



Institute of  
**African Studies**  
CARLETON UNIVERSITY

## Message from Blair Rutherford, Director



We are pleased to resume publication of our semi-annual newsletter as a way to provide some insight into the activities and peoples involved in Carleton University's Institute of African Studies in Ottawa, Canada.

As Canada's only stand-alone university department with degree programs in African Stud-

ies, including Canada's only post-graduate program in African Studies, we strive to provide a learning environment to discuss, analyse, and explore the rich and diverse continent and its peoples, including those in its diasporas.

As its Director, I am delighted to announce that Dr. Nduka Otono is our Institute's first full-time professor. Joining us after spending two years as a Banting postdoctoral fellow with the Institute, Nduka brings his long and rich experience working in newspapers and the culture industry in Nigeria and his exciting research on "street stories," social media and youth culture as discussed in a previous issue of our newsletter.

In the meantime, other units at Carleton continue to hire African Studies experts as we now have nearly 50 professors from all five faculties cross-appointed to our Institute.

We highlight two such colleagues who also contribute their research expertise and passion for teaching to our Institute: Dr. Christine Duff from the French Department and Dr. Paul Mkandawire from the Human Rights program in the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies. IAS faculty and students also work with various organizations in the region, Canada and Africa.

We are pleased to present in this issue one such group, the small but dynamic Ottawa-based organization, CanUgan. We continue to organize on our own or with other governmental, non-governmental, and diplomatic organizations and community groups in Ottawa-Gatineau working on issues concerning Africa or its diasporas.

This includes a new roundtable series we call Umeme: African flashpoints. Using the Kiswahili word for light-

ning, we bring experts to bring informed discussion to bear on current issues in Africa, which flash across our mass-mediated senses.

We have had two very informative roundtables on Ebola and Somalia, with one planned for the new year on Boko Haram.

As you will read inside, we also organized a one day conference, "South Africa After Apartheid: Critical Reflections." Although our keynote speaker, Mr. Irvin Jim, General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), had to cancel at the last minute as the day of the conference coincided with an emergency meeting which ultimately led to a break between his trade union and Congress of Trade Unions of South Africa, a large audience engaged with a number of leading experts on South Africa in exploring the political economies and cultural dynamics of the last twenty years. At the heart of our Institute lies the many undergraduate and graduate students at Carleton who work on African Studies issues.

In this newsletter, we highlight a few of the doctoral students carrying out engaging and important research in Africa.

We also briefly highlight this past May's African Studies Abroad course taught in Rwanda, "The Evolution of the Media in Post-Genocide Rwanda," by Professor Allan Thompson (Journalism & Communication) with a testimonial from one of the 15 students who went on the trip.

Two of the hard-working and innovative students who volunteered to put together this newsletter participated in that IAS course in Rwanda. Kaylee Chancellor-Maddison and Emma Bider. I want to express my great appreciation to them, particularly Emma who also did the layout, as well as to our students, Katie North and Emily Hersey. The work of many helps in the in the diverse activities of our Institute's work in the field of African Studies.

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# IAS Conference looks at South Africa 20 Years After Apartheid

By Katie North



In celebrating twenty years since the end of Apartheid and the beginning of a new era of independence, it has been important to ask the hard questions about this supposed golden era: has South Africa been thriving since 1994? What has the ANC done to improve social and economic conditions? Does race still play a role in South African society? How have gender roles changed since independence?

The Institute of African Studies conference “South Africa After Apartheid: Critical Reflections” looked to provide analysis into these questions and more, offering insight into the political economy of the country and looking at possible trajectories for South Africa. Experts, observers, students and academics gathered on Friday, November 7th to attend the conference offering a diverse spectrum of opinions on how to look at the past 20 years critically. Beginning the first roundtable, Dan O’Meara, a professor at l’Université du Québec à Montréal and a former member of the ANC, provided insight into the structural dynamics of the country, stating, “economic emancipation has not happened.”

Hein Marais, South African political analyst and author of “South Africa Pushed to the Limit: The Political Economy of Change” provided an in-depth look at South Africa’s economy especially in relation to labour markets.

Marais pointed out the startling fact that if a person washes cars, busks or hunts, they are considered ‘employed’ and said, “40% of South African households have no access to waged incomes.”

The second roundtable of the day offered insight from Linda Freeman of Carleton University on the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe, referencing Thabo Mbeki, the former South African

president and his relationship with Zimbabwe leader Robert Mugabe.

Richard Saunders of York University then moved to more contemporary issues between the two countries. He discussed the detrimental effects the mining industry is having in Zimbabwe and how investments made by South Africa may be worsening the situation rather than improving it.

A special highlight of the day included a poetry reading given by Dr. Nduka Otiono, the new assistant professor at the Institute of African Studies. One of the poems, “Grandma’s Pipe” was especially moving, as it represented positivity in light of the critical and sometimes disheartening discussions taking place.

The last roundtable of the day included panelists Zine Magubane of Boston College discussing “Critical Reflections on Gender Politics and Policy in the Post-Apartheid Era” and Allison Goebel a professor at Queens University discussing “Uprising of the Urban Poor: The Right to the City, Environmental Justice, and Sustainable Urbanization in the ‘New South Africa’”.

Magubane noted that there is a persistence of gender violence in South Africa, which fostered discussion about the recent trial of Oscar Pistorius and how the case fits into current perspectives of gender in South Africa.

Goebel discussed the need for new categories in South Africa’s social institutions and raised issues of child protection in the state in terms of education, food security and other social services.

The conference was successful in complicating the presumption that South Africa is the ‘success’ of the continent, when in fact it has a lot of work to do and changes to make within the country’s economic, political and social systems.



# Faculty Profile: Paul Mkandawire

By Kaylee Maddison



Weaving together concepts of human rights, health, and geography may seem like an abstract knot to tie, but that hasn't discouraged Dr. Paul Mkandawire from trying to identify their different points of intersection.

Mkandawire's research resides within the domain of Global Health. He is specifically looking into how global health policies effect local populations, human rights and social justice concerns that arise from these interventions, as well as ways of making these interventions more responsive to needs concerns of local populations.

Geographically, his research is located in Canada and Sub-Saharan Africa. Now in his third year as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Rights in the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies, Mkandawire is also cross-appointed to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies and the Institute of African Studies.

His "checkered" academic background accounts for his curiosity in how geography, economics and social politics shape personal and collective health, as well as the spread of disease.

Mkandawire first studied economics at the University of Malawi, the country where he was born and raised, and would draw inspiration for his future research.

With an interest in larger developmental issues, Mkandawire moved to the University of London in England, obtaining a Master's in International Development there and using his "foundation in economics to understand how global development works, and why we still have uneven geographies of health and development."

Then, 7 years ago, he moved to Canada and earned his doctorate in Medical Geography at the University of Western Ontario.

"Though I've been in Canada for seven years, I feel like I just arrived yesterday," says Mkandawire, recalling the intensity of academic life since moving, but adds the years have probably been the most productive and efficiently used time of his life.

"They've been a very fruitful seven years."

It doesn't appear the pace will be slowing down for Mkandawire anytime soon either, having already had a busy year teaching classes, supervising graduate students and giving talks.

His courses, including one centred on public health and human rights, have been successful in attracting students from all disciplines, which he says speaks to the "vast interest [in the subject] and how contemporary the issue is."

In September, he gave a lecture on global health, discussing questions such as why health has taken a high stance on political agendas today and explaining how advances in transportation, trade and communication have left us vulnerable to disease.

Mkandawire also spoke this fall at the Institute of African Studies' roundtable talk on Ebola, where he expressed the need for responses "to be inspired by local knowledge of the environment," emphasizing the importance of having to engage with the communities in order to create effective and appropriate responses to the disease.

"You don't hear stories from local people themselves in all this talk about Ebola, it's all experts on TV who garner attention and shape public perception and policy," said Mkandawire.

"In the end the voices of local people that have endured the diseases for nearly 40 years are completely subdued. We need to learn to learn from the local people themselves."

He adds that in an era where disease causing pathogens travel at the speed of air traffic, there is need to develop broader responses that go beyond focus on developing and shipping vaccines to include deeper issues of environment, poverty and inequality if humanity is to protect itself from these emerging pandemics.

# Faculty Profile: Christine Duff

By Emma Bider



It all started with a story.

Christine Duff was finishing her master's degree in French theatre of the absurd at Victoria University when she decided to audit a French African and Caribbean literature.

"It was like a big revelation," said Duff. They read the novel *Moi, Tituba, Sorcière* the story of Tituba, a former slave convicted of witchcraft in Salem.

The book changed Duff's path forever.

"It was so new," said Duff, now a professor of French literature at Carleton University and graduate coordinator for the Institute of African Studies.

"You know, you read something and...it just connects with you somehow and you realize how much you don't understand. I thought, well this is what I have to do."

As soon as she realized African and Caribbean literature were her new passions she looked to the same professor who had taught the course for guidance about how to move forward.

"He encouraged me to think of a PhD and he said actually there's someone you need to meet and it was Fred Case," said Duff. Case was a University of Toronto professor who helped to create the African and Caribbean studies programs at the university.

"He was someone who was very demanding...so he really pushed me and that was just the best thing...especially because I had to go from the ground up. I had no background."

Case also helped Duff work through the questions she was having about her research. Duff was becoming increasingly aware of the political undercurrents present in the literature she was looking at and she began to ask herself if her position as a white, privileged Canadian impeded her ability to analyze, critique and work on texts written by African and Caribbean women authors.

"I was questioning where I was coming from and what I was doing and why I wanted to do it," said Duff, "I just had this sort of heightened sensitivity to these relationships and how problematic they are."

In asking these questions and talking to her mentor Duff was able to come to terms with her interest in the literature and to approach it from a place of respect.

"There's a lot of research that goes on before looking at a novel and I think that's...how I sort of managed to come around to it," said Duff. "I want to talk about it because it touches me somehow, and I want to do it on the terms of the authors."

In 2003 Duff completed her doctorate and began work at the Alliance Française in Ottawa, work that—from Duff's perspective—simply wasn't stimulating enough.

"There was no literature involved, it was teaching public servants French and I just didn't want to do that," said Duff.

So when there was an opening in the French Department at Carleton, she applied; and she got the job.

Ten years later, Duff is still passionate about her work and is beginning a project that looks at the zombie figure in Caribbean and North American literature.

"I want to put it back in its proper culture historical context—which is Haiti—and it's a trope that's sort of been co-opted, so I want to go back to the source." While zombies may be a slight shift from her previous endeavours, Duff is of the attitude that it's important to go where life takes you.

"It's just funny," said Duff, "when you don't know what's going to drop in your lap...and what it's going to do to you."



# Heartache and Hope: My study abroad experience in Rwanda

By Megan Simpson



Travelling to Rwanda this past May was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

I have wanted to travel to Africa since I was a child, but I never got the chance.

After hearing about the course Carleton was offering in Rwanda on the media's influence on the Rwandan genocide I knew this was my opportunity.

As a journalism

student this seemed like the ultimate combination of my interests: media, African culture and travel. I could not have been more ecstatic during the plane rides there, but nothing prepared me for the excitement I felt as my feet hit the tarmac in Kigali.

The three and a half weeks that followed were full of joy, amazement, sorrow and pure adventure.

During our studies we travelled to a number of genocide memorial sites to get a better understanding of the horror that occurred there 20 years ago.

It was at one such memorial where I had the most amazing experience in Rwanda and it happened purely by accident.

Our class had travelled in our little bus to Nyamata memorial and we had just been given the tour of the former church. The tour ended with us going underground into the tomb/burial place of those killed at the church.

After climbing down the stairs I was surrounded by

coffins, piled twice my height, in a very narrow passageway. This atmosphere triggered a panic attack and I had to climb out quickly. In this shocked state I started to wander around the grounds waiting for my classmates.

As I walked I heard the beautiful sound of children singing. It was coming from a nearby school playground. I walked closer to it and came up to a locked gate.

I silently watched a group of teenagers and young children all dressed in blue school uniforms singing, and clapping. It was as if their song was healing me. Then one boy walks up to the gate and says, "I would like to invite you in." I couldn't say no.

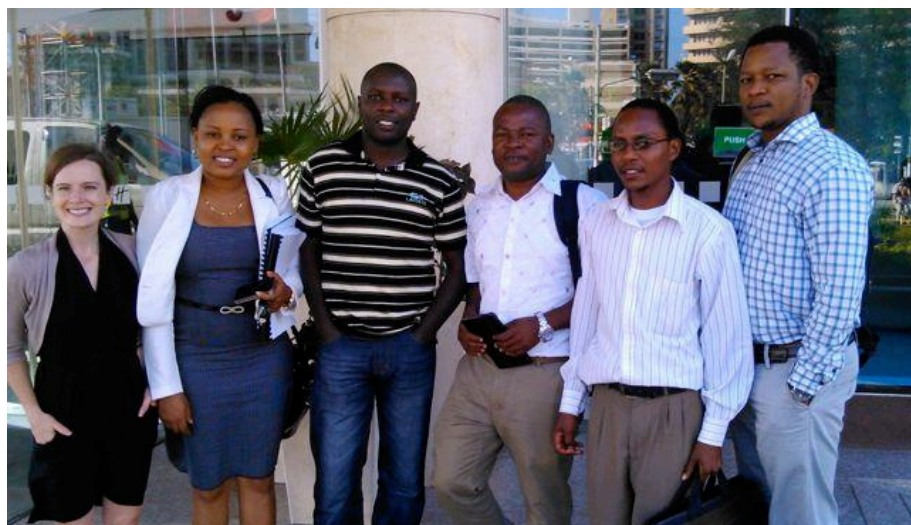
One of the smaller children ran to get the key to the gate and I was let in.

The boy led me over to the group and invited me to join their singing. They were singing in Kinyarwanda but I started to clap along with them. It was one of the most beautiful moments of not only my trip but of my life.

It is hard to explain what I experienced that day, but to go from one extreme of brutal murder to the loving embrace of children's voices, touched my soul in a way that those children will never know. I am forever in their debt and though I don't remember their names or know anything about their lives I will never forget them. This is also a good example of Rwanda itself, the strange juxtaposition of a history of genocide rubbing against the normalcy of everyday life. This trip opened my eyes to the beauty and horror people in Rwanda and around the world face on a regular basis. I can honestly say it was one of the most rewarding and enlightening experiences of my life. It has instilled in me a love for Rwanda and a desire to return again and again.



# Graduate Profiles



*Heather with “a group of psychiatrists in Dar es Salaam where we were working to design a school-based mental health program*

## Heather Gilberds

*Ph.D Candidate, Journalism and Communications*

Heather is a doctoral student in the school of Journalism and Communication. Her research aims to understand the nature of knowledge translation in the context of information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D). Her PhD work focuses on a critical exploration of knowledge translation and communication processes as they relate to food security and health, and the use of culturally appropriate strategies

to catalyze behaviour change, communicate lifesaving information and enhance the adop-

tion of innovations in East Africa. She is also a Program Manager at Farm Radio International, where she is able to apply her research expertise to design and oversee programs that use radio along with mobile technologies to transfer and translate complex scientific information to rural communities in Malawi and Tanzania. Heather has published in the areas of knowledge translation, media for advocacy, media and social change and ICTs for development.

## Karim Myatt

*Ph.D Candidate, Anthropology*

My research takes place in Rabat, Morocco, exploring Jilsas, which are informal religious gathering taking place in people's homes. These gatherings are mostly to be found in poor, working class neighborhoods. The participants of the jilsa often do not have formal religious training and are unlikely to be connected to a religious institution. Research on Islamic movement, particularly after the Arab Spring, tends to focus on their role in the political sphere. I am more interested in the assumptions and beliefs that undergird such groups, rather than their political potential. Discussions in the jilsa rarely involved politics or the state, for that matter, but gravitated around questions of the self and those bodily disciplinary practices directed at the inner self (al nafs). What the jilsa offered, above all, was a space for ethical self-reform as well as the creation of a counter public. At a time when Arab states are going through rapid democratization



and liberalization, Islam has become a state ‘problem’. Simultaneously, on the ground, we have groups that are withdrawing from the state and religious institutions. As a phenomenon outside the reach of the state, and state sanctioned religious institutions, these groups carve out new spaces to participate in democratic and political processes. Informal religious sites are creative openings that allow for novel political and social imaginings. 6



# Graduate Profiles



## Hussein Kasim

*Ph.D Candidate, School of Public Policy & Administration*

Hussein's PhD dissertation explores how the interactions between transferred policies and domestic institutions shape policy outcomes where the particular policies involve Uganda and Rwanda's malaria control policies. Uganda and Rwanda are two malaria-endemic countries in sub-Saharan Africa. These neighbouring countries share a number of socio-economic characteristics that allow them to be classified, in comparativist terms, as similar countries. Despite their similarities, comparable malaria control policies adopted by these countries through transfer from the World Health Organization (WHO) have resulted in divergent outcomes: a reduction in malaria-related admission and death rates in Rwanda, and an increase in malaria-related admissions and deaths in the case of Uganda. The goal of Hussein's research

is to account for factors that might be responsible for this variation. Hussein visited Uganda and Rwanda in 2012 and 2013 to conduct preliminary interviews for his research. Visiting Uganda, a country Churchill called "the pearl of Africa," and Rwanda, "the land of thousand hills" was a fascinating experience! Whether it was hopping on a Bodda-Bodda (motorcycle taxi) to beat traffic in Kampala or listening to stories of how a designer turned mosquito nets into wedding gowns, Hussein's trip was intriguing.



## Melissa Armstrong

*Ph.D Candidate, History*

Melissa's doctoral research project concerns the provision of health care by the African National Congress (ANC) to its members in exile and its military wing, Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), during the South African liberation struggle between 1963 and 1990. The ANC and MK spent nearly thirty years exiled from South Africa. In order to maintain unity and order in the exile movement and liberation struggle, the ANC developed a bureaucratic structure that included a health department. In the early 1960s, healthcare infrastructure was merely a simple clinic in rural

Tanzania designed to serve the medical needs of MK cadres, but by the late 1970s the department had facilities and health delivery teams in Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, and Mozambique. International anti-apartheid organizations and the ANC's communist allies helped to fund the department's infrastructure, staff training and supplies. After 1994, when the ANC achieved political power in South Africa, much of the ANC health personnel from exile transferred to South Africa's new government health department. By focusing on the ANC's health department, Melissa is asking broader questions about how the ANC imagined itself as both a liberation movement and as a governmental structure operating without a national territory. While the expectations and ambitions of the health department in exile begin to provide insight into how the ANC perceived its future role in South Africa, the experiences of men and women who accessed health care in exile were a part of the ANC's claim to legitimacy in the future. Finally, Melissa will look at the transition to liberal democracy in 1994 in order to ask questions about how the ANC's struggle-era health department shaped the development and implementation of today's healthcare system in South Africa.

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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: Katie North, Emily Hersey, Kaylee Maddison, and especially Emma Bider who not only wrote one of the articles but also did the layout for this newsletter.

-- Blair Rutherford



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