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Marisol Teijeiro, ND, completed her diploma in naturopathic medicine at the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine. In private practice, she provides individualized care for patients, from newborns to elders, dealing with nervous, immune and hormonal issues. Dr. Teijeiro's passion is helping people to adopt health practices that improve their quality of life.

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# AFRICAN

*Immigrant*

# CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY 24X365



Ugandan-born Musician Silas Balabyekkubo Babaluku, Page 11  
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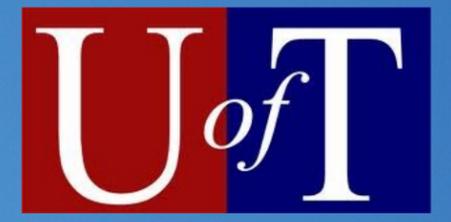
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# WAITING FOR THE MINISTER'S CONVOY

CHIKA EZEANYA BRINGS to light the excesses of public officials in Africa and their perception of invincibility

BY DR. CHIKA EZEANYA

**K**igali, Rwanda: I stood outside the beautiful Serena Hotels conference hall lobby, chatting on my phone. At 8:35 a.m., I had arrived a little too early for the conference slated for 9:15 a.m. With the Minister of Public Service and Labor as the person giving the opening remarks, and being in Africa, I reckoned that the event will start at about 10:30 am; enough time to

allow the busy Minister attend to other urgent matters. At 9:05, an unremarkable jeep pulled up in front of me. A man dressed in a suit I would consider not too fashionable alighted, clutching some files. He walked briskly past me towards the hall. Must be some civil servant conference participant, I noted casually. At about 9:17 a.m. the sound of opening activities

came to me from within the hall indicating the commencement of the event. Excellent, I thought; no African time here. But how could the conference organizers have commenced without the Minister who is billed to be one of the very first to address the audience, I inquired of my Rwandan neighbor. "The Minister is here" he said. "There he is." I followed the polite nod of his head as his eyes rested on the simple looking man who passed me earlier.

"OK. He sent a representative." I responded as I busied myself going through the event schedule.

"No. He is the Minister." For some seconds my mind was beclouded. I suddenly found myself concluding that I was either erroneously at a religious gathering, and that the ordained minister heading the congregation was being pointed out to me, or more realistically, that I was indeed at the right government function where a reverend minister had been invited to say the opening prayers. That was the only way it would make sense to me that the man who alighted from that car without fanfare is indeed a government minister. In search of clarity to my befuddled mind, I took a second, closer look at the schedule and saw clearly written, Opening Remarks by the Minister of Public Service and Labor.

Lost in thought, I did not realize that I had dropped my phone until my kind neighbor nudged

me back to reality. "Is he a full Minister or the Minister of State, or Executive Assistant to the Minister" I further probed, not realizing that I did not say thank you for his good deed.

"He is the Minister." He responded, a little bit bewildered by my disconcerted body language. I ignored him and turned to ask the honest looking elderly lady beside me. I hold no grudge against young men, the likes of who just gave me the information, but I needed a second opinion from someone more reliable in appearance.

"Excuse me Madam. When are we expecting the Minister of Public Service and Labor?" I asked.

"Where are you from?" The good lady asked, perhaps sensing my flash bipolar condition. "Nigeria" I responded meekly, humbled - as is often the case - by the negative gravity often experienced at the mention of that name.

"Your accent," she said, smiling and not elaborating further. "The Minister is the one speaking." She concluded diverting her full attention to the podium. The gentleman had just taken the microphone and was very calmly and respectfully addressing the full room of civil servants, university professors, and other citizens. Very interesting. Not one extra car did I see with this man. I only

*continued on page 28*

## Canada Launches Foreign Credential Assessment Website

It is now easier to work out if your foreign qualifications can be accepted in Canada with the launch of a new website to help people applying for work. Citizenship and Immigration Canada has launched the International Qualification Network (IQN) for the assessment and recognition of foreign worker qualifications. It serves as a virtual space for employers, regulatory bodies, governments and organizations to capitalize on promising qualification assessment and recognition practices'

The Government of Canada is committed to improving the process of recognizing foreign worker qualifications, and the IQN website will help find solutions that will allow immigrants to integrate better into the Canadian labour market,' said Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney."

Through the IQN website, stakeholders can share effective evaluation tools and practices, studies, pilot projects, reports and videos and post information on events, such as workshops and conferences. The website was created with the guidance of the IQN Advisory Council, a group of 20 partners and stakeholders who represent various provinces, employers and post secondary education institutions from across Canada. The information posted on the IQN will benefit everyone in all jurisdictions. For example, The Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre in Nova Scotia has posted a profile of its programme to assist internationally educated health care professionals in getting their credentials recognized and integrating into the province's labour market. The profile serves as a model for other nursing associations in other provinces to design their own programme.

The Multi jurisdictional Midwifery Bridging Project (MMBP) posted an outline of its eight month bridging programme for internationally educated midwives who want to practice in British Columbia, Alberta, the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia. The outline provides valuable information to foreign midwives and organisations assisting immigrants.. With the creation of the IQN website, the Government of Canada is delivering on a two year commitment to support provincial, territorial and stakeholder efforts to improve international credential recognition through the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications. (expatforum.com)

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Continued from p. 26 (RRSP)

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**\*Pre-tax RRSP contribution assumptions** – \$10,000 investment purchased on January 1, 2010 at a gross rate of return of 7% over a 30 year period. The rate of return is used only to illustrate the effects of the compound growth rate and is not intended to reflect future values or returns on investment.

**\*\*RRSP Loan assumptions** – Client takes out a 1 year RRSP loan of \$10,000 at a fixed rate of 6% on January 1, 2010 and makes a \$860.66 (\$810.66 principal and \$50.00 in interest) payment on January 31, 2010. Client has a marginal tax rate of 40% and receives a tax refund of \$4,000, which is used to pay down the loan on February 1, 2010 (remaining balance on February 1, 2010 is \$10,000 - [\$810.66 x 12] = \$5189.34), which is paid monthly (\$486.03) over the remaining 11 months.

Continued from p. 27 (Minister's Convoy)

have a vague recollection of seeing someone else in the front seat apart from the driver. The man I had seen opened the car door himself and carried his files. During lunch, the Minister – I still cannot believe it as I write – joined us to queue for food; the same service line, the same food, the same drink, the same plates and cutlery. Nothing different for the "big man". Excuse me someone, am I in Africa or elsewhere?

Yes. This is Africa. Welcome to Rwanda. The African country where government ministers are not entitled to any extra car allowance and definitely no sirens. Upon appointment as a minister, the appointee is given the equivalent of 11,000 USD in local currency to buy a car. He gets a monthly allowance of 1,400 USD to maintain his vehicle. and that is it. He is also entitled to only one security personnel and one secretary. No more personal servant or any other form of assistant or aide is allowed the minister. The Attorney General (known as Prosecutor General) gets about 15,000 USD to buy a car, and 700 USD monthly for car maintenance. The senators get even less in allowance and office perks. Contrast this with the situation in Kenya. Ministers on the bill of the government purchase vehicles include top-of-the-range Mercedes Benz, Volvos and powerful four-wheel-drives like Range Rovers, Land Cruisers, Nissan Patrols and Toyota Prados. In his first year in power in 2002, President Mwai Kibaki's government set to task purchasing high-end luxury vehicles. And "between January 2003 and September 2004, the new government spent at least 878 million Kenya shillings (about 12 million dollars) in the purchase of luxury cars that were largely for the personal use of senior government officials such as ministers, assistant ministers and permanent secretaries," cites a Transparency International report.

When the Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta asked ministers to purchase less expensive cars with engine capacities of no more than 1.8 litres, the ministers refused stating that they "need to look like ministers." Housing Minister Soita Shitanda expressly stated that he "cannot drive into a function in a small car similar to the ones driven by teenagers." A minister in Nigeria reportedly has over 30 aides- no one is sure of the exact amount. The ministers travel in long convoys of siren blaring cars. Federal ministers, senior army, air force and naval officers, state commissioners, local government chairmen and others are entitled to cars and to the use of sirens. When in late 2011 President Jonathan announced - during the launch of the Federal Road Safety Commission's new driver's license and number plates - a nationwide ban on the use of sirens by unauthorized persons, few Nigerians took him seriously.

Some would argue that it is unfair to denounce countries like Nigeria with an unusually high number of cars, security and personnel in their ministerial convoys as they are some of the most dangerous places on earth to be resident, not to talk of a prominent one. Being appointed even to a street environmental task force remotely connected with the local government, results in nothing less than a declaration of fatwa on the appointee by the criminal community - kidnapers, swindlers, armed robbers, even pick pockets. One cannot go without the other. It is the corruption entrenched in the public service that has resulted in the abundance of crime on the streets of Lagos. When a Minister's salary and allowances are so high, while the common man struggles to pay for even the most basic healthcare, then of course, the minister becomes a target for the disgruntled and crime prone segment of society. When ministers are demi-gods, arriving at meetings two hours behind schedule to a standing ovation by the delighted audience, then that society needs complete overhaul. Rwanda holds up the example for every single African country.

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**PUBLISHER'S NOTE**



**PROF. PHIL TAM-AL ALALIBO**

**A**s we celebrate Black History Month, it is imperative we revisit the crucial issue of culture, heritage vis a vis the child born to African parentage in the Diaspora. The dilemma faced by many of these parents is the urgent question as to whether their children that were born in Canada are Africans or will consider themselves as such when they become of age. With many young African couples having children in Canada, this has become a pertinent issue to be dealt with from the cultural and societal prism. For many of these children, been born and raised in Canada means utter assimilation into the Canadian society, its nuances, culture and ways of life.

Even those that immigrated to Canada at a very young age are finding it difficult to identify with Africa, the continent of their birth. Many of these children cannot speak or understand their mother tongue. This becomes more complicated when the parents though Africans and may come from the same country do not speak the same ethnic language. This often means that English is the medium of exchange in the home and the children grow up without learning their mother tongue. For these children, there is often the issue of identity and they remain conflicted, torn between multiple competing identities and often times, the dominate identity prevails.

Years ago, I was in a conversation with

a young adult who was born in the United States and I asked him where he was from – his response was as much instructive as it was emblematic of the crisis of identity that has engulfed multiple generations of African children born in the Diaspora. This young gentleman responded – "I am from North Carolina where I was born, but my parents are from Nigeria." It is clear that in this case, his allegiance was not with Nigeria, but with the United States where he was born even though his parents were from Nigeria and here lies the dilemma.

As these generations of African children born in the Diaspora become adults, it is unlikely that they would embrace their parents' home country, culture and way of life. It is also unlikely they would marry an African which further annihilates them from their parents' country. It is worth noting that some immigrants groups in Canada and in the West have devised viable means of overcoming this obstacle by creating summer programs where these children can immerse themselves in their parents' culture by learning the language and nuances. This is a positive approach that should be considered by

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*What About Your Children?*

African communities in Canada. Alternatively, some Africans are sending their children home to live with relatives to be familiarized with their home culture. While this may assuage this need, parents should be mindful of the profound emotional effect on the children that may lead to a disconnect.

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# CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY 24X365

BY TOMI GBELEYI

## CANADA: LEARNING ITS BLACK HISTORY

**M**artin Luther King, Rosa Parks and Malcom X are historical figures well known to many university students as leaders who fought against inequality and racism. Names like Marie-Joseph Angélique or Olivier Le Jeune, however, will likely not ring a bell. These two people were slaves in Canada and are part of Canada's multi-faceted black history. Marie-Joseph Angélique was a female black slave who burned half of what was known as Old Montreal, and Olivier Le Jeune was a boy younger than eight years old who came into Canada from Madagascar as a slave but died a free man. Award-winning author Lawrence Hill recently told the *Montreal Gazette* that he believes Canadian knowledge of black history in Canada is incomprehensively focused on the Underground Railroad because of Canadians' "unconscious resistance" towards examining their own history. "It's convenient to know about that, and if a Canadian does know a tiny bit about black history in Canada, they're likely to trumpet the Underground Railroad," Hill said in the interview. Many are unaware that Canada also bears the shame of participating in slave trade. Both slaves and free blacks had to continuously fight against extreme discrimination and racism while living in Canada. Some were lynched for suspected theft, and others were deceived into

a life of domestic work that was little more than slavery. The Maritime provinces have particular significance to Black History Month in Canada. The first major influx of blacks to Canada occurred in Halifax after the American Revolutionary war in 1783. Black Loyalists came with other Loyalists to the Maritimes, but ultimately left to create the city Freetown in Sierra Leone due to the extent of racial discrimination they faced in Canada. Very few attempts have been made to provide an impartial account of Loyalists in Canada. The approach taken is often patriotic or genealogical; thus, there is little information on the maltreatment they meted out to blacks, both slave and free.

As opposed to focusing on the history of African-Americans, which is important, educators and students in the Maritimes should be aware of the history of their own country and province. Many are unaware of major events in Canada, including the major exodus to Sierra Leone in 1792 and the creation of a small community in the city of Halifax called Africville, which was populated almost entirely by African Nova Scotians and subsequently destroyed by the Halifax government in the 1960s. Africville inhabitants continued to protest the demolition of their community in the 1980s and 1990s. The municipal government of Halifax has since apologized for the destruction of Africville, and the government of Canada established a \$250,000 Africville Heritage Trust in 2010 to preserve the history of the community. Now, the rest of the country just needs to get on board and learn about black history in Canada.



## South African Couple BRINGS AFRICA TO CANADA

"There's no Canadian food that comes close to it. It's what South Africans grow up eating,"

**R**od and Mal Paterson are counting on South African-Canadians like themselves who crave a taste of home. Biltong Canada, their Cranbrook, B.C., company, cuts, marinates and dries beef using a recipe that dates back to the 1600s. "We're not just selling food but selling nostalgia, home and life as it used to be," said Rod. Unlike jerky products that are generally derived from smoked South American meat, biltong, which translates as a slice of meat, is made of prime cuts of Alberta beef such as eye of round and inside round. Beef is cut and marinated in salt, vinegar and natural spices and then air dried.

"There's no Canadian food that comes close to it. It's what South Africans grow up eating," said Mal, noting it is a favourite at movies and rugby games and on road trips. The Patersons sell their products, which also include coiled South African boerewors (farmers sausage), droewors (dried sausage) and flavoured mustards at a farmers' market, trade shows and online. They use food sampling, athletic sponsorships and taste of Africa to familiarize consumers with the unique flavours. "Nothing sells a product like enthusiasm and passion," said Rod, who noted that sales have doubled each year since the family business started in 2006.

While expatriates are a big market, the Patersons' customers also include hunters, hikers, athletes, tourists and people seeking new flavours. Celiacs are attracted by the product's gluten-free status. The Patersons also see potential in supplying the armed forces, international space program, search and rescue squads and schools. "It's perfect for that application.... You put it in the pocket and go," said Mal. The Patersons, with their three children, chose Cranbrook because of its climate, mountain setting and smaller size, feeling it would help them adapt more quickly and provide a safe home for their three children. "We don't regret the decision. It was a great place to become Canadian," said Rod.

They left behind a volatile homeland, where 2,000 farmers were murdered in the four years following the end of apartheid. The former cattle and sheep ranchers and agritourism operators

from Waterval Boven arrived in British Columbia in a recession in 2003 and worked at odd jobs. Many years would pass before they were able to sell their farm, and then for only a fraction of its value. They lived on their wages and savings, expanding the company's processing facilities themselves "inch by inch," paying cash for about \$100,000 worth of equipment. "We had to be careful with every penny," said Rod. Mal and Rod have worked for Biltong full time since 2009, with Rod handling the production and Mal overseeing marketing. The children also helped and took food safety courses.

The family had experience in marketing but received a boost navigating through a plethora of business challenges in Canada from B.C.'s Small Scale Food Processors Association. The Patersons received \$15,000 under the Food Safety Systems Implementation (Processors) Program to upgrade equipment for their provincially inspected business. Candice Appleby, the association's executive director, said her group offers support to members in marketing, education, networking and advocacy.

*"NOTHING SELLS A PRODUCT LIKE ENTHUSIASMS AND PASSION."*

- Rod Paterson— South African Immigrant

"For up and coming companies, it helps them jump a lot of hurdles better than on their own," she said. Its food directory features more than 200 companies and 900 products, which it promotes to wholesalers and buyers at trade shows. An online network allows members to talk to one another about issues of common concern, such as buying cabbage, nutrition labelling software and staying abreast of trends, regulatory issues and consumer demands. "It lessens their time doing things..." says Appleby. ([www.producer.com](http://www.producer.com))

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## SETTLEMENT

More Immigrant Support Now Available in Southern Ontario



The City of Waterloo, Ontario

**I**mmigrants to the Kitchener-Waterloo region of Ontario now have more support available to them. The *Immigration Partnership Council* was recently announced, which according to the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, will “better assist new immigrants become part of the community.” The Council will help immigrants settle and find work, with an emphasis on employment through its integration with the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network. The Immigration Partnership Council becomes one of forty-five similar immigration councils in Ontario — and by serving Kitchener-Waterloo — it is serving the seventh most popular destination in the country for new Canadians. Currently, twenty-two percent of the region’s population is composed of immigrants. Waterloo is the well-known home of Research in Motion (RIM), the makers of Blackberry, and the world class Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, started with the help of the founder of RIM. These, and other draws, make the region attractive for new immigrants. You can immigrate to Ontario through such programs as its Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), or a federal program like the Federal Skilled Worker program. To find out your eligibility, fill out our free online assessment form. (CanadaVisa.com)

# PROSTATE CANCER

PROSTATE | HEALTH

You Could Be at Risk—Learn More

**P**rostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men in the United States with estimates of 240,890 new cases being diagnosed and 33,720 men dying from prostate cancer in 2011. The recent U.S. Preventive Services Task Forces’ (USPSTF) recommendation against the use of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) based screening for prostate cancer in men 75 years or older has stimulated a heated discussion regarding the

benefits and harms of early detection screening programs and treatment

for prostate cancer. For younger men, the task force stated “current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of prostate cancer screening in men younger than age 75 years.” However, there may still be great clinical value in identifying and treating prostate cancer in its early stages for many patients. In fact, several of the prostate cancer studies evaluated by the task force showed a definite benefit of screening in younger men. One trial of men in their 50s and early 60s showed a 44 percent relative risk reduction in prostate cancer death rate after a median of 14 years. Prostate cancer screening is typically performed through a blood test to identify the presence of PSA, along with a prostate examination/digital examination. The problem is that PSA, a protein, is also produced by a noncancerous condition called benign enlarged prostates (BPH), in addition to prostate cancer. Therefore the presence of PSA is not specific to prostate cancer. This can lead to falsely positive test results, where the PSA test is abnormal, without the actual presence of prostate cancer. Up to 50 percent of men may have lower risk and/or slow-growing prostate cancer at the time of diagnosis and many of these men do not need immediate treatment. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest prostate cancer patients currently are over-diagnosed and over-treated. However, there is little doubt that early detection of prostate cancer screening has led to better chances for cure and is supported by the following observations:

- Prior to 1990, men had less than a 35 percent chance for curative success, compared to 90 percent of men who present today.
- Epidemiological data have shown a 41 percent decrease in prostate cancer mortality in the U.S. between 1990 and 2008.

Studies suggest that more than 50 percent of this reduction is due to early detection.

Ultimately, men need to be well-informed before making decisions about screening and treatment for prostate cancer. The American Cancer Society and the American Urology Association both advocate screening be performed according to patient preference after an explanation of the potential benefits and harms. A potential solution to the concern of overtreatment of prostate cancer is a relatively new approach in the management of these cancers known as “active surveillance.” Active surveillance allows carefully selected patients with early stage, low-grade tumors (less aggressive) to avoid being treated. All the while, they are being carefully monitored to detect any disease progression before it escapes the realm of curability.

Studies show that approximately 33 percent of men being managed with active surveillance will eventually require some form of definitive treatment. Patients managed with active surveillance are recommended to undergo treatment if the cancer shows evidence of significant growth or demonstrates a more aggressive pattern on pathological evaluation. The goal is always to treat cancer when it is still curative. (Utsandiago.com)

## IT'S OUR TIME



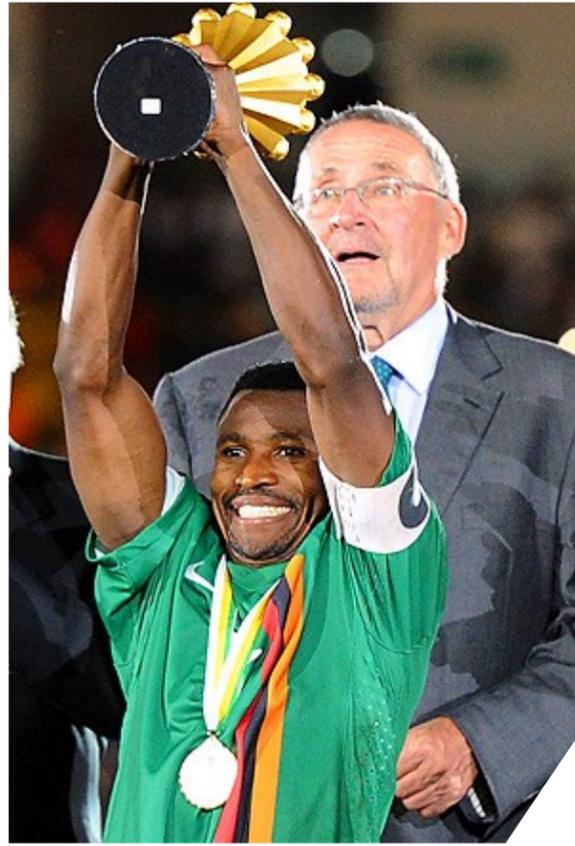
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# Zambia Wins AFRICAN CUP

LAST WORD | ZAMBIA WINS

BY MARTIN ROGERS | YAHOO SPORTS

Following their extraordinary victory in the Africa Cup of Nations final on Sunday night, this underdog group of players who grasped their moment in the spotlight forever can be known, quite simply, as the team of destiny. It was 19 years ago and a handful of miles away from the scene of Zambia's nerve-jangling penalty shootout upset of hot favorite Ivory Coast that the African nation of 12 million people suffered its greatest sporting tragedy. Traveling to a World Cup qualifier against Senegal, the Zambian Air Force plane the team was traveling on exploded after taking off from a stop in the Gabon capital of Libreville, killing all 30 passengers. In one heartbreaking moment an entire generation of Zambian soccer talent was destroyed, with only one player, Kalusha Bwalya, having averted death because he had chosen to make his own way to the game.

It has taken two decades to rebuild, and even then it was seen as something of an achievement just to qualify for this event. Zambia never has reached a World Cup, is ranked 71st in the world and boasts nowhere near the historical pedigree of Cameroon, South Africa, and Egypt, all of whom missed out on qualifying. "There was just something about it," goalkeeper Kennedy Mweene said. "With the tournament being here in Gabon we wanted to take part to honor those who were lost to our country. That made it extra special." The event was co-hosted by Equatorial Guinea, where Zambia played all three group games, plus its quarter-final and semifinal. "We could only get to Libreville by reaching the final,

so we did it," Coach Herve Renard told the Guardian's Jonathan Wilson after an upset 1-0 win against Ghana in the semifinal. "There is something written that we have to go to play to honor the memories of the Zambia national team that died in 1993. It was catastrophic for the nation. The 12 million people of Zambia are waiting for us to go back to Libreville; immediately after we arrive, we will go to the place." For Renard, the journey that culminated in him lifting the trophy was a remarkable one. Eight years ago he was sacked by English club Cambridge United, which now plays in the fifth tier of the English league system.

Renard wore his lucky white shirt through the Cup of Nations, yet while Zambia did enjoy some fortune, all the luck in the world would not have made this result possible without the extreme tenacity of his players. Just like against Ghana, Renard's men scrapped and hustled and refused to give in against an Ivory Coast side packed with superstars. Didier Drogba of the Ivory Coast was the biggest name on the field, but the Chelsea striker lost his nerve when presented with a penalty kick in the second half, blazing his attempt way over the bar. Zambia held on, through regulation and extra time, to set up the shootout, always the most dramatic of finishes.

Goalkeeper Mweene was the chief hero, slotting home his team's fifth penalty himself, and then stopping Kolo Toure with the score tied at 7-7. Rainford Kalaba spurned Zambia's first chance to win it, but after Arsenal star Gervinho missed for the Ivory Coast, Stoppila Sunzu fired home the winner to prompt wild celebrations.

**10 A BIG HEART:** Nigerian-born Olympic Gold Medalist, Daniel Igali, leaves his adopted country Canada after winning gold medal in the Olympics to help prepare Nigeria's London Olympic team for the gold



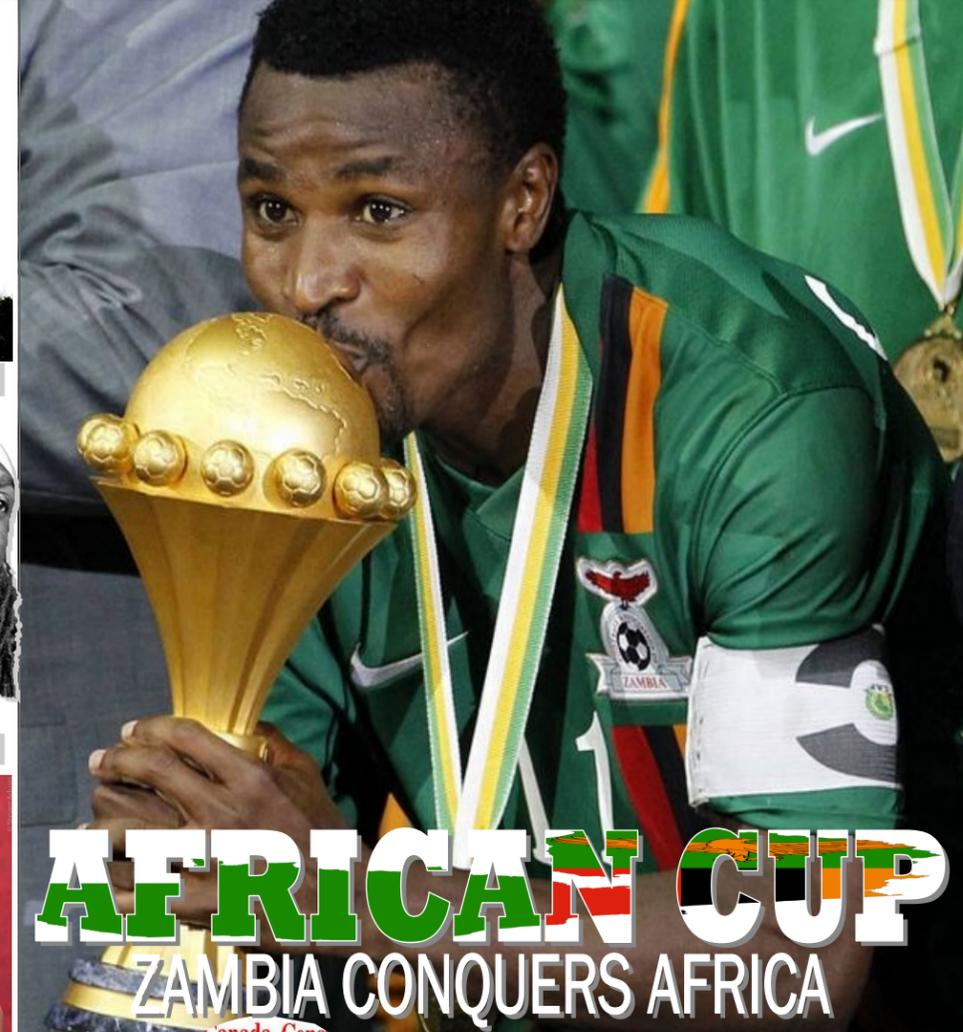
**PASSION 11 FOR THE YOUTH**

Ugandan-born musician Silas Babaluku returns home to help his Country's youth become leaders



**29 A COMEDY QUEEN?**

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# AFRICAN CUP ZAMBIA CONQUERS AFRICA

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### -Online blogs

► "President Atta Mills is done. The worst president Ghana has even had — time for a new one" — Fifi James

► "The short Nigerian actor, Aki, landed a beautiful wife—how did he get so lucky? Hope she is not in there for his money" — Lilia Dominic

► "Great article Kwesi Atta Sakyi on the reasons why there are so many Ghanaians abroad. I love it" — Esi Sackey

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WANT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS—EMAIL [PUBLISHER@AFRICANIMMIGRANT.CA](mailto:PUBLISHER@AFRICANIMMIGRANT.CA)

Dear Editor;

I am a Kenyan immigrant who recently moved to the GTA from Thunder Bay and I am hearing for the first time the group called Abeingo you covered in your January edition as your lead story. I was pleased to learn that Kenyans have taken the bull by the horn so to speak to help fellow Kenyans that are in need. Kenya is one of the most polarized societies in the World along ethnic lines as we witnessed during the aftermath of the December 2007 elections where violence was selectively based on ethnicity. The Abeingo group from my understanding of their goals and mission would go a long way to harmonized Kenyans in Toronto, reminding us all of the common heritage and interest we share in the Diaspora. I am encouraged by their efforts.

Faith (Fafy) Macharia  
North York, ON

Dear Editor;

I get a copy of African Immigrant Magazine each month delivered to my office on Bay Street and it looks to me that your publishers do not know that there is a region called North Africa. Are we not seen as Africans anymore? If the answer is no, then please explain why there has not been a single coverage on people and events in North Africa in your magazine. We expect such a magazine to pioneer African unity through even and fair coverage of events and people from all parts of the continent. Please be fair and don't forget that North Africa exist. Thanks!

Yezi Gulzar  
Toronto, ON

Dear Yezi: Thanks for your letter, we will ensure fair coverage of North Africa moving forward. Editor!

## WRITERS



AMAKA EKENKWO

Amaka is our general interest writer, she writes with passion and zeal on topics ranging from African culture, immigrant experiences to youth and social media. She is a university student and an aspiring lawyer.



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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 29  
AIM WELL, AIM RIGHT, AIM HIGH

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*African Immigrant Magazine* (AIM) is published monthly in Toronto by AIM Publications and distributed free across Canada

To advertise or for distribution: Call 289-800-2575: The Magazine reserves the right to refuse any ad that runs counter to its core values

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Phone: 289-800-2575

Subscription Rate in Canada  
\$29.99 for 12 Issues (12 months)

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Letters: If sent by post, send to  
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CANADA

YVONNE NELSON | ENTERTAINMENT



Actress Yvonne Nelson seems bent on proving she is not a pushover as she is gradually becoming the hottest actress in Ghana, especially after her one year controversial ban. Not long ago, she was rated as the most sought-after actress in Nollywood but back home, her critics started spreading reports that Yvonne can only play romantic roles.

In what seems to be a rebuttal to that criticism, Yvonne has delivered her best performance ever in an all-stars hilarious movie titled 'Wanna Be'. She said the movie was her 55th Independent anniversary gift to her fans and Ghanaians in general. True to her words, the movie would be premiered at the National Theatre in Accra on 6th March, a day which marks Ghana's 55th Independence. Nelson, together with other stars in the movie- Prince David

Osei, Eddie Nartey, Zynell Zuh, Nana Akua and a host of others, will be at the National Theatre during the premiere to interact with their fans, sign autographs and pose for photo shots. NEWS-ONE sources said Yvonne would also use the event to give her fans an opportunity to see for themselves that she did not wear fake designer stuff as speculated by some bloggers and spread on BlackBerry by a particular female singer known for dressing half nude. 'Wanna Be' is a rib-cracking comedy directed by Pascal Amanfo.

The movie tells the true-life story of a lower class lady who wanted to belong to the class of the elite in society and therefore painfully lived a life far expensive than what she could afford. Reports said the script was written based on the life story of a well-known Ghanaian female hip-life artiste who recently topped headlines because of what she wore or failed to wear to a musical concert. (Ghanaweb)

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## Should Swahili Language be Taught in Canadian Schools?

### FUSION—EVENTS, PLACE & NEWS

Swahili is a Bantu language that serves as a second language to various groups traditionally inhabiting parts of the East African coast. Some Swahili vocabulary is derived from Arabic through more than twelve centuries of contact with Arabic-speaking inhabitants of the coast of Zanj. It has also incorporated Persian, German, Portuguese, English and French words into its vocabulary through contact during the last five centuries.

Swahili has become a second language spoken by tens of millions in three countries, Tanzania, Kenya, and Congo (DRC), where it is an official or national language. The neighboring nation of Uganda made Swahili a required subject in primary schools in 1992—although this mandate has not been well implemented—and declared it an official language in 2005 in preparation for the East African Federation. Swahili, or other closely related languages, is spoken by nearly the entire popula-

tion of the Comoros and by relatively small numbers of people in Burundi, Rwanda, northern Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique, and the language was still understood in the southern ports of the Red Sea and along the coasts of southern Arabia and the Persian Gulf in the twentieth century. In the Guthrie non-genetic classification of Bantu languages, Swahili is included under Zone G.

The earliest known documents written in Swahili are letters written in Kilwa in 1711, in the Arabic script. They were sent to the Portuguese of Mozambique and their local allies. The original letters are now preserved in the Historical Archives of Goa, India. Another ancient written document is an epic poem in the Arabic script titled *Utendi wa Tambuka (The History of Tambuka)*; it is dated 1728. The Latin script has become standard under the influence of European colonial powers. (Wikipedia)

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# Scholarships

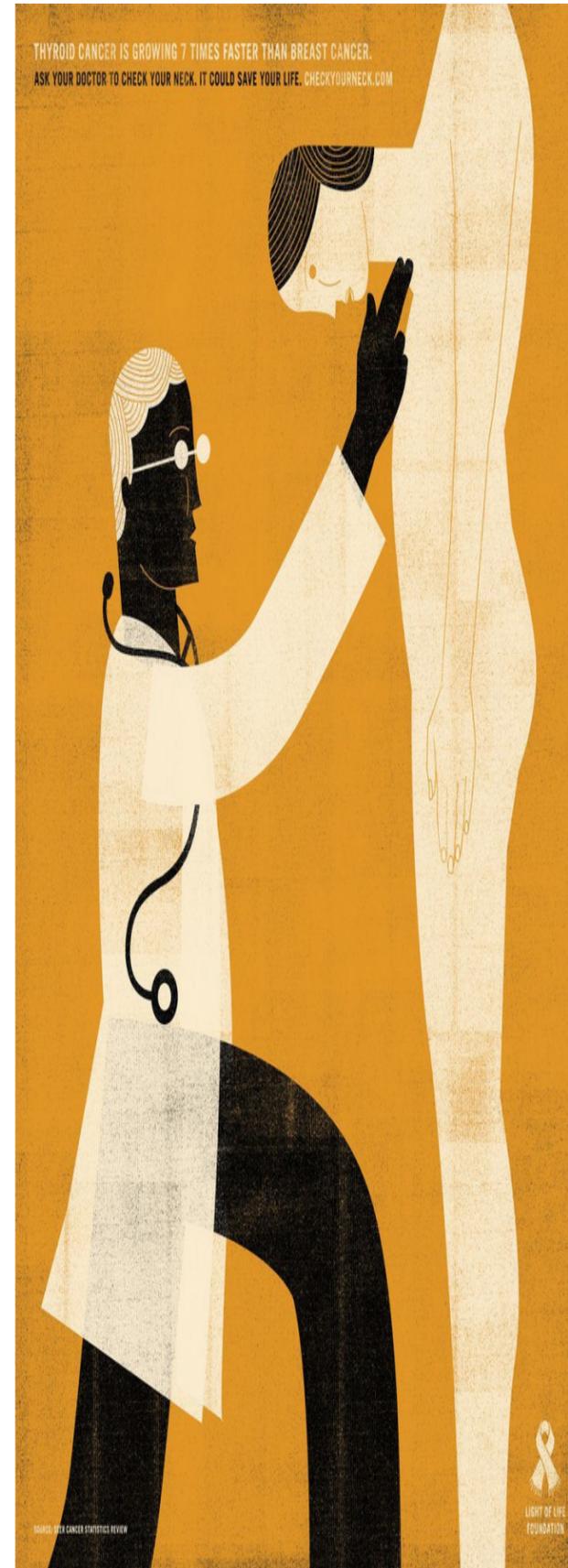
## for Post-secondary Education

If you're looking for money to pay for your education that you don't have to earn yourself or pay back, then scholarships, bursaries, and grants are definitely the way to go. Now, in the grand scheme of things, these three funding options seem pretty similar - they all involve someone giving you free money to pay for school. But they are quite different, and you need to keep those differences in mind when applying for them. Scholarships are generally awarded to students based on some sort of achievement - academic, athletic, etc.

In some cases, schools will award entrance or undergraduate scholarships to students automatically based on your grades, while other scholarships require an actual application - possibly including an essay, letters of reference, etc. - on your part. Bursaries and grants, on the other hand, are often awarded based more on demonstrated financial need or special situations than any sort of achievement, though they do usually still require you to apply for them and meet certain requirements. For example, some bursaries are geared specifically to help out single parents, students with disabilities, part-time students, minorities, and so on. Meanwhile, some parts are aimed

towards women in financial need training to enter certain male-dominated fields, such as engineering or medicine. Either way, to find these types of finances, you'll need to do some digging. The Internet is a good place to start (the scholarship section of SchoolFinder.com has a wealth of information, and you may also want to check out ScholarshipsCanada.com), but you'll also want to check with your guidance counsellor and your school's financial aid office to see what you're eligible to apply for and to confirm the various deadlines for each.

Your family may also be able to provide you with some leads to scholarships and the like. In many cases, your parents' work connections or involvement in any number of different clubs or organizations may make you eligible for special scholarships you wouldn't even know about otherwise. The key is to keep looking for every potential source of income out there - throughout your years in school - and, basically, apply for EVERYTHING you are remotely eligible for. In many cases, students miss out on money they could have easily received just because they were too lazy to fill out a form. Don't let it happen to you. (Scholarshipcanada.com)





# MAXIMIZE YOUR RRSP TODAY and Reap the Rewards!

By **CHRISTOPHER ODUGBEMI**  
(905) 415-2440 ext. 353; (647) 839 9424  
christopher.odugbemi@investorsgroup.com

Year after year, many Canadians leave a key financial opportunity on the table by not contributing the maximum allowable amount into their Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). If your annual income tax assessment includes a notice from the Canada Revenue Agency that details how much unused contribution room you have left in your RRSP from previous years, the time to act is now. For example, contributing \$10,000 into an RRSP that offers a 7% return, compounded annually could turn into \$76,123 over the span of just 30 years. Plus, contributing the full amount creates a larger in-

come tax deduction that could result in a significant tax refund.\* Although it may seem difficult to find the money to contribute into your RRSP every year, we can show you a number of strategies to consider that can help accelerate your plan using assets you have readily available and key tax planning benefits.

#### Know Your Limits

It's important to know how much contribution room you have, prior to sitting down with us to discuss your RRSP strategy. Each year, the Canada Revenue Agency identifies your unused contribution room for the upcoming tax year on your Notice of Assessment. If, however, you are unable to locate your Notice of Assessment, a quick call to the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281 or a visit to [www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca) can provide the information you need.

#### Invest Smart

It may be to your benefit to move money you currently have in savings accounts or other investments into your RRSP sooner, rather than later. Moving these dollars into your RRSP will not only result in a reduction of your annual tax bill – but it also allows you to maximize growth inside your RRSP, without generating immediate taxable income. It's important to remember that interest earned on savings accounts and both realized and unrealized capital gains on non-registered investments will be taxed prior to when they are moved into your RRSP. You can also withdraw from a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) to make your RRSP contribution. Any withdrawals from your TFSA are added to the available TFSA contribution room the following year.

#### Invest Regularly

Consider working your RRSP contribution into your budget by using our monthly investment plan that automatically deducts a specified amount from your savings or chequing account on a regular basis and invests it into funds held inside your RRSP. Monthly investment plans can be customized to work best for you. We will work with you to help determine the appropriate dollar amount and frequency.

#### Consider the Benefits of Borrowing

In many cases, borrowing to take full advantage of RRSP contribution room makes sense. Maximizing your RRSP contribution now offers immediate tax savings this year and tax-deferred potential growth for many years to come. Using this strategy can make it beneficial to borrow for a short period to maximize your plan.\*\* As your Consultant, I can help you determine whether a loan fits into your financial plan by looking at the following factors: *Your age* – The impact of compound growth increases depending on the time that money is invested. While borrowing to invest may have more impact at a younger age, I can prepare an illustration that shows it's never too late to save for your retirement.

Continued on p. 28

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## Attracting and Retaining International PhD Students the Focus of New Immigration Initiative

"Starting November 5, 2011, many international PhD students will be eligible"

Canada intends to accept up to 1,000 international PhD students per year as permanent residents through the Federal Skilled Worker Program, Minister of State (Science and Technology) Gary Goodyear announced on behalf of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney. "Doctoral graduates play a unique role in the economy. They drive research, encourage innovation and pass on their knowledge through teaching," said Minister Goodyear. "And quite simply, Can-

ada needs more of them." Starting November 5, 2011, many international PhD students will be eligible to submit applications for processing as federal skilled workers. To be eligible, they must have completed at least two years of study toward the attainment of a PhD and remain in good academic standing at a provincially recognized post-secondary educational institution in Canada. Those who have recently graduated from a Canadian PhD program will also be eligible to apply, provided they do so within 12 months of their graduation. "This initiative will provide Canadian universities with one more competitive edge in attracting and re-

taining top international talent to pursue their doctoral studies in Canada," said Paul Davidson, President of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. "We welcome this announcement." "Attracting and retaining immigrants with high levels of skill will help Canada compete in the knowledge-based world economy," Minister Goodyear added. "With this initiative, we are telling the innovators of tomorrow that Canada is ready to welcome them and their ideas." International students account for about one-quarter of the students enrolled in Canadian PhD programs. (CIC)

## Babalola, Odeleye

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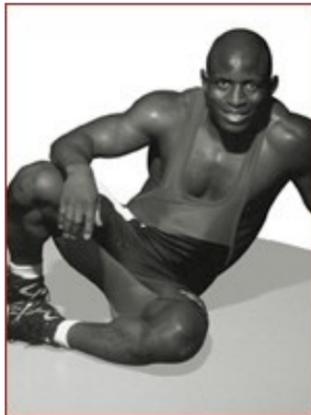
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**D**aniel Igali, the Technical Director, Nigeria Wrestling Federation (NWF), said that wrestlers are to begin camping for the London 2012 Olympic Games qualifiers on Sunday in Yenegoa, Bayelsa. Igali told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos that it would be a closed camp for about 42 wrestlers. "We are going to begin camping officially for wrestlers in preparation for the Olympic qualifiers later in the year, preparations are going fine." Igali said there were basic facilities needed for training in Yenagoa and that a greater number of the wrestlers reside in Bayelsa which in-



# WRESTLING

## Nigerian-born Olympic Gold Medalist, Daniel Igali, Returns Home to Prepare Nigerian Wrestling Team for the 2012 London Olympics

-Leadership-

formed the choice of the camp. He disclosed that if the proposed training tour of Bulgaria did not get the approval of the National Sports Commission (NSC), then they would train throughout in Yenagoa. "Well, if you do not get funds for the training tour of Bul-

garia, then we will make do with training in Nigeria until we depart for the qualifiers," he said. Igali said that the NWF planned to qualify six wrestlers for the Olympics. "Our plan is to qualify about six wrestlers for the Games and we are working toward it and I have every confidence

that we can do it," he said. The technical director said that funding was the major challenge against the development of wrestling. "I think we have issues with funding which has been our major problem, we have a lot of young talented wrestlers with potential but lack of money has hampered harnessing them," he said.

*"We are going to begin camping officially for wrestlers in preparation for the Olympic qualifiers later in the year."*



**They should agree on issues such as morality, finances, values, children, church attendance and involvement, relationships with in-laws..."**

**T**he Bible does not address how to find the "perfect spouse," nor does it get as specific as we might like on the matter of finding the right marriage partner. The one thing God's Word does explicitly tell us is to make sure that we do not marry an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14-15). First Corinthians 7:39 reminds us that, while we are free to marry, we should only marry those who are acceptable to God—in other words, Christians.

Beyond this, the Bible is silent about how to know we are marrying the "right" person. So why doesn't God spell out for us what we should look for in a mate? Why do we not have more specifics about such an important issue? The truth is that the Bible is so clear on what a Christian is and how we are to act that specifics are not necessary. Christians are supposed to be likeminded about important issues, and if two Christians are committed to their marriage and to obeying Christ, they already possess the necessary ingredients for success. However, because



our society is inundated with many professing Christians, it would be wise to use discernment before devoting oneself to the lifelong commitment of marriage. Once a prospective mate's priorities are identified—if he or she is truly committed to Christ-likeness—then the specifics are easier to identify and deal with. First, we should make sure that we are ready to marry. We must have enough maturity to look beyond the here and now and be able to commit ourselves to joining with this one person for the rest of our lives. We must also recognize that marriage requires sacrifice and selflessness. Before marrying, a couple should study the roles and duties of a husband and wife (Ephesians 5:22-31; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:1-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

A couple should make sure they know each other for a sufficient amount of time before discussing marriage. They should watch how the other person reacts to different situations,

how he behaves around his family and friends, and what kind of people she spends time with. A person's behavior is greatly influenced by those he keeps company with (1 Corinthians 15:33). They should agree on issues such as morality, finances, values, children, church attendance and involvement, relationships with in-laws, and employment. These are areas of potential conflict in marriage and should be carefully considered beforehand.

Finally, any couple considering marriage should first go to premarital counseling with their pastor or another trained Christian counselor. Here they will learn valuable tools for building their marriage on a foundation of faith in Christ, and they will also learn how to deal with inevitable conflicts. After all these criteria have been met, the couple is ready to prayerfully decide if they desire to be joined together in marriage. If we are earnestly seeking the will of God, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5-6). (Gotquestions.org)

South Sudan was conceived on the myth that we are one people with one common destiny. We are now discovering that regional and tribal differences are not dissolving and that South Sudanese think and act very differently from one another.

The simple fact is that people who are raised thinking of their tribe/nationality as Pojulu, Dinka, Shuluk, Zande, Bari, Murle, Nuer, or what have you will probably always think of themselves in that way. It may take several generations for the concept of being Pojulu, Dinka, Shuluk, Zande, Bari, Murle, Nuer, or what have you to become the equivalent of being a New Yorker or Californian to an American, and those generations will be longer than generations were in the USA in the 1800s.

It is very important that we highlight the possible challenges and the inconsolable pains to face South Sudan beyond the passionate emotions for independence and try to stimulate the start of thinking rationally for all our future's sakes. Our new country will face many challenges, aware of, despite simplistic categorizations of our war of independence as being between Africans and Arabs/Christians versus Muslims. South Sudanese are not a unified group; this is a profoundly and proudly multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-religious lot/land. Any sense of a common national identity that does exist was forged in the struggle against the Mundukuru (north Sudan), something that we are all acutely aware of.

The point is that South Sudanese must ask themselves if a 'South Sudan Nation' is, in fact, truly what they want. A true nation of South Sudanese will require the majority of its citizens to share common values,



# SOUTH SUDAN

## The Myth of South Sudan

BY MAKOL BONA MALWAL

common ideals, common mores and most likely a common language. If these do not exist naturally, they must be cultivated and that leads to some very difficult ground for debate and discussion (and the potential for many, many problems). As part of this, South Sudanese must ask themselves why they want a nation. Is it to compete economically with the Mundukuru (north Sudan), East Africa and other large population economies (a really bad reason to build a nation)? To prevent any possibility of another grand South Sudanese civil war (South Sudan imploding)?

Or why? This lack of unity is South Sudan's most profound crisis, one that underlies the country's economic and political woes. Most South Sudanese have little idea what the country stands for, what binds its people together, where it has come from in the past and where it is going to in the future. After decades of war and a hefty (and still growing) death toll, we have succeed-

ed in attaining independence without gaining a nation. Yes, but what is a South Sudanese? Values matter because they are the glue that binds countries and peoples together. They help define what a society stands for and against. There is no consensus within South Sudan or among South Sudanese, not even the beginning of a consensus, about what South Sudanese values are.

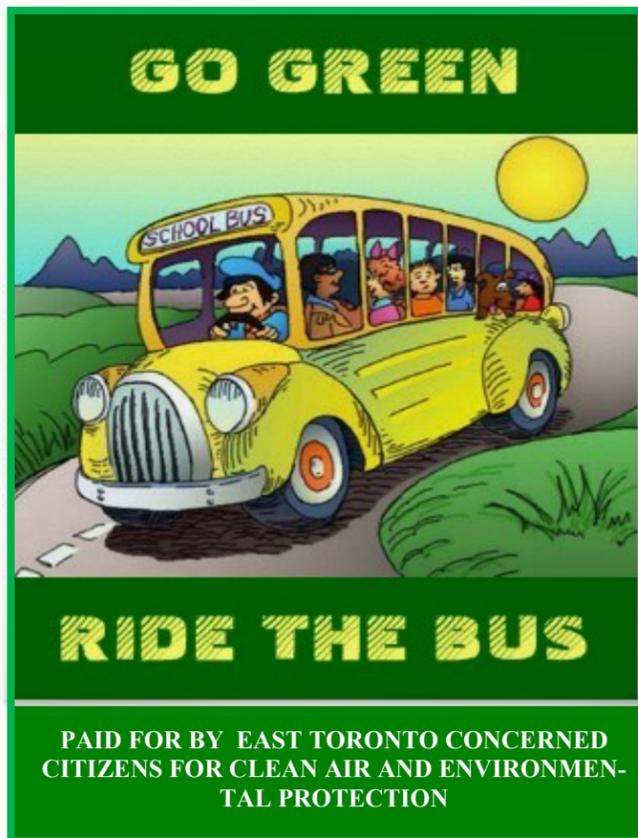
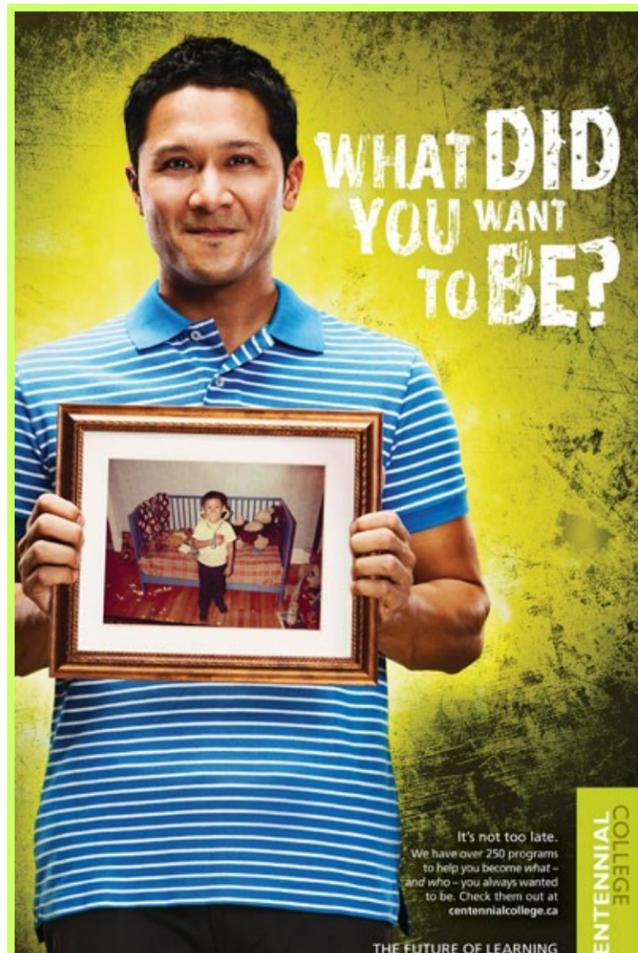
Diversity does not equal tolerance and the existence of differences does not mean acceptance of them. A fact that has come glaringly to the fore as South Sudan has slipped deeper into crisis and relationships have strained among its people and tribes. The relationship between peasant communities and pastoralists with shared livelihoods need to be effectively managed or else violence is the natural outcome of mismanagement. One can of course have multiple identities. Some Europeans are Catalan and Spanish, as well as European. But identities cannot be

artificially created; they are forged early on and never go away. We must construct common institutions, laws and create all the symbols of a nation-state. Prosperity for a war-torn country, freedom from tyranny and peace among our people and tribes after decades if not centuries of bloodletting should be some of the ideals we should aspire too.

This is not to say that a united South Sudan will never happen, but it must be understood that it will be a long, slow process and will likely be longer and slower than the process was in the US for example, due to a longer legacy of conflict between our tribes and people and of all things longer life-spans of those generations today that think of themselves as coming from specific tribes rather than being South Sudanese. Over the long term though, people need the solace and sense of community and shared culture, history and custom that nationhood provides.



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Filing Your Taxes

### What is Involved?

There are four simple things you can do to get ready for tax season: (1) Figure out how you are going to file, (2) Know the deadline dates, (3) Get organized, and (4) File on time or before the deadline.

### How Are You Going To File Your Taxes?

The options to consider are to do your taxes yourself by hand, take it to a tax preparer or accountant, or use software.

If your situation is complex or you are simply not comfortable doing your taxes yourself, there is no shame in using a tax preparation service or local accountant to do them for you. Look at my article on How To Hire The Right Accountant.

### Know The Important Dates

After you figure out how you are going to file, you need to find out when your taxes are due and when you should expect to receive your tax slips.

- For most Canadians, the personal tax return must be filed by April 30th. If you or your spouse is self-employed, your tax return is not due until June 15th although your taxes must still be paid by April 30th.
- Your employer must mail or provide you your T4 slip that shows your employment earnings no later than February 29, 2012.
- The RRSP contribution deadline is February 29, 2012. You will probably receive a contribution receipt immediately or it will be mailed within a few days.

If you receive income from a mutual fund or receive dividends or interest, you will receive a T3 or T5. These will normally arrive during March.

### Get Organized

If you start your filing system now, you'll save time during the year preparing for next year's filing deadline. For my personal taxes, I have use single file folder marked "Income Tax". During the year I place any important tax documents such as my T3, T4, T5 slips, my Notice of Assessment and other important documents such as a medical receipts.

### File On Time

Don't wait until the last minute. If you owe the CRA money and do not file and pay on time, you will be assessed interest and penalties. The penalty for not filing on time is 5% of the amount owed plus 1% for each month the payment is late. Don't Delay – April 30th is looming.



## Ugandan-born Musician Silas Balabyekkubo Babaluku Returns Home to Give Back to Ugandan Youth

The ideology we have would allow young people to discover themselves within and become confident citizens to be able to advocate for the ills in society and things that they wanted to see changed as they are concerned."

BY REBEKAH FRIMPONG

**H**ip-hop Ambassador Silas Balabyekkubo Babaluku was inspired to travel back to the continent and ultimately his homeland of Uganda after living in Vancouver, Canada, for most of his adolescent life because, as he puts it: "I wanted to give back and empower the youth to [become] better leaders for the continent, for the countries they represent and the communities they live in." Babaluku developed Bavubuka – which means youth in Lugandan – Foundation five years ago to show the importance of the journey of a youth foundation.

He elaborates: "The ideology we have would allow young people to discover themselves within and become confident citizens to be able to advocate for the ills in society and things that they wanted to see changed as they are concerned."

The Bavubuka Foundation provides safe spaces for youth to develop skill building and leadership in Uganda through the art of self expression via Hip-hop music and culture. Silas has further developed that concept by engaging the youth he mentors in the visual arts, sports, dance, film, community advocacy and music.

**The Future**—"We want to see our outreach grow nationally as well as globally, and use this as a springboard into music and the creative arts using it as a platform to spread our message," states Babaluku.

He adds that his ultimate goal for the future is to build a "dream space for the youth of Uganda to come and continue to build their foundation celebrating and archiving the youth achievements and teach the youth history in line with the ancestral past and bring preservation element among the youth

of Uganda."

**My Motivation**—Babaluku finds his motivation for achieving the youth foundation to mainly be rooted in connecting generations.

He elaborates: "As a young man it was very important for me to understand why I wanted to do what I do today. The great mantra that I go by is self motivation for inspiration which is a big one in my life. I am always looking for a way the youth in Uganda can be a part of the greater concept of healing the world. So, I keep myself open to my peers from all over regardless of tribe or race, and it is also important to make sure the act of transformation is built at the core of the gift that you are giving."



# 2011 Census: Canada Needs More Immigrants

Yet to maintain even a nominal level of growth in our labour force, that number needs to increase in the coming years.



By Andy Radia

If the census figures released prove anything, it's that there's not enough of us in Canada. There's not enough young people to support an aging population and there's not enough skilled workers to keep Canada's companies competitive. According to CBC.ca, between now and 2020, baby-boomer retirements coupled with declining birth rates are expected to produce labour deficits of approximately 163,000 in construction, 130,000 in oil and gas, 60,000 in nursing, 37,000 in trucking, 22,000 in the hotel industry and 10,000 in the steel trades.

Notwithstanding the current headlines that trumpet high unemployment rates, governments must deal with this enduring problem now or face a future

of economic stagnancy. Our country's primary strategy to cope with our labour problems has been to attract workers from other countries. In 2010, Canada welcomed a record number of immigrants (280,000), plus a record number of temporary foreign workers (182,000) and foreign students (96,000). Yet to maintain even a nominal level of growth in our labour force, that number needs to increase in the coming years. The challenge however, is that other industrialized jurisdictions around the world are feeling the same labour pinch and like Canada, have also chosen immigration as their policy solution. The U.S., U.K., and Australia, in particular, have been proactive in luring skilled migrants and thus have made the business of immigration increasingly competitive. Moreover, the two countries that we have traditionally relied on for new workers --

China and India -- have fairly robust economies themselves, resulting in fewer people wanting to emigrate. It's clear Canada needs to find alternative solutions. A more sustainable strategy might be for governments and businesses to focus on developing a 'homemade' labour supply; maybe it's time for governments to tackle the problem of slumping fertility rates. But as Licia Corbella of the Calgary Herald explains, Canadians don't like having babies. "Since the late 1960s -- the sexual revolution of birth control and rising abortion rates -- the number of births in Canada declined, and by 1976, fertility had fallen to less than 1.8 children per woman, when the replacement level is 2.1 children per woman," she wrote. University of B.C. family policy professor Paul Kershaw recently released a survey suggesting a crucial factor in declining birthrates is the increasing cost of raising children in Canadian cities. Unfortunately, Canadian governments and business

have historically done little to assist new parents with financial aid. Despite common perceptions, Canada trails behind much of the developed world in offering the maternity and family benefits that would facilitate a homegrown solution to our labour shortage. A 2008 study conducted by McGill University found that 106 countries provide mothers with 100 per cent wage replacement while on maternity leave; in most provinces, women are only guaranteed 55 per cent. Thirty-nine countries have implemented laws that guarantee women paid leave to address their children's health needs; in Canada, no province or territory provides such an allowance. Canada can no longer ignore that it's becoming less efficient for us to import people; world-wide demand of the scarce "human resource" will only continue to increase. As a result, governments must do a better job to encourage the "manufacture" of babies. (Yahoo News)



## SOMALILAND IN SEARCH OF POLITICAL RECOGNITION

BY IRIN

More than two decades after it unilaterally asserted its independence from the rest of Somalia, Somaliland plans to lobby hard at a major conference in London in February for something it has sorely lacked since its inception: international recognition of its sovereignty. "Somaliland will attend because 44 nations will be there and those are the ones we need to lobby and explain why Somaliland should be recognized; we see it as an opportunity," Abdillahi Jama Geeljire, Somaliland's Minister of Fisheries and Ports, said.

The London Conference, hosted by the UK government, is expected to bring together "senior representatives from over 40 governments and multi-lateral organizations... with the aim of delivering a new international approach to Somalia", according to a statement posted on the website of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Geeljire said: "Somaliland was invited on equal terms with those nations that will participate; it is a golden opportunity for our country and will give us the exposure we need to present our case. It will provide Somaliland with the opportunity to share

experience and how we achieved the peace and stability we enjoy today and they are searching for." The larger Somalia has been embroiled in conflict since 1991 and has not had a functioning central government since then. One of the aims of the conference is to help pave the way for a permanent administration to replace the transitional one whose mandate expires in August. The meeting's agenda, which does not include the question of Somaliland's sovereignty, covers issues such as root causes of Somalia's conflicts, counter-terrorism, piracy and humanitarian coordination. Somaliland's attendance required overturning a legal ban on participating in such international meetings.

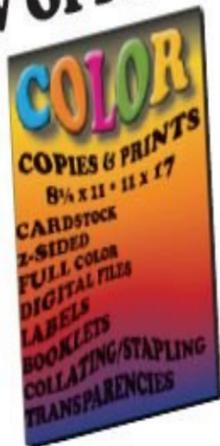
During a 5 February joint session of the bicameral parliament in Hargeisa, 101 legislators approved the change, with just three voting against it. "It is a mistake and we should not be there [at the London Conference]," said Ahmedyassin Sheikh Ali, one of the MPs. Ali said Somaliland had thrived in the past 20 years "because we stayed away from those conferences [about Somalia] and we should have done the same this time around". He said parliament's decision was a "mistake equal to the one we made in 1960 -- when the momentarily independent Somaliland, previously a British territory, chose to merge with the rest of Somalia, which had recently

"Somaliland will attend because 44 nations will be there and those are the ones we need to lobby and explain why Somaliland should be recognized; we see it as an opportunity," Abdillahi Jama Geeljire,

gained independence from Italy. Ali add Ali added the best outcome from the conference would be a decision by the representatives of Somaliland "to reject any decision that will in any way drag us into the Somalia mess." Mohamed-Rahsid Muhumud Farah, a veteran Somaliland journalist, told the conference should be about the Somalis talking directly to one another.

The London Conference, he said, was a stage "where the UK government will dictate and the Somalis will have very little say". "The only conference Somaliland should attend should be one where Somalis talk, whether they agree to separate or reunite does not matter, but they should be talking," Farah said.

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### Canadian Immigration Minister Announces a Tough Regime for Refugees

## Feds expected to tighten refugee rules

Postmedia News

The federal Conservatives are expected to announce further changes to Canada's immigration system. CBC News reports Immigration Minister Jason Kenney plans to announce legislation this week to further strengthen barriers against what the government considers to be "bogus" refugee claimants coming from countries where they face no real risk or persecution. Among other things, it's expected the legislation, if passed, would block an appeal route for refugee claimants coming from countries the government has designated as "safe," and eliminate a committee of experts which was to advise the government on which countries to place on that list. The move comes as Canada copes with a massive spike in refugee applications from Hungary. Figures recently obtained by

Postmedia News suggest 4,409 Hungarians applied for refugee status in 2011 compared with just 2,300 a year earlier. In 2009 there were 2,440 applications for asylum. According to 2009 and 2010 figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Canada is by far the top destination for Hungarian asylum seekers. Belgium was the next highest destination, at 188 applications. The United States received 47 claims, while Norway and France each received 33. The Canadian government has taken a hard line on Roma asylum applications in recent years. A spike in Roma asylum claimants from Czech Republic two on Czech citizens years ago — 95 Czech Roma landed at Toronto's Pearson International Airport in a single night —



Jason Kenney, Immigration Minister

prompted the government to impose a visa requirement and led Kenney to label most Czech Roma claims as "bogus." In 2010, Kenney told the House of Commons that some Roma asylum-seekers are "coached to come to Canada, make a false asylum claim, and then register for provincial welfare benefits." Since Kenney's public questioning of the veracity of the Czech asylum claims, the Immigration and Refugee Board has taken a much harder line on Roma applicants. It approved just two per cent of Czech Republic refugee claims in 2010 and five per cent in the first nine months of 2011. It has been equally hard on claims from Hungarian nationals, approving two per cent in 2010 and seven per cent in the first 9 months of last year.

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# MISTAKES

## TOP FIVE Immigration Mistakes to Avoid

BY ZHU

### 1. Lying when filling-up the permanent residence application –

People make mistakes, we can all understand that. The problem is that “mistakes” you make when filling out the permanent residence application can have huge consequences – it’s called misrepresentation and yes, you can lose your permanent resident status for that. Case in point, people who fail to disclose the birth of a child or a marriage. They usually hope to immigrate to Canada easily on their own and eventually sponsor their relatives, husband, wife, kids. Problem is, if you didn’t disclose your dependents on the immigration papers prior to landing, they don’t exist to Citizenship and Immigration. Not only you can be charged with misrepresentation, but you won’t be able to sponsor relatives that don’t exist.

### 2. Applying for citizenship before meeting the requirements –

I can never understand that one. In order to be eligible to apply for citizenship, you must “have at least three years of residency in Canada within four years immediately preceding the date of application” and “be physically present in Canada for 1,095 days in a four year period”. Yet, there are always people these requirements, who applied for citizenship before they meet and then they complain they received a residency questionnaire or that their application is scrutinized. Well, duh. A Canadian passport is a great thing to have but why jeopardizing everything because you are not patient enough?

### 3. Being convinced that immigrating is a right –

Don’t get me wrong, I’m all for mobility rights and I don’t support closed doors or gatekeepers policies. But overall, I think Canada is pretty fair when it comes to immigration: the country welcomes 250,000 newcomers every year, and has several immigration categories in which you may qualify. Immigrating to Canada is much easier than immigrating to the USA or most Western Europe countries.

Yet, not everybody can immigrate to Canada, the same way not everybody can be a top model or a football player. Deal with it. Immigrating is not a right but a privilege. And since we are it, drop the attitude – it doesn’t help, really. I’m tired of people who want to sue the Canadian government because their application have been denied.

### 4. Failing to comply with the residency obligation –

In order to maintain permanent residence status, landed immigrants must live in Canada for two years for every five-year period. Yet, some people just land in Canada and then go back home. Years later (usually when their permanent resident card is about to expire), they wonder if they lost their status. You bet they did. Because permanent status is intended for people who actually want to live in Canada! I find these kind of situation heartbreaking – why work so hard to obtain permanent residence to not use it? Once you lost your permanent resident status, you have to reapply again from the scratch.

### 5. Doing research based on one and only source –

I interviewed immigrants from all around the world earlier this year, and they all recommended prospective immigrants to do research on their adoptive country beforehand. I would further recommend you to gather information from different sources. Official sources, such as government of Canada websites, will give you the most up-to-date straight-to-the-fact info and documents. However, don’t forget that most of these facts are statistic and don’t really tell the other half of the story. Guillermo recently wrote a very good article on the subject “Los blogs, la inmigración y ‘la última milla’” (in Spanish), in which he explains that new Canadians’ blogs and immigration websites are the “last mile” that connect prospective immigrants with the reality. Most immigrants won’t “sell” you Canada – they will provide real snapshots of their daily lives and experience, and will include you in their network.

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