Did you know that…

“More than eight million people around the world die each year because they are too poor to stay alive.”

“Almost half of Africa’s population is deemed to live in extreme poverty.”

(Reference - Jeffrey D. Sachs, The End of Poverty, 2005)

The dawning of the new millenium seems a long time ago as we move into 2007. However, some significant work happened in 2000 when the United Nations (UN) held its Millennium Assembly in New York in an effort to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger in the world. The result of that Assembly was development of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a framework of goals and targets that UN member countries dedicated to achieve by 2015.

According to Jeffrey Sachs, “the task (of ending extreme poverty) can be achieved within the limits that the rich world has already committed: 0.7 percent of the gross national product of the high-income world, a mere 7 cents of every $10 in income.” It is worth noting that Canada, although committed to the 0.7% target, is spending only 0.3 - 0.4% per year.

With basic education and capacity-building key factors in poverty elimination strategies, colleges play a key role in supporting achievement of the MDGs. As part of our internationalization strategy at College of the Rockies, we are committed to facilitating opportunities for our students and employees to be part of this very important global task. As a result, COTR is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a five year Sustainable Job Creation project in Kenya working in partnership with the Kimathi of Technology and Parkland Regional College based in Saskatchewan (see page 2 for program details). Funded through the Government of Canada’s International Development Agency, this project builds on the work we have done with our partners in Kenya over the past two years. Our new project in Nyeri offers many opportunities for learning from our African partners, and provides numerous Canadian consultancies in specific areas that support ongoing poverty reduction efforts, basic education, health care interventions and education, sustainable tourism development and relationship building between partners.

In this newsletter, we are excited to be able to profile COTR’s work in Kenya. I would also like to invite you to check out some of our new titles related to Africa in the Library. I hope that you enjoy this spring edition of our newsletter. We welcome any comments and feedback you have so please drop us an email or phone call.

Patricia Bowron, Director, International
College of the Rockies and Parkland Regional College from south-central Saskatchewan recently announced a five-year development partnership with Kimathi Institute of Technology (KIT) of Nyeri, Kenya. Nyeri is located two hours north of Nairobi on the western slopes of Mount Kenya and is a major trading centre for farmers, especially for wheat, cattle, tea and coffee.

This new project, entitled Sustainable Job Creation, focuses on developing KIT’s capacity to develop, produce and deliver technical skills training courses centred on sustainable job creation, entrepreneurial skills enhancement and the development of value-added cottage industries to meet the changing employment needs of the community.

This project gives COTR staff the chance to be directly involved in international development work. They have the opportunity to participate in educational exchanges, international volunteer and teaching assignments and a mentorship program for Kenyan educators. In addition, four Canadian students will compete for an educational internship experience in

Kenya delivering educational seminars on health promotion and entrepreneurial business development.

Nyeri District Commissioner Michael Mwangi noted that this region of Kenya has been plagued by drought for over one and a half years leaving crops, animals and families destroyed. He stressed the need to develop small industry and expand in sectors such as eco-tourism. “The lack of large commercial industries in the area means that the focus needs to be turned to developing the local communities to be able to develop micro-businesses into value-added small and medium-sized enterprises,” he said.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Kootenay Columbia MP Jim Abbott added, “International partnerships such as the one between College of the Rockies, Parkland Regional College and Kimathi Institute of Technology are creating new economic and social opportunities for local communities. I’m very pleased to see COTR working with KIT in this capacity.”

Parliamentary Secretary Ted Menzies, who made the announcement in Ottawa commented, “This project reflects Canada’s new government’s commitment to providing aid effectively through established partnerships. Canadian colleges and institutes have a proven track record in training and passing on valuable knowledge to help developing countries reduce poverty.”

College of the Rockies and Parkland Regional College representatives participated in the first official training mission in February. The project is made possible through the Partnership Branch of the Canadian International Development Agency and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

Kimathi Institute Welcomes Canadian Partnership

By Mucemi Gakuru, Council Member and Rosemary Kagondu, Deputy Principal, Kimathi Institute of Technology

Going across the seas from Kenya to Canada, it is amazing how big the world is. Yet, thanks to technologies of the 21st century, communicating with people just takes a click of a button, making the world appear so small: the global village! The diverse cultures and knowledge from different parts of the world can now be easily blended to form a development cocktail essential to drive the universe, with common goals. Goals for peace, which the world is hungry for, yet it is so elusive. Goals which seek to eradicate hunger, poverty, illiteracy and disease. Leaving us with the question “How is this achieved?”

In Kenya, the Nyeri district has attempted to answer this question by setting up Kimathi Institute of Technology (KIT), a community college in the central part of the country, which has now entered the “global village” by getting into an international working relationship through Canadian College Partnership Project (CCPP) programs with Canadian partners College of the Rockies and Parkland Regional College. A launch of the project was announced during the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) conference held in Ottawa from Nov. 20-22, 2006 with ourselves, Mucemi Gakuru and Rosemary Kagondu in attendance as KIT representatives.

KIT is positioning itself to play a pivotal continued on next page...
role in capacity building in central Kenya with the ultimate goal of contributing significantly to turning the wheels of economic fortune of Kenya. Furthermore, the Canadian government through the CCPP has given KIT the opportunity to draw vital developmental lessons, a prospect which KIT is very excited about and very thankful to the Canadian government.

Our visit to Ottawa was truly exciting. First, it was the warmth in reception accorded to us by our Canadian partners, Pat Bowron, Fay Myers, William Litchfield and the ever smiling Sonja Gehl, as we interacted in different fora. Secondly it was the useful lessons that were learnt that should indeed propel us ahead as we implement the project: Sustainable Job Creation.

Indeed, great strides had already been realised by the work of two Canadian interns from the College of Rockies: Tara Carnochan and Victoria Hopkins, who were working at KIT for the last six months. A few of their accomplishments include:

(i) Visits to over fifteen women groups with an emphasis on enriching them with capacity building on group dynamics while at the same time promoting increased linkages between them, community based organisations and micro finance institutions.

(ii) Development of a strong student mentorship group christened “Kimathi Ambassadors.” This initiative has within a short time, helped direct the energies of participating students into purposeful activities as they adopt leadership roles within KIT and surrounding institutions. They have carried out training sessions in schools and have undertaken community service in our hospitals.

(iii) The Kimathi Ambassadors have established linkages with two orphanages, and two primary schools which have exposed them to the inherent social challenges, thus enabling them to develop a connectivity with national efforts. It has further heightened their appreciation for the need to acquire the much sought after appropriate technological skills required to propel the country to the “Vision 2030” which will see Kenya become a Newly Industrialised Country (NIC).

All these point to one fact: we form a great team that is sure to succeed in the project.

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**International Resources in the Library at COTR**

*by Barb Janzen, Public Services Librarian*

Are you interested in finding out more about Africa? A variety of relevant international resources are available in COTR’s library in the international section. Some of them include:

**Stephen Lewis: The man who couldn’t sleep (DVD), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2006 RA643.86.S84 2006**

On Dec 31st, Stephen Lewis’s tenure as UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa came to an end. For five and a half years, he’s criss-crossed Africa and the world at breakneck speed. His crammed schedule has included endless speeches and high level meetings with Presidents, UN officials and anyone who will listen to his impassioned plea for Africa. This program was aired on the “Nature of Things” http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/show_mansleep_interview.html

**Race against time: Searching for hope in AIDS-Ravaged Africa (CBC Massey Lecture) Lewis, Stephen RA643.86**

In 2000, the United Nations laid out a series of eight goals meant to guide humankind in the new century. Called the Millennium Development Goals, these targets are to be met by 2015 and are to lay the foundation for a prosperous future. In Race Against Time, Stephen Lewis advances real solutions to help societies across the globe achieve the Millennium Goals.

**End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time, Sachs, Jeffrey D. HC59.72P6 S225 2005**

Celebrated economist Jeffrey Sachs has a plan to eliminate extreme poverty around the world by 2025. If you think that is too ambitious or wildly unrealistic, you should read this book.

Other African resources available in the international section include:

**Combating AIDS in the Developing World, Josh Ruxin, coordinator, Agnes Binagwaho, coordinator, Paul A. Wilson, lead author; UN Millennium Project, Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB and Access to Essential Medicines HC59.7.U552 2005**


The international section has many other interesting resources including foreign newspapers and periodicals; Lonely Planet guidebooks; language training guides and CD’s; books; and more!

Please come and check it out.
COTR Interns Return from Overseas

By Tracey Brenton, International Project Coordinator

Since 2000, COTR has placed 67 Canadian graduates overseas for six month periods to gain paid international work experience with our partners in Ecuador, China, Guyana, Mozambique, Kenya and Vietnam. These young professionals (interns) have worked on projects related to education, community development, tourism and business development. Human Resources Development Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and International Trade Canada (ITCan) have sponsored these programs.

In June of 2006, COTR placed 13 interns overseas for six months to work in Kenya (3), Ecuador (5), China (3), and Vietnam (2). If you read our Autumn newsletter, you have already learned about some of their experiences. (If not you can view it online at http://www.cotr.bc.ca/interDev/).

On December 15th, after six months of new cultures, interesting challenges, and “different” work environments, these 13 young people completed their work experiences. COTR is very happy with the work that all of them have accomplished and we wish them the best of luck in pursuing their careers! Below are some parting comments from our interns in Vietnam, as well as two articles from our returning Kenya interns.

Erika Van Alten, Tourism Project Manager with Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam (Final Report Excerpt December, 2006).

“It has been the most incredible 6 months of my life after university. I have gained so many skills, and feel like when I’m re-integrated to Canada what I learned abroad will be an unmatchable skill to enhance any workspace I work in.”

Rick Brzostowski, Business Development Project Manager with Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam (Final Report Excerpt December, 2006).

“The main thing I learned from this work experience was a vast appreciation and understanding for a developing country in Southeast Asia. Since my internship revolved around working with a university to develop an centralized support center for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME’s) I learned about how to conduct business and projects in Vietnam. In addition I learned that you do require a lot of patience and understanding to work in a developing country. Perhaps some items which are taken for granted in a business setting in North America would be quite beneficial to aiding the speed of development in Vietnam. On the other side of the coin, North Vietnam is quite family oriented which is refreshing to see as opposed to North America where everyone is almost too busy to make time for their family.

Rick and Erika have both returned to Canada where they have begun their job searches in their respective fields.

An Amazing Work Experience in Kenya

By Victoria Hopkins, Community Development Officer & Tara Carnochan, Gender Equality Officer in Nyeri, Kenya

In December, 2006, Tara and Victoria completed six month, CIDA sponsored internships with Kimathi Institute of Technology in Nyeri, Kenya.

They wrote this article during their last month there.

Tara: When I applied for a CIDA internship, I wanted to remove myself from the classroom and become immersed in practical action. I wanted to assist in improving the world in some small way. I wanted to make a difference. I knew the internship would be a life-changing experience, I just didn’t know exactly how much this experience would impact me in every way possible. While most North Americans typically think of Kenya (and Africa in general) as being a land filled with deprivation and hopelessness, I have quickly come to learn that Kenya is a country filled with beauty, hard-work, and hope. The kindness, strength, and optimism of Kenyan people have made this internship a unique experience.

Victoria: While I have a unique interest in international development policy, upon completion of my Masters in International Affairs, I wanted to remove myself from it. I applied to this COTR placement because I knew that I would learn first hand about the real challenges associated with sustainable development. I would learn this only by living alongside those economically disadvantaged individuals who are meant to benefit from high level international declarations and programs. Now, coming to the end of my time in Kenya, I have realized that while Canadians can bring a lot to Kenya, we too have a lot to learn from Kenyans; most notably, how to work with and rely on our neighbors while enjoying each day and all its small wonders.

To begin at the beginning: In preparation for our internships, we were surprised to realize that Nyeri was not on the internet. Needless to say, we were very curious about the journey we were about to begin.

When we arrived in our new home town, we were pleasantly surprised. Nyeri is a small town in Central Province, Kenya. Nyeri Town has approximately 100,000 citizens, with 700,000 in the district. Like continued on next page...
continued from page 4...

many other small towns in Kenya, Nyeri is characterized by small grocery shops, restaurants (which people call hotels and led to a lot of confusion from us in the first days), and just as many goats in the street as people. If you look hard enough and are a little bit creative, Nyeri is home to some of the most gracious and kind people we’ve ever had the pleasure of meeting.

Visiting the college and potential university at Kimathi led to the realization that text books were severely lacking. As such, a book drive initiative was launched through collaboration with student groups in Canada including the East African Student Association, Carleton University and the Society of Graduate and Professional Students, Queen’s University. Books not intended for post secondary use are to be donated to a primary and secondary school in the slums of Kiberia, Nairobi. To date, tens of thousands of books have been collected which will serve to expand the minds of hundreds of Kenyan children and young adults for years to come.

Our internships have largely focused on working with local women’s and self-help groups. Meeting the individuals in these groups and working with them has been so heart-warming. When we arrived for our first visit at a rural women’s group, the women met us at the road and escorted us into their home, where we were welcomed with singing in the local dialect (Kikuyu), dancing, and tea. All the groups we’ve met have been filled with dynamic, motivated, courageous people that have touched our hearts in more ways than they will ever know. Since then, we’ve worked with the women’s groups to prepare proposals and conduct educational workshops.

Kimathi, being a community college, wishes to expand its extension services to improve the lives of their neighbors. To jump start this focus, we launched the Student Ambassador Training Program which included training in HIV/AIDS Peer Education, Empowerment through Education and Presentation Skills. These Ambassadors have since visited numerous community groups and schools to share their knowledge. The students will now spearhead the program and continue to link Kimathi with the community. To further bring in the community, we helped plan and organize Kimathi Community Day, a day in which we invited the groups to Kimathi in order to network with community-based organizations. The day included workshops conducted by organizations working in different areas: beekeeping, microfinance, entrepreneurship and employment, environmental tourism, conservation, and gender equality. With over 150 group members present, the day was a success!

Kimathi Institute of Technology shares land with Muringato Primary School. Muringato is located in an area with high levels of poverty, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, school attrition, and early marriage. When we visited our neighbors for the first time, we knew we had to help them in some way. We were able to network Muringato Primary School with an organization called the Girl Child Network (GCN). GCN was able to provide Muringato with a renewable supply of sanitary pads to help keep the girls in school. Since they attained the supplies, the girls have had perfect attendance! Additionally, we created the Parteners in Learning program to link Muringato Primary School with Canadian schools for partnership and cultural exchange. Gordon Terrace School and Parkland School in Cranbrook, B.C. have already generated $2000 for Muringato! With this money, Muringato will be able to buy a cow and plant and harvest crops in order to provide their children with lunch every day. Our efforts with the Partners in Learning program will continue and we hope to help Muringato raise enough money to be able to relocate to a better, safer location nearer Kimathi.

Now with just days left in our internships we leave with mixed feelings – sadness to part from those who have become so dear to us and who have taught us so much about their country and customs, and happiness knowing that in some small way we have made an impact here. We don’t know when or why, but we depart knowing that one day we will be back to Kenya. This is just the beginning…

Tara and Victoria returned to Canada in January, 2007. Tara is now at the University of Manitoba taking a Masters Degree in City Planning and Victoria is managing a CIDA contract for a Canadian women’s group with projects in Ghana.

Students from Muringato Primary School
In December, 2006, Elaine completed a six month, CIDA sponsored internship with Shepherd’s Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya. She wrote this article during her last month there.

Working in Nairobi has been an amazing experience, and I have learned so much from the youth with regards to how they perceive HIV/AIDS, what they feel is being done to prevent the spread of the disease and to treat those who are infected, and what the best ways to support positive behavior change among the youth are. Many youth are knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, and have a general understanding of how the virus is spread and what they can do to prevent transmission, but the real trouble they face is having the power to make the decisions they know will keep them safe. So many participants of the course ask me what they can do to make sure their partner agrees to have safer sex, and what they can do to talk to their parents about safer sex and HIV.

Throughout my internship here in Kenya I have been fortunate enough to meet many people, to travel and see different parts of Kenya and East Africa, and to experience the “Kenyan Way of Life”. I have learnt that when someone says they will meet you at 9am, that really means they will be there any time between 9am and noon, that everything takes longer than you plan for, and that meetings never start on time. I have become a little too used to this however and am worried that I will now be late for everything when I get back home! I have had to tell people many times that “no, I am not sick with some horrible skin disease, that I am supposed to have freckles, and that they will not go away when I get back to Canada”. I have learnt how to bargain and not pay the “mzungu price” (foreigner price) for things, that cars will not stop for pedestrians under any circumstances, and have mastered the art of using public transport in Kenya.

My internship has allowed me to meet and work with some amazing people, to gain experience in peer education with youth, and to work on a project focusing on a global health issue in an international setting. Kenya is a beautiful country with generous and caring people, and I am honored to have had the opportunity to be a part of this culture and will miss it greatly when I leave.

Elaine returned to Canada in December, 2007. She is now at the University of Calgary enrolled in a nursing program.
An Interview with MB

With her great smile and easy laughter, many of you may know or recognize Mbuto “MB” Tembo or “MB” one of COTR’s many international students. Arriving in Cranbrook in September, 2005 from South Africa, MB was first struck by the friendliness of Canadians. “people are so nice here. And so funny!”

Born in Lesotho (a small country within South Africa) to a father from Zambia and a mother from South Africa, MB then grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa. She speaks Sotho (her mother’s first language), some Afrikaans and English. During her teenage years, MB attended a British girls boarding school in Johannesburg. On weekends, she “spent time with my family, went to the mall, the usual stuff.” But her family holidays were not what the typical Canadian would call usual. Trips to wildlife game reserves, Victoria Falls, and riding elephants were the norm.

When MB finished high school, she knew that she wanted to study overseas. Her top three destinations were Canada, England, and the United States. As her mother had many Canadian friends, she decided on Canada. College of the Rockies was her parents choice. “They wanted me to start off in a smaller place.”

With one Canadian winter under her belt, and another one just beginning, MB remembers the challenges of adjusting to the cold. “It was really hard. It was so cold.” However, her first experience sledding and tubing added some fun to the adjustment process. Last winter also provided an example of one of the major differences between the English of Canada and the English of South Africa: the slang. “I had no idea what a toque was for the longest time!”

MB will finish up her education at College of the Rockies in 2007.

My Amazing Story

by Ryoko Kasahara

I will never forget the amazing story I experienced this winter. One day, when I walked to school early in the morning, everything was covered with fresh snow. Obviously, the scenery was quite beautiful; however, I was not happy with it because I couldn’t walk fast on the non-shoveled roads. Then while I was struggling with the snow, my wallet fell out from my backpack silently onto the road! Needless to say, when I realized I had lost my wallet at school, I was super shocked. I just could not believe what happened. However, after a while, a miracle happened! When I was going to call police and my bank, I got a phone call from the international student office. Then I knew my wallet had been found by a very nice Canadian, and he tried to contact me. Oh my goodness! Can you imagine how I was relieved at that moment? Can you imagine how I was happy when my wallet safely came back? If I lived in a big city, my wallet would never have come back to me. Thanks Cranbrook, thanks to the super kind Canadian!! I am sure, when I go back to Japan, I will love to tell this surprising story to my parents and friends as a souvenir!

International Student Stories

By Tracey Brenton, International Project Coordinator

Have you ever passed by an International student in the halls and wondered where they are from, what they are doing here, or what their life was like in their home country. With this newsletter edition’s focus on Africa, we took the opportunity to check in with one of our students from South Africa. We also just had to include a story that reflects the gracious and honest nature of Canadians that makes Canada such a great choice for studying internationally.

International Opportunities

The College of the Rockies International Department is excited to announce:

3 New Overseas Opportunities for COTR Students and Staff in Kenya!

These opportunities all take place with our partner, Kimathi Institute of Technology.

Please view these opportunities on our website at: http://www.cotr.bc.ca/interDev/ and click on the Kenya link.

Doctors Without Borders
www.msf.org

Canada World Youth
www.cwy-jcm.org

Care Canada
care.ca/empl/cmnt_e.asp

Careers Without Borders
www.careerswithoutborders.com/

CUSO
www.cuso.org

World University Service of Canada
www.wusc.ca/working

Canadian Crossroads International
www.cci.org.ca/volunteer.html

Oxfam
http://www.oxfam.ca/

Youth International Internship Program
www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/internships

Spring 2007
In the summer of 2006, my daughter Elaine Wilson, a COTR intern working in Kenya (see article “The Reality of HIV/AIDS in Kenya” page 6) contacted myself, a teacher at Gordon Terrace Elementary in Cranbrook, about getting my school involved in helping to raise funds for Muringato School in Nyeri, Kenya. I then got in touch with UNICEF and got their permission to run a joint appeal for UNICEF/MURINGATO.

My grade 3 class made daily announcements on the PA system at school to raise awareness about Muringato and the school’s plan to grow their own crops. I also contacted Kari Duffy, a teacher at Parkland Middle School, who is involved in the Social Justice Program at the school. The Student Council supported the idea to help raise funds and organized a school-wide Penny Drive.

Gordon Terrace students raised $1326 dollars to be shared between Muringato and UNICEF, while Parkland students raised $1332 for Muringato. A cheque for $2000 was sent in late November to Tara Carnochan, who had coordinated the appeal with Victoria Hopkins in Kenya. Students at both schools were excited to learn that the amount raised has been able to help the school raise its own crops and vegetables and buy a milk cow.

Test Your Knowledge of Africa

1. In which African country do all the inhabitants speak the same language?
   a) Egypt   b) Swaziland   c) Somalia   d) Gabon

2. In which country is the highest point in Africa, Mt. Kilimanjaro, located?
   a) Kenya   b) Ghana   c) Tanzania   d) Mozambique

3. What is the capital of Kenya?
   a) Nairobi   b) Maputo   c) Dar es Salaam   d) Kampala

4. How many children under the age of 5 die each day in Africa from malaria?
   a) 30   b) 300   c) 1,000   d) 3,000

5. In which African country are penguins found?
   a) The Seychelles   b) South Africa   c) The Gambia   d) Lesotho

Answer Key for the Test Your Knowledge of Africa Quiz

1. c) Somalia (Somali)   2. c) Tanzania   3. a) Nairobi   4. d) 3000   5. b) South Africa

Visit our website: www.cotr.bc.ca/cotr-international/ for the electronic version of COTR International

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