



# African Language Teachers Association

## LUGHA

### A Message from the President, Audrey Mbeje PhD.

University of Pennsylvania



It is with great delight that I welcome you all to the 16th ALTA Conference and I hope that you will enjoy the exciting presentations featuring this year!

The year 2012 marks the end of my two-year term as the President of the African Languages Teachers Association (ALTA). As we reach the end of my tenure, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for your support in our common endeavor to accomplish the goals of this organization. I have had the pleasure of working with the most dedicated members of the Executive Board, and I would like to thank each one of them for the collaborative spirit that they've demonstrated in serving the organization. To the Secretariat, thank you for the sound structure

that you have created for the organization. I do not know how many Past Presidents received compliments that the organization is functioning effectively but I have had the pleasure of receive such compliments and that is due to the enormous efforts that the Secretariat has put into ensuring that ALTA functions in a professional manner. To ALTA members, I have tremendously enjoyed working with you and serving with some of you in ALTA committees in various capacities.

I will also take this opportunity to share with you some of the highlights and accomplishments we've had in the past two years related to our long-standing goal of ALTA—to uplift the field of African languages. In our efforts to attain this goal we managed in the past two years to 1) to acquire a corporate status for ALTA, and 2) create the Delegate Structure that will ensure effective leadership of the organization. I see these two initiatives as critical steps for the future development of

the organization and for the advancement of the field of African languages and they come at the opportune time when we are beginning to see a burgeoning interest in African languages as the government is supporting new African language programs. In addition to these two areas that directly impact the running of the organization, the past two years also saw significant initiatives for the field in the areas of curriculum development, faculty development, and language training both domestically and abroad.

We are now seeing an unprecedented focus on African languages from the federal government agencies that are sponsoring programs aimed at training Americans in African languages and cultures. For instance, the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Defense are launching new programs aimed at producing cadres of Americans with superior levels of competency in African languages. Featuring

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## A Message from the President, cont.

Dr. Audrey Mbeje, PhD.

across most of these new programs is an emphasis on overseas immersion to expose American students to environments where they can experience their target African languages and cultures first hand. Examples of such programs include the Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad, the African Language Flagship and the new NSEP African Languages Initiative. These programs mean more visibility and access to African languages, and thus ALTA needs to position itself to meet this national demand for African languages. These new overseas immersion programs create an incentive among students to take African languages as they see an opportunity for overseas immersion. In summer 2011, more than 40 students participated in the three Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad programs in Tanzania, Nigeria, and South Africa to study Swahili, Yoruba, and Zulu. My hope is to see more African languages for these programs to provide Americans access to the linguistically and

culturally diverse continent of Africa, the home of more than a third of world languages.

Alongside immersion programs are summer domestic programs for selected African languages offered by various institutions nationwide. The Summer Co-operative African Language Institute (SCALI) operated by National Resource Centers since 1993 was administered by the University of Florida in summer 2011. Also, summer 2011 saw the piloting of the new NSEP African Language Initiative for Bambara, Swahili, Yoruba, and Zulu. While these programs aim at language training for students at institutions of higher education, the new STAR-TALK program trains K-12 students in Swahili and provides professional development for Swahili language instructors.

These trends all point to the importance of assessing the role of ALTA to determine how we can pull together our resources and focus our efforts to benefit our

field of African languages. With most of the nation's leading experts in African languages, ALTA is uniquely positioned to guide new efforts to increase national access to African languages, which in turn, will enhance the field of African languages. In 2011 I said it is crucial to align our organizational goals with the national demand. This year I am saying that I'm fully convinced that ALTA is moving in the right direction to position itself to address such demands.

Finally, I welcome you all to another exciting conference! I would like to extend my profound gratitude to the ALTA Executive Director, Professor Antonia Schleicher, the Secretariat and the NALRC staff for the tremendous efforts to make this 16th ALTA conference another success.

Please take a moment to read the Lughu Newsletter and catch up with ALTA's highlights. Ngiyabonga kakhulu, Asanteni sana, Baie dankie, Amesegin-alehu, Mazvita, Thank you!

## From the Secretariat Desk (ALTA)

Antonia Y. Schleicher PhD.

University of Wisconsin Madison



It is my great pleasure to welcome our members to the 2012 ALTA Annual Conference. We at the secretariat are excited to be hosting you all at what promises to be an exciting 16th Annual Conference.

This year has seen the Secretariat continue to automate and improve ALTA's information and operational mechanisms thus improving the flow of information between the organization's leadership and general membership. From our last conference, tremendous progress has been made in the setting up of computer systems that enable the Secretariat to manage membership information and records. This past year saw us effectively utilize this infrastructure as was demon-

strated by the information exchanges conducted between the Secretariat, ALTA Executive Board and the membership and the critical elections that were held. We were able to continue discussions and receive feedback on issues that were mandated to us at the 2011 ALTA Business Meeting. As a result, the ALTA membership was able to discuss, approve and vote on the adoption of the ALTA Delegate Assembly.

2011 also saw the Secretariat con-

## From the Secretariat Desk (ALTA), cont.

tinue to fully utilize its role as the central place to which the ALTA membership can direct queries and from which important information can be disseminated. We have a solid foundation now from which we can grow our organization.

We have come a long way as an organization and greater achievements and opportunities lie ahead. As we begin the conference this year, it is with the realization of this vision that we can step out into the future and advance ALTA to greater heights. We have an exciting array of presentations and sessions lined up during the conference. Special thanks to the 2012 Conference Planning Committee consisting of Zoliswa Mali, Seth Ofori, Akintunde Akinyemi and Mahiri Mwita for a job well done in selecting quality presentations. I served as the chair of this committee. We are happy again to have Swahili, Yoruba and Nguni Language Specific sessions at this year's conference.

We welcome the American Association of Teachers of Yoruba (AATY) and CHAUKIDU – Swahili teachers' association members that will be having their business meetings in conjunction with ALTA 2012. ALTA is happy to assist in strengthening our other language groups as needed.

The Secretariat notes also the challenges that have beset many of our African languages community here in the United States. In spite of all these challenges, we know that we cannot give up on our collective vision to grow the teaching of African languages at our institutions and build ALTA to

meet the needs of its members. The need to transform ALTA into a 501 (c) 3 status is very evident in these difficult times and a lot of the ground work to this end has been done. This year's conference should see us take the necessary steps to conclude this process.

The Secretariat continues to get inquiries from individuals, government and non-governmental organizations throughout the year. The National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) has in the past year conducted workshops and institutes that have benefited the African language field in general and some of our members in particular. We continue to urge our members to actively engage themselves in opportunities that will develop them professionally and it is the vision of the ALTA Secretariat that as our organization grows and establishes itself, it will be in a position to offer scholarships and grants to the membership for professional development. In this regard, we are grateful to NCOLCTL for providing the NCOLCTL Swahili STARTALK which provides summer support for Swahili language instructors to participate in a professional development workshop. The application process is currently ongoing until May 1, 2012 for the 2012 Summer NCOLCTL Swahili STARTALK Workshop. Please apply and encourage any of your Swahili instructors who have not participated in this workshop to apply. There is still time to send in application forms for this program.

It has been a great pleasure to serve ALTA as the Executive Director again this year. The success of

our organization has a lot to do with the collaborative spirit of the Executive Board. My thanks go to Audrey Mbeje, (President) who will transition to the post of Immediate Past President at the end of this conference; Leonce Rushu-birwa, (Immediate Past President), who will be joining the list of our ALTA past presidents; Kiarie John Wa'Njogu (Vice President), who will be assuming the responsibilities of President at the end of this conference; and Mamarama Seck (Secretary/Treasurer), who was recently elected to assume the duties of the Vice President; for all their hard work and leadership. May I now take this opportunity to congratulate Adeolu Ademoyo the newly elected ALTA Secretary/Treasurer and welcome him to the Executive Board. In the coming year, the ALTA Secretariat hopes to be involved in many more projects that will help professionalize our organization and our field.

My gratitude goes to Nyasha Gwaza, the Assistant Director of NCOLCTL and the NALRC Staff for their service to ALTA and the numerous hours they have committed and continue to commit to the success of this organization. My best wishes for a successful 2012 ALTA Conference to you all.

Antonia Y. Schleicher  
ALTA Executive Director





## 2011 Swahili STARTALK Report by Dr. Alwiya Omar

The 2011 NCOLCTL Swahili STARTALK was held July 11-29th, 2011. The NALRC Co-Sponsored this year's NCOLCTL Swahili STARTALK by meeting the expenses of two participants from Kenya. Twelve Swahili Instructors participated in the three week program. The first week was an Online Teacher Training Course which covered numerous theoretical concepts. The participants took this portion of the course from their various bases. The remaining two weeks of the training were held at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, WI.

Three Master Teachers, Dr. Alwiya S. Omar, Dr. John Kiarie Wa Njogu and Dr. Antonia Schleicher conducted the intensive resident sessions. In the first week of the residential program, various Second Language Acquisition theories and standards were emphasized. The participants also learned the importance of teaching language lessons in context how to create effective lesson plans for the different proficiency levels of Swahili classes. Volunteer non-Swahili speaking students recruited mostly from the University of Wisconsin-Madison were brought in the final week of the training to enable the participants to practically utilize the theoretical skills they had acquired. Each participant designed and prepared several teaching demos that they prepared and taught to the volunteer

students. After each of their demos, the participants gained valuable feedback from their peers, instructors and the volunteer students.

An awards ceremony and dinner was held at the Madison Concourse Hotel to wind up the intense three week program at which the participants gave reflections about the program. In addition, each participant received a certificate of completion from NCOLCTL. The following individuals received certificates:

Aaron Rosenberg  
Belinda Mlingo

Clara Momanyi  
Esther Lisanza  
Geofred Osoro  
Jay Boss Rubin  
Josphat Waruhiu  
Joyce Mmari  
Judith Mmari  
Maina Mutonya  
Samuel Mukoma  
Susana Nkurlu

El Colegio de Mexico  
International Center for Language Studies  
Catholic University of East Africa  
University of North Carolina  
Kansas State University  
Union College  
Portland State University  
Columbus University  
Boston University  
El Colegio de Mexico  
University of San Francisco  
University of Georgia Athens

## STARTALK Swahili for Indiana high school students

<http://www.indiana.edu/~afri-lang/startalk2011/index.html>

Alwiya S. Omar, Director

This four week program (Visiting East Africa) was divided into two sections – new students and continuing students. For beginning students, the focus was on greetings, introductions, family, different kinds of food, ingredients required, eating at a restaurant, bargaining at the market, traditional clothes, and different types of celebrations in East Africa. For continuing students, students took a virtual tour of East Africa visiting countries and cities of East Africa and learning about occupation of the people of these countries, the national anthems of different East African countries, their flags, national holidays, and traditional celebrations. Students also

learned about youths of East Africa, their school life, and different activities that they do including songs and games. Students in both sections participated in simulated field trips: going to the market, visiting families, and having East African food. Successful participants received Pre-College Foreign language credits from Indiana University, Bloomington. The instructors for the program were Abdulwahid Mazrui and Peter Mwangi. They were assisted by para-professionals Will Kanyi and Justin Wild who also acted as lunch time conversation partners together with Ammina Kothar and James Kigamwa.



STARTALK students enjoying 'maandazi' after lunch



Wearing traditional East African coastal clothes



At the 'kanga' market – simulated field trip

## 2010 Group Project Abroad (GPA) Reports

### 2011 Yoruba Group Project Abroad (GPA) Annual Report

#### Introduction

This year marks the 4th and final year for the 2008-2011 funding cycle of the Fulbright Hays Summer Intensive Yoruba Group Project Abroad [GPA] in Nigeria organized by the Center for African Studies, University of Florida. The 8-week intensive language program provides avenue for American college students to achieve advanced competence in the study of Yoruba language and culture. The instruction therefore gave equal attention to proficiency in the four basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and understanding. Other components of the program are one-on-one tutoring, home stay with Yoruba families, interaction with local residents, discussions with local scholars, interaction with guest lecturers, reading of variety of literary works in Yoruba, and field trips to cultural and historical sites.

#### Program participants

The program took place from

June 15 to August 10 2011 with 18 participants from the following nine universities: University of Wisconsin-Madison (5), Harvard (3) UCLA (4), Georgia State University (1), Florida State University (1), Governor State University, IL (1), University of Chicago IL (1), University of California, Berkeley (1), and University of Florida (1).

#### Successes Achieved

Participants were able to develop their Yoruba language competence through classroom instruction as well as informal interaction and socialization outside of class. Below is the result of the pre-program and post-program proficiency tests conducted for participants by ACTFL certified OPI testers:

#### Pre-program proficiency level:

Advanced High [5 students]  
Advanced Mid [3 students]  
Intermediate High [5 students]  
Intermediate Mid [3 students]  
Intermediate Low [2 students]

#### Post-program proficiency level:

Superior Mid [4]; Low [1]  
Advanced High [3]  
Advanced Mid [3]; Low [2]  
Intermediate High [3]  
Intermediate High [1]; Mid [1]

#### Conclusion

The program encountered some challenges and testing situations despite its successes. However, the determination of the participants and the support of the program staff in Nigeria ensured a successful 2011 Yoruba GPA program. In spite of our challenges, we continue to see the long term benefits of the Program. For instance, during this funding cycle, 5 former participants of the program were awarded the Fulbright-Hays doctoral dissertation scholarships to carry out field work in Nigeria.

Akintunde Akinyemi  
Yoruba GPA Project Director

### Advancing Students' Competency in the Zulu language and Culture: Fulbright-Hays Zulu Group Project Abroad in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

The Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA, supported by the U.S. Department of Education and the University of Pennsylvania, continues to offer opportunities for American students to learn the Zulu language and culture in KwaZulu-Natal where the Zulu language is spoken. The University of Zululand, also known as Ongoye, serves as the host institution. Below are selected testimonies from some of the Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA

Alumnis on how the Zulu GPA has impacted their academic and career pursuits:

I have since returned to South Africa for an intensive 9 months of dissertation research in and around Johannesburg. The Zulu I gained during my Fulbright experience allowed me a much more nuanced view of both the language itself and the speech patterns of township lingo (tsotsitaal), which gave me insight into how identity is performed, post-apartheid (my dissertation topic). I am currently preparing for another, final three month trip, in which I will continue to practice my Zulu and conduct follow up research.

-April-Sizemore (Ph.D. candidate), UC-Berkeley, 2009

I have returned to SA annually since the GPA, for periods of up to 3 weeks. Part of that time was

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spent on archival work toward my current book project, "Learning Zulu: A Secret History of Language in South Africa."

-Professor Mark Sanders, NYU, 2008

I participated in the Zulu GPA in the summer of 2009. I spent a month in South Africa in the summer of 2010; I attended the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism at the University of the Witwatersrand and then spent ten days with my GPA host family in Maqongqo. I spent eight weeks in South Africa in the summer of 2011 through a Penn FLAS fellowship, studying Zulu at the University of Zululand in conjunction with the GPA program.

-Joseph Napolitano (Ph.D. candidate), NYU, 2009

I have returned to South Africa since my 2009 Zulu GPA.

I was in South Africa from March 2010 to June 2011 for PhD dissertation research (funded by Fulbright-HAYS DDRA, as well as SSRC IDRF). I conducted interviews and ethnographic research on drug resistant tuberculosis in Durban and Tugela Ferry, KZN (with brief visits to Cape Town, as well.)

-Erica Dwyer (Ph.D. Candidate), Penn, 2009

The 2011 Zulu GPA program was another resounding success! It was very well-received by the participants, based on the student evaluations and the External Evaluator's report. The program took place from June 12 through August 07 and was led by the Project Director, Dr. Audrey Nonhlanhla Mbeje, a native of KwaZulu-Natal. A total of 9 participants (3 graduate students and 6 undergrads) from 6 U.S.

institutions, namely, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Columbia University, University of Michigan, UC Santa Barbara, Rowan University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Nested in the heart of Zululand, in a Zulu-speaking community of KwaDlangezwa, the University of Zululand offers American students vast opportunities for optimum experiential learning and students can engage on a daily basis with native speakers on and off-campus. From the GPA staff members who are all native speakers and experts in the Zulu language and culture to faculty who serves as guest speakers and community members most of whom who work for the university and host our participants for home stays, the Zulu GPA curriculum is carefully designed to maximize linguistic and cultural input for the participants.

As a way to provide a space for students to use the Zulu language beyond the Zulu GPA after they come back to the United States at the end of the program, I launched a Facebook site. I would like to encourage speakers of Zulu to join the Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA Facebook to dialogue with my students nationally in the Zulu language! Instructors of Zulu can also encourage their students to join as this would allow them to practice and to learn from their peers. You would be surprised at the amount of language, cultural knowledge and current news in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa that are shared on this site.

Director, Audrey N Mbeje, Ph.D.  
University of Pennsylvania

### Izithombe (Pictures)!



Posing with the US Consul General (3rd from left)



Zulu GPA Group-Univ of Zululand Campus



At the US Consulate General in Durban



## Intensive Kiswahili Group Projects Abroad in Tanzania

Dates: June 16 – August 10, 2011

by Dr. Deo Ngonyani

The 2011 Kiswahili GPA was a remarkable success. There were 30 applications from students in 19 universities. A panel of 6 ALTA members and past GPA directors reviewed the applications and rated them. GPA fellowships were awarded to 14 participants, 6 graduate students and 8 undergraduate students. The program was hosted by MS-Training Center for Development Cooperation Arusha, Tanzania (MS-TCDC). The GPA awardees were joined in Arusha by 2 undergraduate students who had qualified for GPA but did not get funding and were able to get FLAS fellowships.

For 4 weeks, the participants attended classes at MS-TCDC, lived with host families, went on local excursions, met with local people and had ample opportunity to speak Kiswahili, engage in real language use situation and learn about the culture. The fifth week was spent on travel to Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo and Zanzibar to learn more about Swahili culture and history. The last 3 weeks were spent at MS-TCDC with instruction, local excursions and home-stays. They also presented and wrote reports and presented about their trips and books they read.

Before the program, the ALTA panel of reviewers conducted oral proficiency interviews with applicants who were shortlisted after the first review. The participants' performance in that interview

was the basis of their final selection and placement in Arusha. Based on their proficiency, there were two sections of Advanced Kiswahili. The two groups had some joint sessions each week, as well as separate sessions. There were two written exams, one in the fourth week, and the second in the eighth week. Each participant made two major presentations for which they were graded. One was on a major Kiswahili work, with most of the students presenting on a study of a Kiswahili novel. The second presentation was based on their participation and observation of a community project where they had been involved for two days.

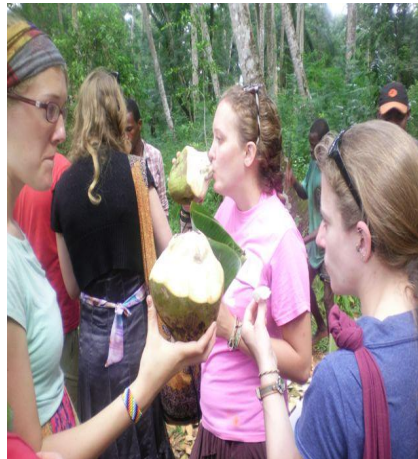
The 2011 GPA was the last of the four-year cycle 2008-2011. The program was hosted by the same institution for all four years with Dr. Deo Ngonyani as the in-country director. The following table presents the enrolment history of the program.

Kiswahili GPA Applications and fellowships offered

Year	Applications	Fellowships	Other
2008	33	13	
2009	21	14	
2010	23	12	
2011	30	14	2 FLAS fellows



GPA 2011 participants, host families and instructors at a farewell gathering



A visit to spice farms in Zanzibar and a taste of fresh coconut juice



Class in session

## African Languages Initiative Domestic Intensive Summer Program at UF

African Languages Initiative (AFLI) is a National Security Education Program that offers Boren Scholarships and Fellowships to undergraduate and graduate students to enable them add an important international and language component to their education. So far, five African languages have participated in the program- they include Akan, Swahili, Wolof Yoruba, or Zulu. The AFLI program comprises two components – Domestic Intensive Summer (DIS) program and Overseas Immersion Fall (OIF) program. The University of Florida was privileged to host the first DIS (Swahili and Yoruba) in summer 2011 which was ran alongside the Summer Cooperative African Languages Institute (SCALI) from June 13 to August 5, 2011.

AFLI 2011 was a successful undertaking with 16 students (12 students in Beginning Swahili, 2 students in Intermediate Swahili, 3 students in Beginning Yoruba, and 1 in Intermediate Yoruba)

The summer Cooperative African Language Institute (SCALI) was hosted by the University of Florida from June 13 to August 5, 2011. It was a successful undertaking. A total of 11 African languages were offered - some at a multiple level as follows: Akan (beginning and intermediate), Amharic (beginning), Arabic (beginning, intermediate, advanced), Hausa (beginning), Igbo (intermediate), Pulaar (beginning), Setswana (intermediate), Somali (beginning, intermediate), Swahili (beginning, intermediate), Wolof (beginning, intermediate), Xhosa (beginning), and Yoruba (beginning). The newly established African Languages Initiative (AFLI) program was also undertaken alongside SCALI. AFLI

and four instructors who demonstrated the highest level of commitment and enthusiasm. The program established a firm foundation to learners regarding the language, culture and traditions of the two languages that prepared them well for the 2011 Overseas Immersion Fall programs at the University of Ibadan (Yoruba) and the State University of Zanzibar - SUZA (Swahili).

Due to the successes recorded in the 2011 AFLI program, UF has again been awarded AFLI grant to run the 2012 Domestic Intensive Summer program scheduled for June 4 – July 27, 2012 in which Akan/Twi, Wolof, and Zulu have been added to the list making a total of five African languages. Students in Swahili, Yoruba, and Zulu programs will spend fall 2012 at the overseas centers – SUZA, University of Ibadan, and University of Zululand respectively. Preparations for AFLI 2012 are going on very smoothly and the number of applicants, over 70, in-

dicates an enormous enthusiasm out there. For more information visit <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/afli.html>.

Programmatically, AFLI program expose learners to the communicative aspects, culture and traditions of the languages both inside and outside the classroom. Instruction is performance-based and communicative-oriented provided by professional, committed and native-speaking instructors. Classes meet four hours plus mandatory two-hour extracurricular activities every weekday over eight weeks. Also, students spend a day with a host family around Gainesville area every other weekend in order to enhance communicative interactions in the target languages. Students earn course credit equivalent to one academic year of instruction.

Charles Bwenge, PhD.  
Director,  
AFLI Program

## SCALI 2011-2012 Report

had only two languages – Swahili and Yoruba – both taught at beginning and intermediate levels. In this regard, the session had a total of 22 instructors. However, the enrollment was not so impressive: total enrollment was 70 students. Thus student-teacher ratio was 3.1. Nevertheless, the highest enrollment per section was 10 (Beginning Swahili, AFLI) and the lowest was 1 (in the following classes: Beginning Akan, Intermediate Igbo, Beginning Pulaar, Beginning Xhosa, and AFLI intermediate Yoruba). Without any doubt, student enrollment was a challenge in relation to hiring instructors. Some students who had expressed interest withdrew in the last minute when instruc-

tors had already signed the job contracts.

Besides challenges posed by unpredictable enrollments, the 2011 SCALI eventually ran smoothly. It exposed students to the culture and traditions of the languages both inside and outside the classroom. Instruction was performance-based and communicative-oriented provided by expert, native-speaking instructors who displayed a high level of professionalism. Classes met four hours a day with a 45 minute break. Students, on the other hand, demonstrated a high level of cooperation and enthusiasm. Every Wednesday a group of languages would put their cul-



tural skills into practice by preparing dishes of their respective C2s for all participants at what came to be popularly known as “Africa Eats Nights”. Towards the end of the Institute, Professor Eyamba Bokamba was invited to conduct external evaluation which he did from July 25-27, 2011. It was indeed quite an experience!

Unfortunately, as the 2011 SCALI was about to take off, budget cuts news surfaced indicating the brink of its demise.

Charles Bwenge, PhD  
University of Florida

# Student Cultural Immersion Experiences in Africa

## First-time, life-long experience in Tanzania—Reflections from a Boren’s African Languages Initiative Scholar

Think back to the last time you felt really uncomfortable. Did you remove yourself from the situation or did you stay and realize that you were growing? For the past six months, I spent my time in Tanzania, where I studied Swahili in Zanzibar through the Boren Scholarship’s African Languages Initiative. Although both my parents emigrated from Tanzania, my first time there was this past June. I had always heard about Tanzania, and growing up with immigrant parents I could understand the language, but it was always my parent’s country, and something foreign to me. It was my first time going there, and I was unprepared for all that I was to see. I saw elementary school-aged kids selling plastic bags in the market. I also saw people help pull children out of a bus after an accident when the police were nowhere to be found. I learned that all this is my heritage, and that I needed to be the change I wanted to see. During my time, I was constantly learning and appreciating, whether through negotiating the prices of everything from food to bus fare, or walking all the way to the Western Union only to be told for the third time that week that the system was down, or meeting my grandmother for the first time and thinking, what did I do to deserve all this love?

Through my work with Ase Academy, an African-centered enrichment program at Penn, I strive to help young people explore black history and discover their own strengths. I am also currently applying for a research grant this summer with African immigrant and refugee youth in Washington D.C., to help motivate them in their transitions. I will also participate in the International Development Summer Institute in Ghana, where I will hopefully gain a better understanding on some of the issues plaguing Sub-Saharan African countries and be able to apply that to my studies here at Penn and beyond. I

will apply for a Fulbright Fellowship to try and teach English in Tanzania after graduation. Ultimately, and this has come through my revelation that Tanzania is also a part of me, I hope to build an elementary school in Tanzania, as young people there are in need of encouragement and support. But throughout everything, I was reminded of how big the world is, and that our time at Penn is leading to something even bigger. But I also see how the streets of Dar Es Salaam closely resemble 40th and Market, and that as blacks, as humans, we share more problems than we care to admit. I eventually learned to find comfort in my discomfort. Now I am learning how to translate that discomfort into the fuel to make a change.

Cecelela Tomi  
University of Pennsylvania  
Boren’s African Languages Initiative Scholar (2011)



# Life-time memories as I step forward into my future: My experience in Zululand

Garth Hammel, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
(Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA, 2011)

As a former participant of the program, I was sorry to hear that the Fulbright-Hays Zulu Group Project Abroad will not receive funding this year. This fellowship, which since 2005 has been enabled by Dr. Audrey Mbeje of the University of Pennsylvania, is one of the few opportunities for American students to learn Zulu and experience South African culture. Zulu is a major language of commerce and education in South Africa, but remains one of the lesser taught languages in the United States.

Last June I was fortunate to be among nine American students who took part in the program. We studied for two months at the University of Zululand-Ongoye in their Department of Zulu Language and Culture with Dr. Mbeje as well as Professor Zamokwakhe Khumalo and Sister Gloria Biyela. Their efforts saw that we received a foundation to use the language in conversation, through extensive speaking and writing practice. Student mentors also took their time to talk with us and to assist us in our studies.

Outside the classroom we were free to explore and try out our language skills with other students at the university, our mentors and our host families. We each stayed with two host families, one in an urban setting in the town of eMpangeni and the other in rural KwaDlangezwa. The experience of living with them broadened our scope and required us to test out our Zulu in conversation. They supported us in the initial nervous few weeks of transition, and helped us to grow and learn as time passed. For example, my host family in eMpangeni spoke only Zulu to me at home, understanding that I was trying to learn the language. My host nephew of three years was an eager conversational partner. In KwaDlangezwa, my host father took me around the community to meet his family and friends and helped me to practice speaking. Being with these families helped me to grow and become more confident in my life. I am grateful for all of the people involved in the program as well as the families who took us in as their own.

Throughout the program we met with a number of people. We traveled to the home of the South

African Minister of Education Blade Nzimande, who discussed with us his plans for expanding technical colleges within the region. We met with Zethu Mkhize, a traditional healer, who surveyed the different herbs used in Zulu medicine and explained their applications. Nkosinathi Sithole, a member of the Shembe church, discussed with us the syncretism of Zulu culture and Christianity within his belief system. We also had the opportunity to visit the historic battlefields of the Anglo-Zulu war Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, the house of Albert Luthuli, the Phansi Museum in Durban, and a gathering of the Shembe Church at Nhlankakazi. These excursions gave us an understanding of the history of Zulu culture, and a context for the language we had been learning.

The Zulu GPA gives students the opportunity to speak Zulu with people who know it as their first language, something which is generally not possible in America. It also fosters leadership and provides students with the chance to learn about a culture apart from their own. We were fortunate to meet so many people and experience so much of South Africa. The experience stays in my heart and the hearts of my friends who I met on the trip. I carry these memories with me as I move forward into the next stage of my life. I hope that Zulu will be recognized and that this program can continue in the future.



A few of us and our student mentors at the University of Zululand



## My immersion experience in Ibadan, Nigeria

By: Kevin Barry, University of Wisconsin-Madison

I had the privilege of being part of the first ever Yoruba Language Flagship Program that ran from 2009-2011. Since my freshman year at the University of Wisconsin Madison in 2009, I took intensive Yoruba language and culture courses. I then went to Nigeria for the 2010-2011 academic year as part of the Language Flagship's cultural immersion program sponsored by American Councils for International Education. This program was critical to my language development as it gave me the opportunity to live with a Nigerian family, study at a Nigerian university, and work at two internships.

Going to Nigeria felt like traveling to another world in many ways due to the vast cultural and societal differences. These differences, however, made my experience highly enriching. The opportunity to live with a Yoruba family was instrumental in my lingual and cultural acquisition. The family I stayed with graciously adopted me as their own child. They treated me as if I were a part of their real family. This entailed both enjoyable and not so enjoyable elements of daily life as a Nigerian. For example, my family threw a huge birthday party for me that had over 60 attendees, food, cake, music and dancing. I also frequently had to wake up at 6am to wash my host father's car. I only spoke Yoruba in the home with them. These varied experiences were enriching

in ways that are impossible to learn in a classroom.

In addition to living with a host family, I worked at a local television and radio station translating programming material between English and Yoruba languages. I also learned traditional dance at a cultural center. Music has always been my passion in life and I have played drums and percussion for over 11 years. Through the cultural center I worked at, I was able to find a world renowned traditional bata drummer who took me under his wing as my mentor and helped me to become well versed in the Yoruba bata and talking drum traditions. This was perhaps the most rewarding experience I had in Nigeria. Moreover, my combined experiences in Nigeria enabled me to achieve a "superior" score on an Oral Proficiency Interview in Yoruba language upon my return.

Since I have returned from Nigeria, I have found countless opportunities I never knew existed in speaking an African language fluently. I have flown around the country to play bata drums with several prominent Nigerian musicians. I have also become a certified court interpreter for the Wisconsin state and United States Federal Courts. I am sure that these experiences will continue to guide me through more amazing experiences over the next few years.



Playing Bata Drums at a traditional Yoruba festival



With my host family at my birthday party



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) Presents

NCOLCTL  
Swahili  
STARTALK



**July 9-28, 2012**  
**Madison, WI**



### Apply for the 2012 NCOLCTL Swahili STARTALK **Application Extended Deadline 05/01/2012**

Swahili STARTALK is a summer professional development program for teachers of Swahili.

Are you interested in expanding your knowledge of teaching Swahili? If so, you should attend this summer Swahili professional development program.



#### NCOLCTL Swahili STARTALK

**What:** An intensive three-week program that will allow you to participate in professional development that will focus on quality instruction, curriculum and assessment for Swahili Language.

**Who:** This program is open to both current and new teachers of Swahili.

**Where:** The program will take place in Madison, WI.

**When:** Program dates are: July 9-28, 2012

July 9-13, 2012 (One-week Non-Residential online program)

July 16-28, 2012 (Two-week Residential program in Madison)

**Cost:** Each participant selected for this program will receive

(i) a \$1,000.00 stipend (ONLY upon successful completion of the program.

(ii) Accommodation for the two-week residential program.

(iii) \$300.00 (maximum), travel reimbursement for all out of town participants\*

(iv) A Certificate of Completion upon successfully completing the program.

*\*Some restrictions may apply*

#### To Apply:

1. Complete the form [Available](#) at the Registration Desk or [www.startalk.ncolctl.org](http://www.startalk.ncolctl.org). You can type in the required information. However, print out the completed form and sign. You can fax, mail or email the completed application to the NCOLCTL Secretariat Office. Have your supervisor complete the [Supervisor's Form](#) to send to the NCOLCTL Secretariat Office.

Application Deadline: **May 1, 2012**

Applicants should expect to hear notification of their application status by Monday, May 7, 2012.



**Lugha Newsletter**  
**Spring Volume 2012**

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