



Institute of  
**African Studies**  
 CARLETON UNIVERSITY

## Message from Blair Rutherford, Director



As the main academic year is drawing to a close in Canada, the Institute of African Studies can look back at a busy, active year, where we were involved in either organizing or co-organizing a range of talks by scholars and relevant officials including, to give but a sampling: Deborah Brautigam who talked about her work on China in Africa; Séverine

Autesserre who presented information from her forthcoming book on the ethnography of humanitarian interventions in the DRC and elsewhere; and Tendai Biti who talked about Africa's economic opportunities and challenges from his perspective as Zimbabwe's Finance Minister. We also were involved in an event commemorating Professor Chinua Achebe, drawing on a range of poets, spoken word artists, singers and other performers from Nigeria, Canada and the U.S.A. Read the moving description of the event from our postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Nduka Otiono, who himself was profiled in our last newsletter.

We are preparing to host the bilingual Canadian Association of African Studies annual conference on the theme of digital technologies in Africa and we are delighted with the range of papers being presented by scholars, graduate students, officials from the Canadian government and non-governmental organizations and the plenary speakers coming from Africa.

The Institute also combined with the Department of Law and Legal Studies at Carleton University and Partnership Africa Canada to host a bilingual workshop on The Economies of Sexual Violence in Bujumbura, Burundi. This was the follow-up to a workshop we had co-organized at Carleton University in 2010. With support from the International Development Research Centre and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada we brought together over 50 African scholars and civil society officials to explore the intersection between gendered economies built around natural resource extraction, cross-border trade,

and other types of livelihood practices and sexual violence. The gathering led to fruitful exchanges of knowledge and ideas and an incipient research network is emerging out of this workshop. Along with Doris Buss of Carleton University, Joanne Lebert of Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) based in Ottawa has been a key person in this work with our Institute. She herself and PAC have been one of the lead organizations working in various interventions around conflict minerals, including a mineral certification program. You can read a profile of her in this issue.

Teaching of undergraduate and graduate students is a key part of our mission. Read about our one of our colleagues who have been introducing Carleton students to the study of Africa and its diasporas. In addition to his own important scholarship and other activities, Professor Daniel Osabu-Kle has been leading students to learn about African Studies in the social sciences and in the humanities.

As we encourage learning opportunities in Africa, please read about one of our current students who has been studying at the University of Dar es Salaam on exchange and one of our first graduates who is currently working in Rwanda. The two graduate students profiled also carried out their research in Africa.

Finally, let me offer my deep appreciation to Nduka Otiono and the students who have put this newsletter together: Mike Wark, Stephanie Vizi, Jenna Hobin, and especially Samantha Allen who also did the lay-out work. Like always, the Institute of African Studies is thriving because of the excellent work and enthusiasm of the Carleton students.

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# A Conversation with Partnership Africa Canada's Joanne Lebert

By Stephanie Vizi



When Joanne Lebert was twelve years old, she read a book about renowned anthropologist, Margaret Mead. Lebert knew from that point on what she wanted to do with her life: she wanted to leave the Southern Ontario tomato farm she grew up on, and work abroad.

During her undergrad, Lebert worked at refugee camp in Zambia as a co-op student, and was thrust into the non-profit development sector. She went on to carry out anthropological fieldwork for her doctoral studies in Namibia and Angola, and was a visiting fellow in Refugee Studies at the University of Oxford.

She has also developed and supported research and policy advocacy related to gender-based sexual violence in conflict settings in Africa, and has examined its intersections with regard to African mining industries.

Today, Lebert is the director of the **Great Lakes Programme at Partnership Africa Canada (PAC)**. PAC has provided work placements for many IAS students.

Stephanie Vizi, a fourth-year journalism and African studies student sat down with her to find out more about her work at PAC.

**Q: How would you describe a day in your life at PAC?**

**JL:** They vary. There are some days that could be seen as very boring, where I sit in front of the computer the entire day and wrestle with countless emails, or reports to funders or fundraising. I participate in international discussions around regulations or laws related to conflict minerals. I do often attend meetings and make presentations, whether it's with Foreign Affairs or the State Department. I travel a great deal. I spend about a third of my time out of the country, mostly in the Great Lakes region.

**Q: What does the Great Lakes Programme do?**

**JL:** The organization we work with is called the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. It's twelve African states, essentially the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its immediate neighbours, Kenya and South Sudan. I travel to the Great Lakes region because we are working with the member states to implement a certifying mechanism to track minerals - coltan, tin, tungsten and gold, to make sure that they do not protract violence in the region.

**Q: What do you hope the certification tracking mechanism will accomplish?**

**JL:** The end goal would be transparency, to make sure that the mineral trade becomes legalized, and that the information collected about the flows of minerals in the region is entirely transparent. The mechanism has a database where every time the minerals change hands, information on the transaction is uploaded. You can track from your cell phone products you have bought with gold, tin, coltan, tungsten in them, and you will know the origins of those minerals to make sure that what you have bought has not served to fuel conflict in the region.

**Q: What drew you into development work?**

**JL:** I wanted to work in communities other than my own. I've always wanted to work in an international context in Africa or Latin America and do local level research, and that's always driven me.



Artisanal miners of cassiterite (tin) in South Kivu, DRC.  
Photo credit: Joanne Lebert



# A Year in Tanzania: Alana Dunbar's exchange at the University of Dar es Salaam

By Jenna Hobin

With a strong passion for African Studies, it is no surprise that Alana Dunbar has made her way to the **University of Dar es Salaam** (UDSM) in Tanzania, to take part in the exchange program offered between Carleton and UDSM. Alana is currently in her fourth year of study at Carleton University, with a Combined Honours BA in African Studies & English, and minors in History and Women's and Gender Studies. Since her arrival to Tanzania in October, she has taken a number of diverse courses that have allowed her to gain new perspectives through her professors, and through engagement with her fellow students.

During Alana's first semester, which ran from October 2012 to January 2013, she had the opportunity to experience a wide range of courses including "Feminist Paradigms and Emerging Theories", "African Women Writers", "Evolution of African Writing", "Society, Culture, & Health", and "Health, Disease, & Healing in African History". Her current semester consists of an equally unique schedule, including courses such as "Development of the Novel", "Africa and World Religions", "Neocolonialism and Revolutionary Movements", and "Politics of Gender in Africa".

Alana describes the advantages of participating in the exchange enthusiastically: "I see things completely differently and from so many different angles. Studying at Dar has built on the knowledge I gained at Carleton and has enhanced my understanding of many issues".

In addition to her coursework, Alana acted as a Research Assistant to Dr. Rose Shayo of UDSM, who was also a visiting scholar to Carleton with the Institute of African Studies in 2010-2011. After completing a course on "Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Higher Learning Institutions" at Carleton, Alana was asked to assist Professor Shayo with her Gender and Sexuality course at the University of Dar es Salaam. Alana has been providing typing and editing assistance to students, as well as teaching the online elements of the course, which links Carleton University Students to those at UDSM. She is also currently working on a research paper in collaboration with Dr. Shayo, which focuses on Sexual Harassment and GBV at UDSM.

Aside from gaining invaluable experience through the University of Dar es Salaam, Alana has also had the opportunity to travel throughout Tanzania, on trips to Kilwa, Moshi, Arusha, Tanga, Bagamoyo, Morogoro, and Zanzibar. She will be completing her exchange this upcoming June, and has plans to travel throughout East Africa during the summer. Alana hopes to obtain an internship in East Africa for Fall 2013, and will be returning to Carleton in the Winter 2014 semester to complete her undergraduate degree.

For more information on Carleton University's exchange opportunities, please visit:  
<http://www1.carleton.ca/isso/>



# From Carleton to Muhanga District, Rwanda

By Jenna Hobini

Almost a year after completing her Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in African Studies and Political Sciences, Carleton University graduate Megan Malone made her way to Gitarama, Rwanda after gaining a position under the CIDA-funded International Youth Internship Program.

Since September 2012, Megan has been working as a Micro-enterprise Development Officer at the Canadian Cooperative Association (CCA)'s partner organization in Rwanda, known as UGAMA/Centre de Services aux Cooperatives. Megan is currently involved with the 'Rwanda-Co-operative Agricultural Growth' (RCAG) Project, set to take place over the next five years, with \$CAD 4.5 million dollars in funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Megan first realized her strong interest in economic and business development in Africa through her African Studies Placement course, which she completed at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) in Ottawa in 2010. Her experiences at the Africa Bureau of DFAIT introduced her to the concept of emerging markets in Africa, which led her towards gauging a more focused career path.

Following graduation at Carleton, Megan obtained her one-year Graduate Certificate in International Business Management through Algonquin College, which provided her with a Certified International Trade Professional designation.

In her role as a Micro-enterprise Development Officer, Megan provides project support in a variety of areas, including assisting in the development, procurement, and analysis of the project's baseline study and collaborating with partners in building connections within Rwanda. She is also involved in researching and providing insight on income generating activities for the cooperatives and their members.

A typical day at the CCA UGAMA office for Megan involves collaborating with volunteers on data entry, analyzing information gathered from household and cooperative surveys, and visiting select cooperative partners in the field. During her internship, she has had the opportunity to receive in-country training

on the integration of gender into agricultural value chains, while gaining valuable fieldwork experience.

Over the past eight months that she has been working with CCA, Megan has had the opportunity to work closely with a number of cooperatives, which are already showing growth and progress as a result of the RCAG Project. "It seems as though every time I head back to the field to visit one of our partner cooperatives, things have changed. Infrastructure has been built, offices have been rearranged, and members are just as energetic and hardworking as always," she says, with optimism.

Megan will be completing her internship placement this coming June, and hopes to move on to a career focusing on economic and business development in sub-Saharan Africa. Her long-term goals involve pursuing an MBA in International Business, after she has gained greater professional experience in the area.

To learn more about the **CIDA IYIP Internship Program**, please visit:

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/internships>

For more information on the Canadian Cooperative Association and the UGAMA/CSC projects in Rwanda, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.coopscanada.coop/>

<http://www.ugamacsc.org.rw>





# It's almost goodbye for one of Carleton's longest running African Studies Professors

By Samantha Wright Allen



Even as he ends his career at Carleton, Professor Daniel Osabu-Kle remains focused on beginnings. Next year he will retire, but he's not quite ready to say he's taught his last AFRI 1002 class, an introductory course in African Studies. This foundational course focuses on learning, or as he says, a re-learning of the area often regarded as "The Dark Continent."

Osabu-Kle says it is important to understand that often perceptions of Africa and its history are fundamentally ethnocentric. He makes it his job to present fresh ideas and challenge each year's new crop of students. He is outspoken about the modern tentacles of colonialism, recently authoring an essay calling for reparations to previously enslaved nations and peoples.

"Colonial structures remain and continue to be perpetuated in existing structures," says Osabu-Kle when discussing the difficulties, both economic and political, that many nations face.

But it isn't for the western nations to decide Africa's future.

"If we want to have Africa develop, we must have Africa develop within its own culture and not within the culture which is alien to them. They must own their own democracy and that is what I have been trying get students to understand," says Osabu-Kle. Without local ownership, no imposed change can last.

He knows first-hand. Born in Accra, Ghana, Osabu-Kle has led a storied career that saw him traversing to numerous countries within Africa and beyond – from Pakistan to India to Holland to England – before finally landing in Canada. He credits living through Ghana's independence from Britain in 1957 for sparking his interest in development. This passion extended to his work, first as an officer in the country's Air Force and throughout his steady climb in the ranks until he held one of the highest political positions in Ghanaian government as Greater Accra Regional Secretary and Director of Civil Aviation.

"I saw the various African countries acquire

independence, the development that they faced and why they faced those problems, so I got a better understanding of why African countries are struggling," says Osabu-Kle, explaining how his past experience directly affects his teaching methods.

"I feel there is hope provided the leaders will have the willpower to do what is right for Africa, rather than be told what to do. The weak point is always listening to the dictates from outside, instead of listening to their own people"

He started at Carleton University as a graduate student, not realizing Canada would be his home some thirty years later. In fact, he is a man who is many things – a military commander, engineer, medicine man, scholar and professor. He's also received prestigious awards, including a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Scholarship that landed him in Carleton. Once in Ottawa, he received a \$10,000 Indira Gandhi Memorial Fellowship to continue his focus in African Studies, which he would eventually teach.

So strongly does he believe in the program that he contemplates making a bequest of thousands of dollars to Carleton University in future to provide scholarships to deserving students each year. But his love of teaching has always been tied closely to his philanthropy. In 1994, he and his late wife Florence Ashichoo Osabu-Kle donated their land and started a public school named Flodan International Academy so that poor children in Ghana could also access good education.

"When I go there, I see the children and it gives me some inward joy." And he says his Canadian students also give him joy.

"I am very much a student-oriented professor. When the students see you are interested them, it motivates them to learn more and because of that they do well," says Osabu-Kle, adding that he loves his students and the opportunity to change how they perceive Africa.

"It is important because one day these students who graduate will occupy responsible positions in government, and when they know that what is being imposed from outside is not working, they will be more apt to understand why policies should be changed to make development more meaningful and more effective."

# A Celebration of Father of African Literature

By Nduka Otiono; Photos by Manuel Junior Delacruz



Chinua Achebe, the iconoclastic Nigerian author of *Things Fall Apart* who died recently in an American hospital came back to life at an event put together in Ottawa on Friday, April 12, 2013 by the Nigeria High Commission and Nigerians in Canada in collaboration with the Institute of African Studies, Carleton University. The event called “Drumbeats for the Iroko: Chinua Achebe (1930-2013)” was held at Carleton University, Ottawa. It featured a potpourri of passionate tributes, poetry recitations, musical and oral performances by Nigerian, African and Africadian artists from Canada and the U.S. The event was moderated by Nduka Otiono, Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in the Institute of African Studies and erstwhile Senior Research Assistant to Professor Achebe at the Department of African Studies, Brown University.

In his opening remarks, Ojo Maduekwe, Nigeria’s High Commissioner to Canada assured that no public funds were used for the event. According to Maduekwe, the event was a private initiative by Nigerians in North America, especially Canada, to remember the writer. The clarification was important because in life as in death, Achebe has been a catalyst for impassioned debates. Two times, he rejected honour from his home government on conscientious grounds. Since his death, there has been a strong debate whether government, which wants to accord the writer a befitting burial, should be involved in his passage rites.

But he was strongly honoured this night as they sang, performed poetry recitations and even danced to eulogize the 82-year old ambassador of African literature whose pioneer work is regarded as the ground norm of African literature. Shortly after the opening remarks, the stage brightened with a captivating performance by dreadlocked poet, folksinger, and guitarist, and veterinary doctor, Segun Akinlolu, aka Beautiful Nubia. Others who took the stage included: Dr. Chinwe Iloabachie who gave a moving tribute to Achebe’s painstaking nature as a writer and his service to others

as a humanist; the winner of the 2011 Canadian Authors Association Emerging Writer Award for her first collection of poems, *Down To Earth*, Titi Sonuga from Edmonton; Toronto-based artist and spoken word poet, Komi Olafimihan; Sonia Oduwa Aimy who provided a velvety musical interlude, performing to the backing of a guitarist, Peter Opong; Amatorisero Ede, award-winning poet, editor and publisher of *Maple Tree Literary Supplement (MTLS)*; Nduka Otiono’s young daughter, Kika, gave a quasi-resignation and quasi-questioning tribute to the man she describes as ‘grandpa’; an animated reading by one of Canada’s most accomplished poets and a native Africadian (African-Nova Scotian), Governor-General’s Award-winning George Elliott Clarke from the University of Toronto; Enea Emmanuel’s performance of a Kiswahili poem of love and unity; and performances by Toronto-based Chief Uche Emenari, who recreated Achebe’s memorable character Unoka of *Things Fall Apart* with his flute, and Obiora Udechukwu, poet and Distinguished Dana Professor of Art and Art History at St. Lawrence University, who burst onto the stage chanting a chilling Igbo poem, that filled the venue with echoes of Achebe’s cultural origins.

Pius Adesanmi, Penguin Prize for African Writing winner, Associate Professor, Department of English and the Institute of African Studies, Carleton University, creatively offered the vote of thanks. The night’s gathering, said Adesanmi, was so full of Who is Who in the literary and artistic community that recognizing them all would be like digging for a needle in a haystack. According to Adesanmi, Achebe may be physically gone, and death may evoke grief, but nobody was shedding tears in the hall, except that for the whole day nature had been shedding tears – tears of rain and almost 20 centimeters of snow in Spring. Indeed, as Otiono had said at the beginning of the event, *Drumbeats for the Iroko* was conceived as a fitting way to celebrate a great writer for whom literature was a celebration.





# Graduate Profiles



## Juhli Lyncaster

### *MA Candidate, Anthropology*

Juhli's Master's thesis explores the historical and current understandings surrounding the practice of ritual murder in the Venda region of South Africa. With her research she hopes to reinvigorate academic discourses surrounding the occult and witchcraft in Africa by exploring how ritual murder is experienced by the individual, at multiple levels of society, as well as being a part of the political and economic practices and beliefs of a people. Her thesis strives to bring together culturally historical understandings with current beliefs and practices, showing how phenomenon such as ritual murder is entangled in historical meanings and encounters, in laws, and social movements and tensions. Future plans for her research on ritual murder will focus on tensions within Venda society where past events and South African laws have created social insecurities which are reflected in Venda peoples' interactions with each other and with immigrants who have been arriving in the area since the end of Apartheid.



## Zoë Gross

### *MA Candidate, Women's & Gender Studies*

### *Constructing Whiteness and Locating Power in East Africa: Desirability and Status of 'Others' with Access*

Zoë Gross' MA thesis examines the ways in which, in the East African countries of Kenya and Tanzania, whiteness is understood as foreign and associated with wealth and privilege. White Western women are understood as desirable to black East African men because these women are perceived to be instrumental to acquiring socio-economic status and the idealized Western lifestyle. This racialized and sexualized location of difference constructs white Western women as 'Others' with access to finances and travel to or residence in the West. Zoë investi-

gates the term 'Other' in this context as one invested with power, inverting traditional Western-based academic understandings of 'difference' within processes of racialization.

Zoë's interest in the subject of whiteness in East Africa grew initially from her own experiences working and living in the region as a volunteer. As a white woman from a Western country, she experienced whiteness as a subjectivity that was inherently foreign and hypervisible within the region. The equation of whiteness with wealth, and the perception that white women exist as heterosexually desirable objects for local men to attain, was evident through daily interactions and conversation. Zoë returned to East Africa to conduct primary research, spending four months in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania this past summer. She conducted nineteen in-depth interviews with white Western women working in international development (from Canada, the United States, Denmark, Germany, Austria and the UK) and local Kenyan and Tanzanian men.

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Youtube: [youtube.com/IASatCarletonU](https://www.youtube.com/IASatCarletonU)

*All this information and more can be found on our website ([Carleton.ca/africanstudies](http://Carleton.ca/africanstudies)) and is sent out along with information about other public events having to do with Africa in the Ottawa-Gatineau region.*

*Please send us an email at [African\\_studies@carleton.ca](mailto:African_studies@carleton.ca) to be put on the mailing list.*

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**THANK YOU:** Let me once again pass on my deep appreciation for all the hard and professional work of the students who put this newsletter together: Jenna Hobin, Stephanie Vizi, and especially Samantha Wright Allen who not only wrote one of the articles but also did the layout for this newsletter.

-- Blair Rutherford



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