

# CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

NEWSLETTER: FALL 2008, VOLUME XII

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David is pictured at left below with:  
Dr. Vupenyu Dzingirai (University of Zimbabwe)



and at right with Dr. James Murombedzi  
(former Regional Director, International Union for the Conservation of Nature)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 27 *Literary Conference "Littératures d'Expression Française -- Pistes, Trajets, Destinations" ("Literatures in French -- Paths, Trajectories, Destinations")*

The speakers include Mildred Mortimer (University of Colorado, Boulder); Winifred Woodhull (University of California, San Diego); and Jack Yeager (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge). Their presentations will be in English with a French summary. Senegalese novelist Boubacar Boris Diop will present the keynote address in French entitled, "Être un écrivain négro-africain franco-phone aujourd'hui." An English summary will be provided.

### OCTOBER

### 23 *Ayesha Imam Talk, "Our Rights, Our Cultures: Muslim Women in West Africa and Struggles over Definitions, Entitlements and Power"*

Sponsored by The Institute for Research on Women's 2008-2009 Distinguished Lecture Series entitled, "The Culture of Rights/The Rights of Culture" Imam is a Board Member of the Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws; Founding Executive Director of BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights; Working Group of the African Feminist Forum

For more event information visit <http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/events/index.html>

## The Silences in the Palace - Shamt al kushur

By Moufida Tlatli (1994, Tunisia)

### Dinner, Movie and Dialogue presented by the RU

Center for African Studies, Cinema Studies Program's "Reel Africa" and Office of Undergraduate Education, Multicultural Student Engagement

Date: Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Time: 6pm Dinner, 7pm Film

Place: Graduate Student Lounge (College Avenue)



Photo Credit: trigon-film

## CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES STAFF

David M. Hughes.....Director  
Richard Schroeder.....Associate Director  
Renée DeLancey.....Assistant to Director  
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## NEWSLETTER

David M. Hughes.....Editor  
Renée DeLancey...Content, Layout, Design

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**RUTGERS**  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW JERSEY

## Letter from the Director, David McDermott Hughes

I write to you in my first month as Director and on the heels of a short trip to South Africa. There, it struck me that many Africanists of my generation are experiencing the best of times and the worst of times. To start with the bad news, anti-foreigner pogroms terrorized Johannesburg only a week before my Zimbabwe-focussed conference. Imagine the Zimbabwean participants' despair in facing persecution – not only in their own country- but in the region's very beacon of liberty. I felt my own personal disillusionment. In the 1980s, the student movement against apartheid first drew me and many of my peers to Southern Africa. How far things have sunk – we all felt in Johannesburg – since that era of promise and fellowship. On the positive side, everywhere I went in South Africa people talked to me about Barack Obama. Some likened him to Mandela. Both men ascended from positions that seemed impossibly distant from power. Both have crafted a political rhetoric that moves people, ideas, and (one hopes) institutions. Viewing the US, my South African friends implicitly envisioned a reiteration of their own history.

Obama's rise mirrors an institutional shift at Rutgers, as well. As I write, the Board of Governors has just approved the creation of a Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures (DAMESALL). This investment will add considerably to Rutgers' ability to teach and study these languages. Indeed, we owe this success largely to the unflagging efforts of Center members Ousseina Alidou, Carolyn Brown, Barbara Cooper, Alamin Mazrui, and Richard Serrano. Yet, the proposal aroused some controversy. Opposition centered on the transfer of African languages (and related faculty lines and other resources) from the Department of Africana Studies to the new unit. At another level, I believe, the University confronted (and added an iota of force to) a seismic jolt in Africa's place in the US imagination. Africana's curriculum has represented its subject as trans-Atlantic, encompassing an interlinked set of American-African connections, including the slave trade and the civil rights movement. The creation of DAMESALL turns Africa eastward, reclassifying the continent as within a trans-Indian Ocean region. For the US, the shift would also seem to reinterpret Africa, not as the singular source of previous slaves, but as one among many sources of current immigrants. Perhaps, there is a parallel between Obama's popularity – as a Kenyan-American above and, in some ways, against the politics of civil rights – and an academic structure bounded by the Old World tropics: "Africa" figures primarily in the project of diversity and only secondarily in the older, less successful quest for equality. This pattern – if it exists at all - need not diminish our excitement about the new department. But it does signal the broader context within which we work. In more and less comfortable ways, Rutgers lives symbiotically with the political culture around it.

At the risk of wading into another controversy, I offer a teaser regarding some of our programming for the coming year. In previous meetings, we have discussed the federal government's increasing desire to enlist Africanists, Asianists, and Latin Americanists in the "war on terror." In some ways, Washington is reactivating its Cold War cooperation with academia, a relationship which gave rise to area studies in the first place. There are important differences, however: more aggressive funding incentives at the graduate level and, particularly in Afghanistan, the actual *deployment* of social scientists in counter-insurgency (known as "weaponized anthropology"). To consider these developments – in their empirical and ethical dimensions – we are hoping to hold a small conference in collaboration with the national African Studies Association and possibly with the other area studies programs at Rutgers in March. Stay tuned!

In May, **Abena P.A. Busia** and **Carolyn Brown** shared CAS's Exemplary Service Award. Their work on the Local Arrangements Committee contributed enormously to the success of the 2007 African Studies Association meeting in New York. Finally, thank you so much, **Barbara Cooper**, for the efficiency, thoroughness, and humor with which you have run the Center. My feet swim in your shoes.

Cheers,



David M. Hughes

## Letter from Outgoing Director Barbara Cooper


It has been a tremendous learning experience heading the Center for African Studies these past few years. My goal as Director has been to stabilize and regularize the workings of the Center. I put a great deal of energy into working with other International Program directors to ensure that Rutgers has structures in place to support international and area studies broadly. The new Rutgers slogan “Jersey Roots, Global Reach” reflects, I think, the success we’ve had in bringing global initiatives to the fore. The appointment of Joanna Regulska as the first Dean of International Programs promises to ensure that global issues become a signature commitment of Rutgers. The focus upon international concerns has made it possible for the School of Arts and Sciences to envision for the first time more appropriate institutional structures for the promotion of non-Western languages ranging from Arabic to Hindi to Zulu. With the newly approved Department of African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures, the “less commonly taught languages” will for the first time have the kind of institutional support necessary for area studies at Rutgers to thrive.

As the University as a whole has worked hard the past several years to restructure undergraduate education, we at CAS have reworked our undergraduate minor in African Area Studies to generate cross-listed “core” courses, to encourage students to take African languages, and to update and diversify the elective courses and experiential opportunities available to students. We have also initiated an innovative Undergraduate Fellows Program to generate a sense of community among undergraduates participating in a broad array of Africa-related initiatives. The program will feature peer mentors who can introduce other students to all the exciting opportunities at Rutgers.

This past year we also reworked our Graduate Certificate Program as well. This will enable more faculty to lead the designated Center for African Studies seminars. We now offer a menu of courses within the major departments participating in the program (History, Anthropology, Geography, and Comparative Literature) that will correspond to our book-end seminars (Current Issues in African Studies and Interdisciplinary Research in African Studies). This is a very exciting development that we hope will lead to further cross-fertilization and collaboration across the different participating units.

We also initiated our first annual Graduate Student Workshop this past spring. This is an open invitation to all graduate students and visiting scholars to present work in progress to one another, to get feedback from faculty, and in general to benefit from a sense of a shared interdisciplinary project. This year’s workshop on March 5, 2008 was a great success and we will continue this new tradition annually. The program enabled students and visiting scholars across several departments and two schools to meet one another, swap notes on research, test out ideas, and enjoy a convivial atmosphere. It was particularly useful for students at early stages in their graduate careers to meet and confer with students further along, and for advanced students to have an opportunity to present material relevant to presenting themselves well on the job market.

Any casual visitor to the Upcoming Events page on our website knows, however, that the Center has engaged in a spectacular array of programming to raise awareness about key issues related to Africa. As I turn the helm over to the dynamic and energetic David Hughes I am confident that we can look forward to another year of stimulating programming and exciting initiatives beginning this coming Fall.

Sincerely,  Barbara M. Cooper, Outgoing Director

## FACULTY NEWS

**Abena Busia** (English) *Ghana: An African Portrait Revisited*, Peter Randall, photo. and ed. (Peter E. Randall Publisher and Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007) was a finalist in the coffee table/ large format category for the Benjamin Franklin award given by the PMA (the independent publishers association). "Of Records and Memory: An African Portrait Revisited, an Essay" and "Notes for a Diary of the Republic: A Time-Line", in pp xv-xviii and pp xxxi-xxxiv are the essays that Professor Busia contributed. **Carolyn Brown** (History) has won a Fulbright to work in Canada with Paul Lovejoy (York University) on an oral history project in the Igbo areas of southeastern Nigeria. After completing her Fulbright stay in Canada, she has a year-long (2009) Scholars-in-Residence fellowship at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, where she will continue work on her study of nationalist politics in Nigeria during and after WWII.

**Barbara Cooper** (History) was awarded the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's New Directions Fellowship. This award will enable Barbara to pursue training in demography and public health this coming year for her new project on the medical and political history of human fertility and motherhood in what was French West Africa. She will also travel to France and Niger over the next two years to consult with colleagues on cutting edge work in Francophone institutions. **Joanna Regulska** (Women's and Gender Studies; Geography) was appointed Dean of International Programs in the School of Arts and Sciences. **Zakia Salime** has been appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies. Her research interests include gender, development, race, globalization, political Islam and transnational feminisms and movements.

## CAS FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

**Moha Ennaji** (Arabic) *Language and Gender in the Mediterranean Region* (Mouton de Gruyter, 2008) and *The Dialogue of Civilizations: The Self and the Other* (Red Sea Press, 2008)

**Renée Larrier** (French) "Sont-ils encore gens de Guadeloupe?" Departmentalization, Migration, and Family Dynamics." /International Journal of Francophone Studies/ 11. 1&2

(Spring/Summer 2008); "Joseph Zobel" in *The Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora*. Ed. Carole Boyce Davies. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Publishers, 2008. **Susan Martín-Márquez** (Spanish and Portuguese) *Disorientations: Spanish Colonialism in Africa and the Performance of Identity* (Yale University Press, 2008) **Meredeth Turshen** (Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy) "What has happened in Africa since Cairo?" *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 2007, 14(3):387-408; "Gender and Health" *Journal of Public Health Policy* 2007, 28: 319-321.

## AMESALL: NEW LANGUAGES UNIT

On July 17 the New Jersey Board of Governors approved the establishment of a new department at Rutgers New Brunswick, the Department of African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures, which will bring together all the languages and literatures of these three interconnected regions into one home. Professors Ousseina Alidou and Alamin Mazrui from the Center for African Studies will anchor the new department, while professors Laura Ahearn of Anthropology and Stephen Reinert of History will round out the initial faculty committee that will construct the new department and its curriculum. Professor Richard Serrano is the first chairman.



## Julie Livingston's Research in Botswana

My current project, entitled *The Other Cancer Ward: Pain, Laughter, and Knowledge in an African Oncology Clinic*, is an ethnography of cancer and clinical oncology in Botswana. I am pictured above with some of the staff (doctors and nurses) from the oncology ward of Princess Marina Hospital in Botswana, where I do my research.

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

### Lincoln Addison's Awards for Anthropology Research Zimbabwe and South Africa

This summer Lincoln learned chiShona at the African Language Research Institute, University of Zimbabwe with Dr. Emmanuel Chabata. In mid-June, he presented a paper on Zimbabwean farm workers at a Johannesburg conference entitled "Political Economies of Displacement in Post 2000 Zimbabwe." In July he traveled to northern South Africa and conducted preliminary research with Zimbabweans working on commercial farms there. A Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship and a CAS Graduate Student Enhancement Award helped to make his field work possible.



Lincoln (left) with Professor Emmanuel Chabata

### Omotayo Jolaosho's Awards: Cultural Anthropology Research

I received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. My proposed research examines protest performances by focusing on the moving body to understand strategies for community mobilization in post-apartheid South Africa. Previous discussions of this topic have focused largely on the activities of social movements such as marches, pickets, demonstrations, media statements, and organizational meetings. My project will enrich these discussions, which so far have given little attention to performance and the moving body. Studies of social movements often treat performance as epiphenomenal, rather than as an integral part of dissenting action, and give little consideration to the body as the means of mobilization. My consideration of mobilization will therefore contribute to social movement scholarship by attention to thought in its embodiment in and fluency as practice.



Tayo (left) with Professor Abena P.A. Busia

I also have a 10-week fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage this summer. My project at the Smithsonian Institution explores the historical links between the freedom songs of African-Americans and South Africans. Community protest singing played a central role in the United States' civil rights movement. Furthermore, songs of the civil rights movement influenced South Africa's freedom songs, which later came to circulate in the United States. By documenting this interrelationship between movements, my study will contribute to a more transnational understanding of protest repertoires.

### Mary Kay Jou's Social Work Research: Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda

In March 2008, Dr. Linda Kreitzer from the University of Calgary, and Mary Kay Jou, PhD Candidate from the Rutgers University School of Social Work, co-facilitated a three-hour workshop to over 100 social workers from in and around Canada. The topic was "Healing from Genocide in Rwanda." First, Linda provided the historical and cultural context for the violence that erupted in Rwanda in 1994, as well as some information regarding Rwandan approaches to healing and reconciliation. This built the foundation for Mary Kay to present her work in conflict resolution which she has been developing in the Great Lakes Region of Africa over the last three years. Using photos and personal stories of the participants in the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops which were facilitated between escapees of the genocide and ex-prisoners convicted of participating in the genocide, she shared the experiences of healing and reconciliation taking place in this

part of the world in a very meaningful way. Linda and Mary Kay are in the final stages of preparing a manuscript for publication on this work, which will be sent to the Journal on International Social Work this summer.



Mary Kay Jou (right) with Linda Kreitzer

### **Samuel Ledermann's Geography Field Work**

After several weeks of intensive Kiswahili lessons and practicing in bustling Dar es Salaam with market-women, watchmen and drivers alike, I'm off to Arusha for additional Kiswahili tutoring and excursions to potential fieldsites for my doctoral research focusing on non-traditional agricultural export production and its impact on poverty and inequalities. Even within these first weeks, visits with scholars and libraries (particularly the East Africana collection) have been very fruitful and exceeded all my expectation.



Samuel in front of Uni of Dar es Salaam Library

For these next weeks, I'm especially excited about an upcoming trip to a Swiss project in the rural Shinyanga region, where around 1,700 farmers are receiving a price premium for producing organic cotton. Having followed this export commodity closely over the last years, I'm keen to gather some impressions of its main successes and challenges for farming and non-farming households, before heading 'home' to Switzerland for critical reflections and meetings with organic traders and retailers. In this spirit, Asante sana na tutaonana baadaye! Many thanks to CAS for helping me to acquire sufficient funding for my research!

### **ALUKA Awarded Benjamin Neimark for His Innovative Teaching of Geography**

Aluka is dedicated to supporting the academic community by providing rich and scholarly research materials and dynamic tools to assist classroom teaching. The Aluka Award for Innovative Teaching recognizes creative instructional uses of the digital library that enrich teaching about or related to Africa. Congratulations, Ben, for both the Aluka award and the birth of your son, Raphael!



The Neimark Family

### **Laura Ann Pechacek's Pre-departure Update**

"I am leaving for Senegal next Tuesday! I received \$2,000 from the Graduate School in support of my trip. I also am a fellow at the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis this year for the Vernacular Epistemologies project run by Julie Livingston and Indrani Chatterjee." Laura Ann's research focuses on a history of women's collective work and its intersections with international development in Mali.

## Adryan Wallace's Political Science Notes from Nigeria

Every doctoral student dreams of having the opportunity to conduct pre-dissertation research which enables us to implement a modified version of our future field work and make the necessary modifications in the present. I think that perhaps the greatest obstacle in preparing for this trip to Kano, Nigeria and Tamale, Ghana was resisting the temptation to over prepare. Packing my clothes, books, and notebooks increased the impulse to transport my concepts of politics, identity formation, political mobilization, and nationalism and of course the state along with my luggage. Given that all research is subjective I alleviated some of the guilt I felt by generating elastic categories capable of absorbing and reflecting the realities on the ground. Additionally, I created a detailed inventory of these concepts and any biases in one of my notebooks so that I would have a record of my perspectives prior to leaving New Jersey.

I arrived in Kano at 8:30 pm on Friday June 27<sup>th</sup>, and was welcomed by a flurry of nocturnal economic activity. Dr. Barbara Callaway my advisor arranged for me to stay with a wonderful woman and critical contact, Mrs. Betty Dan Bappa. I decided to change into hijab and was greeted warmly by my host who because of my attire was initially unsure that I was her guest from America. We quickly placed the luggage into the car and arrived home. As she helped me settle in she gently explained that while modest dress is ideal, hijab is far from a requirement outside the city of Kano. Though once you enter the gates of the old city it is preferred. We both laughed and I went to bed anxiously awaiting my first official day in Kano. Mrs. Dan Bappa immediately began plugging me into the networks of women in Kano which has proven to be an invaluable asset.

My meetings with the women are ensuring that my own perspectives on politics and gender remain tempered. There are several NGOs in Kano working diligently on income generating activities, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and education. They also have projects that focus explicitly on addressing gender stereotypes and traditional definitions of femininity and masculinity. During this trip I have made more contacts than I could possibly have envisioned which will make conducting field work much smoother.

I am also excited to report that I learned to make beaded jewelry during a visit to Al-Yusrah Family Empowerment Foundation, an NGO established and headed by the first lady of Kano. In addition to income generating activities to include bead making, perfume, pomades, local spices and sewing, they also provide trainings for traditional birth attendants, and reproductive health programs. I greatly enjoyed my visit with the women of Al-Yusrah and look forward to seeing them again during my dissertation research. Being African-American in Kano, is another dimen-

Adryan Wallace (second from left) with the staff of Al-Yusrah Family Empowerment Foundation; Samira Abdulkadir (in green) is the Project Coordinator



sion of my project that I would like to explore further. There have been several occasions where people think that I am Hausa, a compliment I am happy to accept.

Words cannot express the sheer joy and exhilaration I have felt over the last two weeks. Not only have I been able to speak with the women and men that are overseeing the key economic and social programs, but I have also been able to speak with the women themselves that are accessing their services. One of the greatest outcomes has been gaining insight into how women across a myriad of demographic categories to include, socioeconomic status, educational level, age, and marital status, conceptualize and define politics and inclusive governing structures. The newspapers and the media have also been wonderful illustrations of how political messages, symbols and motives are presented, interpreted, and acted upon. All of these factors have revealed new potential directions for my dissertation research.

As I prepare to travel to Tamale, Ghana next week some of the questions I am grappling with are: What constitutes political action? How do I define the state and the nation in the context of a federation like Nigeria? How is nationalism being deployed? What is my social location while conducting this research? Who is Hausa? What constitutes corruption? What methodological tools will capture the realities on the ground? Which narratives are getting privileged? What are the political implications of my study? While presently I have more questions than answers I look forward to cultivating responses using this pre-dissertation research as the foundation for that endeavor.

Let me conclude this piece by highlighting the fact that none of this would have been possible without the generous support of the Center for African Studies, The Graduate School of New Brunswick, and of course my wonderful advisor Dr. Barbara Callaway! Thanks to you all, and I look forward to sharing more notes from the field upon my return...

## **UNDERGRADUATE NEWS**

### **Olufunmilayo Oyefesobi Reports from Nigeria**

Olufunmilayo Oyefesobi was awarded a Fulbright-Hays fellowship to participate in the eight-week Intensive Advanced Yoruba Group Project Abroad (GPA) course scheduled for Ile-Ife, Nigeria from June 20 to August 12 2008 made possible with funds from the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board and the US Department of Education in Washington. She wrote to CAS from Nigeria: "Right now we are at the Institute of Cultural Studies. There are about 15 students staying with Yoruba host families. We have classes Mondays through Fridays and cultural trips on Saturdays. During the week we also visit different sites and have guest lectures. Many people on this trip are doctoral candidates and others are undergraduates learning about the Yoruba culture and language. I hope to write you again soon!"

### **Jessica Akunna Graduates: Her Happy Return to Ghana Summer 2008**

Once again I have had the wonderful opportunity to go to Ghana! My interests in public health and infectious diseases landed me a research opportunity with the Minority Health International Research Training Program. This program is run by the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health. It gives undergraduates and post graduate students who have an interest in public health to perform research in developing countries. There are sites all over the world from Peru, Guatemala, Jamaica, and even as far as Kenya. My research assesses sexual behavior among HIV seropositive individuals through a questionnaire format. My work as an intern last year served as an easy adjustment in Ghana. Already familiar with the food, a bit of the Twi language, and how to access public transportation, I adjusted easily upon my return. Moreover my work with women based organizations in various fields in Ghana coupled with my current research will enhance my background as I prepare to practice as a physician in West Africa.



## **TWESE Reflections from Incoming TWESE President David Osei-Hwedieh**

TWESE is the association for Africa and friends of Africa on Rutgers University's New Brunswick campus. The main goal of our organization is to educate the Rutgers University community on various aspects of African culture, people and issues. We seek to dispel negative views and false ideas of African culture and people abroad. Each semester, TWESE organizes events including an annual Royal African Pride Banquet and annual TWESE fashion show geared towards enlightening the Rutgers student body on the many accomplishments of Africa. As President, I hope to set up a mentoring program to support troubled kids at the local high school. I also plan to use this year's banquet to recognize the efforts of Africa to unite as one nation and to celebrate how far they have come.

## **and from Outgoing TWESE President, Bridgette Forson**

TWESE means so much more to me than a university club/organization. TWESE, which means unity in Kinya-rwanda, serves as a place of friendship and growth, as new and strong bonds are formed and Africa-related current events are shared and discussed. The 2007-2008 school semester was very successful for TWESE. Our Annual African Pride Banquet, "Celebrating Arts in Africa" was truly wonderful. It featured the diversity of African art and included other forms of cultural expression such as film. We screened "Invisible Children," a moving documentary that examines what life is like for the child soldiers of northern Uganda and the fear and despair that the people of the region live in due to the recent civil war. Our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Fashion Show was also one of the most successful in the organization's 17 year history, reaching an audience of 700 while highlighting the beautiful creativity in African clothing design and music.

Reflecting on this past year as the president of TWESE, I am greeted with memories of joy in achieving our goals and satisfaction in all that the 2007-2008 executive board has accomplished. The year was filled with stressful and

testing times; however the harder we struggled to achieve a goal, the sweeter our fulfillment of that goal became.

As a student who may not be very familiar with what TWESE stands for or what it contributes to the Rutgers community, I ask that you take the time to attend a weekly meeting and allow yourself to network with other African peers. In networking and building strong relationships, you will be surprised at how much you can accomplish both inside and outside of the classroom. TWESE meets every Tuesday, from 8:30-9:30pm in the Paul Robeson Cultural Center on Busch Campus.

## **Oxfam Rutgers President Parisa Kharazi Deems Oxfest 2008 a Success**

I'm very proud to announce that Oxfam Rutgers collected over \$700 from OXFEST 08: Rock for Somalia and about 150 people attended the event making it the best Oxfam event all year! We promoted our event well and we were able to reach out to both the Rutgers and international communities. Now more people know about the importance of fair trade, what it is, and the current humanitarian crisis in Somalia. We thank our many sponsors for their kind support.



## **CAS Mentors CESEP Students**

The Civic Engagement and Service Education Partnerships Program (CESEP), which strives to make civic partnerships, engaged teaching, and service learning a distinctive aspect of educational culture university-wide, directed several undergraduate students to CAS this year for mentoring and assistance at the Center: Tyler Beckenbach, LaShelle Cross, Chinyere Ojini, and Denise Olusala. CAS extends sincere thanks to each of these students for their diligence, professionalism and contributions to the Center! To learn more about CESEP please visit them on their website: <http://engage.rutgers.edu>.

## An Undergraduate Reacts to Bamako

By Lobna Eldasher

This movie opened my eyes to something of which I was seriously, and shamefully, unaware. All my life, I—just as the majority of Americans, I believe—fell victim to the stereotypical portrayals of Africans. All these stereotypes produced misconceptions of the African community. This included false information regarding women, their daily lives, and poverty.

It is commonly portrayed that African women are degraded or disadvantaged; *Bamako*, however, showed a completely different picture. The women of the society were the activists, the writers, and the entrepreneurs. In the court trial, they were able to make valid arguments with good command of the language and an understanding of statistics. They understood not only the immediate effects of

poverty, but the actual causes of it. They understood and could explain the politics of the West and the politics of their nation. Shamefully to us, they have a good understanding of what is going on in the United States, they know the problems the US is dealing with, they know the political heads of the West; they are aware of both Eastern and Western philosophers; and we know very little of their culture, politics, and social structure. We are content in telling ourselves that they are poor and ridden with AIDS, as if that is the end of anything concerning Africa, and we make no effort to understand the complexities of their lives.

With respect to their daily lives, many of the witnesses in the court trial spoke out against the privatization of healthcare and education. They complained about an immigration problem, problems with healthcare availability, and many more issues that paralleled problems we are having in the US. But their problems were more devastating and pronounced. They accused the IMF and World Bank for their conditions and had valid reasons for doing so. Problems of national debt were raised; problems of high interest on the debt were voiced. The viewer came to reason that these people are just as aware of their problems as we are aware of ours, if not more. Our media, however, represents Africans as ignorant of what is occurring in their surroundings; but, in fact, they are more knowledgeable than we ever have been.

Although the Mali citizens were very vocal about how the IMF and World Bank were the cause of the economic break down of Africa, the movie implied—through Chaka's marriage and suicide—that it is the cause of social turmoil. Chaka was unemployed, he could not provide for his family, and his daughter was ill. Despite this downward slope he was constantly shown learning another language - with ambition and hope. , and this shows ambition; it shows hope. In this sense, the state of the African nations is portrayed: they are going through hard times but they are ambitious about change and improvement. Dismayingly, Chaka shot himself at the end of the movie, and the film concluded with the funeral prayer and a cliff-hanger on the verdict of the trial. I do not want to draw an association, but if Chaka was supposed to symbolize Africa then maybe the cliff-hanger was not really a cliff-hanger but a means of saying something without words.

What is very interesting about this video is the manner in which it was filmed. There was great attention given to minute details, to the actions of children, to facial expressions, tears, body movements, sounds, and singing without music. Music was played about twice in the movie, and



it was live club music; there was no background music at all. I feel this contributed greatly to the mood. There was a constant silence when people were not talking. Rather than playing music to set the mood, the director was able to send that message through the setting and characters themselves. If this needed to be enriched, then there was sometimes a singing in the background—perhaps a woman walking through the street singing to herself—and that set a more realistic feel to the atmosphere.

This movie was very thought provoking and I feel it is an excellent way of conveying African struggles to the West. America brought up a generation that, in its literacy is illiterate. This generation turns to movies rather than newspapers. I feel that it is through these means that Africa will be able to mobilize Western support—maybe not by the governments, but by the citizenry empowering them—and help itself out of the problems Western nations, essentially, pushed onto it.

### **Summer 2008 Ghana Interns Share What They Have Learned**

Thanks to the continued and generous support of Rutgers Alumna Wendy Lee to the Department of Women's and Gender Studies a second round of three interns were chosen to go to Africa on fully supported internships to work with African women's organizations. Interns Awo Dede Mankatah, Hawwa Muhammad and Chinyere Ojini travelled to Ghana in Summer 2008 under the guidance of Internship Director, Professor of English and Center for African Studies member Dr. Abena P.A. Busia. Each student has shared both what they have learned on their internships and their favorite pictures taken in Ghana.

#### **Awo Dede Mankatah**

Since I have been in Ghana, it has been one learning experience after another. I learned about the many women's organizations that exist. I had the honor of participating in a women's caucus where they discussed prevailing issues that are currently affecting their lives. It was very interesting to see so many successful entrepreneurial women come together to discuss the social prejudices that they still face despite their success. Moreover, I chose to work with an organization called W.I.S.E (Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment). At W.I.S.E I will be creating a sex-education program to present to some of the refugees at the Liberian refugee camp in Ghana. So far, I am learning about the different issues that the refugees are facing and how I can create a program that will facilitate healthy and safe sexual health while promoting AIDS testing.



My father and I at Abgree Gardens

## Hawwa Muhammad

The question of how social philanthropy works has never failed to incite my curiosities about the nature of giving and the beneficiaries of economic growth. After being selected to intern at a women's organization in Ghana, the excitement of being able to juxtapose my passions with practice in a country like Ghana thrilled me.

As it stands, prior to attaining this internship, I have always been impassioned by issues regarding women. Hence once the opportunity to work directly with women and contribute to the work being done here presented itself, I immediately seized it.

What then began to appeal to me, was the science inherent in the process of funding and how this translates to empowering the recipients of aid. The idea of social philanthropy began to become more appealing to me as I began to reflect on the way in which aid is given to Africa and how institutions are upheld or rather why they become obsolete as a result of funding. This begged the question of whether the funding with which organizations are endowed encourages self-reliance; does this funding encourage capacity building?

After discussing more of the placement options I would have once the two interns and I would have arrived to Ghana, Dr. Busia steered me towards the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) which, I was happy to learn, encouraged the capacity building I had intended to study. I was pleased to learn about the strategic ways in which funding was established by the AWDF so as to foster the type of social philanthropy that will enable institutions and organizations seeking assistance to remain strong and to not have to depend upon the financial support of the AWDF. To this extent the AWDF does more than endow. They create a cyclic process which enables women and their organizations to remain self-sustained. This empowerment creates a stronger ability for these once struggling organizations to promote programs which spread awareness across the continent of Africa about issues which threaten the progress of women's rights in Africa. Within this structure the AWDF addresses an issue which many institutions fail to even acknowledge: how to negotiate the incorporation of endowing a program in addition to empowering and more importantly educating its recipients.

During the latter part of the month, I will also intern at WISE (Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment) where I will work with women from the largest refugee camp for Liberians in Ghana. I am very excited about what I have learned thus far and look forward to all that I will soon encounter.

Hawwa Muhammad, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science '09

Hawwa Muhammad at the Women's Leadership Conference, La Palm Hotel, Accra, Ghana.



## Chinyere K. Ojini

Chinyere K. Ojini models colorful Ghanaian fabric at the W.E.B. Dubois Center.

I am currently interning at the Foundation for Female Photojournalists (FFP). The director and founder of the not for profit organization is very warm and overall spectacular. She is determined to make me learn from this experience. I am being exposed to so many different areas of journalism that I am sure that by the end of this internship, I will be able to make a decision as to where I would work as a career. Currently, I am independently working on four tasks. The organization has a website that gives current news updates along with information about in-process fundraising projects. I am in charge of creating and sending a mass e-mail of the newsletter. I have also been assigned to create a photo documentary of the heavy influence that religion has in Ghana. For example, one can find a religious reference on the back of taxis, a major form of transport, and even as the names of businesses (ex: By His Grace Fashion). I will also be the representative of the organization, go to events and conferences, then write reports on what occurred. Shortly, I will be working with the Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE) at the Liberian refugee camp with the program to teach 50 select women sewing, hair dressing, computer database, and computer programming. This program enables these women, most of them teenage mothers, to develop a skill set so that whether they decide to remain in Ghana, move back to Liberia, or move to another country, they will be able to support themselves and their families. Because I will be interning at both organizations simultaneously, I will also work on another photo documentary capturing the lives of female teenagers living as refugees. For WISE, I hope to work at the school and act as a teacher's aid to keep all students at the same pace. This has truly been a wonderful experience and I have learned so much in such a short amount of time through the internship and interaction with people in general. It is truly a life changing experience!



### ***Live in Africa***

***Learn about African history, culture and daily life***

***Develop a skill set that will further your understanding of globalization***

This fully sponsored, intensive and guided internship with selected women's organizations aims to offer students an opportunity to learn about women's struggles and their accomplishments, but also to learn how creative strategies and solutions that address the pervasive social, political, and economic obstacles facing women in Africa are being developed. In Fall 2008 contact Women's and Gender Studies (<http://womens-studies.rutgers.edu/>) for the Summer 2009 Ghana Internship competition guidelines!

# Congratulations to the Winners of the CAS 2008 Paper Prize Competition!

## The Claude Ake Undergraduate Prize was awarded to Brian Poucher

### **Abstract: Social Security in Senegal's Informal Sector: The Complexities and Contradictions of Senegal's Attempts to Extend Its Social Benefits System**

Over half of the world's population has no statutory social security. In many developing countries a large portion of this population works in what is called the urban informal sector, an economy that is not officially recorded and does not generate tax revenue for the state. Brian's thesis is an analysis of a set of government initiatives that began in 1996 that were intended to expand Senegal's statutory social security programs to cover workers in the informal sector. Specifically Brian studied the political, cultural, and economic impetuses that caused the government to undertake this expansion, why these initiatives eventually failed, and the startling similarities between the original debates over labor and social security in the 1940s in French West Africa and these more recent initiatives. Through library research, archival research, and interviews with journalists, government officials, and informal sector workers, an intriguing picture emerged. The initiatives were the indirect product of a host of conflicting forces: pressure from international organizations, controversies in Senegal's social security agencies, unrest among former government employees laid off in the wake of structural adjustment policies, and the political ambitions of Senegal's most prominent politicians. Reasons for the initiatives' failure include the top-down decision-making structures of the involved labor unions and organizations, informal sector labor unions' desire to remain hidden from the government tax net, general distrust of the government, and a lack of political will to carry the initiatives further. In addition, Senegal's history of gender-biased decision-making regarding labor and reform blinded the organizations and officials implementing the initiatives to innovative solutions for providing social protections being created by informal sector workers themselves. This analysis sheds light on previously under-studied aspects of these initiatives and provides suggestions and analyses for future social policy-makers and researchers.



Brian Poucher



Jodie Barker

For more information on the annual CAS paper prize competition please visit our website:  
<http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/students/prize/index.html>

## The Ruth First Graduate Prize was awarded to Jodie Barker

### **Abstract: “Dance and the Dynamics of Tension and Release in Senghor’s *Élégie pour la Reine de Saba*”**

***Only in the dance do I know how to tell the parable of the highest things... -Friedrich Nietzsche***  
***Je danse, donc je suis. -Léopold Sédar Senghor***

Dancing has been considered aesthetically beautiful and powerful enough to “influence warriors and philosophers.” Too often in Francophone poetry, however, dance is stripped of its aesthetic beauty and power and is reduced to reminiscence. Regarded as an illustration of the poet’s link to a nostalgic Africa, dance has customarily been theorized as a tool that weaves an essential “African-ness” into the poetic process, rooting both the poem and poet into an (often lost) African genealogy. The poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor reflects this. Representations of dance abound in Senghor’s poetic œuvre but are frequently connected to stereotypically “traditional” themes in African literature. While theorizing dance in Senghor’s poetry as a nostalgic illustration of a lost, idealized homeland may not be entirely incorrect, it is limiting. The active, creative and spontaneous elements that representations of dance evoke are often overlooked and overshadowed in favor of nostalgia and the poet’s quest to reestablish African roots.

Dynamics of tension and release that compose dance and render it active and creative illustrate Senghor’s poetry and help to move it beyond mere nostalgia. This is made evident in his final, emblematic œuvre, *Élégie pour la Reine de Saba* where representations of dance propel the poetic space beyond African nostalgia and stereotypical connotations of Francophone poetry. Senghor’s *Élégie pour la Reine de Saba* oscillates between a *lieu de mémoire* and a *lieu de renaissance*, constructing both its tensions and releases as a hybrid mélange of “self” and “other,” while simultaneously illustrating the poet’s philosophical and socio-political objectives. Representations of dance in Senghor’s poetry act as physical eruptions on the page that extend the boundaries of the poetic text, transforming it and opening it up to *renaissance*.

In Senghor’s *Élégie*, dance is one tool through which the complicated mode of expression of the hybrid release can come into being. It is precisely because dance embodies three major artistic elements: the corporeal, the rhythmic and language, that it facilitates what dancer Martha Graham calls “a process of transformation.” This is made evident on the page in the form of the hybrid image as well as via the theme of *l’amour métis*.

Hybridity (including *l’amour métis*) plays a crucial role in the *Élégie* for it prohibits Senghor’s poetry from stagnating in nostalgia, despite significant historical references that are woven into the œuvre. Senghor takes manifestations of history in the form of the French language, Western poetic form, African tradition, etc., infuses them with “life” - i.e. dance - and crafts them into a veritable living philosophy. In this respect, language and ideas do not lie dormant between the pages of a book. Through dance, they leap from the page and live in the present, paving the way for a new and inherently creative future. Nietzsche wrote that “(o)nly in the dance do I know how to tell the parable of the highest things.” Perhaps, therefore, the parable Senghor illustrates through dance in the *Élégie pour la Reine de Saba* is one that harmoniously depicts the diversity in unity (and vice versa), which can inspire us today on the political, poetic and personal levels. Albeit utopian, investigating this possibility alone proves that the *Élégie* incites *renaissance*, inspiring us to think, to question...and hopefully, to dance.

## FOCUS ON GENDER

### IRW Helps to Bridge Gender Research and International Studies at Rutgers

Institute for Research on Women, directed by **Dorothy Hodgson**, received an award through the Rutgers Academic Excellence Fund to support travel and living expenses for international scholars currently living outside the United States while they are in residence at the Institute for Research on Women (IRW) during 2008-2009. The IRW Global Scholars program is a collaborative effort with colleagues from the Center for African Studies, Latin American Studies Program, South Asian Studies Program and Office of International Programs.

The purpose of the IRW Global Scholars Program is to enhance and expand the collaboration among and between International Programs units and the Institute for Research on Women, one of Rutgers' signal institutions for gender research. The new program will enable these units to work together to build upon and bridge Rutgers' tremendous strengths in gender research and international studies. As they pursue their own research, IRW Global Scholars will participate in the IRW's weekly interdisciplinary seminar for faculty and advanced graduate students and present a public lecture to the University in collaboration with the appropriate area studies units. They will also participate in the IRW Undergraduate Learning Community, meet individually with interested faculty and students, and speak in appropriate classes, university and community forums.

In spring 2009, the IRW will welcome two funded IRW Global Scholars whose work is relevant to the annual theme of "The Culture of Rights/The Rights of Culture": **Salma Maoulidi** from Tanzania and Eniko Magyari-Vincze from Romania. Salma is a prominent Muslim woman's activist, lawyer and scholar. She is the founder of the Sahiba Sisters Organization, active in Women Living Under Muslim Laws, and a vibrant public intellectual who writes a weekly newspaper column and occasional essays that probe the challenges and issues confronting Muslim women as activists and agents, and as wives, sisters and daughters.

In addition, **Fatima Sadiqi**, a renowned linguist from the University of Fes in Morocco will be in residence for the entire academic year as an unfunded IRW Global Scholar. She will be working on a book about Berber women's cultural rights and expressions of the sacred.

CAS members who are interested in meeting with either Salma or Fatima (or inviting them to their classes) during their residencies are welcome to contact the IRW (732-932-9072, [irw.rutgers.edu](http://irw.rutgers.edu)).

### 'Never been to me': the in/visibility of women writers in Morocco

A talk given by Soumia Boutkhil, Fulbright scholar from Mohammed I University, Oujda Morocco

Dr. Boutkhil focused on the subject of francophone Moroccan women writers and the plea for gender equality and social justice. The title of this presentation alludes to a song by Charlene and its relevance to women writers' condition in Morocco comes from the fact that as long as they continue voicing their woes through a foreign language (French) in a largely Arabic/Berber speaking culture, they will probably never impact their own societies. This, Dr. Boutkhil argues, is a form of self censorship in an already male dominated culture that considers woman as minors.





The talk examines three novels by two prominent female authors *La liaison* (1994) by Ghita Khayat, *Une femme tout simplement* (1996) and *Une vie à trois* (2000) by Bahaa Trabelsi. All three novels address very sensitive issues such as female sexuality, desire, the right to difference in a historical period when Moroccan activists were struggling for a change of the traditional family law that viewed women as eternal minors. Yet these narratives have never threatened the archaic social structures because their readership is composed mainly of francophone middle and upper class elites who are more likely to accept these ideas, while the literate and much more conservative majority versed only in Arabic remains totally immune to these claims.

This problematic situation is related to the fact that the linguistic landscape in Morocco is very complex. While the country's constitution continues obstinately to claim Arabic as the official language of the state, the everyday language is *Darija* along with a variety of Amazigh (Berber) dialects. *Darija* is a vernacular used/understood by the majority of Moroccans, classical Arabic is the language of the media, education and Al Quran, whereas French remains the language of economy, technology, the upper class and the elite. Therefore anyone who hopes to have an audience must address his readers in the language they speak most. And so, unless the above mentioned narratives are accessible to the greater majority which entails either translation or other versions in *Darija* or at least Arabic, they will remain literary curiosities doomed to entertain foreign readers in search for exoticism. Even the label of activism that these women writers claim would have no substance since it is deprived of a popular means of communication. The irony is that while mainstream Arabic literature continues to bolster the patriarchal structure of society, the most subversive and potentially liberating texts remain cloistered in an ivory tower, which reduces them to inefficient and elitist entertainment.

## FOCUS ON CHILDREN

### Child Poverty in Africa

By Meredith Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum,<sup>1</sup> a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and wellbeing of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year's conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children's rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

Over 40 per cent of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US \$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20 per cent of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20 per cent. Over 26 per cent of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

## The gender dimension of child poverty (continued)

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. Yet African women represent 70 per cent of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

### (Endnotes)

The African Child Policy Forum is based in Addis Ababa; Assefa Bequele is Executive Director, and Salim Ahmed Salim is Chairperson of the International Board of Trustees.

<http://www.africanchildforum.org>

ACPF is supported by International Child Support, Plan International, Save the Children UK, ILO, UNICEF, and UNFPA.

## 1929 Aba Women's War and the Social Economy of Children

By Robin P. Chapdelaine, Ph.D. Student, History Dissertation Project

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1929, British soldiers shot 31 Southeastern Nigerian women dead. A colonial administrator described the incident as a "black chapter" in West African History.<sup>1</sup> This black chapter is most often referred to as the 1929 Aba Women's War. In November 1929, the rumor that the British colonial government planned to tax Igbo women spurred women throughout the Owerri-Calabar region to fury. As a result of the rumor, women petitioned native leaders, the warrant chiefs, and burned down court buildings and trading houses. They wore leaves about their bodies and spread clay on their faces. They sang and danced in order to signal to others that "they were at war with the Government." When they soiled themselves with black chalk and ashes it symbolized their "unbearable economic reality."<sup>2</sup> These women slapped their tummies and called for justice. Colonial authorities responded in force. Police opened fire when hundreds of unarmed women crossed into open markets,<sup>3</sup> citing authority to do so per the anti-riot Ordinance of the Magistrate.

Since 1929, anthropologists, historians and feminist scholars have offered varying interpretations of this event. In 1966, A.E. Afigbo argued that, "European rule inaugurated a many-sided revolution which was in no way congenial to the temperament of the conservative among the Ibo and Ibibio peoples of Eastern Nigeria; and the Women's Riot of 1929 must be seen as one, if the most violent, of the people's reactions to this revolution."<sup>4</sup> Ten years after Afigbo offered his analysis of the Women's War, Judith Van Allen explained how colonial economic policies incited Igbo women to revolt against the native warrant chiefs and colonial administrators. In 1929 Igbo women 'sat on a man' in order to enact political and social change.<sup>5</sup> Van Allen describes the traditional practice of airing grievances by singing and dancing around the compound of the individual with whom the women had grievances. Igbo women called this practice 'sitting on' or 'making war on a man.'<sup>6</sup> Historian Temma Kaplan explains that, "In periods of stress...when the women's families and communities were threatened, such women will sometimes take matters into their own hands..."<sup>7</sup> The Igbo women could no longer bear the economic stresses of their time and decided to protest. I hope that my research on this incident will add to the growing number of studies that incorporate women's economic contributions to the colonial economy

while at the same time providing one of the first significant studies of the social economy of children within West Africa.

Those who engaged in the Women's War were the wives of clerks, civil servants, and other administrative employees. Igbo women belonged to stratified social classes. These women actively traded in the local markets, belonged to savings institutions, church organizations, and secret societies. Igbo women's involvement in these organizations provide insight into how imbedded economies shaped the nature of the women's political economy, and how women gained power and prestige based upon their roles as mother and productive laborers.

My research explores Igbo women's political economy in terms of the social economy of children within colonial Nigeria. Elements of Nigerian society, such as pawnship, hierarchical social structures, social value of children, and other economic exchanges are integral to my research. In particular, I use the institution of child pawnship as an analytical tool to understand the inner-workings of women's political economy.

Pawnship, different from slavery and indentured servanthood, existed amongst West Africans long before the 20th century. Historians Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy explain that, "Pawnship, a system in which individuals are held in debt bondage as collateral for loans, has been largely neglected."<sup>8</sup> At the most basic level, the institution of pawnship can be studied as a functioning part of social relationships and economic institutions, such as: kinship networks that engender dependent relationships and social stratification, and gendered interactions where women and children are most vulnerable.

Evidence suggests that child pawning increased as the demand for taxes increased. The introduction of British currency and global economic decline also exacerbated the practice. Further investigation on the institution of child pawnship within Southeastern Nigerian promises to offer a more complicated analysis of how the social economy of children changed within colonial Nigeria in conjunction with women's commercial activities. British intervention seemed to have undermined kinship networks, and dependent relationships, such as client-patron relations. As a result, the indigenous institution of pawnship suffered from the weakened safety nets traditionally provided by the lending arrangement. Preliminary research suggests that children's vulnerability increased as the global economy declined and as women's trading profits decreased with the imposition of colonial taxation. The rumor of direct taxation caused women to respond in an unprecedented and virulent manner. Women knew that their social status, both political and social, was based upon their access to children. The increase of child pawning illustrated the decline in female economic solvency. For this reason, the threat of losing additional children in pawn can be attributed as one of the many reasons women engaged in the 1929 revolt.

#### **(Footnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> Public Records Office (PRO), Kew, London, CO 583/168/14, *Native Unrest in Nigeria* (Letter from Mr. Bottomley to Sir. S. Wilson), December 1929.

<sup>2</sup> Aba Commission of Inquiry. *Notes of Evidence Taken by the Commission of Inquiry Appointed to Inquire into the Disturbances in the Calabar and Owerri Provinces, December 1929* (January 1930), 56.

<sup>3</sup> Ekwere Otu Akpan and Violetta L. Ekpo, *A Popular Uprising in South Eastern Nigeria: Preliminary Study* (Printed by the Government Printer, Calabar: Nigeria, 1988), 33-5.

<sup>4</sup> A.E. Afigbo, "Revolution and Reaction in Eastern Nigeria: 1900-1929: The Background to the Women's Riot of 1929," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. III, No. 3 (December 1966), 540.

<sup>5</sup> Judith Van Allen, "'Aba Riots' or Igbo 'Women's War'? Ideology, Stratification, and the Invisibility of Women," in *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change* ed. Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 59.

<sup>6</sup> Van Allen, 59-61.

<sup>7</sup> Temma Kaplan, "Naked Mothers and Maternal Sexuality," *The Politics of Motherhood: Activist Voices from Left to Right*, eds. Alexis Jetter, Annelise Orleck, and Dianna Taylor (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997), 211.

<sup>8</sup> Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., *Pawnship in Africa: Debt Bondage in Historical Perspective*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 1.

## FOCUS ON SOCIAL ISSUES

### Discussing Forecasts and Using Forecasts in Ugandan Villages: How the Poor Receive Climate Science

By Benjamin Orlove, Carla Roncoli, and Merit Kabugo

Despite the diversity of climatic zones and agricultural systems in Uganda, most farmers are highly dependent on rainfall for production and livelihood. Interannual climate variability in East Africa is strongly influenced by the El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Rural producers can, therefore, benefit from ENSO-based seasonal rainfall forecasts. In Uganda, forecasts are produced by the National Meteorological Service (NMS) at the onset of each rainy season, incorporated into farmer advisories by the Ministry of Agriculture, and disseminated by the media. In many cases, however, the information does not reach rural areas and, when it does, may not be adequately interpreted by farmers.

This project generated feedback from direct users on ways to improve the content and dissemination of forecasts so that they better respond to farmers' priorities and capacities. It also shows how existing networks of farmers' groups can be mobilized to serve as channels for the communication of climate forecasts. Insights from this research will generate tools that can help harness this potential for collective action and adaptive management in response to forecasts.

This study focuses on the role of culture and language in framing the presentation and processing of uncertain information (seasonal rainfall forecasts) in a group setting. The research design centers on the experimental dissemination of seasonal rainfall forecasts to farmers' groups in Rakai District, a drought prone area in southern Uganda. Seasonal rainfall forecasts were downscaled to district level by NMS collaborators, translated into a simple format and local language by Ugandan linguists, and then presented to farmers groups at the onset of the Sept-Dec 2005 and the March-May 2006 rainy seasons. Participants were then asked to discuss the forecasts among themselves (without facilitation by the researchers) and to agree on 3 suggestions to help the NMS better serve farmers' needs. A total of 15 meetings were held and were video- and audio-recorded.

A sociolinguistic analysis of the transcripts shows how the new information is often framed in terms of local knowledge and experience (e.g. of traditional forecast indicators) and cultural models (e.g. of climate change). Social interactions during meetings are shown to be structured by cultural norms (e.g. being polite) and social goals (e.g. reaching consensus). The analysis throws light on the participation dynamics and authority clashes set in motion by the uncertainty of climate forecasts. Participants appeal to tradition, religion, science, government, and development programs to back their ideas and agendas. Interviews with participants were conducted at the end of each rainy season to investigate whether and how the consensual understanding of the forecasts generated during the meetings influenced group and individual decisions and what was the outcome of those decisions. Farmers who did not participate in the meetings were also interviewed for comparative data.

The research showed that farmers who heard the forecasts in the context of participatory meetings were significantly more likely to use the forecasts than those who heard the forecasts as individuals, without the discussion in meetings. The weather outcomes that were forecasted were well within the range of conditions that farmers had experienced. The changes in farm management that the farmers undertook, such as shifting their mixes of crops, selecting different planting dates, or altering the areas that they planted, were also well within their experience. In this sense, the meeting discussions were not necessary for the farmers to understand new information or weigh new forms of action. Rather, farmers emphasized the importance of inte-

Members of a farmers' organization, discussing the forecast for the coming rainy season, Rakai, Uganda, 2006

grating new information in the context of their different sources of traditional knowledge—long collective experience with the seasons, traditional folklore-based indicators, close observation of natural phenomena such as clouds, and reports from kin, friends and associates in other regions that allow them to trace the progress of the rains across the country. They spoke of wanting forecasts to sink in so that they could rely on them. They also mentioned that discussions reduced or ended any confusion that they experienced from conflicts between different information sources, leading them to allocate more effort to their farms. In sum, the farmers had a complex, culturally-based language to describe their patterns of use of information, knowledge, cognition and decision-making and to explain the effects of group discussions.



For more information visit <http://www.cred.columbia.edu> and <http://www.des.ucdavis.edu/faculty/orlove.htm>

### **Ex-Combatants at “Healing Ceremonies” in Sierra Leone**

Dozens of ex-combatants from Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war are taking part in "healing ceremonies" to make peace with victims of the brutal conflict that left thousands dead. The ceremony was started by a local NGO, Forum of Conscience, directed by John Caulker, who gave a presentation at Rutgers in the Fall of 2007. According to Caulker, thousands of such "forgiveness ceremonies" are to take place throughout the country over the next five years, with funds provided by a United States-based foundation, Catalyst for Peace.

*Text Credit: National Newspaper Publisher's Association, April 15, 2008*

### **New Sudan Education Initiative Celebrates Flagship School**

On May 19, NESEI's U.S and Sudan staffs were joined by regional chiefs and elders, and other members of the local Lanya County and Yei town communities to welcome the first students of NESEI's flagship school to the new campus. The "blessing ceremony" was an opportunity for the NESEI family and local Sudanese friends to come together and stand witness to a milestone in development for South Sudan. As each student shook the hand of Directors Robert Lair and Atem Deng and passed through the entrance of the dining hall, where the ceremony was held, the dream of providing secondary education in South Sudan took a step closer towards reality. About 20 young women were present for the blessing ceremony that morning, the first of many young women and men who will receive a quality, life-changing education at an NESEI school.

*The New Sudan Education Initiative (NESEI) is a partnership between Sudanese and a global network of supporters, who have come together to bring the gift of education to Sudan. Their mission is to ensure a lasting peace in the region by building 20 schools by 2015. To learn more about their work visit <http://www.nesei.org> . Text Credit: NESEI News*

## AFRICA AND THE MILITARY

### **Africom: The New U.S. Military Command for Africa**

By Daniel Volman

Daniel Volman is the Director of the African Security Research Project in Washington, DC, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars. He is a specialist on U.S. military activities in Africa and African security issues.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, I had the honor and pleasure of joining Jan Tamas—representing the movement against U.S. bases in the Czech Republic—and Louis Olivier Bancoult—leader of the campaign by the people of the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean to return to the homes they were forced to leave to make way for the U.S. bases at Diego Garcia—at Rutgers University for a panel discussion on the spread of American military bases abroad. Rutgers Against War and the New Jersey Peace Council hosted the event as part of a national tour aimed at sharing the first-hand experiences of activists and scholars opposed to the militarization of U.S. foreign policy and the increasing presence of American troops all over the world.

My presentation focused on the creation of Africom, the Pentagon's new military command for Africa. The decision to create the Africa Command was announced by President Bush on February 6, 2007 and the new Africa Command is now being established at the U.S. base at Stuttgart, Germany; it is officially scheduled to become operational on October 1, 2008. The creation of the new command is the result of Africa's rising status in U.S. national security policy and military affairs. Africa now supplies more oil to the United States than the Middle East. It currently provides some 20% of total U.S. oil imports and is expected to provide at least 25% by 2015. The Bush administration has therefore declared that access to Africa's oil supplies is a "strategic national interest" of the United States. Africa has also become a central battlefield in America's Global War on Terrorism as well as a focus of the growing global competition between the United States and China for control of strategic resources and political influence.

When Africom becomes fully operational in October it will take over the implementation of a wide range of ongoing military, security cooperation, and security assistance programs that have already led to a series of U.S. air raids on Somalia as well as the establishment of a new U.S. military base in Africa—located at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti—and a vastly enlarged U.S. naval presence, particularly in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. The Bush administration has also dramatically increased funding for U.S. arms sales to Africa and created a host of new programs to provide weaponry and military training to African allies. Over the past seven years, the value of U.S. security assistance to Africa has risen from about \$100 million each year to an annual level of approximately \$800 million. The Pentagon would like to avoid direct military intervention in Africa whenever possible, preferring to bolster the internal security capabilities of its African friends and to build up the military forces of key states that can act as surrogates for the United States. But it is also preparing for the day when a disruption of oil supplies or some other crisis will lead to further direct military intervention. The Bush administration has substantially increased the size and frequency of U.S. military exercises in Africa and negotiated agreements to gain access to local military bases in a number of African countries, including Algeria, Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Tunisia, Namibia, São Tomé, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia.

However, one major issue related to the new command remains to be resolved: whether and where Africom will establish a regional headquarters in Africa. American officials toured Africa during 2007 looking for countries that would let Africom establish up to five regional headquarters on the continent. But the public response throughout Africa was so hostile to the idea of a permanent and highly visible American military presence on their territory and the risk that the

headquarters would be a magnet for terrorism was so great that no African country—except for Liberia—has yet offered to host the new command.

This constitutes a signal victory for civil society all across the continent and an important demonstration that the dynamics of global relations and political relations within states have changed radically since the end of the Cold War. Even in Africa—once treated as a convenient arena for manipulation and intervention by both superpowers—the United States can no longer rely on compliant regimes to do its bidding and faces growing opposition from popular political organizations and civic institutions (political parties; newspapers and other independent media; churches, mosques, and other religious institutions; trade unions; community associations; human rights organizations; environmental groups; private business interests; etc.) that are gaining more and more power to challenge U.S. policy.

Privately, however, many African rulers have assured the United States that they are still eager to collaborate with the Pentagon in less visible ways, including participating in U.S. security assistance programs and agreeing to allow U.S. forces to use local military bases in times of crisis. For the time being, therefore, Africom's headquarters will remain at Stuttgart, although the Pentagon has announced that it hopes to establish an Africom presence in at least two African countries during the coming year.

Africom only becomes fully operational this October, just a month before the election to select President Bush's successor. Thus, it will be up to the next president to decide whether or not to follow the path marked out by the Bush administration—a strategy based on its determination to depend upon the use of military force in Africa and elsewhere to satisfy America's continuing addiction to oil—or will chart a new path based on an international and multi-lateral partnership with African nations and with other countries that have a stake in the continent (including China and India) to promote sustainable economic development and democracy in Africa and a new global energy order based on the use of clean, safe, and renewable resources.

### **Rutgers Hosts International Workshop, “Re-Evaluating Africa and World War II”**

From March 27-30 several dozen scholars attended an international workshop entitled, “Re-Evaluating Africa and World War II,” and film series on Black soldiers in World War II. The event was organized by several African historians: Carolyn Brown (Rutgers), Ahmad Sikainga (Ohio State), Judith Byfield (Cornell) and Gregory Mann (Columbia). This, the first of two workshops (the other planned for Cornell U. next spring), launches a publishing project to create an undergraduate text on World War II and Africa. Scholars attended from Nigeria, Japan, Israel, Botswana, Wales, and South Africa. Presentations demonstrated the important yet underrated role that Africa and Africans played in the War and included a diversity of topics including West African combatants in Burma, war time entertainment in South Africa, Igbo women and trade, and much more. For a complete list of sponsors please visit the event archives of the Center for African Studies website: [http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/events/media/0708\\_media/afrwwii\\_horiz.pdf](http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/events/media/0708_media/afrwwii_horiz.pdf).

There was a film showing and discussion on two of the evenings. Greg Mann led a discussion following the first film, the award-winning Algerian film “Days of Glory - Indigenes,” about four Algerian soldiers who join the war against Nazism. The producer and editor of the second film, “761st Tank Battalion,” a film about a forgotten African American tank brigade, attended and led a discussion following the presentation. Dr. Fernanda Perrone (Rutgers Library's Special Collections and University Archives) gave a presentation of pictures from the “Abrahams Collection” of photos from Liberia borrowed from Cornell University's library. These were images of 3000 African American troops guarding Firestone's rubber plantations. The follow up conference will be held at Cornell University.

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