the anecdote above, water plays a central role in a much larger number of conflicts that do not attain this hyperbolic rhetoric. Conflicts over natural resources, the extraction, production and commodification of which pollutes and diverts water away from local populations towards market interests, have often strong but implicit water components. It is those that I am interested in.

Water was already central to social control and its contestation in Gafsa before the French established the phosphate mines in 1885. Maliki *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), dominant throughout Tunisia, is the only Islamic legal school that allows for the private ownership of water. Water as private property produced a highly stratified social organization and perpetuated patron-client relations in Gafsa at least until the 1980s. I am interested in the present insanitation of these Islamic water rights and how they in their coexistence with contemporary neoliberal water regimes mediate access to water for both commodities and people. By paying attention to water rights in the pre-colonial past and their possible contemporary existence, I hope to suggest ways for Tunisia’s water governance to overcome the binary of market interests and the commons. And through the excavation of the historical relationship between water and commodities and therefore water and capitalism, I hope to broaden the narrow concern with neoliberal water governance that presently dominates the literature and highlight the importance of water in many political movements across the globe.
At the end of a day spent interviewing community members in a rural Ghanaian village on the Black Volta river, the northern border with Côte d’Ivoire, my research collaborator and I reflected on the knowledge we gained and experiences we shared that day: learning about the cultural and economic history of the border crossings up and downriver, the fraught history of small-scale gold mining and recent developments in both prospecting and newly acquired concessions, the shifting politics of Gonjaland land tenure, the changes in local agricultural systems, and the specific expressions of concern we heard surrounding these and many other issues. Many such moments occurred during my time in Ghana this summer conducting pre-dissertation work in various settings and communities. With the support of a travel award from the Center for African Studies, I was able to make important progress in laying the groundwork for my dissertation.

Small-scale gold mining (SSM) has rapidly developed in Ghana in the past decade. The geography of this form of resource extraction has long been influenced by uneven political and economic power. The goal of my research broadly aims to untangle the relationships between political-economic processes, environmental practices, and socio-ecological change. The confluence of various actors and processes will be engaged to interrogate new surface and subterranean governance practices at various sites. I travelled to Ghana this summer with several goals in mind, including identifying potential study sites, evaluating research design, and strengthening ties within Ghanaian institutions and agencies.

However, more critically, the trip provided an opportunity to assess my overall research questions and proposed approach to investigating the politics of resource access and environmental change. In revisiting areas I have previously worked that are experiencing new shifts resulting from SSM (including the government expulsion of many thousands of foreign small-scale miners two weeks before my arrival), I could more clearly recognize emerging patterns in these processes. I was able to visit and conduct interviews in 14 new communities in the Central, Brong Ahafo, and Northern regions of Ghana that are experiencing a wide spectrum of transformations from a variety of SSM practices. Interviews conducted with representatives from government organizations and academics working at the national, regional, and local levels provide a critical framing of these issues and invaluable research contacts for future work. Finally, this trip provided an incredible opportunity to meet new people and reconnect with communities and individuals with whom I have worked, laughed, and shared, brush up on my limited motorcycle repair skills, win an eating contest, and work a day as a wedding photographer. It was a time filled with daily reminders of what can be accomplished by working collaboratively, striving for open communication and understanding. I look forward to returning to Ghana to continue this research next year (and the cooking class I’ve already arranged).
This summer the Center for African Studies at Rutgers-New Brunswick and the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers-Newark sponsored my attendance of the European Conference for African Studies (ECAS) in Lisbon, Portugal from June 27 to June 29, 2013. The theme of the conference was to explore African dynamics in a multipolar world. There were a number of panels at the conference; my panel was “promoting sustainable urbanization in Africa.” Most of the papers for this particular panel looked at the impact of urbanization on poverty in Africa with the aim of identifying problems related to rapid urbanization while also suggesting solutions that would help promote sustainable development and poverty reduction. Issues of urban poverty, discrimination, inequality and social policy in the areas of health, education, gender and so on were explored in the various papers. I presented a paper entitled, “Urbanization and Developing Sustainable Cities: Abuja as a case study.” The moderator and convener of the panel was Professor David Simon (pictured with me below), a distinguished professor of geography and expert on development and sustainability at the University of London. Other presenters were Wolfgang Scholz of TU Dortmund in Germany and Daniel Honig of Harvard University.

Professor Simon’s paper focused on the challenges that climate change has on the development of African urban centers, noting that while most of the information on the effects of climate change are more evident in the OECD countries, knowledge of how climate/environmental change affects African urban areas is rather negligible. His paper is thus centered around a workshop that took place earlier in the year to help develop protocols and resources to collect information on the effects of climate/environmental change on African urban areas with the aim of identifying challenges and developing sustainable solutions. Dr. Scholz looks at the impact of legislation on settlement patterns in South Africa and Tanzania noting that legislation or the lack thereof determines to a large extent the formation of informal urban settlements. He concludes that there are many problems that can be mitigated by sensible legislation, planning, and the political will to make appropriate implementation. Daniel Honig explored the scope of ethnic, religious, and class discrimination in Lagos, Nigeria by looking at price discrimination in the house rental market. He found that price discrimination was often based on empathy rather than profit and that the availability of strong legal institutions is a good way to censor price discrimination such that a sustainable pricing method is achieved.

My paper looked at the development of cities in Nigeria and the reasons for the building of the “new” capital Abuja. Nigeria is a country that is experiencing rapid urbanization and with that comes the expansion of informal urban settlements on the periphery of the cities. Many of these peri-urban areas lack adequate facilities and infrastructure, but are more affordable than the core
urban area, thus presenting the city with a disorganized sprawling pattern of growth. In addition to the sprawl government policy often intensifies the problems that the poor have with respect to transportation, housing, education, and health. By looking at China and Brazil who are also experiencing rapid urbanization, we can find solutions to some of the problems that have been encountered in Abuja. Some of the suggestions for developing a sustainable city are: designing an urban policy that the leadership of the city will stick to; encouraging participation from all sectors of society in designing such a policy; streamlining the cumbersome and bureaucratic land acquisition process; encouraging, through various incentives, investment of the private sector in housing for low income residents; setting up better avenues for financing the purchase of housing by low income earners; being more aware of ways in which sustainable urban development can be implemented; being more vigilant about ensuring accountability with respect to urban policy implementation; and being more willing to make use of local content when it comes to developing solutions to the problems of urban sprawl.

The whole conference was interesting and there were panels for every conceivable topic. There was a particularly interesting panel that had presentations regarding the importance and definition of the mother tongue, noting that the use of European languages such as French, English, Portuguese, and Spanish as the languages of government and education in most African countries has contributed to a loss of information and knowledge on the continent. Another panel explored the politics of whiteness in Africa; Professor Richard Schroeder of the Rutgers Geography Department in New Brunswick made a presentation on this panel. There were book launchings and movie screenings and vendors selling various items in addition to the books of some of the presenters at the conference. The conference had many European and Western based Africanists in attendance but many of the presenters based in and from African countries had difficulty obtaining travel visas to Portugal. This left a lot of the panels without input from those who are culturally almost completely African. Despite this shortcoming there were opportunities for learning about and doing research on Africa and Africans and their place in this multipolar world. It was a well-attended and diverse (in terms of subject matter) conference.

For me the conference was an enjoyable educational endeavor. I was able to network with others with similar interests and meet some of the leading Africanist researchers. While my dissertation research is not based on the study of sustainability per se, (I am looking at the career trajectory of, and economic survival strategies developed by, market women in Nigeria that make it possible for them to supplement household income and insure the wellbeing of their families) sustainable economic models are important to developing economies particularly those in Africa. Some of the contacts I made at the conference provided helpful suggestions for my research. I am very grateful to the Center for African Studies and the Division of Global Affairs for granting me this pleasant opportunity.

In the pictures on the preceding page the top photo is of CAS Director Ousseina Alidou and I, when I received my CAS award. The middle photo is of me, and in the bottom photo I am pictured with David Simon. The pictures of Abuja above, from left to right, are of: a central mosque, a cathedral, the business district, and squalor due to a lack of sanitation services in the peri-urban areas of Abuja.
Edna Adan Ismail’s Rutgers Talk on Her Work Improving Life in Somaliland

By Karie McGuire

On Tuesday April 2, 2013 Rutgers University had the honor of welcoming Dr. Edna Adan Ismail (pictured left) to talk on her efforts to improve the lives of the people in her home country of Somaliland. Edna has been featured in Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn’s *Half the Sky* book and documentary that was featured on PBS in 2012. Through the collaboration of the Africa Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Rutgers-Camden School of Social Work she was able to spend an evening on the Rutgers-Camden Campus. She traveled throughout the east coast speaking about her work and spreading awareness for her university and hospital.

Edna was the first Somali woman to study in Britain and Somalia’s first trained nurse-midwife. She has held many important positions such as Regional Nursing Advisor for the World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Technical Officer for Mother and Child Health, and the only woman minister in the Somaliland government until 2006. After her work with the WHO she returned to Somaliland to build a hospital from scratch. In 2002, the Edna Adan Maternity Hospital opened and is still running today. In addition to being a hospital it is also a university, which provides training for nurses, midwives, and other health workers.

Much of her discussion while at Rutgers was on her hospital and the impact it has had on the people of Somaliland. Even though the hospital is available for emergencies and urgent care, the main purpose is to train and provide maternal healthcare for the women in the region. Edna talked very much about the trained midwives who work throughout Somaliland once they complete their training at the hospital. These girls study at the hospital for two years and then are sent back to their villages to work as midwives. The difference in the maternal mortality rates throughout the country after the implementation of these midwives and the hospital has been tremendous and much of that credit can go to Edna.

Finally, in addition to her hospital she has been striving to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and improve the rights and knowledge of women. She was been working tirelessly to find new ways to change the minds of individuals who practice FGM in her country and elsewhere. For more information on the Edna Adan Maternity Hospital and ways you can help, visit www.ednahospital.org.

Karie McGuire is a graduate student in the School of Social Work. In the picture above from left to right are: Lee Cassanelli (Director, University of Pennsylvania’s Africa Center), Michelle Cwanger (SSW student), Edna Adan Ismail, Karie McGuire (SSW student), and Robert Mundy (SSW student).
My research focuses on climate extremes in the West African Sahel and more specifically, the exploration of the possibility of using a type of insurance known as index insurance as a means of adapting to said climate extremes. In addition to being one of the poorer parts of Africa, the Sahel has been marked by a natural history of large regional climate changes on multi-decadal time scales. For economies in which a large proportion of the population is engaged in rain-fed subsistence agriculture, these fluctuations have significant consequences for local livelihoods. In the 1970s to early 1990s, much of the West African Sahel experienced prolonged drought conditions and many associated hardships. Since the mid-1990s, there has been somewhat of a rebound in the regional rainfall, but this increase of rainfall coupled with some changes to the regional land cover and surface hydrology characteristics have led to increased incidents of riverine flooding – with several dramatic recent examples along the Niger and Senegal rivers.

I visited Niamey, Niger in 2010 (my first trip to Africa – shortly after a major drought and heat wave and shortly before the city experienced a major flooding event) and was fortunate enough to acquire hydrology data from several stations along the River Niger from the Niger Basin Authority. After completing my qualifying exams in late 2011, I began to delve more deeply into this hydrologic data in 2012. In 2012, I had the privilege of being invited to submit an article on my data analysis to the *African Geographical Review*. I have recently submitted the revisions to this manuscript and hopefully, it will be ready for publication soon. In this research, I have collaborated closely with tropical climate expert, Dr. Neil Ward.

Also in 2012, I had the pleasure of attending the 4th conference of the African Monsoon Multidisciplinary Analysis (AMMA) (pictured below), held in Toulouse, France in early July and presenting my research in a developing stage. This bilingual (English and French) conference was hosted by the French meteorological service Météo-France. It was a wonderful multicultural experience attended by around 300 people – probably close to 40% each from Africa and Europe and then smaller contingents from the Americas and elsewhere. The caliber of the scientific research was excellent and it's clear that the international community of African monsoon scholars is closely knit. The conference themes were: society, environment and climate interactions, predictability and prediction of the West African Monsoon and its impacts, and the West African Monsoon system.

At this point, I am shifting gears to the next phase of my research and will explore the performance of theoretical index insurance contracts designed to address both flooding risk for irrigated farmers and drought risk for dry-land subsistence farmers. In addition to using observed rainfall and agricultural, I may also start integrating some output projections from global climate models. Understanding how the frequency of extreme events changes in a changing climate is at the heart of adaptation research in Africa and beyond and is at the heart of assessing the viability of index insurance as an adaptation tool.  

*Asher Siebert is a Ph.D. Candidate in Geography.*
The 9th Annual Aresty Undergraduate Research Symposium: Africa Research Abstracts

Opening remarks at the annual symposium:

The Aresty Undergraduate Research Program has grown from 30 students in 2004 to 450 participants this year representing more than 60 departments, institutes, and centers across our campuses. One of our goals at the Aresty Research Center is to help students become more tightly integrated into the scholarly life of the research university – to show them the excitement of joining their professors in the creation of knowledge. Projects range in subject from English to Engineering, in scale from the nuclei of cells to the nuclei of galaxies, and in scope from the behavior of genes to the behavior of nations. These students have discovered during the past year that cutting-edge research is within their reach. The Symposium isn’t simply about showcasing student research; it’s also the most visible example here at Rutgers of the growing community of scholars engaged in all aspects of inquiry. The 450 student presenters have worked incredibly hard to reach this point, and we congratulate them on their accomplishments. But they have done so thanks to the equally hard work of the many faculty members from all schools at Rutgers and UMDNJ who have invested so much time and energy to mentor these students. We thank the family of Jerome and Lorraine Aresty and the Rutgers Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs for the support that makes all of this possible. With such broad commitment, undergraduate research will continue to thrive at RU.

Chuck Keeton (Associate Professor, Department of Physics & Astronomy; and Faculty Director, Aresty Research Center for Undergraduates)
Matt Evans (Director, Aresty Research Center for Undergraduates)
For more information on the Aresty Research Center visit aresty.rutgers.edu.

CAS celebrates these talented undergraduate scholars for their fabulous research of Africa, and the advisors who mentored them!

Banan Abdelrahman
Advisor: Toby Jones
Navigating State Lines: The Story of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Social Welfare System Under Hosni Mubarak
This research focuses on the Muslim Brotherhood’s social welfare system under Hosni Mubarak’s regime. It depicts how the Muslim Brotherhood, a political opposition group, was able to build its own social welfare apparatus to compensate for Egypt’s failure to invest in proper infrastructure building. However, the Muslim Brotherhood devised a system to navigate the hardships the State placed to hinder their work. This research focuses on the Muslim Brotherhood in the rural Gharbia District, and uses this district as a case study to reconstruct the social history of the members who were running various welfare projects. Through conducting fieldwork in Egypt, it becomes clear that the Muslim Brotherhood emphasized secrecy amongst its members when dealing with Amn Al Dawlah, (the Egyptian State Security). The Muslim Brotherhood’s methods not only enabled them to overcome the State’s barriers, but also made the Egyptian government dependent on the Muslim Brotherhood, thus making complete prosecution out of the question. The 2011 Egyptian Revolution brought with it changes to the power system, and saw the Brotherhood emerge as the new authority. Hence, this research ends with an in-depth analysis of how the revolution directly impacted the projects in Gharbia district, as well as focuses on the national projects that the Muslim Brotherhood plans to implement through their “Nahda (Renaissance)” development project.

Linda Anyaduba
Advisor: Abena P.A. Busia
Immigration and African Women’s Health: Women’s and Gender Studies
Upon immigrating to United States, African women’s birth rates drop while the infant mortality rate increases. The issue may arise from environmental factors, nutritional discrepancies, geological location, outside stress/media influence and social and cultural traditions. The African Women development Fund USA is working with immigrant women’s organization and the public to
understand the significance of nutrition and diet and to work towards eliminating infant mortality and morbidity. In African countries as well as the North America, investigating these factors can help African Women Development Fund USA answer questions such as: what is the relationship among African immigrant women between diet and nutrition and the survival and health of their babies? Does this increase the chances of mortality or does it provide some sort of advantage for the mother and her mental health? What has been done to decrease this problem? By researching these topics, and possibly interviewing victims of infant fatality along with creating events that educate the public about health issues, AWDF USA could hopefully further our missions while raising funds for the empowerment of African women and girls.

Jeremy Ballack  
Advisor: Abena P.A. Busia  
*Forged from the Love of Liberty*  
Professor Abena Busia’s unpublished article, “The Poetics of Diaspora Literacy,” tackles issues concerning knowledge access within developing countries and in-part, their literary management. In particular, verbal cues are edified by Busia’s writing on poet Audra Lorde and her performance of, “Call” and Jayne Cortez with her reading of, “For the Poets,” and so it is essential to examine the performance and gendered ideology behind these spoken word authorities. Using borders, both literal and figurative, to signify separation between literary ideals, Evie Shockley’s coined term, “renegade poetics,” is examined through sexed partitioning in literary theory. This forthcoming chapter, that will be part of Professor Busia’s latest project entitled, “Circumstantial Embodiment,” will lend itself to analyzing femininity, creed, and status whether in the third or first worlds.

Peter Chi  
Advisor: Andrew Baker  
*Constructing a Cosmic Vuvuzela*  
A new radio telescope, the MeerKAT array, is currently under construction in the remote Karoo of South Africa. With a total of 64 dishes, each one with a diameter of 13.5 meters, the MeerKAT array will be the world’s most powerful radio telescope when it is fully completed sometime in 2015-2016. The LADUMA (Looking At the Distant Universe Using the MeerKAT Array) project, jointly led by Professor Andrew Baker, aims to use the MeerKAT array’s unprecedented sensitivity to examine neutral hydrogen emission out to a redshift of z=1.5, with the aim of increasing our understanding of galaxy evolution and dynamics. As part of the preparations before the full array is completed, a model of the to-be observed, vuvuzela shaped volume is being constructed to simulate what we expect to see. The model is based on an evolving distribution of dark matter halos predicted by numerical simulations, which are then populated with galaxies from Rutgers Professor Rachel Somerville’s semi-analytic models (SAMs) from Somerville et al (2008, 2012). Properties relevant to the LADUMA project such as radio continuum and neutral hydrogen fluxes are then calculated for each galaxy. Additionally, hydroxyl megamasers, which can mimic the neutral hydrogen signal, are inserted semi-randomly throughout the sample according to observed relations to infrared-luminous galaxies. Constructing this data set helps provide an understanding both of what we expect to see with the MeerKAT array and of the magnitude of the problems we may encounter in analyzing the resulting data.

Alyssa Karis  
Advisor: Gail Ashley  
*Spatial and Temporal Variability of Stable Isotopes in an Upper Bed II Tufa, Olduval Gorge Tanzania*  
Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania is a part of the East Africa Rift System and has preserved 2 million years of paleontology and archaeology. An extensive tufa deposit (>1.5 km wide and 1 meter thick) was uncovered during paleoanthropological excavations in Upper Bed II. Tufas are interpreted as freshwater carbonate deposits associated with springs, wetlands and/or lakes;
Darren Ross
Advisor: Ayorkor Gaba

Substance Abuse in Kenya: Is There a Need for Women-Focused Treatment?
Currently there are no programs in Kenya which attend to the needs of female substance users and address the multiple gender, political, economic, community, and cultural issues at play in effectively addressing substance use and related risk factors in Kenyan women. This paper explores several published articles that detail the substance abuse situation in Kenya. The most common substance being consumed is alcohol, followed by tobacco, khat (miraa, a plant when chewed releases cathinone, an amphetamine-like), marijuana (bhang), cocaine, heroin, hashish, and ecstasy. Substance users who commonly abuse these items are at increased risk for several negative health and mental outcomes related to their use. Studies have shown substance use in Kenya to be causally related to unintended injury, suicide, interpersonal violence, and unplanned sexual intercourse, with the latter increasing the risk of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection, and HIV/AIDS. Female substance users are at increased risk for HIV infection, poor adherence to HIV treatment, risk of PTSD related to physical and sexual abuse, and concurrent psychiatric disorders. They also experience more stigma and discrimination related to their use. Community members often believe that female substance users are deviant and that women’s treatment is secondary to that of men. A total of 46 published articles were included in this literature analysis. While the issues of alcohol and drug abuse have been addressed in the literature and by Kenyan authorities, there is currently a paucity of research focusing specifically on the incidence, treatment, and differential challenges female substance users in Kenya face.

Khoa Tran
Advisor: Abena P.A. Busia

Essay Project on Art and Social History: Representing Dutch Heritage in Ghana
With the rise of post-colonialism and globalization, issues of race, nation, empire, politics, migration, and culture has been brought to the forefront of academic discourse and discussion. Professor Abena Busia’s research, which will be published by the African Collections at the
History Department of Amsterdam Rijksmuseum—the Dutch National Museum of Art and History, seeks to investigate the impact of a five hundred year colonial, diplomatic, commercial, and social relationship between Ghana and The Netherlands. Here this project seeks to understand contemporary Ghana through the legacy of the Dutch, examining both tangible historical narratives, such as Dutch-Elmina Cemetery and the Elmina Castle, while also exploring the intangible narratives where Dutch legacy is not explicitly and physically manifested. While colonial legacy may seem unnoticed in contemporary Ghana, the process of thinking through fragments of historical narratives produces a history that reveals the deep impact of Dutch relations. Understanding this relationship provides us with rich links to the global and interconnected colonial history.

Jeanifer Uwaechie
Advisor: Abena P.A. Busia

The Demographics of African Giving in the United States

This research was conducted to understand the demographics of Africans in the United States that are sending funds to their respective countries. The project was conducted under the supervision of the African Women’s Development Fund USA (AWDF USA). AWDF USA is a grant making organization, which seeks to highlight the impact that African nonprofits are having on communities across the continent. As an AWDF USA Intern, my work included research on the rates of remittance, female volunteerism, and African demographics in the United States. An aspect of this research focuses on how African women volunteer their time in helping others in Africa. We focus on the female population because this research is conducted through AWDF USA, which seeks to see the effect of female volunteerism in Africa. This research project was conducted using various primary and secondary sources such as John Anarfi’s research about the “Sustainable Return of West Africans.” Other sources such as the 2011 Homeland Security Immigration statistics data, and the “Civil Service in the Southern Development Community” research conducted by the University of Johannesburg were all used to answer various questions of this research. The population size of various African groups, such as Nigerians and Ghanians who reside in the United States, was used to understand the difference in remittance rates. This population data spanned from 1990-2010. This research will be used by AWDF USA to raise awareness about the collaboration of Africans in the Diaspora in improving the quality of life in Africa. Jeanifer Uwaechie is pictured above with CAS Director Oussein Alidou, receiving an undergraduate award that helped defray the cost of her participation in the 2013 Ghana International Service Learning program.

International Science and Education Testimonials:
Kate Cochran (Nigeria) and Devin Goldman (Kenya)

Kate Cochran Reflects on ISE Nigeria

The opportunity to travel to Nigeria for six weeks between July and August to develop my own research project was one that I will never forget. Both academically and anthropologically, I gained an invaluable set of knowledge that will last a lifetime. As an Environmental Policy, Institutions, and Behavior student within the Department of Human Ecology, the foundation of my studies relies on not only being aware of cultural differences, but also embracing them. Before my trip to Nigeria, I had never traveled very far or had an in-depth experience in a culture other than my own.

From my ISE experience, I was able to see first hand the rich yet diverse culture of Nigerians as well as the major obstacles the country faces in daily life. When I first arrived at my hostel in
Devin Goldman’s ISE Kenya Experience

The International Science and Education Outreach Program was brought to my attention at the Rutgers Cook Campus Undergraduate Research Mixer. I attended the mixer in my search for an opportunity to gain research experience. Dr. Albert Ayeni was present at the mixer to discuss summer internships through the ISE program. I hoped that by participating in the International Science and Education Outreach Program, I could observe how the applications of my field of interest, Environmental Science, would apply in a country with a different agricultural system. After attending the mixer I applied and was accepted into the ISE program for the summer of 2011.

Much of my time was centered at the Thika branch of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute. The Center works with the government of Kenya to coordinate research while also assisting small farmers with their needs. Ibadan, sure enough there was no electricity or running water working at the time. I quickly got used to the infamously inconsistent power supply and learned to fetch water from the pumps, which were thankfully just outside my hostel. My neighbors and peers were eager to teach me the ways of a typical life in Ibadan, including showering with buckets of water, shopping and haggling, and of course most importantly, cooking.

My research on the use of sub-irrigated container gardens (similar to EarthBox) using indigenous leafy vegetables allowed me to gain my first experience developing and implementing an agricultural project that can truly have practical implications for populations with limited resources, while also providing me with a sound knowledge of the current perceptions of Nigerians on their current agricultural successes and challenges.

I am thankful for the chance to bring this knowledge back and share it with my peers and colleagues. As a whole, my trip was an enlightening and eye-opening experience into both the world of agriculture and the daily lives of those in developing countries.

In the top picture Kate is with Department of Agronomy students after a workshop that she gave. In the pictures above she poses with her experimental container garden systems, she shares a view of the city of Ibadan, and she poses with Dr. Janice E. Olawoye.

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farmers. I, along with another Rutgers student stayed at the home of a KARI faculty member who lived in the Thika. Thika was one of the smaller towns in Kenya which was also home to a surprisingly diverse assortment of ethnic groups such as Indians and Asian Kenyans. A Hindu temple was located only one block away. We would travel to the institute by riding in a mutatu, a small van that is one of the major forms of public transportation in Kenya. Other branches of KARI focus on different areas of service such as soil quality testing. For example, I had the opportunity to gain hands on experience working to prepare banana tissue culture samples by first collecting the tissue of the banana plants in the field and then transporting the tissues to the lab for culturing. This was done to facilitate banana production and maximize yields of banana plants.

One of my favorite experiences was my visit to the Kenya Forestry Service which works with the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in order to protect Kenya’s natural forests. I had the opportunity to meet with a KSF official to learn about the activities that are undertaken to preserve and restore Kenya’s forests such as encouraging local communities to collect the seeds of indigenous trees and plant them. The KSF rewards the communities by offering new land with which they can practice agriculture and grow trees for logging.

During my leisure time I traveled to several of Kenya’s popular destinations such as the capital city, Nairobi, which is home to a variety of museums and craft markets. I visited the National Museum of Kenya where I experienced an in-depth look at the cultures of Kenya’s indigenous people throughout the course of its history. The museum was also home to a variety of archaeological artifacts such as the tools and skeletal fossils of homo sapiens and relative ancestors to modern day primate species and homo sapiens. The museum also included a zoological center with a variety of reptiles such as African snakes and crocodiles.

In addition, I traveled to several natural parks one of which was the Maasai Mara National Reserve located on the eastern side of Kenya, about a seven hour drive to the east. Because my internship was held during the rainy season, the annual wildebeest migration was taking place. The massive scale of the wildebeest herds was a sight to behold. I also had the opportunity to visit one of the Massai villages and learn about several of the Massai customs and traditions such as lion hunting.

Overall, my experience in Kenya was educational not only from a scientific perspective but also from a cultural perspective as well. My ISE internship gave me a hands-on learning experience regarding all of the major players in the agriculture industry such as the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, universities, private-sector, farmers, and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute.

The top picture is of Devin at a farmer’s banana plantation. The picture below it is of Devin, a Massai villager, and friend Casey at Massai Mara.
2013 Ghana International Service Learners: Jozsalina DelVal and Yaritza Waddell

Jozsalina DelVal’s Love for Ghana!

I have been blessed with an opportunity of a lifetime. Words cannot explain how much this experience has changed my outlook on so many things. This by far was the best summer of my life. Ghana is a beautiful country that amazed me in so many ways! By participating in this specific international service learning opportunity, I was really able to increase my global awareness and compare and contrast the different aspects of culture to that of the United States. Everyone we met was so welcoming and generous towards us especially the children. I never felt so much generosity in one place before. It kind of changed my view a little on how people in America sometimes keep to themselves and the environment we live in is mostly fast paced. Ghana is more laid back and relationship oriented which is something I loved. The whole time I was there, I was never really stressed at all. Going to Ghana makes me want to travel all over the world. When I experienced going to the Cape Coast Slave Castle, Kintampo Waterfalls, Akosombo Dam, the Mole National Park (safari) and other weekend trip destinations I so enjoyed seeing and learning about these different parts of Ghana. I really loved seeing the nature there, it was so astonishingly beautiful. I would love to go back to Ghana. I am so grateful for the opportunity that I had to participate in this program. I can really go on and on about this experience but it would be endless with everything that I saw, learned, and felt there. Honestly, it was one of the greatest highlights in my 22 years of life.

Pictures from top to bottom:
Jozsalina DelVal, Yaritza Waddell, Delilah White-Harcum, and Deven Williams at Kasoa;
Director Abena P.A. Busia, Mr. Knee, Jozsalina DelVal, Yaritza Waddell, Delilah White-Harcum, Deven Williams, Jeanifer Uwaechie, Emilia Depalo, Kate Pemberton, and Keyna Scott, Yamiesha Bell, Gabriela Guzman, Asjia Waters, Fallamusu Bangura, and Enyonam Amexo at Kintampo Waterfalls;
Director Abena P.A. Busia, Jozsalina DelVal, Yaritza Waddell, Delilah White-Harcum, Deven Williams, Jeanifer Uwaechie, Emilia Depalo, Kate Pemberton, Yamiesha Bell, Gabriela Guzman, Asjia Waters, Fallamusu Bangura, Enyonam Amexo, Katrina Cervantes, Hanna Hamdi, and Claudia Black at Elmina Township; and
Delilah White-Harcum poses with Ghanaian children.
Yaritza Waddell's Life Changing Ghanaian Adventure

Is it possible to be homesick of a place that is not necessarily your home? Well, that’s the case with Ghana and I. I still find myself listening to Ghanaian music as I walk to and from places. I knew after the first week there that it was going to be a life changing and surreal experience. I didn’t expect to not want to leave. I didn’t expect to feel as if I had found the missing part of me; I had found another home. As a young woman of Dominican and African-American parents, I came to Ghana hoping I could find any connection to my ancestors. The joy that I felt on a daily basis in this beautiful country was unexplainable. I felt like I belonged there.

I feel like Ghana always had a spot reserved in my heart but I did not know it wasn’t filled until I went there. When my family called me I told them that I did not want to come back, and I could not ever really explain why. In the future I am definitely bringing back my father’s side of the family since I know they would appreciate it as much as I do.

Being an intern in Ghana was an incredible part of the experience. One of my co-workers, Enam, felt like she was a second mother to me and I am so grateful to have met her. She took care of us while we worked and that made Ghana feel like home. I had Ghanaian food every day for lunch and each time I found a similarity with my family’s cooking. I had the amazing opportunity to work with Beyond Aid and Haven International. I was helping organize an online store for Beyond Aid. The organization helps Ghanaian women become self-reliant by creating a variety of products out of bamboo. The products ranged from purses, lamps, fans, etc. I traveled throughout Ghana with Haven International to help educate communities about conditions like autism and cerebral palsy. Since I am a psychology major, it meant a lot for me to be able to work with psychologists. Seeing their work has made me consider a career like theirs.

The friends that I have made on this trip are friends that I can see myself staying with throughout life. I have been back for about a month now and I still smile thinking about Ghana. Their music has become a part of my daily life. When I spoke about Ghana while I was there, people told me that it sounded like I had been there for a while and honestly maybe it was because a part of me always had. I can never fully explain how I felt being there, so I hope that I can, by writing this, strongly encourage others decide to experience it for themselves.

Pictures from top to bottom:
Gabriela Guzman helping with a demonstration of how custom Ghanaian dresses are made;
Yaritza ready for the going away party in a custom made Ghanaian dress;
Yaritza visiting a mosque; and
Yaritza working at her internship in Akosombo with Sandrah (the little girl) and speech pathologist Ade Otubanjo.
Introducing CAS Grant Writing Intern Mariel Quintana

Throughout my young adult life, my passion for learning has led me to enlightening expeditions and exciting experiences around the world. For my most recent adventure, I found myself in Cape Town, South Africa. During the spring 2013 semester I participated in a service learning program where I was able to learn about myself, South African culture, and the importance of immersing oneself into a community.

The majestic presence of Table Mountain followed me wherever I went. (The picture to the left is of the 12 Apostles Mountain Range in Cape Town, South Africa.) From the beach, to the forest, to the desert-like region, Table Mountain proudly displayed her beauty. Capetonians were never shy to boast about their mountain and how it was recently inaugurated as a wonder of the world. Of course, I climbed it and enjoyed every spectacular view. I did plenty of other classic South African ventures as well. I went on a fabulous wine tour; ate at Mzoli’s—a shebeen famous for its bountiful amount of meat; and paid a visit to multiple Townships in the region. Townships in South Africa are pretty different than those in the states. Oftentimes they represent poverty, segregation, and oppression in post-Apartheid South Africa. As a spectator, it’s easy to view Townships as hopeless neighborhoods with little chance for revitalization. As a service learning student, however, Townships become a place of figurative and literal beauty.

Cape Town’s population was just as unique as its geography. This was confirmed sometime between my service, my interactions with locals, and my homestay weekend. Half of my time was spent in the classroom and the other half was spent with an organization called Young in Prison. My courses revolved around the theme of community development and policy. For my service I facilitated leadership workshops with youth in-conflict with the law. For a weekend I stayed in Bo-Kaap – a historic district that was once limited to slaves of Afrikaner farmers. I learned about Bo-Kaap’s rich history of merging races, religions, foods, and music.

While I was busy adventuring throughout the semester, I learned about Ubuntu—a South African philosophy that emphasizes the importance of community togetherness. It isn’t just a word, it is a way of life that asserts, “I am, because we are.” Because of Ubuntu all of the beautiful people I met, the memories I made, and the lessons I learned are now a part of me. Please visit my blog at summmblr.tumblr.com to learn more about my stay in South Africa.

As a fall intern with the Center for African Studies, I will help with applying for the Association of Performing Arts Presenters grant. My double major in Planning & Public Policy and Women’s and Gender Studies and background in cultural event planning will serve as an aid to further the progress of the project while I help to provide the perspective of an undergraduate. After I graduate in May 2014, my professional plan is to work with a nonprofit that deals with advocacy for women’s rights on an international level.
RU-Wanawake is a rich combination of cultural infusion and female empowerment. A fairly new organization, founded in 2008, wanawake is the Swahili word for women. We are open to all races and genders who are interested. We are a motivated group of individuals who strive to improve the economic conditions of women and children in Africa and the surrounding diaspora through education, awareness, community service, and art. At weekly meetings (Tuesdays, 9-10pm, in the Livingston Student Center’s Room 202), we discuss a variety of topics such as politics, health, religion, family and any other issues effecting the African community, especially pertaining to women. Every fall, we host an annual "The Africa You Don't Know" which is meant to break down stereotypes and misconceptions of African culture and expose the Rutgers community to hidden aspects of African life. This past year we focused on music, art, and poetry which was a success. In the spring we hosted our annual "Honoring the African Woman" banquet where two of our very own Rutgers students, Jeanifer Uwaechie and Tochi Nworu, and staff member Cheryl Wilson, were honored. The main goal of the event was not only to commemorate those who are making a difference in their communities but also to inspire other young adults to be leaders and use their time and talents to help, serve, and have an impact on society. We have big ambitions for the upcoming school year. Our plans include fundraising for orphan children in Africa, young adult voting advocacy, domestic violence, and trafficking awareness. A major goal is to further establish and grow our organization by becoming more active in the community surrounding our university. We are making it our duty to keep the efforts of past and present strong African women leaders alive and try our best to follow in their footsteps. In the picture above Wanawake members model traditional African attire for at the CAS "Writing Through the Visual/Virtual" conference. Email ruwanawake@yahoo.com for more information.

TWENE, The Organization of African Students and Friends of Africa  By Nana Afrifah

Hello Everyone,
My name is Nana Afrifah and I am continuing as the President of TWENE. For all that do not know, twene means unity in the Kinyarwandan language and as the Organization of African Students and Friends of Africa we aim to inform Rutgers University and the community about African people, culture, and issues. I want to thank everyone who has supported TWENE last year. Our Annual African Pride Banquet was a great success last fall. Our Annual Fashion Show titled "Genesis" drew a crowd of over 300 people. We are very proud of our accomplishments thus far and want to make these events better than I would ever imagine. In the upcoming semester, we want to try and create new programs that engage the interest of students as well as help Africa. As a team we are very eager and excited to implement new and original programs. We hope that students take advantage of the opportunities that the Center of African Studies provides, which help our focus on the eradication of ignorance regarding the African Diaspora and Africans. For more information on TWENE, find our group on Facebook “TWENE” and follow us on Twitter at @RUTwese! To become a TWENE member, REMEMBER we meet every Wednesday at 8pm in the Paul Robeson Center on the Busch Campus. Hope to see you there.
Je suis arrivée à l'Université Rutgers le lundi 12 mai 2013 vers 15h, à l'hôtel University Inn and Conference Center. Dr. Ousseina Alidou était déjà passée s'enquérir de mes nouvelles. Après avoir pris possession de ma chambre, je l'ai appelé au téléphone et n'avais plus qu'à l'attendre. Pendant que j’attendais j’ai expliqué à mon neveu qui m’avais amenée les démarches faites: mise en contact par Hassana Alidou avec sa sœur jumelle Ousseina Alidou du Centre d'études africaines de l'Université Rutgers de New Jersey, procédure enclenchée par celle-ci pour nous faire entrer mon collègue Francois Sawadogo (également intéressé par ce voyage d'études) et moi-même dans le système de Rutgers.

Dr. Ousseina est arrivée et j’avais l’impression d’avoir en face de moi Hassana Alidou que je connaissais bien et que je tutoyais. D'où ma tendance tout de suite à tutoyer aussi celle qui était en face de moi en ce moment précis, que j’avais le sentiment de connaître déjà alors que je la voyais en fait pour la première fois.

Tour de l’Université Rutgers-New Brunswick, prise de contact avec quelques collègues, visite au Centre d'études africaines dirigé par Dr. Ousseina Alidou où j'ai rencontré Renée DeLancey. Ce premier tour m'a permis de constater que Rutgers est une grande université, étendue dans l’espace avec ses cinq campus (Cook/Douglass, College Avenue, Livingston, Piscataway, Busch) et des bus gratuits qui les relient les uns aux autres.

Mon repère durant tout mon séjour sera RUTGERS ou la lettre R en rouge, symbole de cette Université inscrite sur des bâtiments, enseignes, bus, indiquant l’appartenance à cette université.


Avec Ousseina et les autres collègues (Dr. Darren Clarke et Dr. Mary Curran, Dr. Renée Larrier, Bojana et Moustapha Coulibaly, Fakhri Haghani, Alisa Belzer, etc.), nous avons échangé à propos de coopération entre les Universités Rutgers et de Koudougou: échanges d’étudiants, d’enseignants, co-organisations de rencontres scientifiques, contribution à des numéros de revues, etc. Dans d’autres secteurs aussi comme la pharmacopée (ONG de Bojana et Moustapha Coulibaly).

Malgré la fin de session, les étudiants achevant leurs examens et la plupart des enseignants partis, des contacts ont donc pu être pris et j’ai même assisté à un cours de Dr Bojana consistant à une restitution dramatisée par les étudiants de leurs travaux de fin de session. Au-delà des échanges inter-universitaires, ce sont des relations sociales entre des personnes d’horizons divers qui se tissent! J’ai quitté Rutgers le 25 mai 2013, satisfaite du séjour, des rencontres, avec la conviction qu’il me fallait revenir, et pas que moi! Merci à Ousseina et sa famille, aux deux Renée, aux deux Bojana, à Fakhri et à tous les autres!
Firstly I would like to thank CAS for the opportunity and the honor of expressing myself in your journal. I will gladly share with your readers information about me and my university. I am a cognitive psychologist and the Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Humanities at the University of Koudougou in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Our university, the second largest in our country, with more than 9,000 students, has a diverse range of training and is a pole of excellence in education sciences.

The University of Koudougou has the following faculties: the Normal High School (ENS), for all teachers of secondary education training; Faculty of Economics; the Center of University Pedagogy with a doctorate in education sciences; and the Faculty of Humanities for which I am responsible, which includes Psychology, Geography, Modern Letter, History, Philosophy, and Library Studies.

The objective of my visit was for me to seize the opportunity that CAS offered me, and explore the possibility of collaboration and student exchange between the University of Koudougou and Rutgers, an important American university. As a psychologist with an interest in learning and education I was eager to familiarize myself with the work of Rutgers faculty in Education and in Psychology. The University of Koudougou has planned to offer a Master’s in Cinema to meet a need in the region. Indeed, Burkina Faso is home to the main festival of cinema in Africa, the Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), and is considered a leading country in promoting African cinema. So my visit to Rutgers would also allow me to benefit from the expertise of Rutgers in the finalization and implementation of the project.

My visit was very rich thanks to the quality of the trip planning carried out by the Center for African Studies. I thank very warmly Professor Ousseina Alidou and administratice Renée DeLancey for their hospitality and exceptional management of the visit.

I was so pleased to meet with: the School of Arts and Sciences Dean of Humanities Professor James Swenson; Graduate School of Education faculty Professors Mary Curran and Elisa Belzer; Spanish and Cinema Studies Professor Susan Martin-Marquez, and staff members Kim Pernice and Stephanie Perez at the Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs. These work sessions established promising contacts with professors and helped me to outline areas of collaboration between Rutgers University and the University of Koudougou. Dean James Swenson encouraged us to create direct links between professors from different departments at Rutgers University and at the University of Koudougou. The wide variety of training fields at Rutgers allows for many linkage possibilities at the University of Koudougou. This sets a strong groundwork for building an effective collaboration. My conversation with the Graduate School of Education faculty, Professors Mary Curran and Elisa Belzer, included an emphasis on the importance of helping to train teachers at the University of Koudougou by way of exchanges on teaching approaches. Collaborative work between teachers and students in the teaching responsibility would be ideal. It is particularly possible to establish a connection with the Master’s in Psychology of Learning and Education and to establish a training initiative for English teachers. With the help of Professor Susan Martin-Marquez we have improved our cinema project to create the Master’s in Cinema with a focus both on filmmaking and professional film criticism. Further exchanges of ideas for this project should be pursued with Dena Seidel, the Director of the Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking, and with NYU’s Manthia Diawara. The meeting at the Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs with Stephanie Perez and Kim Pernice was also very fruitful because it helped me to see how we can gradually strengthen exchanges between Rutgers and the University of Koudougou, using inter-university mobility, for example.
In summary I am very grateful for my access to resources at Rutgers, facilitated by CAS, as I was able to access important documentary resources at Rutgers. CAS Director Ousseina Alidou kindly provided a guided tour that helped identify the infrastructure and clarify how Rutgers University is organized. My visit was very rich and productive both for the researcher that I am, and for my administrative role on the faculty of Humanities at the University of Koudougou. I will close by commending CAS and everyone that I met at Rutgers on the quality of the reception and management of international visitors to Rutgers. I warmly thank everyone for their extreme kindness and generous availability!

Olivier Walther and Allen Howard Collaborate at Rutgers

When I contacted Rutgers Professor Allen Howard in February 2011 to learn more about his historical approach of West African trade networks, I had no idea that two years later I would be welcomed as a visiting scholar at the Center for African Studies during the 2013 spring term. My goal at the time was to understand how, over the last 30 years, two different bodies of literature had come to similar conclusions regarding West African trade. Building on an analysis of the Sierra Leone-Guinea region, U.S. historians such as Allen Howard (Rutgers) and colleagues had developed the “spatial factor” approach to African history writing. Over the same period of time, francophone geographers such as Denis Retailié and myself had developed a “mobile space” approach from the analysis of the Sahel region that focused on the way contemporary West African societies interacted with space.

The objective of my stay at Rutgers was to bring these two approaches together and develop a comprehensive analysis of West African economic patterns combining the spatial factor and mobile space approaches. Allen and I explored the emergence of this interdisciplinary field of research and identified areas of intersection between their two approaches: notably their emphasis on mobility and exchange. We discovered that, despite their different origins, both approaches saw traders as highly capable of developing flexible spatial patterns that aimed at minimizing their exposure to uncertainty. Both approaches also viewed exchange centers as both nodes of transregional or transnational trade networks and places in production territories. Focusing on a number of key exchange sites, they saw spatial economic “development” as resulting from the combination of trade and production activities and explored the potential competition between these two forces. We also examined certain important differences in the two approaches, especially the ways in which the “spatial factor” incorporates conflict, accumulation, and power into the analysis. We argued that bringing together the two schools of thought focuses analysis on the centrality of social actors rather than on the demographic size of places, and redefines the space of action targeted by policies by identifying relevant functional regions that potentially cut across national boundaries.

Our work at Rutgers was greatly facilitated by CAS Administrator Renée DeLancey and by CAS Director Ousseina Alidou, who both stood behind me through my first weeks and supported my initiatives throughout my stay. I also appreciated the support received by Richard Schroeder, who invited me to teach the “Geography of Africa” course at the Geography Department. The support received at Rutgers has convinced me to extend my stay in the U.S. for six additional months. Beginning in August 2013, I will head over to the Division of Global Affairs in Newark, where I will teach a graduate Africa course and continue my research on West African trade networks. 

Olivier Walther is a researcher with the Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies in Luxembourg. He holds a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Lausanne and a Master of Advanced Studies in Development Studies from the University of Geneva in Switzerland. He is pictured above with his daughter, Elia.
FRIENDS OF AFRICA

Jessica Akunna: from a Ghana ISL Pilot Participant to M.D.

We are so proud of Jessica Akunna! We met her in 2007, a Public Health undergraduate eager to participate in the inaugural launch of our Ghana International Service Learning Program (see her pictured there below, in front of kente cloth). Jessica has now become a medical doctor, and we wish her the very best in her personal and professional pursuits!

Jessica Akunna: from a Ghana ISL Pilot Participant to M.D.

Pioneering Scholar of Nigerian Art Gifts Major Collection to the Newark Museum
Selected works will be on view in The Art of Translation: The Simon Ottenberg Gift of Modern and Contemporary Nigerian Art, May 15 - November 3, 2013

The Newark Museum has announced a major gift of modern and contemporary African art from the collection of Dr. Simon Ottenberg, emeritus professor of anthropology at the University of Washington, Seattle, and a pioneering scholar of modern and contemporary Nigerian art. The gift of some 145 works of art, including paintings, sculpture and works on paper, more than doubles the Museum’s existing collection of modern and contemporary African art. The strength of the collection resides in pre- and post-independence period works by Nigerian artists, with additional works by artists from South Africa, Sierra Leone and Ghana. Selected works from the collection will make their debut at the Museum in the exhibition The Art of Translation: The Simon Ottenberg Gift of Modern and Contemporary Nigerian Art, May 15 through November 3, 2013.

Ottenberg developed his collection over the past 50 years, acquiring most of the works during research trips to Africa, and often directly from the artists themselves. His initial fieldwork in Nigeria during the 1950s and 1960s focused on traditional arts of the Afikpo Igbo culture. In the early 1990s, Ottenberg redirected his scholarship

Panel 4-Njikoka Series, 1982
Emmanuel Okechukwu Odita
Screenprint on paper, H: 35.0 in, W: 17.75 in
The Simon Ottenberg Collection, gift to the Newark Museum, 2012 2012.38.71
toward modern and contemporary Nigerian art, believing that the artists deserved to be better known. His research culminated in the 1997 exhibition, *The Poetics of Line: Seven Artists of the Nsukka Group*, at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution. This groundbreaking exhibition introduced artists such as the now celebrated El Anatsui to a wider American audience.

“We are thrilled to be the home for this important collection,” said Dr. Christa Clarke, the Museum’s Senior Curator, Arts of Africa. “With Dr. Ottenberg’s transformative gift, the Museum can present more comprehensively the creative contributions of Africa’s artists over the past century and in doing so, contribute to an expanded understanding of art movements across the globe.”

Speaking of the decision to gift his collection to the Museum, Ottenberg said, “I chose the Newark Museum since it is a first-rate institution of long standing, has an energetic and innovative curator of African art, and is a place where my modern and contemporary art works help strengthen an important section of the collection.” Ottenberg will be recognized for his major gift, as well as his lifelong contributions to scholarship on African art and culture, on May 11 when he will receive the Newark Museum’s Distinguished Collector Award at its annual Gala. Gala attendees will be able to see works from the Ottenberg gift in the exhibition *The Art of Translation* before it opens to the public.

*The Art of Translation* takes an historical overview of modern and contemporary Nigerian art, presenting 24 works spanning the 1940s to 2000 by artists including Akinola Lasekan, Uche Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Jacob Afolabi, Obiora Udechukwu, Ada Udechukwu, Chinwe Uwatse, Olu Oguibe, Chiaka Okeke-Agulu and Marcia Kure. The exhibition considers how these artists have drawn upon their nation’s cultural and aesthetic traditions, translating their meanings, forms and functions as they have navigated the country’s changing social and political landscape. *The Art of Translation* is curated by Perrin Lathrop, Curatorial Associate, Arts of Africa, and remains on view through November 3.

“Over the past decade, the Newark Museum has been committed to collecting and exhibiting contemporary art from Africa,” said Mary Sue Sweeney Price, the CEO and Director of the Newark Museum. “To receive this major gift from Dr. Ottenberg – a pioneering collection – is also a testament to the groundbreaking role of the Newark Museum in expanding public understanding of African art.”

This article originally appeared in www.artdaily.org. For more information on *The Art of Translation* visit the Newark Museum’s website: www.newarkmuseum.org/ArtOfTranslation.html.
Building Tomorrow  
By Emily Crawford

As a rising junior, I can attest to the fact that college students have a lot on their plates: our lives have become delicate balancing acts in which we must find time for classes, homework, jobs, extracurricular activities, and socialization. If you’re anything like me, you’re compelled to add saving the world to your checklist, too. I’ve always wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Not in a hold-the-door-for-a-stranger kind of way, or even a volunteer-once-a-week-at-a-soup-kitchen kind of way. These are great things to do, of course, but they don’t truly make a lasting difference. Enter Building Tomorrow, a global nonprofit I learned about while in high school, and an organization I am extremely passionate about.

Building Tomorrow envisions a world in which every child with a desire to learn has a safe, permanent place to do so. BT recognizes that quality education is the best solution to ensure that: millions of families climb out of poverty; children around the world receive adequate healthcare; HIV/AIDS becomes less prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa; and that women are seen as equals in the eyes of their male counterparts.

Building Tomorrow was founded after George Srour visited Uganda as a college student and saw a one-room school that needed repairs. Upon returning to campus, George encouraged his fellow students to raise the money needed to provide the kids in Uganda with a permanent, well-built structure, positively impacting the lives of over a hundred students and their families. Today, there are a dozen Building Tomorrow Academies in Uganda, and by the end of 2016, Building Tomorrow will fulfill its Clinton Global Initiative commitment of breaking ground on its 60th school.

What I love most about Building Tomorrow is that it’s a grassroots organization. The seven staff members in Uganda are all natives of the country, seeking to empower their fellow citizens. Rural communities in Uganda approach our team, asking for help building schools, and in return, they agree to donate land and over 20,000 hours of labor, meaning the construction of BT Academies is community-driven. Once the schools are open, the Ugandan government covers operating costs to ensure sustainability.

That in a nutshell is Building Tomorrow. But here’s the catch: BT needs your help if we want to continue building new schools. This may sound daunting, but did you know that if every undergrad at Rutgers gave just $1.90, your campus could fund the entire construction of a BT Academy? Just one dollar and ninety cents! Many BT Academies have been funded by universities across the U.S., and there are a number of ways you can help add Rutgers to that list. If you’re interested in learning more about how you can become involved in our work, be sure to visit www.buildingtomorrow.org/get-involved. Liz (liz@buildingtomorrow.org) helps college students coordinate BT events on campuses and would love to speak with you, as well! I hope you will join us in Building Tomorrow!

Emily Crawford is a BT Outreach Intern. The top picture is of the Lutisi school before the community teamed up with BT. The picture below it is of one of seven classrooms in the BT Academy of Lutisi.
Princeton in Africa – Service for a Year, Commitment for a Lifetime
By Derek J. Demeri

Started in 1999, Princeton in Africa (PiAf) is an independent nonprofit organization that sends recent college graduates to Africa for yearlong fellowships to work with a variety of organizations across the continent. Examples of partner organizations include: African Cashew Alliance, International Rescue Committee, Olam International, the United Nations World Food Programme, and many others. While originally reserved only for Princeton students, the program opened up to other university students several years ago. The program is highly selective – for the 2013-2014 fellowship year, PiAf received 466 applications from more than 125 colleges and universities. From this pool, 46 fellows were selected to work in as many as 15 African countries with 25 partner organizations.

Under the program, funding is provided to cover basic living expenses for housing, food, and other costs. PiAf provides a pre-departure orientation in Princeton, basic medical and evacuation insurance, a mid-year retreat, and personal and professional support throughout the year. Fellows are responsible for travel costs to and from orientation, travel costs to and from Africa, vaccinations, and other incidentals. A limited amount of financial aid is available from PiAf to assist eligible, selected Fellows with covering such expenses. Princeton in Africa depends on the continued generosity of corporations, foundations, and individuals to make these fellowship opportunities possible. Please visit www.princetoninafrica.org/support-piaf/ to see how you can help support Princeton in Africa.

Princeton in Africa’s mission is to develop young leaders committed to the advancement of Africa, and additionally supports this through an active alumni network worldwide. With the 2012-2013 Fellows in the process of returning from Africa, PiAf’s alumni network is soon to reach over 300 people, most of whom remain engaged in Africa professionally or personally. Alumni are constantly posting career opportunities for the network, which allows access to a unique listing of jobs not normally posted on career websites. Alumni regularly meet up with each other in Africa, here in the U.S., and elsewhere around the world.

For those who are interested in applying for the 2014-2015 fellow cycle, applications are expected to open by the end of August and to be due in mid-November. Interviews will take place in January, and decisions are made on a rolling basis from February through May. You can check out the Princeton in Africa website (www.princetoninafrica.org) to learn about the application process, application deadlines, partner organizations, and more. To join the applicant mailing list, email piafapp@princeton.edu with your name, university, and graduating year, to be invited to fill out the application later in the year. To join PiAf’s general mailing list, please email piaf@princeton.edu with your name and a request for the general mailing list.

Derek J. Demeri is a summer 2013 intern with Princeton in Africa. He is a rising Rutgers junior studying Global Politics, French, History & African studies. He is actively involved in human rights issues and a proud student associate with the Center for the Study of Genocide, Conflict Resolution & Human Rights (CGHR). Recent accomplishments include his publication of “New Jersey, HIV & the Law” in Righting Wrongs and forming CGHR’s sexual and gender minorities program. Next Spring, Derek hopes to study abroad in Ghana and participate in the Ghana International Service Learning program in the summer. He is pictured above in front of the United Nations.
Remodeling Early Mothers Initiative
By Rhoda Doku

Remodeling Early Mothers Initiative (www.remiafrica.org) was founded by a young single mother who comes from a society that stigmatizes young girls who become pregnant. I was inspired through the experiences I had as a single mother. It was clear that single mothers had no role models to turn to for counseling, empowerment, and help with integration into society. Despite many challenges I persevered and strived to go back to school. I got a job and was admitted to the African University College of Communication.

While in school, I was a source of strength to teen mothers in Ghana through a radio talk show I hosted called Our World Today. The talk show had counselors who were available to support teen mothers who wanted to abort their pregnancies or commit suicide. At my third year in school, I had the opportunity for an oral presentation during an African Health Summit at Ohio University in 2010. This was a platform to unearth REMI to the international community. I graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Communication and Development in 2011 and received a scholarship to pursue my master’s in African Studies at Ohio University in 2012. I have completed my first year.

Remodeling Early Mothers Initiative is a nonprofit organization, dedicated to the promotion of positive behavioral change through the provision of counseling services, education, and training opportunities for first time early mothers to guarantee quality lives for mother and child. We help raise the self-esteem of these girls while seeking social justice and developing their role in building sustainable and productive futures.

Our vision is to ensure societal values in every young mother by giving them the needed skills that will make them productive and financially independent. Our mission is to create a platform to help young mothers build up their confidence, give them equal opportunities, give them companionship, a listening ear, and provide unwavering encouragement dedicated to helping them become agents of change in our generation. Our philosophy is that by informing, inspiring, and engaging young mothers in issues that affect them, they will be inspired to get involved and take actions that will better their lives. REMI is currently sponsoring 10 less privileged children in school and will be introducing a micro finance project in July 2013 to help alleviate poverty by creating jobs for mothers who cannot go back to school.

Rhoda Doku is the CEO of Remodeling Early Mothers Initiative in Accra, Ghana. Visit her blog at remighana.blogspot.com. The top picture is of less privileged children in the Nungua community on Remi Scholarship with care takers in Ghana. The bottom left picture is of Doku with sowing apprentice teen moms in the prampram community in Accra. The bottom right picture is of Doku.
Preserving the Threatened Libraries of Timbuktu
By Tony Dowler

In 2012, an enormous cultural heritage came under threat when fundamentalist rebels took control of the city of Timbuktu in Northern Mali. A huge trove of ancient manuscripts held in private libraries and handed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years, were in danger of being destroyed. At great personal risk, a team of archivists, librarians, and couriers evacuated these irreplaceable manuscripts from Timbuktu, some by donkey, some by road, some by canoe. By their efforts the manuscripts were removed from immediate risk; however they are still in danger.

The physical conditions of the manuscripts, packed tightly in metal boxes, and the considerably more humid conditions in southern Mali mean terrible risk to these cultural artifacts. Already there are signs of mildew in the corpus. That is why T160K, an international initiative forged in the evacuation of these treasures, has launched Timbuktu Libraries in Exile (www.indiegogo.com/projects/timbuktu-libraries-in-exile), a public campaign to raise funds for the preservation effort. T160K was co-founded by Stephanie Diakité and Abdel Kader Haidara.

The corpus of Timbuktu dates back for generations, and contains an amazingly rich and varied selection of manuscripts (see picture above). The libraries include manuscripts from Andalusia and Southern Europe, Arabia, Egypt, the Arab trading ports on the Indian Ocean, and Morocco and other centers of medieval learning, as well as the region of Timbuktu itself. Timbuktu is a traditional crossroads of culture and has played a peacekeeper role in the region. The manuscripts chronicle this role. They represent an astounding diversity of topics and authors, including a significant number of women’s voices.

The current effort is focused on preserving these manuscripts with individual moisture traps and archival boxes. There are over 300,000 manuscripts in total, so this is an immense task. This effort is necessary to keep the manuscripts safe from deterioration and loss until they can safely be returned to Timbuktu. People and organizations interested in volunteering or partnering in the effort can find more information at the T160K website (t160k.org).

T160K is dedicated to the protection, preservation, and study of the ancient manuscripts of Timbuktu with the long-term vision of returning them to their home in Timbuktu and to apply the vast knowledge they contain to the peace process in Mali and in other places in Africa. Abdel Kader Haidara and Stephanie Diakité and their respective organizations will manage the funds to ensure that the preservation effort uses them as effectively as possible and to the highest possible standards.

Stephanie Diakité, JC-JD/MBA/PhD is a jurist and a poverty eradication institutional development specialist working in more than 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa through her firm, D intl (see dintlafrica.com) and a book artist and book and paper conservation specialist. Abdel Kader Haidara is the generational curator of one of the most important libraries of manuscripts in Timbuktu and founder of SAVAMA DCI (www.savamadci.net), an association of private Timbuktu libraries committed to public access. Tony Dowler is a writer and artist living in Seattle and is currently campaign manager for Timbuktu Libraries in Exile.
Janet Goldner (www.janetgoldner.com) is an artist, independent scholar, and consultant. She has been working in Mali for more than two decades. The original version of this article appeared in the online journal Cultural Anthropology on June 10, 2013 (production.culanth.org/fieldsights/330-malis-history-and-culture-the-keys-to-a-durable-solution). The author has edited the original article further for the Center for African Studies.

A long brewing crisis erupted in Mali in March 2012 exposing wide spread corruption and nepotism that had frustrated Malians for a long time. The crisis laid bare a shocking degree of blatant governmental abuse. Perhaps the most crucial neglect was in the contentious and collapsed education system. But corruption permeated all levels of society and went as far as governmental collaboration with drug traffickers and hostage takers.

The history of Mali dates back to ancient Djenné and the three empires, Wagadu (Ghana), Mali and Songhay that originated in and governed the territory that is today the Republic of Mali and more. These empires brought together many peoples and cultures. The enormous scope of the empires makes Mali a cultural source for West Africa. In Mali these traditions are carefully preserved and still transmitted from mouth to ear.

This history continues through the period of French colonialism including Malian resistance to the initial colonial penetration and the struggle for independence. The first president after independence was Modibo Keita. After him Mali suffered 23 years of dictatorship and the two highly corrupt elected governments whose moral authority the current crisis calls into question.

Yet Mali has a history of democracy that stems from the Mali Empire and the Manden charter, which is on the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The charter first codified social relations and organized the Mali Empire as a constitutional monarchy in 1235. For almost 800 years, Malians and their allies have considered themselves members of the same large family or nation. The articles of this constitution, which still govern social relations today, codify peaceful coexistence within this family across diverse communities, as well as the intermingling of cultures and intermarriage. This brought a history of ethnic harmony.

It is impossible to understand or solve the current crisis without taking the historical and cultural context into account. This vision is shared by most Malians with whom I am in contact. But ordinary Malians have not been consulted in the reactions and solutions to the crisis thus far.

Malian culture is still suffering from the cultural disruption and attempted erasure that resulted from colonialism. Colonialism forbade the practice and growth of culture and forced languages, rituals and symbols underground to survive. I am often astonished to witness the debates of Malian intellectuals, each knowing part of the history, actively examining, debating, working to put the disparate pieces together.

Some of these pieces exist in recognized UNESCO World Heritage sites in Djenné, Gao, Timbuktu, and Dogon. Other pieces are preserved by griots and other traditional negotiators and
mediators such as blacksmiths and hunters. The material culture is rich with artifacts that witnessed the past. While their meanings are obscure, some of the same intellectuals who debate the history also know how to read these objects for the history that they contain.

Culture is a living entity that must evolve and grow in order to remain viable. This continuing research into the past through the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and bringing this heritage into the present and the future is important for the continuity of Malian identity. Malian culture holds the keys to the resolution of this conflict and the future of Malian democracy. This is especially important to bear in mind at this trying time when solutions to the current crisis are being imposed by an international community that is unaware or not mindful of this rich cultural context and the interconnected histories of the peoples of the region.

Janet Goldner will give a talk on UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Mali at Rutgers on Wednesday, October 2, from 3:20-4:40 p.m. at the Zimmerli Museum’s Dodge Gallery. Special thanks to CAS Director Ousseina Alidou for scheduling this lecture during her Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures course, “Introduction to the Literatures of Africa” 01:013:211. Both photographs were taken by Janet Goldner. “The Niger River near Timbuktu” was taken in 2004. “Horses and Jockies Dressed by Kandioura Coulibaly, Segou” was taken in 2007.

Willingboro Public Library Celebrates African Immigrants to New Jersey  By Christine Hill

Willingboro Public Library has won a prestigious mini-grant of $3000 from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities to hold a year-long celebration of African Immigrants to New Jersey. “Congratulations on your award!” said Robert Apgar, Senior Program Officer. "The Council is pleased to, again, be working in partnership with the library, which consistently offers engaging community programming. Our grant review committee felt that the library developed another nicely planned series, valuable for local residents.”

Beginning in September, 2013 and ending in July, 2014, the library will host a series of lectures, workshops, book discussions, art exhibits, and cultural performances with the aim of encouraging community and dispelling stereotypes. The events will include university-based scholars from such institutions as Stockton State College, Delaware State University, City University of New York, and Brooklyn College. The initial presentations will be “African Immigrants: Myths and Realities,” with Dr. Akwasi Osei of Delaware State University on Saturday, September 28 at 2 p.m. and “African Immigrants in New Jersey,” with Dr. Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome on Saturday, December 7 at 2 p.m. Further lecture topics will include African immigrants and religion; African immigrants and gender; and African immigrants, the economy and entrepreneurship.

“Our goal is to inform and create awareness about this growing and diverse group of Africans, who live and interact with others in New Jersey,” said Paulette Doe-Williams (pictured above), adult
services librarian and grant manager, who is herself an immigrant from Liberia. “We aim to dispel stereotypes and encourage dialogue between groups in Willingboro and surrounding towns.”

The program line-up was developed in consultation with the library’s African Advisory Board, consisting of African-born community leaders from Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, the predominant sources of immigration in Willingboro. The board was formed as part of an outreach program to immigrants developed by Ms. Doe-Williams in 2009 which surveyed the community to determine familiarity with the library, and how the library could better fulfill their information and cultural needs. To stay in touch with the project and get regular updates on upcoming events, interested readers should like the event Facebook page (www.facebook.com/AfricanImmigrantsToNewJerseyACelebration), check the library’s website (www.willingboro.org) or send an email to cmhill@willingboro.org to be put on an e-mailing list. Christine Hill is the Assistant Director of Willingboro Public Library. She received her MS degree from Columbia University. Willingboro Public Library is located at 220 Willingboro Parkway, just off of Route 130 and Levitt Parkway, next to Strayer University. The library building is handicapped accessible. For further information, call 609-877-6668.

**The Changing Face of Local Governance in Nigeria**  
By Sola Lawal

Globe Telly, a Lagos, Nigeria based television production firm, has been engaged for some time in a special project involving the reporting, through audio-visual channels, of life-changing programs embarked on by local government administration in Nigeria. For the Globe Telly team this work is not only a bridge between the governments and the governed at the grassroots level, but, more than anything else, a veritable avenue to push the limits of developmental imagination to loftier heights through the encouragement of competition among officials at the local government level. In the course of the Globe Telly teams’ work in many of the states in Nigeria, a stunning discovery...
Linguistic Atonement: Penitence and Privilege in White Kenyan Language Ideologies
By Janet McIntosh

My argument in this talk hinges on the observation that white Kenyan relationships with Kenya’s *lingua franca*, Kiswahili, stand as a synecdoche for the broader question of white Kenyans’ role in the nation. On the one hand, many younger white Kenyans have shifted from an early twentieth century colonial attitude toward Kiswahili that was patently pejorative to a more congenial footing I call “linguistic atonement,” in which language enthusiasms and longings are meta-linguistically performed, in hopes that such attitudes might help mitigate a history of colonial discrimination. Among white Kenyans, part of linguistic atonement is the aspiration to use Kiswahili to achieve a “connection” (this is their word), a mutual understanding of sorts, with Kenya’s majority, while indexing their nationalist enthusiasm. Many also frame Kiswahili as a medium that opens positive expressive possibilities to them that, in the accounts of some, anyway, may be more sealed off to them when they are in a more “European” mode of personhood. Yet despite the good feelings of many white Kenyans towards Kiswahili, they nevertheless reify a subtle but persistent hierarchy of languages, one established in the colonial era through colonial policies and settler habits, and now largely uninterrogated. Thus we see here, as in other domains of their lives, the tension in white Kenyans between discrediting and valorizing the worth of things marked as “African.” This ambivalence, I suggest, captures aspects of contemporary white identity in post-colonial Africa, and exemplifies the global spread of new embodiments of privilege.

Ifeoma Madueke on Her Work at the United Nations Development Programme, Nigeria

The sacrificial life of Mother Theresa, and the selfless service, resilience, and strength displayed by Margaret Ekpo and Queen Amina of Zaria to mention a few, always fascinated me as a young girl growing up in Nigeria. Using them as models, I began a long journey of service to humanity, knowing that there would be a lot of miles to cover. My childhood fascination with these women and meetings with several remarkable women including two of Rutgers’ finest Dr. Alidou and Dr. Busia -further emboldened me to work harder and make my own little contribution to enhancing the development of women in my society. Understanding that every human being is capable of defining and refining his or her destiny for the benefit of humanity, especially in ensuring that our children live in a much better world through our collective action, is my choice for a life dedicated to the pursuit of a better society than I had known. In spite of the foggy details of my desire as a young girl, my father and mother (her memories forever engraved in my heart)
considerably helped in streamlining and focusing my activities towards this enviable goal. My craving to be part of a crusade to contribute towards significant changes that would impact positively on people’s lives would not have been sustained if not for the pioneering efforts of strong, well-grounded, and selfless women in Africa and around the world who have made remarkable contributions to human and women’s development, which provided me with much needed inspiration, focus, and drive.

Working for the United Nations Development Programme provided great opportunity to realize my dreams and has helped to mould me into the strong, sharp, analytical, patient, selfless, and devoted woman I need to be in order play my part in transforming various sectors of my society. One of the projects I am currently working on, as a poverty and gender analyst with UNDP, is located in Ekiti State (southwestern Nigeria) and entitled, “Youth in Commercial Agriculture Programme” (YCAD). In my humble opinion, this well-articulated State development programme aims to give the youths, both male and female, opportunities to excel in agro businesses. The programme promotes agriculture as a business focusing on enhancing and building capacities across the value chain, while creating knowledge space though an innovative college of agriculture. These are not new ideas but the programme provides exciting and innovative ways of making not so new ideas in agriculture and agribusiness more interesting, ensuring that young females and males are meaningfully engaged to produce results that will benefit them and their communities as a whole. Working on projects like this always excites me and gives me hope for a better tomorrow. I am fully aware that the programme will not solve all the unemployment woes in Ekiti State but this is certainly one step in the right direction. I hope to share exciting progress as well as positive results on this programme soon. We hope these results will contribute significantly to the youth and particularly to young women in agriculture development policy for Nigeria. I thank you very much for the opportunity to share. The UNDP often advertises internship positions on its job site: www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/jobs.html.

Parker Associates Global’s Regional Farm Training Centre at Obeda Empowers Farmers
By Samuel J. Parker III

Parker Associates Global’s (PAG) Entrepreneurship Empowerment Program (EEP) strives to empower rural African communities by building capacity at the community level through education, training, and equipping smallholder farmers with skills, methods, and knowledge needed to improve their lives socially and economically. Collaborative partnerships and project development strategies in agribusiness span the value chain to expand economic opportunities, food security and nutrition, poverty alleviation, financial awareness, and develop market-driven approaches.

PAG has developed a consortium of universities through signed agreements with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, New Brunswick, New Jersey; the University of Maryland/Department of Nutrition and Food Science Food Bioprocess Engineering and Food Safety Extension, College Park, Maryland; the National Center for Health Behavioral Change at Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland; and the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. In addition, PAG is currently working in cooperative relationships with multinational private sector companies, NGO’s, and government officials in Nigeria to develop the 860 acre site.

Parker Associates Global, LLC’s held a University Consortium Team Meeting at Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, Rockville, MD. Pictured above from left to right: Brian Smith (EduSerc, Inc.); Ric LaGrange, Ph.D. (Morgan State UN/NCHBC); Y. Martin Lo, Ph.D. (U of MD/NFSC); Obadina Adewale, Ph.D. (FUNAAB); Patricia Hayes-Parker (President, PAG); Samuel Parker III (PAG); Jehari Jones (PAG); Samuel Parker, Jr. (Principal, PAG); John Peter Thompson (Consultant); Albert Ayeni, Ph.D. (RU/SEBS); Ben Friton (Can YA Love); Eriks Brolis (memeTree Social Enterprise Consultants); Patrick Wilson, Ph.D. (Consultant).
At the proposed Regional Farm Training Centre (RFTC) at Odeda, PAG will train over 15,000 trainees annually. Additional training through the extension program has the potential to serve the farming community of 2.5 million persons in Ogun State, Nigeria. PAG’s RFTC is designed to promote job creation, entrepreneurship training for women and youth, improvement in crops and quality control standards, expansion of agriculture markets and trade, small processing and storage solutions, and the introduction of Climate Smart agriculture.

The foundation of the project is centered on PAG’s EEP that weaves together new technologies, business concepts, financial literacy, health, and wellness skills. PAG’s uniquely designed program allows participants to blend their knowledge and interests with our innovative strategies. PAG’s EEP accelerates the development of smallholder farmers and empowers each student to scale-up to commercial agriculture when ready. Our customized training meets the individual needs of each farmer. Trainees and students participate in core modules, monitoring each student’s growth and skill development followed by review. Agricultural and business development training are woven together with new technologies and hands-on farm fieldwork to offer the most complete and practical application of farm training imaginable.

In all the courses offered, students can complete introductory classwork and discussions leading to hands-on learning opportunities on The Model Farm on-site. This program will be integrated with our Mobile Operations Training Vehicle and Call Center to offer smallholder farmers customized information about their crops, farm and financial management, and market needs in their local communities. Our comprehensive training program will increase crop production and sustainable income; create jobs; expand regional and international exports; expand markets; and minimize environmental impact. PAG is fully committed to transforming and empowering smallholder farmers to be part of a technologically advanced society, thereby increasing knowledge and skills for future generations to come. For additional information visit our website, www.parkerassociatesglobal.com. If you have comments or questions about PAG and our current initiatives, e-mail sjparker3@parkerassociatesglobal.com.

Acreage at the Centre will be used to exhibit Climate Smart Agriculture, precision agriculture, and new technologies with teaching areas on Model Farm plots for targeted value chain crops. New accessory buildings will be constructed for crop storage, processing, maintenance and farm equipment, training, and dormitory facilities complemented by a new Food Safety Laboratory.

Regional Farm Training Centre at Odeda Site Plan 2013
Dr. Jean-Baptiste Sourou Wins 2013 International Journalism and Media Award

Dr. Jean-Baptiste Sourou who is from Benin Republic and has been hosted at CAS during his African Studies Association Presidential Fellowship in 2012, has recently won an honorable mention at the 2013 International Journalism and Media Awards for his book, Affondo. The International Committee of the Awards based in Geneva, Switzerland has written, “The jury took the decision considering the value and the relevance of the theme submitted.” As a journalist, Dr. Sourou lived and shared for several years the conditions of African immigrants in Italy and in 2011 he published a study which highlights and denounces the widespread ignorance and hypocrisy in many parts of Europe and Africa about immigration. He reveals the sad and most often ignored fact that the Mediterranean Sea is a big open cemetery hosting countless numbers of bodies of Africans who want to reach Europe escaping from wars, exploitation, oppression, and barbarism. A fisherman that Dr. Sourou interviewed said that often they find in their nets human bodies or body parts. The book narrates stories of Africans who risked their lives in order to reach Europe, but these dreams drown because either they die in the Mediterranean Sea, or if he/she arrives safely in Europe, their expectations are not met. Affondo strongly criticizes the way African leaders have turned a blind eye to the issue of migration. “I sometimes feel ashamed of the attitude of Africa and its leaders towards irregular immigrants,” Dr. Sourou says. He criticizes the way the media covers immigrants who arrive by boat in Italy. “They treat the whole issue from a purely statistical perspective”, the author explains. He also suggests some solutions on the issue. Published by Edizioni San Paolo, the book which is a documented and hard complaint, not only of the Italian situation but of the whole Mediterranean area, is for the moment available only in Italian, but Dr. Sourou is working on translations in different languages in order to create awareness in the public.

Dr. Sourou is working on a new book whose main goal concerns music and dances in African contemporary ritual celebrations in urban areas. The book is an analysis of the kind of music and dances African city dwellers use during their rites, the way they use it, why they use these “hybrid” performances, and the embodied new symbolic forms within the context of the celebrations of funerals and weddings. He carried out the fieldwork in three West African cities: Cotonou (Benin), Lomé (Togo), and Accra (Ghana). Through an appealing description of the contemporary context, and the everyday life of the populations combined with colorful descriptions of musical and dance performances at weddings and funerals that Dr. Sourou attended during the fieldwork, the reader discovers how people celebrate these rituals, the different categories of performers, the kind of dance and music they play, and the ways people are using music in Cotonou, Lomé, and Accra. Through the analysis of the described performances, Dr. Sourou presents some new, interesting ideas which, he hopes, will start a vital discussion on the issue.
PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO CAS!

Checks should be made payable to the Rutgers University Foundation, with “Center for African Studies” indicated on the memo line. Please mail your check to the CAS address above. For online donations please visit ruafrica.rutgers.edu. For more information contact CAS: 848-445-6638.