

PIAF FELLOWS' FLYER

News and views for and by current Princeton in Africa Fellows.

November 2007



UPCOMING EVENTS

To those folks in Africa: please help us spread the word about these events to your friends and family! And note that the online auction is open to all around the world.

To those folks who are currently not in Africa: we hope you'll join us at the following events!

2007 Annual Benefit

Dinner, live auction, and presentation of the Princeton in Africa Medal to Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D. for his medical work in Africa

November 15 — 6:30 PM

New York City

RSVP by November 5

Email piaf@princeton.edu for ticket info

PiAf Online Auction

Bid to Support Our Fellows!

Vacation packages, gift ideas, sports tickets, and much, much more

November 8-27

www.charityfolks.com/princetoninafrica

Princeton in Africa Wine Safari

Join us for a tasting tour of South Africa's diverse and delicious wines led by Marnie Old, director of wine studies for the acclaimed French Culinary Institute. Limited spots are available for this exclusive event!

December 5 — 7:00 PM
New York City

December 5 — 7:00 PM

New York City

Email piaf@princeton.edu for ticket info



ANNOUNCING...

a new PiAf photo book!

JOURNEYS:

**service, exploration and
adventure through
Princeton in Africa**

edited by PiAf alumnae

Emily Harris and Carolyn Pichert

A retrospective look at PiAf
through the years

Over 75 pages and 150 photos
depicting the experiences of 120+
alumni in 25 countries

Order your copy today!

Email piaf@princeton.edu

WE'RE STILL RECRUITING!

Know someone who'd be a great PiAf Fellow? As we recruit candidates for the 2008-2009 fellowship year, we need your help to find fantastic applicants! Please tell your Princeton friends—graduating seniors in the Class of 2008 and young alumni—about PiAf and...

- **Our "Applying for a Post-Graduate Fellowship" workshop:** November 7 @ 7:30 PM in Dodds Auditorium. Attendees will learn how to create an effective application for international and public service-oriented post-graduate options. Tailoring a résumé, writing a personal statement, and presenting oneself well during an interview will be covered. Sponsored by Career Services, PiAf, P55, PiLA, and PiA.
- **Our open office hours for applicants:** Tuesdays and Fridays 2:00-4:00 PM in our office in the Bobst Center (83 Prospect Avenue) until December 18.
- **Our upcoming info session:** November 27 @ 7:30 PM in Frist 302.

Interested applicants may also email piafapp@princeton.edu for more information.

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY TO:

November 9
Jennifer Austin

November 16
Carter Clement



Above: Aliya on the night the Springboks, South Africa's national rugby team, became Rugby World Cup Champions

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

by Aliya Sanders, '07-'08 Fellow at *mothers2mothers* in South Africa

PMTCT. ANC. VCT. On my first day of work at **mothers2mothers** in Cape Town, all sorts of terms and acronyms were being thrown at me, and it took me several tries (by myself) to say "PMTCT" without getting tongue-tied. However, now it seems as if my vocabulary is being reduced to fewer and fewer words, and more and more acronyms. **mothers2mothers**, also known as **m2m**, is a South Africa-based international NGO that trains HIV-positive mothers to work in clinics and hospitals in an effort to help reduce the transmission of HIV from mother to child. These mothers do this by offering education and psychosocial support, often through support groups, to pregnant women and new mothers living with HIV.

Since 2001, the organization has grown exponentially, and in the past four months, it seems like every other day I'm hearing that a new site is opening in South Africa, or somewhere else in the sub-Saharan region. This news, in turn, simultaneously makes my job more interesting and harder. I accidentally fell into helping develop the training curriculum for South African and international sites – I was initially enlisted to just create a PowerPoint presentation to go along with it, in addition to managing a completely separate project – but since the project had proven to be a more daunting task than expected, I now spend most of my time trying to make sense of all the things that the people we employ have to learn and teach at their sites, and do this process fast enough to meet deadlines for program roll-out in other countries. In addition, tailoring the curriculum for other countries – for example, women in Kenya rarely give birth in facilities, whereas in South Africa, many women give birth in hospitals or clinics – is proving to be quite difficult, especially since governments in other countries need to approve everything before it can actually be used.

Every day, I have a deep feeling of dread and excitement to see what else will be on my plate. My eyes are usually tired and burning, and I'm sure I'll have a severe case of carpal tunnel syndrome by the end of my time here. However, in spite of the long hours and shoulder cramps that come along with them, I can't help but feel incredibly privileged when my boss, who started the organization and is one of the most respected doctors in South Africa, asks me to facilitate meetings with international partners regarding the curriculum, and when people genuinely want to know my opinion on how key messages should be taught, even though I have no background in education and am just a Fellow at the organization. While I sometimes get frustrated to the point that I want to throw my computer at the wall (a feeling that I haven't had since writing my thesis), being able to do something that is used here in South Africa and will soon be used in international sites has proven to be a truly rewarding experience.



Above: Aliya in the **mothers2mothers** office

Aliya's Guide to Key South African Phrases (once you get these down, all you have to do is learn all the languages!)

Now = very soon, sooner than "just now" and "now now"

Just now = shortly, but not as soon as "now now"; could also mean never

Now now = soon, but not as soon as "now"

Howzit? = how are you?

Lekker = nice or cool

Lank = very or a lot

Braai = barbeque

Is it? (more like izzit) = really?

Klap = slap, but in the phrase "let's klap it", it means, "let's get it done"



Left: The Springboks team captain, John Smit, proudly displays the gold cup outside Cape Town's City Hall; right: Aliya on top of Table Mountain.

It's easy to see why this snake of water has inspired so many thoughts and words. This is a view of the river near the northeastern town of Mbandaka, from above

The very broad view I've gotten as an information officer epitomizes a lot of things about the development field that I see here – its excitements and hopes, its difficulties, its contradictions. The DRC is a particularly dynamic context full of innumerable humanitarian actors and programs, unfolding in a political situation that is technically “post-conflict” and focused on development, but which digresses into armed violence and insecurity unpredictably.

Despite this the Congolese people, like the amazing landscape they live on, are dancing, full of life. If I could absorb only one thing, I'd like it to be their *joie de vivre*.



Crossing Lake Kivu in the east, the recent site of renewed fighting between rebel forces and the army.

Following the meandering Congo River

(or... being a PIAF Fellow at the IRC in Kinshasa!)

By Nahal Zebarjadi, '07-'08 Fellow



IRC DRC's programming is vast and varied, like the country it operates in. This maternity ward in an IRC-supported hospital in the eastern province of South Kivu, is an example of health programming aimed at reducing maternal mortalities. The task of monitoring donor visibility compliance gives me a reason to visit the facilities, and to speak with the staff who run them. A difficulty I had not predicted is that even speaking French, communication is complicated because many beneficiaries of these projects speak their local languages – Lingala in Kinshasa, Swahili in the east, and lots of others in between.

As an 'Information and Communication Officer,' my job description is conveniently broad and inclusive. I work on internal IRC communications as well as some external – information packages, press releases, news articles. The best part is traveling to IRC's various field sites in order to see IRC facilitators in action and collect information, or to disseminate it, for example in explaining the IRC Program Framework to new staff.



These women are survivors of gender-based violence, who created their own women's group, and use it to teach each other skills – such as knitting clothes – which they can use to generate a small income, and farm on land given to them by IRC.



The most disturbing aspect of the violent political/social context of DRC is the profoundly shocking, barbaric extent of violence against women, most vicious in the east. The group of women pictured here were the most dynamic, constructive group of beneficiaries I have visited in any sector, who had the strongest sense of what they want and what they will do about it. The experience was not only humbling, but inspiring and thought-provoking.

The “community-driven reconstruction” sector is the most exciting project that I have been involved with. As a very ambitious, generously-funded, meticulously studied and prepared pilot project, its goal is to create structures of local democratic governance where they've never existed – in villages, across the entire of the east of the country. On paper, this is an overwhelming concept. Fortunately, there are people like this woman, president of a Village Development Committee, who speak about their pride in the small projects that their village has achieved with very little money – like this water source.



A toleka or bike taxi, in a small northern town. Unfortunately taking pictures in Kinshasa is forbidden, so I can't show you the mess of traffic and large four-wheel drives – white ones for aid workers and shiny black ones with tinted windows for businessmen – which eats several hours every day between the IRC guest house and office

