

CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

NEWSLETTER: SPRING 2008, VOLUME XI

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February (Black History Month)

- 12 Lecture: Reverend Dr. M. William Howard, Jr., Chairman of the RU Board of Governors, speaks on the history of the American Committee on Africa
- 20 Lecture: ASA President Aliko Songolo
- 27 Dinner, Movie and Dialogue: Bamako

March

- 5 Workshop: First Annual Graduate Student and Research Fellows
- 6 Film: Democracy in Dakar
- 28-29 Workshop: Re-evaluating Africa and WWII

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

Editor.....Barbara Cooper
Content, Layout, Design.....Renée DeLancey

BAMAKO By Abderrahmane Sissako (2006, Mali)

Dinner, Movie and Dialogue presented by

The Center for African Studies and
The Office of Undergraduate Education, Multicultural Student Engagement

Date: Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Time: 6pm Dinner, 7pm Film

Place: Graduate Student Lounge (College Avenue)

Photo Credit: Artificial Eye's Bamako Web Gallery



Please consider making a donation to support CAS!

For mailed donations 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 Center for African Studies at the address on the back of this issue. For online donations visit the CAS website: <http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu>. If you require additional information please call the Center at 732-445-6638.

CAS STAFF

Barbara Cooper.....Director
Richard Schroeder.....Associate Director
Renée DeLancey.....Assistant to Director
Cherai Daniels.....Administrative Assistant
Kaia Shivers.....Graduate Work Study

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OF NEW JERSEY

Letter from Director Barbara Cooper:

So often it is hard to reconcile the tempo and priorities of the University's teaching and research mission with the more immediate the needs of Africans both here in the United States and on the continent. With a view toward finding more ways to make our mission as specialists on Africa useful to citizens of New Jersey, this year we at the Center for African Studies have put particular emphasis upon initiatives to engage more directly with African immigrants here in New Jersey and to reflect upon the role of the United States in Africa.

We began the year with an invitation to Congressman Donald Payne, who represents the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey and has long been a friend to CAS and to Africa. Congressman Payne is the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, which hosted hearings this past summer on "Africa Command: Opportunity for Enhanced Engagement or the Militarization of US-Africa Relations." Because the debates over this newly unified and uniquely inter-agency Africa command (or AFRICOM) have been heated both in the United States and in Africa, we asked Congressman Payne to provide us with an update on it and an overview of other issues before Congress that touch upon Africa. By the time of our talk, of course, AFRICOM was already a fait accompli. Congressman Payne was very frank in his misgivings about AFRICOM and expressed an interest in working closely with Africa specialists to ensure that the new command does not result in a militarization of State Department and USAID functions in Africa.

We carried forward that momentum in our "African Immigrants Organize" speaker series. Historically it has been difficult for the Center to actively engage with Africans here in the United States—the mandate of an "area studies center" has often been defined explicitly to *exclude* research and programming related to immigrants. It is our conviction that Africans both here and on the continent are neither merely passive victims, nor lacking in initiative and imagination. In an effort to think about how the Center might be of service to initiatives begun by African immigrant groups we have invited leaders and activists from a variety of organizations in the region and beyond to speak about their work, about the challenges Africans face, and about the issues facing immigrants more generally. So far we have benefited from visits from John Caulker of Forum of Conscience to speak on issues of corporate responsibility and reintegration challenges in post-conflict Sierra Leone; from Benjamin Afrifa of the African Federation to speak about how immigrant groups can join together under a bigger umbrella to work very proactively both here and on the continent; and from Alix Nguéfack of American Friends Service Committee to speak on the Immigrant Rights Program in Newark to draw African immigrants together in a context in which services have traditionally targeted Spanish speaking immigrants.

Probably our greatest success this fall collaborating with other units interested in promoting an engaged and informed citizenry in New Jersey was the visit from Abraham Awolich of the New Sudan Education Initiative (NESEI) campaign for building peace through education, "Future Beyond Genocide." Awolich's riveting presentation of his own experiences as a war refugee brought the problems and conflicts of Sudan to life for our students. NESEI's project to raise funds to rebuild the educational system in Southern Sudan is a powerful example of how African immigrants are active and forward-looking.

I hope you will enjoy the pieces we have included in this newsletter related to this ongoing series and we look forward to seeing you at our spring events for this and other exciting initiatives.
Yours,



Barbara M. Cooper

FACULTY NEWS

Abena Busia (English), was elected Director for the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD). She was also elected RU School of Arts and Sciences Senator and Representative to the Board of Trustees and appointed Chair of the Faculty Honorary Degrees Committee. **Dorothy Hodgson** (Anthropology), is President-elect of the national Association for Feminist Anthropology and has become the first social scientist to direct the Institute for Research on Women. She is focused on further expanding the Institute's interdisciplinary partnerships and developing additional programs offering multi-national perspectives. **Walton Johnson** (Africana Studies), will spend the next three Spring semesters at the University of Cape Town's Center for African Studies. He will participate in the formulation of strategies to help the University respond to the needs of the new South Africa. **Julie Livingston** (History), will Co-Direct the 2008-2010 project entitled, "Vernacular Epistemologies" at the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis. **Alamin Mazrui**, (Africana Studies), co-authored a Swahili-language play, *Sudana* with Kimani Wanjogu, which was awarded the second prize in the 2007 Jomo Kenyatta Foundation Awards in the category of Swahili Literature.

See also ASA event highlights page three.

CAS FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Abena Busia: *Women Writing Africa Volume III: East Africa* (The Feminist Press, 2007).
"Teaching Toni Cade Bambara Teaching: Learning With The Children in Toni Cade Bambara's 'The Lesson,'" in *Savoring the Salt: The Legacy of Toni Cade Bambara*, Linda Janet Holmes and Cheryl A. Wall, eds. (Temple University Press, 2007) pp 181-194.
"The Artistic Impulse of Toni Morrison's Shorter Works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Toni Morrison*, Justine Tally, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp 101-111. "Of Records and Memory: An African Portrait Revisited, an Essay" and "Notes for a Diary of the Republic:

A Time-Line", in *Ghana: An African Portrait Revisited*, Peter Randall, photo. and ed. (Peter E. Randall Publisher and Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007) pp xv-xviii and pp xxxi-xxxiv
Moha Ennaji: *La Culture Amazighe et le Développement Humain: Colloques et Séminaires*. Co-edited together with Fatima Sadiqi (Imprimerie Sipama, 2007). *Femmes et Education dans la Région Méditerranéenne*. (Imprimerie Sipama, 2007).
Alamin Mazrui: *Swahili Beyond the Boundaries: Literature, Language and Identity* (Ohio University Press, 2007). A prize-winning Swahili play, co-authored with Kimani Wanjogu, *Sudana* (Nairobi: Longhorn, 2007). "A Sociolinguistics of 'Double-Consciousness': English and Ethnicity in the Black Experience," in *English and Ethnicity*, Catherine Evans Davies and Janina Brutt-Griffler, eds. (Palgrave, 2007) pp 49-74. "Africa in America's 'War on Terrorism': Some Political Implications" in *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: In Search of an African Voice*, Wafala Okumu and Anneli Botha, eds. (Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria, 2007) pp 67-77. "Media and Culture: Language Use" and "Literature in African Languages: Islamic," *New Encyclopedia of Africa* (2nd. Edition), John Middleton and Joseph C. Miller, eds. (Charles Scribner's Sons, 2007).

Meet the CAS Staff!

Barbara Cooper



Richard Schroeder



Renée DeLancey



Kaia Shivers



Cherai Daniels

Abena Busia's ASA 2007 Highlights - Rutgers Shines!

By Abena P.A. Busia, Department of English

We having just returned from the 50th Anniversary Conference of the ASA in NYC, have good reason to award ourselves three cheers, here they are in true awards fashion:

The First Cheer:, as we all know, Carolyn Brown was a Co-chair of the Local Arrangements committee, and truly inspirational in her vision for the meeting, principally in being the moving spirit behind "New York Celebrates Africa" Week promulgated by the Mayor. Such was the success of that idea that the Mayor's Office sent a proclamation declaring that henceforth it will be an annual city-wide event! HIP!!

The Second Cheer: We did not know, but discovered in our program books on registration that Ousseina Alidou's book *Engaging Modernity: Muslim Women and the Politics of Agency in Post-Colonial Niger* was the runner-up for the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize awarded by the Women's Caucus of the ASA for an outstanding book published by a woman that prioritizes women's experiences. HIP HIP!!!

And the Final Cheer: The Melville J. Herskovits Award is presented annually by the ASA to the author of an outstanding original scholarly work published on Africa in the previous year. It is one of the Association's most coveted award, and though the finalists are published in the conference program, the winner is not announced until the conference itself, at an awards ceremony following the Presidential Lecture. Imagine our pride on opening up the program book to see listed a work by a scholar we all know whose stellar first book published a few years ago had also been a finalist for this award. This time she did herself one better and those of us present has the joy of hearing the titles of first the fourth, then the third, then the second runner up called out leaving only one possible conclusion - that the winner of the 2006 Melville J. Herskovits Award for outstanding original scholarship was (DRUM ROLL) *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel* by our own Barbara Cooper, Professor of History and Director of CAS, Rutgers University. HIP HIP HOORAY !!!

Big Congratulations to all three of them.

African Studies Association 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting in New York, NY October 16-21, 2007



From left to right: The Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs (Carolyn Brown, center) at the Welcome Reception; Herskovits Award Winner Barbara Cooper; Durbar of Ghanaian Chiefs (Abena P.A. Busia at microphone)

Photographs taken by Kristina L. Carle

Climate Change Helps Spread Disease

By Alisa Chen (Reprinted courtesy of *The Daily Targum*)

Students checking the daily weather forecast may be surprised to hear that a change in climate has more impact on their lives than a mere change of wardrobe. Dr. Paul Epstein spoke to University students about how climate change can contribute to and propagate the spread of diseases in Africa at a talk on Wednesday, November 7, 2007 hosted by the Center for African Studies and the Center for Race and Ethnicity.

“Malaria is the biggest issue,” said Epstein, who is the Associate Director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School. “Its distribution and outbreaks are affected by warming as well as by extreme weather patterns. Malaria kills 2,000 people a day - primarily children and primarily in Africa - so it’s a huge issue there. Climate change makes it worse.” Epstein said in the mountains of Africa, the effects of a warming climate are presently evidenced by melting glaciers, a transition of plant communities to higher ground and mosquitoes moving up to a higher altitude. As a result, many new African communities are being exposed to malaria.



Paul Epstein and Barbara Cooper

Epstein, a medical doctor trained in tropical health, has worked with various organizations such as NASA to assess the health impact of climate change. He said the awareness of a relationship between climate change and its health effects stemmed from a cholera outbreak in 1991. Three different cities in Peru were struck with cholera and, from there, scientists hypothesized that the nearby warm sea surface temperatures and rich nutrients had led to the growth of algal colonies, which fostered cholera and infected the fish and shellfish populations in the area. Global warming, which he said has been exacerbated by recent increases in greenhouse gases and weather change, is partly responsible this. The changing weather patterns in Africa also have a global effect. “The dust storms in central Africa also affect other parts of the world,” Epstein said, “this is a dimension that was not thought of just a few years ago.”

Many in the audience found Epstein’s assertions to be novel. “I thought it was a really interesting connection how the climate change in Africa has caused dust storms, which have also affected the Caribbean islands,” said Maddie Perlman-Gabel, a Livingston College sophomore. David Russell, a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Health, remarked that he too was surprised by Epstein’s words on climate change and the wide scope of effects on global health. “I wasn’t aware of some of the indirect ways that climate change affects health,” Russell said. “It’s an issue that is getting more important as we become more aware of the consequences of energy consumption. I think that more people are starting to realize that it’s actually happening.”

But Epstein said all is not lost. There are steps that can be taken to prevent drastic climate change. In Africa, the spread of meningitis occurs during the dry season when membranes of the respiratory tract become dried up. Since dry seasons can be foreseen, he said climate forecasting is one step towards preventing the disease. Additionally, since climate change affects everyone on a global scale, there are steps that we can take to alleviate warming. The use of clean energy, green buildings, the planting of trees alongside streets and learning to be environmentally friendly can help, he said.

The Importance of Education Resonates in Sudan and South Africa

Genocide Refugee Tells Story

By M. Aasin Pena (Reprinted courtesy of *The Daily Targum*)

For Abraham Awolich, Co-founder of the New Sudan Education Initiative (<http://www.nesei.org>), the constant killing and suffering taking place in the Sudan was a horrible reality for more than 17 years, not just a distant conflict. Students gathered at the Graduate Student Lounge of the Rutgers Student Center on the College Avenue Campus on November 5, 2007 to hear Awolich, a Southern Sudanese refugee, talk about his experiences. After his village was attacked, Awolich and thousands of others were forced to flee in search of safety from the civil war plaguing their country. Despite being only seven years old at the time, Awolich fled to Ethiopia, later returning to Sudan after war began in the neighboring country before finally making it to Kenya. Countless numbers of people died along the way from military ambushes, food deprivation and other dangers. Awolich said he spent nearly two decades as a refugee before being granted the opportunity to come to the United States in 2001.

For Manny Algarin, a Rutgers College junior, the event provided an unbelievable account of what it was like being a refugee in the Sudan. "Just to hear the struggle of growing up and having to run away from dangers constantly when you haven't even reached puberty yet is inconceivable to me," he said.

Until 2005, Sudan was in a civil war between the Islamist government in the north and the Christian Sudanese people in the South, which had been going on since the country's independence. During the conflict the civilian death toll, at an estimated 1.9 million, was one of the highest of any war, Awolich said. "In Sudan, the only way you can discuss peace is not through the negotiations table, but rather through the barrel of the gun," he said. He would like to change that by addressing the educational needs of young Sudanese.

The event was sponsored by the Center for African Studies and was part of their African Immigrants Organize program, which is a talk series that focuses on the many ways that different organizations in the area help African immigrants. Other co-sponsors include: the Graduate School of Education's Continuing Education and Global Programs and Department of Educational Theory, Policy, and Administration; the Office of Undergraduate Education's College Avenue Campus Dean; Oxfam Rutgers; the Rutgers Chapter of Amnesty International; the Catholic Center; Salam Muslim Students Association; and Rutgers Hillel.



From left to right
Avi Smolen, Community Service Coordinator Rutgers Hillel
Lauren Servin, Co-founder NESEI
Abraham Awolich, Co-founder NESEI
Father Kevin Kelly, Catholic Center

GSE Global Initiative Thrives in South Africa

By Dr. Darren Clarke

RU Graduate School of Education, Executive Director Continuing Education & Global Programs

In 2001, GSE began what would become an annual academic tour to South Africa to demonstrate to graduate students and educators the critical need to improve education for children in this region. Among the planned activities are lectures, participation in school and community development projects, and visits to important historical and cultural arenas. Shortly after returning home, each participant is responsible for developing a project or product for his or her school district or community.

The annual 18-day trip has served as a springboard for the development of the broader South Africa Initiative (SAI), which also includes US graduate students and teachers working in our three adopted South African schools; an exchange program for South Africa educators to travel to the U.S. to experience and learn about American educational systems; and a Wine for Literacy program sponsored by our US corporate partners, 57 Main Street Imports and GAR Products, which provide much needed school supplies and furniture. Johnson & Johnson has also recently become a partner.

We have developed an academy without walls and a true exchange of talents and expertise. In this vibrant learning and sharing environment, educators from the United States and South Africa develop strategies and interventions for the improvement of teaching and learning. The success of SAI is measured by the increased levels of engagement, motivation and retention of teachers, which helps address teacher shortages in both countries. Also, school administrators report increased levels of learning, achievement, retention and greater parental and community involvement in school activities.

The 2007 group of 17 SAI participants returned from a very successful trip to South Africa, where they provided activities and health and wellness programs in the schools and communities of Paarl, where unemployment and educational challenges abound. This circle of engagement with our South African Educators (SAEs) was completed in November of this year, with the visit to New Brunswick of Claude De Jager, principal Amstelhof Primary School; Hillary Jacobs, a teacher/counselor at Klein Nederberg High School; Martha Waddington, a teacher at Bergendal Intermediate School; and Jeffery Van Schoor, a teacher from Amstelhof Primary School. During their two-week sojourn, the group visited public schools in New Jersey; participated in a variety of workshops and training sessions with GSE faculty and experts in educational technology, math education and civics; visited New York City; and conducted discussions with Rutgers graduate students.

Over eighty-six “alumni” have taken part in the Study Tour. Participant academic projects have focused on a variety of topics including the development of multicultural competencies, narratives of hope, science and mathematics, aesthetics and culture, the public nature of South African institutions of higher education, special education policy and practice in South African schools, as well as several projects involving the development of curriculum materials for teaching about South Africa in US schools.

The SAI website www.gse.rutgers.edu/southafrica continues to be a resource for communication about events, programs and showcasing activities in New Jersey schools and our partner schools in South Africa. It showcases the SAI work in public schools in South Africa and New Jersey which serve to bridge cultures, uplift communities and provide hope for our future world leaders, educators, health care workers and democratic citizens. Applications for the 2008 study tour to South Africa are available now on our website. For more information: (732) 932 7496, Ext. 8106

African Immigrants Organize

Blood Diamonds and Reparations for War Victims in Post Conflict Sierra Leone

By Mafudia Bangura, MD/MPH student at UMDNJ

Mr. John Caulker, Executive Director for Forum of Conscience, a human rights advocacy organization based in Freetown, Sierra Leone, is currently a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University. Mr. Caulker spoke to an audience of over 50 students and faculty about the role of blood diamonds in the Sierra Leonean conflict and the current state of reparations for war victims in the country.

Prior to the institution of Forum of Conscience (FOC) in 1996, little was known outside of the region about human rights violations in Sierra Leone during the lengthy civil conflict that ended five years ago.

Mr. Caulker's organization has been instrumental in bringing to light the scope of these violations. At great risk Forum of Conscience staff worked closely with Amnesty International at the height of the war to publi-

cize the atrocities committed by fighting groups in the country. When asked how he survived a conflict that left thousands dead or maimed, he replied, "If you believe in God, I will tell you it was God." In the post-conflict era, in addition to advocating for human rights and war victims, FOC is also raising awareness about the environmental devastation caused by mining activities in the diamond and rutile mining districts.



John Caulker

Mr. Caulker emphasized that diamonds were not the root cause of the conflict in Sierra Leone. The war was the result of decades of bad governance, corruption, and denial of basic human rights. Nevertheless it is clear that diamonds played a major role in sustaining the war. The sad irony of this is, as Mr. Caulker stated, "the average Sierra Leonean has never seen a diamond in his life." So what is the country doing to heal its war wounds and prevent a recurrence of violence? The Disarmament Demobilization, and Reintegration Commission (DDRC) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) are two efforts that were developed to promote peace in the nation. The DDRC has provided benefits and training opportunities for former fighters to reintegrate them into civilian society. Forum of Conscience played a major role in ensuring that the Sierra Leone government institute the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) called for by the Lomé Peace Agreement so that Sierra Leoneans could know the truth about what happened to them and their loved ones. The tasks of the TRC included reporting on the causes of the war and providing recommendations to prevent future violence.

However, the Commission faced many challenges, including confusion caused by the creation of a UN mandated Criminal Court (the "Special Court") which opened at the same time as the TRC. The purpose of the Special Court was to prosecute those most responsible for human rights violations during the war. Most Sierra Leoneans had trouble differentiating the Special Court and the TRC. In addition, the government was not very supportive of the efforts of the Commission. At the conclusion of its hearings, the TRC proposed that reparations be made to war victims; however, three years have passed since the Commission issued its recommendations to the government, and nothing has been done about reparations. Mr. Caulker has been vocal in drawing the international community's attention to this injustice.

Nah We Yone, Inc. - Responding to the Needs of Displaced Africans

By Adeyinka M. Akinsulure-Smith, Ph.D., Board Member and Co-founder Nah We Yone, Inc.

Our name “Nah We Yone” means “It belongs to us” in the Krio language of Sierra Leone; it is reflective of the self-help philosophy that we use to provide assistance. Since our founding, NWY has provided culturally sensitive, multi-faceted supportive psychological and social services to over 400 displaced Africans throughout the New York metropolitan area. Our services have included two main types of programs: a detainee-support program and therapeutic programs.

Through the Detainee Support program, NWY arranged for volunteers to make regular visits to asylum seekers who have been detained in INS Detention Centers in Queens and in Elizabeth. NWY offers resources to the detainees in the form of phone cards, magazines, postage and stationary. We help detainees and parolees find affordable legal representation, professionals to provide legal testimonies, and language interpreters to assist in asylum hearings.

Our clients have many concrete and emotional needs for social services and counseling. We have made NWY available to them by phone, through home visits, and now we are able to provide services in our office. We have provided individual, group and family counseling, crisis intervention and ongoing emotional support as clients encounter many new challenges in their adaptation to New York.

Also monthly meetings provide social interaction for both clients and volunteers on a regular basis. These meetings provide orientation to life in the US, education, and information about services. Some of the topics have included updates on African politics, recent changes in immigration laws, resettlement issues (e.g. Temporary Protected Status), and information about Cancer and STDS/HIV/AIDS in the African immigrant community.

Once a month, NWY organizes and provides the funds for our clients to go on therapeutic outings to meet people within the community over meals in a relaxed family style setting. These therapeutic outings have also involved welcoming and assisting the adults and children from Sierra Leone who were physically mutilated as a result of the war. All were brought to the United States to receive medical attention for their severed limbs.

NWY has developed a number of activities that focus on our youth, in our Project De Fambul. These activities have ranged from a three-day summer camp to a range of educational outings and opportunities for young African war survivors, immigrants and members of the local community. Such activities afford opportunities for all involved to learn from each other and share experiences in a safe and nurturing environment.

Although NWY has received several awards, our greatest affirmation comes from our members - seeing the smiles of children who have experienced much trauma during their short lives run, swim, dance, create, and feel free to be themselves during our annual Camp de Fambul; or understanding how meaningful our Women’s Wellness Group is to women who are trying to manage their transition to a new country while raising their families and addressing their own needs; or breaking bread with the NWY community at our monthly brunches.

For more information visit Nah We Yone on the web at <http://www.nahweyone.org> or call 646-417-5676.

African Culture: Clubs and Internships

Arabic and Swahili Clubs Celebrate Language, Society and Culture

The **Arabic Cultural Club** was created in April 2007, following the initiative of Dr. Moha Ennaji, Director of the Arabic Studies Program. It is a student organization with the aim to inform and to expose members of the student body, faculty and staff to the Arabic language, and to the culture of the many countries that speak Arabic. Its objective is also to organize cultural and intellectual activities of different sorts: music, dance, film festivals, art, videoscreening, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc. The Club has organized two major activities: Arabic music and belly dancing by Rutgers students on October 31 and a film presentation of Adel Imam's comic love film entitled, "Bakhiet and Adeela" on November 19 at the Busch Student Center. Membership is open to all Rutgers University students who are interested in Arabic language, society and culture. There is no formal registration process. To become a member please contact Moha Ennaji, the Director of Arabic, at: mennaji2002@yahoo.fr. The **Kiswahili Speakers Baraza** (Swahili for "meeting place") was launched on December 6, 2007 by Walimu (Swahili for "teachers") Alamin Mazrui and Emmanuel Endiema who welcomed Kiswahili enthusiasts to join the club and enjoy traditional Swahili treats such as mandazi, chai, kahawa, samosa and mahamri chapati. Like the Arabic Cultural Club, the Kiswahili Baraza's objective is to promote Swahili and to celebrate its many wonderful cultural facets. If you are interested in becoming a member please send an e-mail to Asia Stewart, the Swahili club's Correspondence Secretary, at: asias@eden.rutgers.edu. The Yoruba learners are also planning to form a language based **Yoruba Club** next semester. The student initiated clubs are an important development in African language instruction at Rutgers. They demonstrate a growing desire among students themselves to have more opportunities for developing higher levels of proficiency in the languages of their study.

Africana House

By Adryan Wallace, Doctoral Student, Political Science

The Africana House is part of the Global Village, a living and learning community for students interested in developing language skills, intercultural appreciation, global awareness and a sense of community. This unique residential environment combines curricular and co-curricular activities designed to enhance students' overall college experience and provide them with the skills necessary for effective global citizenship and leadership. The Africana House introduces students to the myriad cultural formations in Africa and the African Diaspora and explores gender and other contemporary development issues. Students are also mentored, with special emphasis placed on their academic and professional development. In addition to the house course, students are also required to enroll in a 3-credit course offered by the Africana Studies department.

In September 2007, several students from the Africana House traveled to Washington DC to participate in the Constituency for Africa's pilot Next Generation Leadership Program held during the Ron Brown African Affairs Series.



If you are interested in applying to the Africana House please contact Adryan Wallace, Africana House Fellow, via email at adwallac@eden.rutgers.edu or the Office of Global Programs at (732) 932-2900 ext. 103, for additional information.

Senait Kassahun, a Long Time Friend of CAS, Sends Greetings from Cairo (November 10, 2007)

Hello dear friends and family,

I am writing to you as I just passed my 2nd month landmark in Cairo. What a challenging, enlightening, and engaging two months it has been. I would like to update you about my experiences here – both with life in Cairo and with my work at Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA).

Cairo is a challenging city! With over 20 million people who call it home, it is no wonder that there are so many cars on the road, just like one might find in New York City, or any other major city. One of the major differences between New York and Cairo though, is that it is much more difficult to cross the road here!

Cairo is also permeated by a police and military presence. One starts to grow accustomed to this after a while, though it is quite disconcerting at first. This is however, one reason why one generally does not find much petty crime here. There are wonderful cultural activities such as concerts, exhibitions, films and lectures. These events seem like an oasis in this bustling city. I live in an apartment in Garden City with five roommates: one Italian, two French, one Danish, one German, and myself. We all work with various NGOs or universities. I now enjoy studying Arabic and I have also begun to take a traditional Egyptian dance class once a week, which helps to mediate the hecticness of work and life in Cairo.

My work at AMERA has proven to be quite a challenge. Our clients have experienced so much hardship in their home countries of Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea among others. For various reasons they were persecuted and abused and forced to flee for safety. Once in Egypt many of them face racism, discrimination and mistreatment. Hearing their stories has an emotional effect, and sometimes this effect can be overwhelming. Somali women seem to have the most difficult time. Many had been raped in Somalia, and face complications resulting from genital cutting and a host of gynecological problems and other health challenges. Hearing these stories makes me wonder how it is possible that human beings are capable of inflicting such pain.

I was heartened by two lectures by Cornel West at the American University in Cairo. Dr. West noted that Mrs. Mamie Till-Mobley made an indelible impact on the world when she decided to have an open-casket funeral for her 14 year-old son who was beaten and slain in the U.S. in 1955. That way the world could see what racism and hatred had done to her son; she wanted all to bear witness to what had been done to him. Dr. West recalled that 50,000 people passed through the funeral space and when Mrs. Till-Mobley spoke to them she said, "I will pursue justice for the rest of my life." He argued that this tragic event is a major pre-cursor to the Civil Rights Movement. What a different Civil Rights Movement it would have been, Dr. West pointed out, if Emmett Till's mother had vowed to pursue revenge for the rest of her life instead of justice. Some of the tragedies of war that are befalling this region are caused by the desire for revenge at any cost. This results in a violence not unlike that which was frequent in the Jim Crow South of the United States. Instead of race however, in East Africa this violence is perpetrated and justified on the basis of one's clan, ethnicity, religion, nationality and gender. I hope that throughout Africa and the world more and more people will pursue justice rather than revenge, and that one day people like our clients will no longer have to suffer.

My work here has heightened for me just how fortunate I am to have all of you wonderful friends and family in my life. With love and warm wishes, Senait

Ghana Internship Summer 2007: The Three Interns On What They Learned

Abena P.A. Busia, Ghana Internship Director, Reports: In Fall 2006 Mrs. Wendy Lee, a Rutgers Alumna, donated \$15,000 to Women's and Gender Studies and the Center for African Studies to fund three students to go to Africa on fully supported internships to work with African women's organizations. I offered Ghana as the location for the pilot program, and provided oversight for the students on their two month trip. Three students, Jessica Akunna, Karina Martinez, and Marta Zuleta, won the competition and after a semester of independent preparatory study with me, travelled to Ghana in Summer 2007. As you will see from their presentations, they were sterling ambassadors. We all learned much from their experiences and, for my part, it was exhilarating and a source of pride to see how well they rose to the challenge of the real responsibilities they faced. They tackled these responsibilities with grace and a real sense of achievement.

Jessica Akunna Reports: I had the unique opportunity to work for two organizations during my summer 2007 internship in Ghana. The first, the Women's Business and Assistance Association (WABA), is a non-profit entity with four diverse areas of service: economic empowerment, the Future of Leaders of Ghana (FLOG), human rights education, and organizational development. Under the direction of Ms. Gloria Ofori-Boadu, a lawyer by profession, I created a strategic plan for the organization with a specific focus on health education and micro-credit programs. Following that, I interned for DAWN, an international organization that focuses on sexual and reproductive health rights. I was responsible for researching abortion issues in Ghana and the Maputo Plan of Action established by the African Union.

In order to create a comprehensive strategic plan for WABA, my first week was spent reviewing their previous programs, reading several WABA publications and learning how to create a strategic plan! WABA's micro-credit programs are primarily in the Eastern Region of Ghana. I stayed in a rural town called Asafo-Akim. WABA trains women in soap making, tie-dye, printmaking, and bead making in order to create income-generating skills. In Atwemamena and Adukuanta, nearby towns to Asafo-Akim, small women's groups participated in the micro-credit program where they financed small palm oil factories several years ago. My job was to discuss with the women collectively whether their projects were sustainable. Upon my return to Accra I would provide feedback to Ms. Ofori-Boadu and incorporate my findings in the strategic plan.

Ms. Ofori-Boadu is also in the process of expanding the FLOG program in Asafo-Akim. FLOG provides leadership skills in the areas of reproductive health and sexually transmitted disease to the youth. I was enthusiastic to talk to the Junior Secondary School children about HIV/AIDS and safe sexual practices. As a sexual health advocate here at Rutgers I felt comfortable facilitating this program. However, I had to be culturally sensitive and tailor the talk for the younger crowd. At the end of my internship I created a strategic plan of comprehensive fundraising strategies, methods to sustain the micro-credit program, ways to provide an effective FLOG program, and suggestions on how to divide work among staff to make WABA more effective.

As a Dawn intern, I researched the legal framework of abortion in Ghana and harmful self-induced abortions that occur. Abortion is legal under certain circumstances yet the written law is not comprehensive. The research I provided for Dr. Afua Hesse was used to facilitate an event sponsored by IPAS, an international organization that advocates for safe abortion. Her presentation was geared to a group of Ghanaian lawyers who are responsible for drafting the law. Finally I had to research and analyze the Maputo Plan of Action. The Maputo Plan of Action is a lengthy framework created by the African Union in 2006 in an effort to dramatically improve sexual and reproductive health in Africa by 2010. I accompanied Dr. Hesse to the three-day Maputo conference entitled, "ECOWAS Civil Society Consultative Meeting on the Maputo Plan of Action" which included representatives of civil society from every nation in West Africa. These representatives

had to create implementation strategies that would best fit their nations. While Dr. Hesse facilitated the conference in its entirety I was responsible for taking vigorous notes and was encouraged to actively participate.

Besides personal growth and re-evaluating my future career goals, I was able to leave something tangible as an intern. WABA provided me with insight on how small, non-government entities work with communities through capacity building and transform lives through improved health, both physically and fiscally. In contrast, working with DAWN allowed me to see everything from a macro level and appreciate the importance of structure. I am entirely grateful for this unique internship opportunity and thank the program's donor, Wendy Lee, Women Studies, the Center of African studies, Professor Abena Busia, family and friends for all their support!



Karina Martinez, program sponsor Wendy Lee, Jessica Akunna



Dr. Busia with interns at Tagbo Water Falls



Marta Zuleta at the Cape Coast's Elmina Castle



Interns at the Ghana vs. Nigeria women's soccer match



Jessica Akunna at Accra's National Museum with kente cloth



Three interns sitting on a fishing boat at Capecoast

Karina Martinez Reports: My experience as an intern in Ghana was unforgettable: the people, culture and internship all contributed to my wonderful memories. I first started out working for the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), where I met a wonderful community of women who strive for excellence and justice. These women allocate large sums of funds yearly to women's NGOs with missions in health, reproductive rights, HIV & AIDS, economic empowerment, peace building, and political participation. Working, however briefly, alongside passionate women really touched me and opened up my eyes to the struggles and hardships women face.

I spent the rest of my four weeks interning with a lawyer with Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa (LAWA). I was able to help her with the National Plan of Action on the Domestic Violence Act (May 2007), which had been passed recently. The National Plan of Action would later be presented to the United Nations. Before arriving to Ghana I already had a passion for work on domestic violence as a result of my experience with Women Aware Inc.; I knew that I wanted to work with something closely related to my field work here at Rutgers.

While working on the National Plan of Action my supervisor urged me to look into issues regarding child domestic workers in the Volta Region of Ghana. It is vital that we educate the children on their rights and their parents on their responsibilities. My task was to create a manual to be the component for workshops to educate children and their parents. I spent challenging days reading the Ghanaian constitution, the Children's Act, and the Labour Act to develop the training manual. After four weeks of writing, reading, and constructing a manual, I finally finished my project and was very satisfied. One of the reasons that I absolutely enjoyed my internship with LAWA was that I was able to leave Ghana with something concrete to show for my time there.

In addition to my experiences interning I also left Ghana with an unforgettable group of friends, a taste for Ghanaian food, and a passion for the culture. All of these things made my experience in Ghana extraordinary.

Marta Zuleta Reports: During my internship in Ghana I worked in WISE, a locally based, non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to improve and better the lives of women and girls. My task was to assist in a research project on teenage pregnancy in Budumburam Refugee Camp, one of the largest Refugee camps in West Africa. Budumburam is home to over 42,000 thousand people, most of whom had fled Liberia when the civil war started in 1990.

At times it was not easy to adapt to such a different setting. Frequently I felt overwhelmed by the situation. Working and interviewing young women was emotionally hard since so often I felt that the girls had no dream or future expectations for themselves. As a foreigner living in the most developed country of the world, it is easy to take for granted many things that, for some people in Ghana, are unimaginable.

Interning in Ghana helped me to get a better understanding of the reality of life for many women and to gain personal skills that will be useful later in life. This experience helped me develop communication skills that enabled me to talk more effectively with the girls I surveyed as well as my co-workers.

The culture of Ghana is very different from our own but it was quite easy to adapt since most people were extremely polite and were open to difference. After the second week I felt like I was at home but every now and then I still felt isolated when people spoke in other languages or did things I have never seen or done before. But over all my internship in Ghana was a great experience.

Program in African Languages and Literatures

Rutgers Participation at Yale University NERCPAL Workshop

By Ousseina Alidou, Director, Program in African Languages and Literature

On Saturday, November 3, 2007, seven teachers of Rutgers Program in African languages participated in the second workshop of North East Consortium of Programs in African languages held at Yale University. These are Moha Ennaji (Arabic), Alamin Mazrui, Emmanuel Ndiema and Gabriel Moses (Kiswahili), Moses Mabayoje and Nurudeen Ali Masankore (Yoruba), and Ousseina Alidou (Hausa). Other participants at the workshop came from Harvard University, Boston University, and University of Hartford. The workshop was designed to provide opportunities for African language teachers to share teaching modules they have developed that integrate multimedia technologies. We also discussed how new African language teaching approaches build on the learners' competence in digital literacy. Dr. John Kiari Wanjogu presented his Kiswahili for Medics video lessons and the picture-based interactive medical Kiswahili dictionary which evolved from the lessons. The objective of his modules was to illustrate how a content-based Kiswahili lesson can stimulate the growing interest in the language from students majoring in nursing and medical schools aiming to do research in East Africa. The modules provide the learners with a discourse-literacy on how Kiswahili language and culture deal with topics —such as health, illness and healing – for which the learners have established a familiarity through their training and/or in their native language. Dr. Oluseye Adesola's presented a variety of internet language games which Americans are familiar with and which he uses in his Yoruba classes to motivate and develop learning cooperation among his students at different levels. These games located from the *Quia* website include language learning activities such as matching games, flash cards, hangman, trivia games. These are American games adapted to Yoruba language teaching and learning, which could be used both in and outside the classroom.



PALL faculty Ousseina Alidou and Alamin Mazrui
Photo credit: Department of Africana Studies

The workshop stressed that the African language modules were a collaborative outcome between the African language teachers (who provided the content) and the staff of the Yale Center for Language Study (who provided the technological expertise). Brad Gano, the Acting Director of Yale Center for the Study of Language and Robin Ladouceur, the African Language faculty liaison were also present at the workshop and provided a detailed explanation on the importance and modalities of this collaboration between the pedagogical and technological dimension of African language instruction.

There were also a couple of students presentations in Kiswahili and Yoruba which provided a learner's perspective on which pedagogical approaches and language learning strategies they found most effective. They drew from their comparative experiences of language learning in both classroom settings in the American academy and in immersion study abroad situations.

Finally, the workshop concluded by discussing possible collaborative projects between NERCPAL institutions. It was agreed that Yale University and Rutgers University will jointly work on a proposal on African languages for Medical workers.

Student Exposure to Research in African Languages and Literatures: Sylviane Diouf and Abdoulaye Niang

By Alamin Mazrui, Program in African Languages and Literatures

The Program in African Languages and Literatures sponsored two exciting speakers this fall. The first, Sylviane A. Diouf of the Schomburg Center, acclaimed author of *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (named a 1999 Outstanding Academic Book), gave a talk on “Literate African Muslims and American Slavery” in my class, “Islam in the Black Experience,” which had read her book. Diouf’s lively power-point gave the a good sense not only of whom the enslaved African Muslims were – many coming from the ranks of *shaykhs*, *mallams* and *taalibe* – but also of the importance they placed on literacy and the kinds of materials and documents they read and wrote, both in Arabic and *Ajami* (Arabic script). Discussing the autobiographies of several individual slaves, she demonstrated the ambiguities of literacy in the American slave system, where it served as an instrument both of upward mobility and of slave resistance. Diouf’s conclusions highlighted how *African* Islam had already become by the 17th Century. Her presentation underscored the critical importance of the study of African languages and literacy practices in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of African slave culture in the Americas.

PALL also sponsored a visit by Abdoulaye Niang, a professor of Sociology at Université Gaston Berger in Saint-Louis, Senegal. Dr. Niang made two wonderful presentations on Wolof rap music in Senegal, one talk in English and the other in French. The first talk, again in my “Islam and the Black Experience” class, assisted us in looking at the interplay between Islam and musical traditions in Africa and in the African American experience. Niang’s talk paid special attention to the ways rap music galvanizes Muslim unity and fidelity to the faith across the sectarian Sufi divide. But his talk also highlighted the multiple meanings that Islam carries for different people and communities, even within a single nation like Senegal. And because of rap music’s growing popularity, its great potential for mass mobilization, and its ability to generate huge sums of money, rap is slowly gaining legitimacy even among its potentially most vociferous critics, the religious leaders of Sufi Brotherhoods. At his second talk, in French, for René Larrier’s, “Media and Memory,” Senior Culture Seminar, Professor Niang traced the history of the hip hop movement in Senegal, discussed its status as a cultural system, and revealed how rappers, despite their youth, not only take a stand on issues, but criticize government policies and leaders with impunity. Both presentations illustrated how popular culture in African languages can transform the socio-cultural landscape in ways that are particularly empowering to the youth.



Alamin Mazrui, Ousseina Alidou and Sylviane Diouf (fourth from left) with students



Abdoulaye Niang, Barbara Cooper, Renée Larrier and Ousseina Alidou

Graduate Student Rendezvous

Get to know our first and second year graduate students

Lincoln Addison (Anthropology) laddison@eden.rutgers.edu

My academic interests revolve around political economy, post-colonialism and the critique of Eurocentric theory and practice, particularly the notion of development as it relates to Africa. My current dissertation research focuses on Zimbabwean migrant farm workers in the northern borderlands of South Africa. I will conduct ethnographic fieldwork in this area to explore the livelihoods and survival strategies of Zimbabwean migrants as they engage with overlapping forms of power and intervention.

Omotayo Jolaosho (Anthropology) ojolao@eden.rutgers.edu

I am a second-year PhD student in cultural anthropology. I work on issues of performance, protests, and creative resistance in South Africa. Along with three sister editors, I am currently working on an anthology, "Women Writing Resistance in Africa," the second book in a Women Writing Resistance series with the first one focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mary Kay Jou (School of Social Work) mjou@rci.rutgers.edu

I am a second year PhD student at Rutgers University School of Social Work, where I also teach as an Adjunct Professor. For the last seven years, I have been working with refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, survivors of torture and detainees. I have run school based programs for traumatized refugee and immigrant children, worked with traumatized Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities post 9/11, and kept people aware of the quickly changing tides of immigration policy. I also conduct psychological evaluations at Elizabeth Detention Center. I worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mali from 1996-1998. I've spent the last three summers conducting Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) cross border conflict resolution workshops in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Rwanda.

Samuel Lederman (Geography) samueltl@pegasus.rutgers.edu

My research areas include development geography, with a specific focus on studies of the political economy and ecology in sub-Saharan Africa. Past research topics included investigations of the relationship between inequality and agricultural (export) production in Africa, as well as assessing potential long-term impacts of the WTO Doha Round on small-scale farmers.

Laura Ann Pechacek (History) lpechacek@gmail.com

Currently, I am researching a history of women's collective work and its intersections with international development in Mali. I worked with several women's associations in Mali through the Peace Corps, where I also worked with a local health center on issues of women's health and HIV/AIDS. From 2000 to 2001 I served on the Peace Corps Mali Committee for Gender and Development. My previous research projects have included a comparative study of museums teaching the slave trade in Senegal, Ghana, and New York; I also presented a paper on Malian crime fiction at the 2006 African Literature Association conference. I studied advanced Bambara at the Summer Cooperative in African Languages Institute (SCALI) last summer, where I also presented a paper on Women's Associations and International Development.

Brian Stromberg (Geography) bristrom@eden.rutgers.edu

I am interested in development studies in rural Africa, not just working on the ground, with individual villages, but also with working with those communities to help influence/create national/international policies.

Adryan R. Wallace (Political Science) adwallac@eden.rutgers.edu

My research focuses on gender and democratic movements in Sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to

beginning my doctoral program I was the Program Officer for Africa for the International Association of Women Judges and as President of ARW & Associates (a consulting firm) I worked on projects with the Constituency for Africa and the Phelps Stokes Fund. I also spent ten months lecturing on HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, and Information Technology at the International University of Management in Windhoek. I designed for publication “A Practical Guide for Inheritance Rights” for African NGOs facilitating women’s inheritance rights. I have an MA degree in African Studies with a focus on gender, information communication technology (ICT) and development from Howard University.

The Oppositional Gaze: The Black Graduate Students Association

By Nimu Njoya, Doctoral Student Political Science and BGSA Secretary

My primary field of study is the Western tradition of political philosophy. To put it plainly, I’m concerned with the “conversation” that takes place between a few dead white men, a few of the same that are living and aspire to the fame (or infamy) of their predecessors, and the heirs to these ruminations who are yet unborn. It is a fundamentally conservative enterprise, to say the least. From Plato to Marx in a tightly policed, exclusionary discourse on freedom and openness. A strange home for an African woman? Not really. Hostile, sometimes, but always familiar on a number of levels.

At a very young age, I acquired a consciousness that is receptive to the voices of those who have passed before us by watching my father close his eyes and commune with the ancestors. The colonialist missionaries called it ancestor worship, I call it philosophy and I learned it at my father’s feet. I am no pioneer—remember Fanon’s story of the black student at the Lycée Saint-Louis in Paris, who was thrown out because “he had had the impudence to read Engels”? The question is not *how could I read this tradition that is so often racist and sexist*, but *how could I not read it?* And there have been many others (though not nearly enough) who dared to read and to cast back an oppositional gaze on Europe.

As Lewis Gordon points out in *Her Majesty’s Other Children*, “there is a logic that can show that African philosophy is broader in scope than Western philosophy because it includes the Western in its self-articulation. In *practice*, Western philosophy may be a subset of African philosophy.” This radically reverses our commonplace notions of margin and center, putting Europe back into proper perspective and expanding our understanding of what “legitimate” African(ist) philosophy is or can be.” The task, then, for those of us who gaze impudently upon Europe and dare to read, is to explain how it came to be that the subset is hegemonic and the set of which it is a part disappears from view.

And this, at least provisionally, is my self-articulation as an African(ist) scholar of the Western tradition. In this ironic project, I rely heavily on the support of my fellow travelers. To others who find themselves caught up in similar conundrums, I extend an open invitation to join me and other members of the Black Graduate Students Association in our research and social network. The purpose of the BGSA is to improve the experience and status of black students across the Diaspora to include African, African American, West Indian and Afro-Latinos. We have members from a wide variety of disciplines and welcome all students currently enrolled in a graduate program and committed to the purpose and objectives of this organization. The BGSA does not discriminate or limit its membership to any individual or group based on race, creed, color, nationality, ability or sexual preference. Activities include networking events, roundtables on the black experience in graduate research, and collaboration with similar graduate student groups at other universities in the New York area.

For more information or to join, please contact Nimu Njoya wnjoya@eden.rutgers.edu.

CAS Goes MySpace: Our Graduate Work Study Reports

By Kaia Niambi Shivers

In this fast-paced, fast-changing world of technology, CAS has decided to explore the new media by setting up a MySpace Page. Yes, we are going MySPACE! This may seem like such an old idea to students and young adults who have already taken advantage of one of the largest networking sites in the world, but we are excited about this new form of communication.

When you go on our site, you will see we have several news podcasts reporting from all over the world on all things Africa. Another feature we are proud of is our slideshow of faculty and a music playlist which features artists from all over Africa. Additionally, we are preparing to set up blogs and discussion forums that will allow professors, students, and others in the community to interact and share ideas.

We are asking those who are a part of the CAS family to visit our MySpace page and give us suggestions on how to improve this site with the CAS community in mind. Check us out at <http://www.myspace.com/centerforafricanstudies>. Please e-mail your suggestions to me: kshivers@eden.rutgers.edu.

Call for Papers

Center for African Studies

First Annual Graduate Student and Research Fellows Workshop 2008

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Graduate Student Lounge, CAC

In order to assist Rutgers graduate students working on issues related to Africa in:

- getting to know one another
- making contact with faculty outside their departments working on Africa
- gaining experience presenting work in progress

And to give us an opportunity to get to know the work of researchers who are visiting Rutgers through research fellowships or collaborative arrangements in various departments,

The Center for African Studies is sponsoring a relatively informal graduate student and research fellows workshop on the evening of Wed., March 5, 2008 in the Graduate Student Lounge on College Avenue Campus (behind Au Bon Pain).

Graduate Students, research associates, and friends in the neighborhood are invited to present papers on any topic related to Africa. Presenters will have an opportunity to present their work for 15-20 minutes followed by discussion. Those of you who would like to present at the NY Area Historians Conference the following weekend might appreciate having a chance to do a trial run! Please feel free to forward this CFP to anyone you think might be interested.

We will have a light buffet dinner and conclude with deserts and a suitable libation.

Please send abstracts by January 20, 2008 to barbara.cooper@rutgers.edu

FROM:

Center For African Studies
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
99 Avenue E - Beck Hall 206
Piscataway, NJ 08854

Non-Profit Organization

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