Focusing on Peace: First Regional Conference of the West African Peace Initiative

The inaugural conference of WARA’s West African Peace Initiative took place in Dakar, Senegal, from December 12 to 15, 2009. *Peacemaking in West Africa: Historical Methods and Modern Applications*, welcomed participants from 14 West African countries, representing more than 23 different institutions in the region. This was the first of three regional conferences that are part of a larger project that includes a journalism institute for journalists reporting on conflict and a fellowship program for researchers whose focus is conflict and peace studies.

Addressing the conference at the opening ceremony were the Secretary General of the Senegalese Ministry of Justice, the US Ambassador to Senegal, and rectors of Senegalese universities. It as an honor, as well, to have the presence of Dr. Mary Ellen Lane, Executive Director of CAORC, present at the podium.

The conference featured both an opening and closing keynote, both presented by distinguished international figures, both of whom made special trips to Dakar for the conference. The opening keynote address was delivered by His Excellency Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, currently the UN Special Representative for Somalia, who has also served as Special Representative for Burundi, Special Representative for West Africa, and Special Envoy to Sudan. Ould-Abdallah has also held ambassadorial positions for Mauritania (to the US and the EU, among other places) and served as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The closing keynote was delivered by another outstanding peacemaker, known for his work in the region and throughout the continent, the former Senegalese senior minister of foreign affairs, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio. Finally, a special address to the conference was prepared by Ibrahim Gambari, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General; his remarks were read to the gathering during the closing session.

Conference presentations focused on the range of endogenous methods for preserving the peace and resolving conflicts, from the level of the household, to the community, to the nation, and to the region. Video footage of each of the presentations is available on the project website, as are written summaries.

Another high point of the conference was the active participation of traditional leaders whose participation provided a certain grounding for the proceedings. Representative of the King of Oussouye (Cassamance, in the south of Senegal) and the Grand Serigne de Dakar of the Lebu community shared their wisdom about conflict avoidance and conflict resolution and engaged in discussion with conference participants. We also had the participation of two activists, Mme. Ndiaye Ndoye, coordinator of SOS Equilibre and Mme. Aissata Satigui Sy, attorney and coordinator of the Mauritanian NGO Initiative for Civic Education and the Promotion of Political Dialogue (IPCD). In conjunction with the conference, the Peace Project organized a special public roundtable on the crisis in Guinea Conakry and its negative impact on the preservation of peace in the region. The roundtable featured eminent historian of the Senegambia, Professor Boubacar Barry, originally from Guinea, and Guinean human rights activist Mariama Bah.

The academic content of the conference was developed by two scholars who are well-known in the field of conflict studies, I. William Zartman, Jacob Blaustein Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Organizations and Conflict Resolution at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and Edmond Kwam Kouassi, professor of Law and Political Science at the University of Benin in Togo. The two academic coordinators studies all abstracts, selected papers for presentation, organized the program, and have been following up with presenters as they prepare their papers for publication. Professor Zartman was one of the original founders of WARA back in 1989; his key role in this conference was a fitting way to celebrate WARA’s 20th anniversary.

*Peacemaking in West Africa: Historical Methods and Modern Applications* was the first of three regional conferences that are part of the US State Department funded West African Peace Initiative. The next conferences are slated for Sierra Leone (December 2010), and Cape Verde (December 2011). Proceedings of the first conference and other project information can be found at [www.initiativedepaix.org](http://www.initiativedepaix.org). The call for papers for the second conference should be out soon and will be posted on the WARA website.
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Since the last meeting of the board and general membership at the African Studies Association annual meeting in New Orleans in November 2009, various committees and individuals have worked diligently to follow up on and implement decisions and plans made at the meeting. The work of the ad hoc committee on the revision of the by-laws is almost done and this will be reviewed at the upcoming meeting of the executive committee in June at Kent State University. The Fellowship Committee has reviewed the applications for the pre-doctoral and post-doctoral awards and has submitted recommendations for awards. The Membership and Nominations Committee has also initiated moves to increase the institutional membership base of WARA and I would like to encourage everyone to assist in this campaign. The Steering Committee of the Peace Initiative project met in Gainesville in February and, among other actions regarding publication of the proceedings of the last conference, ironed out plans for next year’s conference and institutes. With board member Abu Bah taking the lead, WARA began a conversation on possible partnership with the African Peace and Conflict Network (APCN) on a journal publication initiative. I commend everyone for a job well done.

Our US Executive Director, Jennifer Yanco, has done much in the past five months to streamline administrative procedures and practices of WARA to respond to various requirements and needs of our funders, partners and the association. A term that keeps recurring most often in reference to WARA currently is ‘growth.’ The associated administrative and programmatic challenges of this growth are enormous and with limited support staff, our director continues to meet these challenges. We are, indeed, fortunate to have her at the helm on this side and, together with Ousmane Sène and his staff on the other side at WARC, the association is in good hands. Part of the agenda of the upcoming Executive Committee meeting at Kent State is a discussion of mechanisms and resources to retain and cultivate the able staff of the association to secure a strong and vibrant future for WARA.

We are looking forward to the next session of the Fulbright Hays seminar scheduled to take place at WARC in July. This year, Samba Gadjigo of Mount Holyoke College and I will co-direct the seminar for 16 high school teachers selected from different parts of the US. The theme of the seminar is “Exploring West Africa: Spotlight on Senegal,” with a focus on history, culture, politics, religion and the Senegalese diaspora. In addition to lectures, discussions and film screenings at WARC, participation in various cultural activities and visits to historical and other sites of contemporary significance in the Dakar area, participants will travel to Saint Louis, Touba, Kaolack and Toubacouta. This seminar will equip the high school teachers with information and skills to enhance their understanding and teaching of West Africa, in general, and Senegal, in particular. This second seminar builds on the very successful and useful seminar conducted last year for college teachers by WARA Executive Director, Jennifer Yanco, and WARA board secretary, Wendy Wilson Fall. These seminars are central to the mission of WARA.

I want to thank each and every member of the board and the various committees as well as our able and dedicated staff at WARC for their work and dedication. Much lies ahead in the coming months and there is no doubt we will accomplish these and much more.

Mbye Cham
WARA President
News from the WARA and WARC Headquarters

From the WARC Director

When the West African Research Center (WARC) receives its last shipment of DVD’s sometime in July, it will boast no less than 200 films combining both African and American cinematographic productions. This, along with the equipment already acquired and installed in the conference room of the Center, gives WARC the opportunity to consolidate one of its favorite activities, the cine club earlier called “Les Vendredis Cinematographiques du WARC.” The films already purchased enabled WARC to run a very successful film show with four sessions over the month of February to celebrate Black History Month. The WARC Cine Club is soon to start and will feature two film shows a month.

The Center teamed up with University Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD) to organize an event in solidarity with the sorely affected and afflicted Haitian people and also to celebrate a Senegalo-Haitian artist, Lucien Lemoine, who recently passed away. He had spent an extremely eventful and productive life of over 40 years in Senegal, beginning in the early days of independence.

Meanwhile, WARC is steadily working on two major activities relating to the West Africa Peace Initiative Project (WAPI), namely the Journalism Institute and the second international conference on peace and conflict resolution slated to take place in December 2010 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In order to better prepare the second international conference, the project coordinator, who already visited Sierra Leone to set to work a local team of collaborators, will soon visit Freetown again with the WARA and WARC directors to assess progress made in the field in preparation for the December 2010 conference.

The first session of the journalism institute will open in May 2010 and applications are now being received from many West African journalists while the house to accommodate them has already been identified and the resource person to serve as academic coordinator has also been selected.

Partnership with WARC is being eagerly sought by a number of institutions both in West Africa and other parts of the world. In this respect, the International Honors Program (IHP) established in Boston, selected WARC from among several other institutions in the Senegalese capital to host its first Cities in the 21st Century Program in West Africa in Spring 2011. The Director of WARC recently visited the IHP program currently being implemented in Cape Town (South Africa) to get further acquainted with the activities of that initiative.

My concluding remarks would emphasize the encouraging and stimulating fact that WARC is growing beyond its capacities in terms of staffing and space. The pace has to be kept up and consolidated while efforts will certainly be made to beef up the Center’s staff and build new structures in the premises.

Ousmane Sène
WARC Director

From the WARA Director

Greetings to everyone from the WARA offices at Boston University! It’s been a long, cold winter (at least in these parts) and we are pleased to be stepping out into the sunshine and warm weather once again.

An email went out earlier this year, urging members to enlist their institutions to become institutional members of WARA; let me reiterate that request here. A strong institutional membership base is important to WARA. And there are benefits: WARA member institutions can apply for the WARA Residency, a grant which funds a West African scholar to come to your campus for a four-to-six week residency—a good reason to urge your institution to become a WARA member. Since our last newsletter, two West African researchers have made visits to institutions here in the US as WARA Residency fellows. Historian Usman Ladan of Ahmadu Bello University was the guest of Ohio University’s Center for African Studies, where he continued his research on the Borno Youth Movement and political violence, completed a number of articles, worked on preparing his dissertation for publication, met with colleagues, delivered a lecture, and attended the ASA (see Dr. Ladan’s report on page 6). In April, WARA Residency Fellow Alain Sissao of Burkina Faso is visiting colleagues at Santa Clara University.

The support of individual scholars like these is a critical part of WARA’s mission. Increased support from ECA through CAORC made it possible for us to increase the number of fellowships offered in this year’s competition, with Travel Grants going from six to ten per year and Pre-Doctoral and Residency Fellowships going each from two to three per year. A big thank you is due the WARA Fellowship committee, who thoughtfully reviewed applications for this year’s grants and made some very tough decisions. You will find a list of awardees and their projects on page 13. We are especially pleased that Megan Goins (NYU and Long Island University) will be spending June and July in Dakar as this year’s WARC Library Fellow.

WARA’s new board president, Mbye Cham is both tireless and ever-cheerful in his commitment to WARA. His efforts, together with those of other board members, WARC Director Ousmane Sène, and WARC staff make it possible for WARA to serve the community of West Africanist scholars in a multiplicity of ways. We are represented at WARC by a highly skilled and hard-working staff, all of whom demonstrate an exceptional level of professionalism in their work. The same can be said for Abel Djassi Amado, who has been doing a truly superior job as our Graduate Assistant these last two years. You will soon see more fruits of his labor when our new website is unveiled…sometime this summer, inshallah.

As always, we are grateful to the US Department of Education and to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US State Department for their confidence in and support of our projects, and to Boston University African Studies Center for their continuing hospitality. Wishing you all a productive (and relaxing) summer!

Jennifer Yanco
WARA Director
The N’ko Script of Souleymane Kanté on the ALMA Website

This is the first of what will be an ongoing column in the WARA newsletter, bringing readers up-to-date on the work of the African Language Materials Archive

WARA’s ALMA Project has recently taken steps to extend its holdings to include literature in indigenous African scripts and ajami. The story of the N’ko script—its relatively recent origin, its evolution, and its increased following throughout West Africa—make it an urgent priority for the ALMA website. The emergence of Mandekan literature in the N’ko script has been documented by a body of scholars, many of whom are historians, and has received recognition from the Mande Studies Association. This year during a trip to Bamako, Mali, Prof. Kassim Koné of SUNY-Cortland, President of the Mande Studies Association and member of the ALMA Advisory Board, represented ALMA in meetings with the association of the N’ko movement and the practitioners and authors using N’ko. Koné worked with 11 authors, including one newspaper editor, and was able to interest them in displaying some of their work on the ALMA website. Seventeen Maninka-Bamanankan works have been subscribed and will soon be posted on the ALMA sites (dir.aiys.org/ALMA/index-alma.htm and alma.matrix.msu.edu). Kassim Koné worked with Souleymane Diabaté and Hamidou Kalossi Fofana in organizing and coordinating this effort.

The name of this orthography, N’ko, comes from the Mandekan expression n ko meaning I say or I said. This expression is used in many varieties of Mandekan, and thus it can be said that the N’ko orthography is used as a writing system for all of the languages and the cluster of dialects that share this use of the expression N’ko (I say/said). There is agreement that Kanté’s N’ko orthography was first used to write the Maninka dialect of Mandekan in Kankan in the Republic of Guinea. Maninka is therefore the mother dialect of the orthography, so to speak, and remains the dialect of reference for N’ko script writers of Mandekan throughout the Mande-language diaspora, regardless of their maternal language.

Dianne White Oyler, historian from Fayetteville State University, is a practitioner of N’ko who has contributed significantly to the documentation of the story behind the creation of N’ko, the legend of Souleymane Kanté, and the importance of the script. She writes:

The “Souleymane Kanté Tale” is one whose hero, Kanté, is larger than life. Kanté has become a cultural hero because he accomplished feats of intellectual prowess. According to the story repeated by members of the N’ko literate community, Souleymane Kanté accepted a challenge posed in 1944 by the Lebanese journalist Kamal Marwa in his racially offensive and culturally insensitive remarks published in an Arabic-language publication, Nahmu fi Afrika [We are in Africa] (Personal Interviews). Having conducted research on African culture in British and French colonies (Personal Interviews), Kamal Marwa concluded that Africans were inferior because they possessed no indigenous written form of communication. Marwa’s position reflected the prevailing views of many colonial Europeans. Although the journalist acknowledged that the Vai had created a syllabary, he discounted its cultural relevancy because he deemed it incomplete (Personal Interview).1

It was due to this set of circumstances that the N’ko orthography was invented in April of 1949 by Souleymane Kanté as his response to the kinds of attitudes espoused by Kamal Marwa. Kanté had taught himself various languages and had evaluated numerous writing systems and had come to the conclusion that none were adequate for the proper representation of his own Maninka language and its subtleties. The N’ko orthography script is unique and original, and does not rely on characters from the Latin alphabet. N’ko is written from right to left. It is constituted of 27 characters, including 19 consonants, 7 vowels, and one neutral symbol, as shown in the following inventory2:

Souleymane Kanté produced a significant body of literature and scientific documentation in the N’ko script, which developed a sizeable group of followers and practitioners over the years. The N’ko movement was established more formally to carry on the work of Kanté after he passed away in 1987. Since 1993, the N’ko movement has been promoting the use of this writing system for the Mande languages as well as other African languages, and has contributed to the development of a significant body of literature in West Africa. The publications that will appear on the ALMA website are examples of the production by the N’ko movement. Particularly in Guinea and Mali where these efforts are concentrated, there is a growing following of readers for the academic/scientific, literary, and newspaper publications that are flourishing. In Mali today, the use of N’ko has now spread to other languages, there being N’ko publications in Soninké for example, as well as in Fulfulde, a West Atlantic language outside of the Mande branch of Niger Congo languages. Proponents of N’ko maintain that it is adaptable for use in the writing and publishing of documents in all African languages.

American students of Bamanankan who have studied under Boubacar Diakité of Indiana University have had the privilege of learning to write the language in the N’ko script. Boston University student, Natalie Mettler, doctoral candidate in history, studied under him several years ago at an intensive SCALI course and became a fluent reader and writer of N’ko. Thankfully she was able to transliterate the titles of the new N’ko works for the ALMA Project Coordinator!

John P. Hutchison
ALMA Project Coordinator

WARA Resident Scholar Usman Ladan

In fall 2009, I spent eight weeks in the US, where I was warmly received by my host institution, Ohio University, and given access to the rich research facilities of the Ohio library network—Africana librarian, Araba Dawson, literally put herself on standby in order to meet my research needs.

Having done a certain amount of fieldwork and library research in Nigeria on the history and politics of the Bornu Youth Movement (BYM), I arrived the US armed with a modest amount of data on my subject that needed to be developed and enriched into a more coherent study. The BYM was a party of the political opposition in Bornu Province in northeastern Nigeria between 1954 and 1961. There were over a dozen parties and movements engaged in the decolonization struggle in colonial Nigeria after World War II, the BYM among the few with radical agendas. Like the others, it had a courageous leadership that spearheaded a determined struggle for the achievement of Nigerian independence before 1960. When it comes to ranking colonial Nigeria’s radical movements in terms of their ideological clarity, progressive outlook and commitment to the welfare of the commoner classes, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) was first, the Zikist Movement was second, and the Bornu Youth Movement was third. Yet, while a significant number of published and unpublished studies have been undertaken by scholars and activists on NEPU and the Zikist Movement, almost none of significant value exists on the BYM. Hence, the necessity for my current research which intends to document the social and economic conditions which gave rise to the BYM; its organization, structure and ideology; its struggles and the political reaction of the British and the Native Authority aristocracy; electoral successes and failures; alliance with other parties and movements; its defeat by the Northern People’s Congress in collaboration with the British; and finally, the relevance or otherwise of the BYM experience to democracy and politics in contemporary Nigeria.

I used my stay in Ohio to transcribe my interview material and consulted library materials on the general history and theory of politics, decolonization and youth movements. I synthesized my findings in a paper entitled, “The Origin of the Bornu Youth Movement,” which I presented at a seminar attended by faculty, staff and graduate students of African Studies in Yamada House. In the paper, I tried to show that the process leading to the formation of the BYM started when a cultural association known as Bornu Youth was formed by a group of teenagers in the Provincial capital of Yerwa before World War II. Within a few years, the association spread its tenacles to many districts and towns in the Bornu Province, bringing a large number of youth into its fold. At the initial stage, the association was apolitical, concerned merely with organizing weddings and naming ceremonies of members, facilitating dance and drama, staging durbar, organizing wrestling competitions and promoting the culture of the Kanuri people. Then World War II broke out, heralding far reaching economic, social and political changes. Yerwa became a major military base of British and American soldiers on their way to the North African campaigns. Military bases were built, hundreds of soldiers were quartered, food and munitions were ferried through it; and a large number of people among its resident population were recruited to fight in the War. At the end of the War, thousands of soldiers were demobilized and resettled; widespread poverty, unemployment, destitution, crime and prostitution emerged; grievances by different social strata piled up and nationalist forces emerged to take advantage of it. The people in Bornu were galvanized into politics and the decolonization struggle by these developments and by the tour of Yerwa by the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1946 and establishment of branches of political parties like the Zikist Movement in 1948, Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) in 1950 and the Northern People’s Congress in 1951. A majority of the members of the Bornu Youth cultural association, previously apolitical, joined those formations. Shortly after, some of them came together and decided to transform the cultural association in to a political movement. Hence, the Bornu Youth Movement (BYM) was born on 14th July 1954 and immediately proclaimed as a political party. Some of the leading founders were Alhaji Sheriff, Lawan Goni, Kolo Kankanba, Abba Kano Mattedan, Muka Marwa and Mohammed Ben Waffi. They were subsequently joined by the charismatic Ibrahim Imam and the highly revered Basharu Yunusa, both of whom were responsible for expanding and strengthening the party dramatically.

From its formation in 1954 until its demise in 1961, the BYM entered the field of political action in a clear and coordinated opposition to British colonialism and the pro-establishment politics of the NPC. The politics of the NPC materialized the interest of the local aristocracy, Native Authority bureaucrats and wealthy merchants, closely nurtured and promoted by the British. The politics of the BYM materialized the interest of petty traders, salaried employees, artisans, farmers and the commoner classes. The two competed for votes and public support, and in spite of the pervasive power of the forces behind the NPC, the BYM, led by a few petty bourgeois elements, was able to significantly roll back the political monopoly of the NPC for a time. The most dramatic of its successes was recorded in 1956, when BYM candidates won the two seats in Yerwa during the Northern Region House of Assembly elections, defeating Alhaji Dori, the richest trader in town and Kashim Ibrahim, who later became Governor of Northern Nigeria. The shock of this electoral defeat, by elements hitherto referred to as “rascals” by the establishment, jolted the Native Authority and NPC machinery into taking determined measures to tame and undo this movement. The consequence was the use of intimidation, coercion and persuasion against the movement, its officials, registered members and even sympathizers. This graduated

Continued on page 7
into the use of open and sustained violence, the climax of which was
the storming of the house of Ibrahim Imam by NPC partisans on
September 7, 1958, killing three people and setting the house on fire.
As a result, leaders of the BYM fled into exile while many members
and officials were compelled to either join the NPC or withdraw to
the tranquility of their previous political life. By the end of 1961 the
political hegemony of the NPC had been restored while the BYM as
a party was crushed. Although the party is no more, the legacy of
political violence, acrimony and the deployment of armed youth
groups by opposing political camps continues to this day.

At the end of my seminar presentation, I received useful comments
and observations by competent scholars removed from the subjective
influences of my area of research. I hope to use the insights acquired
in reviewing the paper before publication for wider circulation. In
addition, it was clear from the interactions that there is a need to
expand and deepen research on the subject in order to pursue new
lines of inquiry that were identified and/or suggested by participants
during and after the seminar. Were it not for the sponsorship by
WARA, all these would not have been possible. I am deeply grateful
to it and to the Centre of African Studies in Ohio University for
serving as host.

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I am a fish pathologist and tenured faculty at Lagos State University,
Nigeria, with the department of Fisheries of the faculty of science.
This fall I was able to join colleagues working with the United States
Geological Survey’s Biomonitoring of Environmental Status and Trends
(BEST) Program and the National Fish & Wildlife’s National Wild
Fish Health Survey (NWFHS) in the Eastern United States.

I received a WARC Travel grant to participate in these
conjoined projects and was in the
United States at the National
Fish Health Laboratory (NFHL)
at the Leetown Science Center
(LSC), Kearneysville, West
Virginia from September 16 to
October 19, 2009. I was
privileged to have been invited
to participate in this annual
initiative by Dr. Vicki Blazer of
the Leetown Science Center, and
the WARA grant made my
participation a reality.

The deleterious and frankly
destructive effects of human
activities on aquatic ecosystems
are a matter of worldwide
concern. The health of aquatic
organisms most at risk due to
exposure to a large array of
aquatic pollutants is also a matter
for consideration by scientists, biologists, preservationists and other
professionals all over the world.

The USGS’s Status and Trends of Biological Resources Program
supports and provides the collection and analysis of biological data
for use by natural resource managers, scientists, and the general public,
with their health (their well-being, resilience) being one of the priority
areas of for monitoring. While in the US I worked along with a team of
USGS and FWS scientists, including Dr. V. Blazer, Dr. Luke Iwanowicz,
Dr Fred Pinckney and others. We visited several sites in five states
along the Chesapeake estuary, collecting fish specimens and doing
field evaluations and health assessments, and documenting these
findings for inclusion in the annual report. I was also able to use the
excellent molecular biology facilities at the NFHL for the processing
and analysis of fish organ specimens from reference and polluted
locations from Lagos. We successfully isolated RNA from my
specimens and the sequencing of the RNA is ongoing in conjunction with Dr. Luke
Iwanowicz of the NFHL. The outcomes of
the monitoring programme will be
published as an annual report sometime in
summer 2010. I was in attendance at the
USGS LSC advanced technologies
workshop October 7 and 8 2009.

It wasn’t all work though. On one of
our off days in Pennslyvania, we visited
Bushkill Falls, “The Niagara of
Pennsylvania”. The falls are one of the most
famous scenic attractions in Pennsylvania
and this unique series of eight waterfalls,
deep in the wooded Pocono Mountains,
has an excellent network of hiking trails
and bridges which afford fabulous views of
the falls and the surrounding forest. We took
the grueling red trail and surmounted it, it
was a great experience and I proudly wear
the achievement brooch for that feat.

The trip allowed me make contact with
and become incorporated into an
international network of scientists with
whom I hope to continue working and
publishing in the future.

I must extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. Jenny
Yanco who was most helpful before, during and up till my departure
from the USA. My thanks also go to WARC/WARA for the travel
grant. I look forward to being able to give something back in the
future.

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From Our Fellows

The Paradox of Non-Communicable Epidemic:
A Generational Perspective on Diabetes Care in Northern Ghana

As a WARA Pre-Doctoral Fellow, I traveled to Ghana in the summer of 2009. I arrived in Tamale, Northern Ghana in late July to begin two months of exploratory research conducting ethnographic interviews, making home visits and collecting life stories to create a record of people’s social experiences with medical issues and local care systems. Listening to their experiences and histories, I came to better understand families’ struggles with tropical disease alongside growing non-communicable illnesses such as Type 2 Diabetes—which often remain outside the scope of global interventions, despite the fact that their comparative human costs now outweighs the mortality caused by infectious disease in many parts of the developing world.

In September I concluded ethnographic research that I first began in 2008 with the Guinea Worm Eradication Campaign in Ghana, a highly successful multi-million dollar program with dozens of international partners. Yet in the same village where this excellent national program has a comprehensive surveillance system to document and treat all leg sores caused by emerging guinea worms, people like one mother I met named Salimata had untended leg wounds caused by non-communicable conditions that refused to heal. She was diagnosed with diabetes the same day that the doctor told her he needed to cut off her leg above the knee.

When viewed through the empirical experiences of these Dagomba farmers, diabetes appears as a series of paradoxes: nerve damage and amputated limbs severely limit people’s mobility at the same time great travel mobility is required in order for villagers to receive ongoing treatment; dependencies on cheap, unhealthy imported foods (slowly replacing nutritious locally-grown food) can in turn generate a need for expensive foreign medicines and technological devices like blood sugar barometers, deeply embedding these patients in a global landscape of interlocked dependencies. Although biomedical treatments and market solutions to health problems are often presented as the best approach to disease epidemics in West Africa, diabetes reminds us that global markets and new patterns of consumption are deeply entangled in the roots of disease and poverty—rather than providing the sole solution for growth and health.

Yet in the very moment such escalating rates of diabetes make clear the devastatingly visceral human costs of shifting global economies, they also alter domestic relations at the most intimate levels. For example, my research this year stretched over the entire month of Ramadan, an occasion which forced many diabetics in the predominantly Muslim region of Northern Ghana to make difficult decisions. Would they fast anyway and let their blood sugar dip dangerously low as they waited for the sun to set, risking a diabetic coma? Or would they acknowledge the Koran’s exemption from fasting for sick people, yet by privately preparing their own glucose-balanced food exclude themselves from the communal rhythms of devout fast-keeping, sharing the evening meal from a common pot together with their families? Such underlying issues of interrupted communality and the reallocation of limited household resources open up domestic questions of triage as well; would certain necessities for a family’s children be sacrificed in order to afford a mother’s monthly bottle of insulin? Or would medications go untaken, to better care for the children in the immediate future at the potential cost over time of their parents’ limbs, eyesight, or life?

In documenting the stories of people who slip between the cracks of current care systems, I hope to shed ethnographic light on the structures of prioritization and social meanings of contagion that underlie global health interventions. How do international funding and global media attention play a role in shaping programs and the treatment resources available to community doctors and local families, or inflect their experiences of disease? My dissertation fieldwork this upcoming year will be a continued exploration of these human stories, and the overarching questions they illuminate in global medicine.

Amy Moran-Thomas
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An array of imported white rice has replaced nutritious locally grown brown rice throughout much of Ghana
Words From a Past Grantee

I am pleased to inform you that I joined the 112th convocation ceremony on 18 December 2009. As I was called to the podium and conferred the degree, the significance of that occasion was a big reminder to me of both the challenges and opportunities I faced in getting to this point. My participation in the Asian Institute of Technology’s 112th convocation ceremony on 18 December 2009 to me and my family was an evidence of the support I got from WARC. The WARC travel grant I was awarded made all the difference, as at the time there was no place for me to turn to fund my travel to Nigeria for my fieldwork. Just at that hour of need, our prayer was answered through your grant you offered me. I am really grateful to you and WARC for all this encouragement.

Othniel Mintang Yila, PhD, received the WARC Travel Grant to conduct field research from January to May 2008 in Ganawuri and Ta Hoss Districts, Jos Plateau, Nigeria. His report, “Adoption of resource-conserving agricultural technologies by smallholder farmers in the Jos Plateau: An economic and policy analysis for Nigeria,” appeared in the Fall 2008 WARA Newsletter. WARA wishes Dr. Yila the best in all of his future scholarly and professional endeavors.

WARA Grantees 2010

Post-Doctoral Fellows

Pre-Doctoral Fellows
John Scott-Railton (Urban Planning, UCLA) “Maladaptation of the Changing Climate: Why Household Strategies may have Worsened Flooding in Dakar, Senegal”
Jessica Wilbanks (Creative Writing, U. Houston) “God’s Arrows: Documenting the Oral and Written Narratives of Pentecostal Christians in Southern Nigeria”

WARA Residencies
Kalamazoo College, to host Dr. Joe Anthony Dominic Alie (History, Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone)
Boston University, to host Cheikh Tidiane Fall (Foreign Languages, Universite Gaston Berger, Senegal)
University of Florida-Jacksonville, to host Dr. Ahmed Nuhu Zakariah (Emergency Medicine & Director of the national ambulance service of Ghana)

WARC Library Fellow
Megan Goins (Africana Studies/Library Science) Ms. Goins is working on two Masters degrees, one in Africana Studies at NYU, and another in Library and Information Studies at Long Island University.

Fall competition: 5 Travel Grants.
Amy Niang (Senegalese), for research in Burkina Faso and Mali on “State and Social Processes in Pre-colonial West Africa: elements of power, office devolution and agency in the Mossi states”
Edem Kodzo Ekpe (Ghanaian), for research in Ghana on “Evaluating biocomplexity: Livelihoods Support activities and their effects on forest biodiversity in Southeastern Ghana”
Bala Saho (Gambian), for research in the Gambia on “Islam, Gender and authority: Social and Religious Transformations in the Muslim Courts of the Gambia, 1905 – 1965”
Gladys Asiedu (Ghanaian), for research in Ghana on “Unheard voices: Impacts of HIV/AIDS- Related Stigma on individuals and families in Ghana”
Asi Ndum (Cameroonian), for research in Cameroon on “Bottom-up approach for sustainable solid waste management in Cameroon”
Nkrumah @ 100: Remembering the Life and Legacy of Ghana’s First President

September 21, 2009 marked the centenary of the birth of Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian nationalist and Pan-Africanist who led the former British colony of the Gold Coast and Dependencies to independence on March 6, 1957.

On November 6, 2009, Connecticut College hosted an international symposium to commemorate Nkrumah’s life and legacy, which included presentations, literary discussion and a dance performance.

A.B. Assensoh of Indiana University-Bloomington, delivered the keynote address, acknowledging Nkrumah’s tremendous influence on African political history, Pan-Africanism and international affairs. He opened his speech with a video clip from Ghana’s inaugural Independence Day celebrations, when Nkrumah made his famous Pan-Africanist declaration that “our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent.” Assensoh, author of *Kwame Nkrumah of Africa: His formative years and the beginning of his political career, 1935-1948*, provided both a scholarly and personal view of Nkrumah, whom he had met in person. Assensoh discussed how Ghana’s independence had a significant impact on the concurrent Civil Rights Movement in the US. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s visit to Ghana during the Independence Day celebrations and discussions with Nkrumah about his “Positive Action” campaign against the British colonial regime, inspired King’s “Birth of a New Nation” speech as well as his non-violent tactics of civil disobedience, non-cooperation, boycotts and strikes. Further, it was King’s fateful encounter with then Vice President Nixon in Accra that later led to a critical meeting between King and Eisenhower at the White House to begin talks on important civil rights legislation.

Connecticut College professor David Canton spoke on “the African Americanization and Racialization of Kwame Nkrumah.” He focused on the ten years (from 1935 – 1945) that Nkrumah spent in the US working and studying at Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania. Nkrumah became radicalized and racialized by living amongst, learning and sharing in the history, culture and experiences of both ordinary and prominent African American and Afro-Caribbean activists, intellectuals and preachers. While living in America, Nkrumah was heavily influenced by the philosophies and opinions of Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. DuBois, C.L.R. James and other black nationalists. Canton argued that Nkrumah owed much of his nationalist and Pan-Africanist ideology to his transformative experiences in the U.S. during his early career.

WARA board member Edmund Abaka of the University of Miami examined the origins and legacy of the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement (GYPM), which Nkrumah started in 1961. The GYPM’s aim was to politicize and inculcate school-aged youth with a sense of patriotism; duty and service to the nation; discipline; physical fitness; and reverence for education. Promising young Africans, from other nations were also trained in Ghana as Young Pioneers and ultimately became leaders of their home countries. Abaka addressed the main historical criticism of the GYPM: That it was designed to brainwash youth into spying on opponents of the CPP (including their parents), concluding that he has found no evidence yet to corroborate these accusations.

Harcourt Fuller, who organized the Nkrumah symposium, teaches “Ghana in World History” and “The International History of Africa: 1884 to Present” at Connecticut College. Fuller focused on how Nkrumah sought to balance the demands of nation-building, Pan-Africanism, Cold War alignment and Third World non-alignment. In order to illustrate the complexities inherent in juggling these four pillars of his presidency, Fuller examined the iconography and symbolism of the national currencies, postage stamps, monuments and other representations of “symbolic nationalism” produced during the Nkrumah era. Fuller has published an article in *Nations and Nationalism* and is currently working on a monograph on this topic.

Ama Biney of the University of Middlesex (UK) highlighted a debate that centered on Ali Mazrui’s 1966 article entitled “Nkrumah: The Leninist Czar” in *Transition*. Mazrui argued that although Nkrumah was the hero of Pan-Africanism, he was also the architect of the one-party state in Africa. While agreeing with Mazrui in terms of the parallels between Nkrumah and Lenin, Biney contextualized the circumstances that led to Nkrumah’s move toward authoritarianism, which included the assassination attempts on his life, conspiracies to overthrow the CPP government and internal ethno-political dissunity. The one-party state, Biney argued, was not unique to Ghana in the post-independence period, but was adopted by other African leaders such as Léopold Sédar Senghor as a nation-building solution to end tribalism and regionalism. The online publication *Pambazuka News* published Biney’s recent article, “Nkrumah at 100,” in November.
The symposium also made an indelible impression on the students and faculty who were in attendance. As one freshman commented, “Kwame Nkrumah was not a name I had heard of before. I was shocked to learn of his impact not only on Africa but also... on international politics. The lack of knowledge about Nkrumah in the U.S. is another indicator of the little we know and understand regarding Africa. This lecture made me aware of how much there is to learn about Africa and the people that have influenced it.” I could not agree more.

WARA was pleased to be able to support the symposium by providing travel funds for Pan Africanist scholar, Dr. Ama Binney.

Harcoort Fuller
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Connecticut College
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African Origins Project: Tracing Our Names

The scholars who assembled and took Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database online (http://www.slavevoyages.org) now are expanding that work with a new project. Called “African Origins,” it will present rare, detailed information on Africans pulled into the slave trade. With this data and with assistance from the public, these researchers plan to reconstruct the migration histories of Africans who were forced onto slave ships in the Atlantic in the early 19th century, says David Eltis, principal investigator on the project.

The African Origins project will create an online database of detailed data on 67,000 liberated Africans—such information as name, gender, age, African port of departure, and in some cases, the name of the place where the person originally lived. This information comes from registers created by International Courts of Mixed Commission located in Havana, Cuba, and Freetown, Sierra Leone. These and other courts were established around the Atlantic Basin in the early 19th century, following the United States’ and Great Britain’s suppression of the transatlantic slave trade in 1808. The courts adjudicated cases of slaving ships intercepted by the British and American navies. The spoken names of Africans liberated from these vessels, along with other identifying information they provided through translators, were recorded in court registers, in an effort to protect these Africans from future enslavement.

Now these names are clues to discovering who these Africans were. The persistence of naming practices among many African social groups as well as the strong links between the use of certain names in certain languages, means that these names could be used to identify the what language or ethnic group an African belonged to, and through this, where the individual originally lived in Africa.

To canvas the thousands of languages and dialects likely spoken by the more than 67,000 individuals listed in these historical registers, the African Origins Project seeks volunteer assistance from Africans, members of the African Diaspora and scholars worldwide. Members of the public with knowledge of African languages, cultural naming practices and geographic areas can assist in identifying the language, ethnic and geographic origins of people listed in these registers, by taking a few minutes to search these records, listen to a name and offer an assessment of an individual’s likely affiliations.


A National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant provides the bulk of support for this project, with additional funding provided by Harvard University’s W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African and African American Research and by Emory University’s Research for Collaboration in the Humanities Program. NEH is an independent grant-making agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation and public programs in the humanities.

The African Origins site will launch for public use in late spring 2010. To find out more about the project or contact the project team, visit http://www.african-origins.org.

For more information: Nafees Khan, (404) 496-8890, nmkhan@emory.edu.
Rethinking Islam in West Africa:
Reflections on Practicing Law in Shariah Courts of Northern Nigeria

In our long-standing tradition of cooperation and collaboration, Boston University’s African Studies Center and the West African Research Association have teamed up to host a joint speaker series that will explore Islamic West Africa. The series, Rethinking Islam in West Africa, will feature world class speakers, each of whom will bring their own particular perspective to this vast, complex, and diverse world area.

On February 26, we were honored to have as our first speaker Nigerian attorney Hauwa Ibrahim, Visiting Fellow, Harvard Law School Program in Human Rights & Islamic Legal Studies. Ms. Ibrahim is well-known for her courageous work in a number of high-profile cases defending women in the Shariah courts of Northern Nigeria. Prior to her work in the Shariah courts, Ms. Ibrahim served as Principal State counsel in the Nigerian Ministry of Justice for eight years. She has been a guest lecturer at numerous universities in the US and Europe, has consulted with various international organizations including the EU, UNDP, Lawyers without Borders, and BAOBAB for Women’s Rights. She is the recipient of many awards and honors, not the least of which is the Sacharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, awarded to her by the EU Parliament in 2005. Ms. Ibrahim has written extensively on Shariah law and on women’s rights under law. She has recently completed a handbook on strategies for practicing in Shariah courts, and is currently working on a book on humanizing Shariah.

Ms. Ibrahim opened her talk with an introduction to Nigeria—the nation with the largest black population of any country in the world, some 250 languages, and four legal systems. She noted that until 1999, the Shariah courts of northern Nigeria were limited to adjudicating civil matters; it was only in 1999 that criminal Shariah courts were instituted in the 12 northern states. The penal code was hastily drafted and as a result included omissions and contradictions. Lawyers and judges alike were caught unawares; none had been trained in Shariah law, which is not taught in Nigerian universities.

It was in this context that Ms. Ibrahim found herself defending cases in Shariah courts. Of the 152 cases she has defended in these courts, most have involved women and children. Of these, she lost only one or two cases, and these to flogging, rather than capital punishment. She spoke at some length of her strategies which included identifying allies, staying focused and being flexible, having alternate plans, and, importantly, understanding the dynamics of local society and how to work within them. She emphasized that it is the particular interpretations of Shariah that are at issues rather than Shariah itself.

During the question and answer period, Ms. Ibrahim noted that there is a growth of new strands of Islam in the north, giving the example of her home village where there was once just one Islamic community and there are now some ten different Islamic groups. She spoke, too, of the value ‘traditional’ Hausa place on peacemaking and conflict resolution and how this fits in (or not) with the Shariah courts.

There will be two more speakers in the series this spring:

- Professor Allen Roberts of UCLA, who will speak on “‘Repetition for Itself’: Iterative Arts of Senegal” on Thursday, April 15.
- Professor Jeremy Keenan of Bristol University (UK) who will speak on “The War on Terror and Al Qaeda in Touareg NW Africa,” on May 3.

Congratulations for Dr. Shittu

WARA would like to send a word of congratulations to Dr. Adebayo Osagie Shittu, a 2007 WARC Travel Grantee, for his recent publication. “Characterization of Staphylococcus aureus isolates obtained from health care institutions in Ekiti and Ondo States, South-Western Nigeria” was published in the December 2009 issue of African Journal of Microbiology Research Vol. 3(12).
In July 2009, I spent four weeks in Senegal as a participant in the Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad Program. It was a great trip, and I now realize, a very short one...there are so many things I still want to know about Senegal. I was fortunate to spend time in the capital city of Dakar, in the colonial capital of Saint-Louis in the north, and in the magnificent mangroves in the South. I heard Senegalese experts and authorities speak on a wide range of topics including geography, history, religion, museums, slavery, art, film-making, feminism, language, literature, education, environment, agriculture, and culture. In addition to the impressive presenters, my walks to and from the West African Research Center (WARC) left me with impressions and perceptions of Senegal that I deeply appreciate—especially the voices and smiles of Senegal. On these walks, I contemplated my objective: developing a college curriculum on second language acquisition. Thanks to the Seminar and the people I met at WARC, I understand better the issues of second language acquisition in Senegal and in my home country of the United States.

Language
After spending a few days in French-speaking Senegal, I felt the stress of language isolation. As an English-only speaker, I felt failure and stupidity because I could not respond to a friendly greeting and smile. At first a frustrating inconvenience, after awhile the inconvenience of not being able to express myself turned into the straw that broke the camel’s back—I longed for English TV programs; communicating through interpreters was excoriating and it made my head hurt. However, after four weeks in Senegal, I began to feel comfortable with the multitude of languages spoken in the streets, in the stores, and in the classrooms. My frustration with my lack of language was motivating me to learn and use new languages, even if only a phrase or two. One phrase I used was nanga def, a Wolof phrase meaning, “How are you?” I applied the phrase every day, to everyone; and inappropriately at times, usually getting a smile from my feeble attempts to communicate, and the smile was positive reinforcement.

My English speaking companions were invaluable as a source of language support and I was grateful for the opportunities to speak English with the many English speaking Senegalese. Envious and curious about Senegal’s cultural support and tolerance for multiple languages, I asked Senegalese at every opportunity about the various languages they spoke. Most of the people were surprised that I was impressed with their knowledge and use of many languages. The Senegalese are encouraged to learn other languages from their family and friends, and they move easily from one language to another in their daily activities. It seemed second nature for Senegalese to use of multiple languages.

Wolof is spoken on the streets of Dakar and in the rural villages; along with other ethnic languages such as Serer, Pulaar, and Mandinka. I interviewed and participated in conversations with college students, taxi drivers, hotel workers, and college professors regarding their language proficiencies. I learned that although French is the language of the classroom, not all Senegalese speak French. Ten percent of the population speaks French, and among women it is estimated at 1% to 2%. Most Senegalese college students speak French and other languages including English, Portuguese, Spanish, other African languages. English is taught in the universities and colleges and it is a popular choice for many students.

I asked Senegalese about their beliefs regarding multiple language acquisition, because in the United States it is considered nearly impossible to have fluency in more than English. I learned during my short time in Senegal that the following beliefs supported the acquisition of second languages.

- It is advantageous to speak multiple languages in order to communicate with friends from other ethnic groups.
- It is advantageous to speak multiple languages in order to communicate in business dealings.
- There is pride in your ethnic language, and the language is maintained.
- Children are encouraged to learn French, the language of schools.
- Children learn French in order to watch TV, and read signs, textbooks, newspapers and magazines.
- Knowing multiple languages is viewed as a good and positive thing.

When I think about the beliefs I have heard expressed in the United States about the acquisition of languages other than English I come up with this list.

- It is hard to learn a second language.
- Everyone should speak English.
- Speaking a language that someone does not know in front of them is rude
- All children and Americans should speak English.
- New immigrants to the US must learn English as soon as possible in order to participate in English-speaking schools.
- All business and education should be conducted in English.
- In order to get ahead in the US you must speak English, so learn it and forget your native language.

Our beliefs are not very supportive of learning and maintaining a language other than English, and educational funding for foreign language instruction in elementary schools is almost nonexistent. Without cultural and educational funding for foreign languages, I don’t believe we will be a country of language diversity. I wonder how Senegal will resolve their language issues. Will they follow our road and choose only one language for all?

Dr. Annette Johnson

Dr. Johnson is an adjunct teacher in the College of Education at the University of New Mexico, Highlands University. She has over 40 years experience in education as a school superintendent, school principal, school counselor, and teacher and is currently a member of the Cimarron Municipal School Board.
Announcements, Opportunities and Upcoming Events

**Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies**  
An international conference at Emory University  
**February 3-5, 2011**  
**Deadline:** April 26, 2010  
**Contact:** Dr. Melissa Sexton <msexton@emory.edu>.

In recent years, an increasing number of scholars and students have explored the profound historical entanglements and legacies of slavery and the slave trade at institutions of higher learning. In some instances, critical reexaminations of slavery in the history of educational institutions have been sponsored or facilitated by senior administrations; in other cases, this kind of historical research and “memory work” has been pursued without official sanction or encouragement. This work has also inspired activism and change within universities and in the communities that surround them. This conference explores the full range of historical intersections between slavery and higher education, past and present, as well as the acknowledged and unacknowledged legacies of slavery and slave trades in the Academy. For individual papers, please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words. For panels, submit an overall abstract of no more than 500 words and individual paper descriptions of no more than 250 words each, in addition to a cover page with paper titles, presenters, and their affiliations. Each applicant

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**Medical Anthropology in Global Africa: Current Trends in Scholarship and Practice**  
University of Kansas, September 16 - 18, 2010  
**Deadline:** April 30, 2010  
**Contact:** Professor Kathryn Rhine <kasc.maga2010@gmail.com>

Within this seemingly boundless sub-discipline of anthropology, this conference poses the question: What makes Africanist projects unique? What contributions have anthropological or ethnographic studies of Africa made to health sciences? And what, in turn, does contemporary medical anthropology and health science scholarship offer Africanists? When scholars of health in Africa trace their concerns beyond the boundaries of the continent, what lasting impact have their experiences had on the trajectory of their work? Finally, what draws the current generation of medical anthropologists and ethnographically oriented health scientists to pursue research in sub-Saharan Africa? We hope these discussions will reinvigorate the efforts of African Studies Centers to explore these novel intersections through curricular and collaborative research initiatives. More information can be found on the conference website: [http://www.kasc.ku.edu/programs/conferences/2010/Health%20Conf_index.shtml](http://www.kasc.ku.edu/programs/conferences/2010/Health%20Conf_index.shtml)

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**Ousmane Sembène and the Politics of Culture**  
**Deadline:** May 31, 2010  
**Contact:** Lifongo Vetinde <lifongo.vetinde@lawrence.edu> or Amadou Fofana <afofana@willamette.edu>

We invite original contributions for a book on Sembene Ousmane to be published in 2011. We are interested in receiving proposals for substantial articles in English and French from scholars interested in re-evaluating Sembene’s intellectual and artistic legacy framed around any of the following rubrics: Globalization, Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Eco-Consciousness, Historiography, Panafricanism, Women’s Rights, (Im)migration, Space and Time, Film Music, Aesthetics, Ideological Interventions, Interview (unpublished), and Miscellaneous.

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**HED Announces an Opportunity to Strengthen Senegal’s Middle School Education**  
**Deadline:** June 7, 2010  
**Contact:** <hcipolle@hedprogram.org>

Higher Education for Development (HED) is pleased to announce a request for applications for one (1) award of up to $300,000 for three years for a higher education partnership with Collège Universitaire Régional de Bambey in Senegal. Funding for the partnership is provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Information on the Senegal: Community Service Learning RFA and HED’s dedication to global development can be found at [www.hedprogram.org](http://www.hedprogram.org) or contact please contact Hazel Cipolle at (202) 243-7696 or hcipolle@hedprogram.org.

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**FAWE Research Initiative 2010/2011 Call for Proposals Strengthening Gender Research to Improve Girls’ and Women’s Education in Africa**  
**Deadline:** Wednesday 15 May 2010.  
**Contact:** bceptus@fawe.org (or [http://www.fawe.org/](http://www.fawe.org/))

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) invites you to submit a proposal for the second round of research grants to research institutions for its Strengthening Gender Research to Improve Girls’ and Women’s Education in Africa Initiative. The initiative, which is supported by the Norwegian Development Corporation (Norad), promotes girls and women’s education through the integration of gender into education policy and practice in sub-Saharan Africa. Grants are awarded to provide support to institutions and research centres working in the areas of gender, education, or policy advocacy. FAWE will award five grants ranging from USD 30,000-35,000 for research projects. Proposals for Research Grants must be received by Wednesday 15 May 2010. Applications are accepted in English and French.
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The West African Research Association is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) based at the Smithsonian Institution. WARA is the only Sub-Saharan African member of CAORC. More information on CAORC is available at the following website: www.caorc.org.