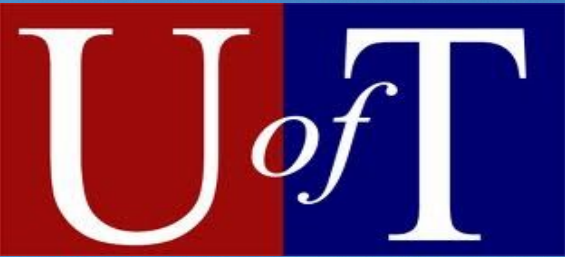


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# IMMIGRANT



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Dates: Friday, May 11, 2012 Teaching Service - 8:00p.m  
Sunday, May 13, 2012 Morning Service - 10:30a.m

Evening Service - 6:00p.m

If you are coming from outside of Toronto and you need accommodation, the following are the recommended

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Comfort Inn Toronto North:  
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Airdrie, Alberta – Thursday, May 17 – Saturday, May 19, 2012  
Venue: Dynamic Life Christian Fellowship  
209, 2903 Kingsview Blvd, Airdrie, T4A 0C4, Alberta, Canada

Dates: Thursday, May 17, 2012 Teaching Service - 7:00 – 9:00p.m  
Friday, May 18, 2012 Teaching Service - 7:00 – 11:00p.m

Saturday, May 19, 2012 Men's Meeting with Bro Gbile - 10:00a.m - 12:00 noon

Women's meeting with Sister Sade – 10:00a.m-12:00noon

If you are coming from outside of Airdrie/Calgary area and you need accommodation, the following are the recommended hotels that are close to the venue of the program:

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Super 8 Airdrie:  
Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Airdrie +1-403-912-1952

Calgary, Alberta - Sunday, May 20, 2012  
Venue: First Assembly Church, 6031 Elbow Drive SW Calgary, AB T2V 1J4  
Alberta, Canada Time: 9:30a.m – 1:00pm (2 Services)



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# PREPARING



for Interview

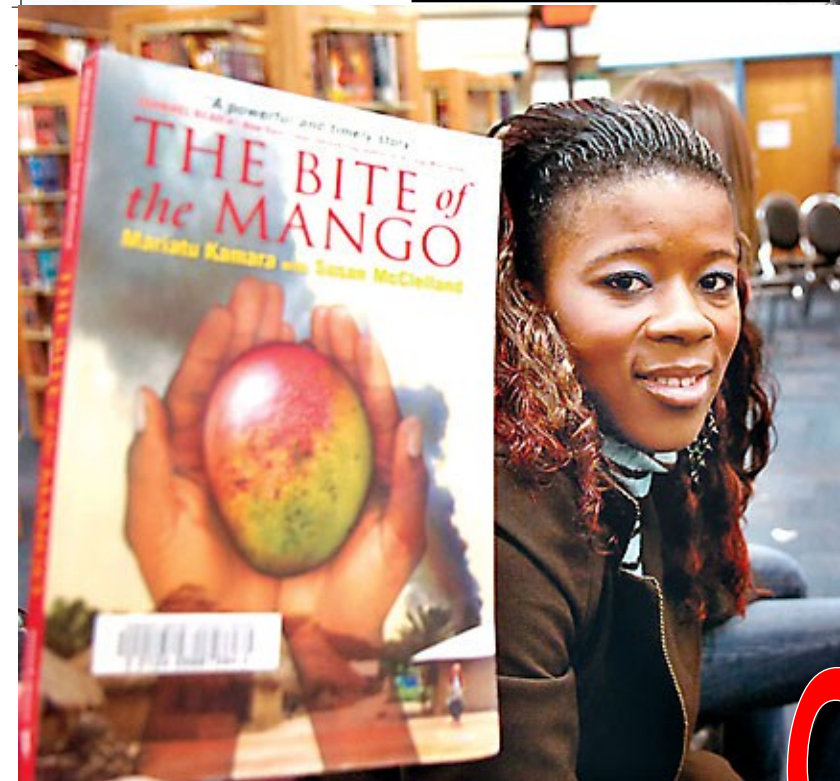
Job interviews can be a source of concern for students and graduates who haven't had much experience with them. Hopefully, what is written here will help to make them less so. Perhaps the most important key to a successful interview is to be well-prepared for it and to have some knowledge of what to expect. Armed with this information you should be able to approach your interview with confidence and hope-fully, even pleasurable anticipation. Remember, the employers want you.

The interview itself is merely an exercise in two-way communication between the recruiter and you and each attempts to "sell" the other. The recruiter "sells" the job and his/her company while the student "sells" himself or herself as the person best suited to fill it. The first step is to read the job description carefully and understand the content. Your next step is to find out all you can about the company. Information may be available from the business pages in various newspapers, trade publications and company annual reports, as well as the College library. As a bare minimum you should know what products the company produces or the services it provides and where it is located. As mentioned previously, the job interview will require you to "sell" yourself. Your appearance, manner and

and attitude are of first importance. You must be on time for your interview since nothing creates a worse impression than being late.

As far as dress is concerned, be neatly and conservatively dressed. Your manner and attitude should reflect the type of person you are or would like to be. Recruiters are generally quite good at detecting the person who "puts on an act", so just be yourself! Come to the interview prepared to talk about yourself, your career objectives and your interests. Don't underestimate your hobby interests and extra curricular activities since recruiters are fully aware that what you like to do in your spare time says a lot about the type of person you are. If you have no such interests you should do something about cultivating them.

Above all, approach your interview with a reasonable degree of confidence and self-assurance. Convince yourself that you can do the job as well as the next person and probably better if you put your mind to it. Recruiters are invariably impressed with the student who displays real interest and enthusiasm. Thank the interviewer for the opportunity and leave with a warm smile and handshake.



## The Face of COURAGE

With Both Hands Amputated, Sierra Leonean Immigrant & War Victim, Mariatu Kamara, Walks Tall

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We thank our sponsors and advertisers for making yet another issue successful. Without your support we would not be where we are today—You have truly made us The Premier African Magazine in Canada.



As a child in a small rural village in Sierra Leone, Mariatu Kamara lived peacefully surrounded by family and friends. Rumors of rebel attacks were no more than a distant worry. But when 12-year-old Mariatu set out for a neighboring village, she never arrived. Heavily armed rebel soldiers, many no older than children themselves, attacked and tortured Mariatu. During this brutal act of senseless violence they cut off both her hands. Stumbling through the countryside, Mariatu miraculously survived. The sweet taste of a mango, her first food after the attack, reaffirmed her desire to live, but the challenge of clutching the fruit in her bloodied arms reinforced the grim new reality that stood before her. With no parents or living adult to support

her and living in a refugee camp, she turned to begging in the streets of Freetown. As told to her by Mariatu, journalist Susan McClelland has written the heart-breaking true story of the brutal attack, its aftermath and Mariatu's eventual arrival in Toronto where she began to pull together the pieces of her broken life with courage, astonishing resilience and hope. Now 24 years old, Mariatu Kamara has been named a UNICEF Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict; a Voices of Courage Honoree by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children; and has established The Mariatu Foundation, which aims to offer much needed refuge to the ongoing victims of the civil war in Sierra Leone. A documentary about child victims of war, featuring Mariatu, is in the works. (Annick Press)



# Canada to Experience Another Year of Two-speed Economy - BMO Predicts

"The bank predicts the four western provinces, led by Alberta and Saskatchewan, will be the only ones to record above two per cent growth this year. "

The latest provincial outlook from the Bank of Montreal is a stark reminder that Canada has an entrenched two-speed economy. The bank predicts the four western provinces, led by Alberta and Saskatchewan, will be the only ones to record above two per cent growth this year. All the rest are below what the Bank of Can-

ada considers the potential growth rate for the Canadian economy. The West will also lead the nation in growth next year, according to the bank, although oil-rich Newfoundland will be joining that select group. BMO economist Douglas Porter says resources are the major reason for the superior prospects of the western provinces. After a five per cent growth rate last year, Alberta's economic growth will slow this year to 3.4 per cent, but still lead the country, followed by Saskatchewan at 2.9 per cent. Manitoba is likely to grow by 2.6 per cent and British Colum-

bia by 2.3 per cent. Meanwhile, provinces that depend on manufacturing continue to trail despite some improving prospects south of the border, with Ontario leading the weak-six at 1.9 per cent growth. Other expected growth rates are Quebec, 1.6; New Brunswick, 1.5; Nova Scotia 1.8; Prince Edward Island, 1.4, and Newfoundland and Labrador one per cent. For the country as a whole, the bank says the economy will expand by two per cent this year, somewhat below the Bank of Canada's 2.4 per cent forecast. (Canadian Press)

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## COMING NEXT ISSUE

**JUNE 2012:**

- Father's Day Special
  - African Immigrant Profile
  - How is Your Health?
  - Africans and Social Networking
- .....and much more, DON'T MISS IT

# Leaving Canada for the USA?

PROF. PHIL TAM-AL ALALIBO



Over the last few years, I have witnessed scores of friends, colleagues, acquaintances, relocate to the United States after spending considerable time in Canada. All of these individuals were duly landed immigrants in Canada and a few had taken citizenship, but they opted to relocate to the US in what they believed to be a continuation of their search for greener pastures. They all had a common persistent theme; United States has more economic opportunities than the Great White North also known as Canada especially, for those with foreign credentials. Indeed, nothing could be farthest from the truth as the United States with ten times the population of Canada is most likely to have more economic opportunities. These individuals that have immigrated down south also contended that the taxes and general cost of living are lower in the US and when complimented by the strong purchasing power of the US dollar makes the United States a clear choice. Evidently, the U.S. has its

advantages but so does Canada which is a leading industrialized Western country just like the US. In fact, in most of the benchmarks used by the United Nations in education, safety, quality of life, environmental preservation and health, to mention but a few, Canada ranks higher than the U.S. While it is true that taxes are higher in Canada, compounded by the recently introduced Harmonized Sales Tax in both British Columbia and Ontario, the benefit of such higher taxes compensate in no small measure for the level of taxation. The universal health care system in Canada for example remains a plus as every citizen regardless of level of income or social status has an unfettered access to health care. While brain surgery in the United States can bankrupt a family it remains a medical serv-

ice that is enjoyed freely by Canadians and here lies the unique advantage of a Canadian residency, in addition to the relative safety amiable to raising a family. The Lure of Canada also lies in its culture of environmental consciousness and the premium placed on urban renewal. It is therefore not a surprise that four of its cities, Vancouver, Toronto and Calgary were recently voted to be in the top five most livable cities in the world with Vancouver claiming the top spot.

Being the month we celebrate Mother's Day, may I use this medium to salute all mothers, in particular, my lovely wife for her Herculean inner strength and unwavering support. Happy Mother's Day!



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“When I look at her, she gives me the inspiration to keep going. Now that I am pregnant with my second child she takes care of me, always asking, mommy, are you okay.”

# Celebrating Motherhood

## Nigerian-born Shade Durodola Offers Unique Perspectives

By Prof. Phil Tam-AI Alalibo

In this month of May that mothers in North America and in some parts of the world are celebrated for their ineffable and indefinable feat of simply being mothers, we highlight the parental experiences of Nigerian-born immigrant, Shade Durodola, a Toronto resident and mother of four-year old Morenike. By and large, her experiences are similar to those of most immigrant mothers in Canada that face many issues that often complicate their adjustment to their new environment and hinder their ability to spend quality time with their children.

A 2010 graduate of Centennial College’s three year diploma program in Child and Youth Worker, Shade, a congenial and amicable youth worker, speaks of the joys and challenges of motherhood in her adopted country and the grim realization of the demands of a fast-paced and self-centered society. Central to her experiences is the dearth of extended family support that often resulted in leaving her daughter in the care of babysitters while attending to her studies at Centennial College. By contrast, Shade remembers the ready availability of childcare in her native Nigeria where close friends and relatives hastily offered their services to those in need, sometimes, at no cost. She noted rather emphatically, “it is very challenging to take an infant to daycare at a time when she should be bonding with the mother, but I had no choice and had to resign myself to the fact

that she will be fine.” During her internship assignment in the third year of her intense college program, Shade recalls the odd 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shift that often prevented her from being home on time to put her daughter to bed. “It was sad,” she offered, “By the time I got home my husband had already put her to bed. But again, I considered it as a sacrifice, to give her what I did not have, and to ensure that she lacks nothing.”

Indeed, a monumental sacrifice that Shade and millions of other immigrant mothers selflessly undertake daily to provide a better future for their children. Amply emboldened by these challenges, she readily admits they pale eminently in comparison to the thrills and satisfaction of motherhood, an experience she describes as inestimable, utterly inexplicable and well beyond portraiture. In affirmation, Shade noted, “When I look at her, she gives me the inspiration to keep going. Now that I am pregnant with my second child, she takes care of me, always asking, mommy, are you okay?” Even at the lure of sending her young daughter home to Nigeria in the safe care of her mother and sister while she attended to her studies, she resisted and remained resolved to ‘tough’ out where many would have easily capitulated.

Like many immigrant mothers and parents in general, Shade is acutely aware of the seemingly inevitable trade-offs and often considers the implications of intra-familial culture clash when children are quickly assimilated into the dominant culture at the expense of their parents’ culture. She is also aware that in the Western society more than in her native Nigeria, the risk of conflict between children and their parents is heightened on issues of socialization with opposite gender, making friends from other cultures, issues of rights, individualism and freedoms and expectations of high academic standards. But against the backdrop of her strong Christian faith with tacit reference to Proverbs 22:6 in the Holy Bible that states, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it,” shade strongly believes it is dependent on how a child is raised. “Parents have the responsibility to instill in their children at a young age what is right and wrong and they would remain true to those values as adults,” she stated unequivocally.

Advising immigrant mothers, especially, those with school aged children that often have to contend with a medley of social, emotional and psychological challenges, the child and youth worker underscored the importance of parents having a strong relationship with their children with an open line of communication to keep abreast of the on-goings in their lives. She avers, “Parents must talk with their children, they must ask relevant questions, know who their friends are and watch out for strange behaviours.” With her expansive theoretical and practical knowledge in managing children and youth, she further advises immigrant parents, especially those from cultures where absolute and un-negotiated obedience is demanded by parents from children to adjust and develop viable strategies that would reduce the occurrences of conflicts that may be detrimental to family relationships.









# CAPE VERDE

For Your Next Vacation

The Cape Verde archipelago is made up of 10 islands and 5 islets, 450km East of the West coast of Africa. The islands of Cape Verde have mile upon mile of un-spoilt, unpolluted and undiscovered beaches, not to mention the perfect conditions for water sports, surf, kitesurf, windsurfing, diving and more. Cape Verde is a great place for surfing, fishing enthusiasts, as well as divers and snorkelers with many interesting fish and reefs. The islands of Sal, Boa Visita and



try's future economic prospects depend heavily on the maintenance of aid flows, the encouragement of tourism, remittances, outsourcing labour to neighbouring African countries, and the momentum of the government's development programme. Tourism has increased in recent years. Large hotels have been built across the country in an effort to boost tourism. In particular, on the islands of Boa Vista (Club Hotel Riu Karamboa (750 rooms)), and Sal (Club Hotel Riu Funana/ Garopa (1000 rooms)—the largest hotel in all of West Africa). The Cape Verde islands have a relatively low crime rate and beautiful beaches, as well as having engaging local people. Tourists and leisure seekers from across Europe and the world are coming to the country in larger numbers. In 2011, about 475,294 tourists visited the archipelago.

Maio are well known for their glorious beaches and for their full variety of water sports.

## Tourism:

Cape Verde's strategic location at the crossroads of mid-Atlantic air and sea lanes has been enhanced by significant improvements at Mindelo's harbour (Porto Grande) and at Sal's and Praia's international airports. A new international airport was opened in Boa Vista in December 2007, and on the island of Sao Vicente, the newest international airport (Sao Pedro Airport) in Cape Verde, was opened in late 2009. Ship repair facilities at Mindelo were opened in 1983. The major ports are Mindelo and Praia, but all other islands have smaller port facilities. In addition to the international airport on Sal, airports have been built on all of the inhabited islands. All but the airport on Brava enjoy scheduled air service. The archipelago has 3,050 km (1,895 mi) of roads, of which 1,010 km (628 mi) are paved, most using cobblestone. The Coun-

## Culture:

Cape Verdean social and cultural patterns are similar to those of rural Portugal and Africa. Football (Futebol) games and church activities are typical sources of social interaction and entertainment. The traditional walk around the praça (town square) to meet friends is practiced regularly in Cape Verde towns.<sup>[10]</sup> In towns with electricity, television is available on two channels (Cape Verdean and Portuguese). Cape Verde music incorporates Portuguese, Caribbean, African, and Brazilian influences.<sup>[40]</sup> Cape Verde's quintessential national music is the *morna*, a melancholy and lyrical song form typically sung in Cape Verdean Creole. The most popular music genre after *morna* is the *coladeira* followed by *funaná* and *batuque* music. (Wikipedia)

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## Online

VISIT [AFRICANIMMIGRANT.CA](http://AFRICANIMMIGRANT.CA) FOR NEWS ABOUT CANADA'S AFRICAN COMMUNITY

-Online blogs on April Issue

➤ "Top forty Canadian employers of immigrants, I work for TD Canada Trust and happy to see it listed" - Aaron W.

➤ "Nadia Buari a lawyer, I almost believed it. She is better off acting than defending criminals in Ghanaian courts" — Seth G.

➤ "Becoming a social worker, what the heck...how much does it pay? I rather go into a profession that breaks the bank" SE

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Dear Editor;

### Top Forty Employers:

Thank you for bringing us the top forty employers in Canada, in your last edition in April. It was good to review the profiles of those companies and set an eye on them. However, I would have liked for your magazine to dig deeper to determine why they are the top forty, what immigrant friendly programs they have set in place, etc. Please write a follow-up article to provide these information. Thanks you sir and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,  
J.C. Ndikalani  
Scarborough, ON

Dear Editor:

Your coverage of the Ethiopian "Fasika" was a great surprise and I could not help it but pick up a few copies to distribute in the Ethiopian community in the GTA and at the Ethiopian church. I am considering writing an article on the importance and significance of the occasion for Ethiopians whose rich religious history transcends time. With more Ethiopians immigrating to Canada from the home country and from other parts of the world, it is important that we keep our traditions alive for our children and grand children in a society that is bent on ensuring that they forget their heritage.

Tedi Hasini  
Toronto, ON

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**VOLUME 3, ISSUE 32**

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# WINNERS OF AFRICAN MOVIE Academy Awards

*dm*

ajid picked up the coveted award for his lead role in the 2011 movie **'Somewhere In Africa'** while the ever radiant-looking Dominic won the 'Best Actress' award for her lead role in the movie **'Shattered'** beating the likes of **Nse Ikpe-Etim, Uche Jumbo** and **Yvonne Okoro**. The biggest win of the night however went to the South African movie **'How to Steal 2 Million'** which bagged four awards, the highest of the night. Directed by **Charlie Vundla**, the movie bag-

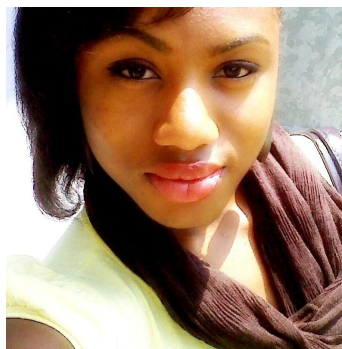


ed the awards for 'Best Film', 'Best Actress in a Supporting Role', 'Best Actor in a Supporting Role' and 'Best Director'. **Lancelot Oduwa Imaseun's 'Adesuwa'** followed closely winning three awards which includes 'Best Nigerian Film'. **Kunle Afolayan's 'Phone**

**Swap'** wasn't left out as it won the Achievement in Production Design' award while **Akin Omotoso** won the 'Special Jury' award for **'Man on the Ground'**. The awards ceremony which was held at the Expo Hall of the **Eko Hotel and Suites** was attended by a host of Nollywood ac-

tors, movie practitioners and industry players including Actors' Guild of Nigeria (AGN) president **Segun Arinze**, former AGN boss **Ejike Asiegbu**, **Tee-Mac**, **Florence Ita-Giwa**, Airtel Chairman **Oba Otudeko** and many others. The show was hosted by Haitian-born **Jimmy Jean-Louis** and Nigerian actor **OC Ukeje**. Hollywood stars present at the show include **Morris Chestnut**, **Lynn Whitfield**, **Maya Gilbert** and **Rockmond Dumar**. (AMAA Awards 2012)

## OUR WRITERS



AMAKA EKENKWO

**Amaka** is our general interest writer; she writes on a plethora of subjects ranging from immigrant experiences to youth and social media. She is a university student and an aspiring lawyer.



CHRISTOPHER ODUGBEMI

**Christopher** is a financial planner with the Investors' Group Financial Services and an instructor at Seneca College, Toronto. He writes on the critical topic of financial planning, taxes, RRSP, etc.



JOHNSON BABALOLA

**Johnson** is a prominent immigration and real estate lawyer in Toronto who has assisted hundreds of African immigrants to settle in Canada. He enjoys writing on immigrant subjects. To contact Johnson, see ad in p. 20

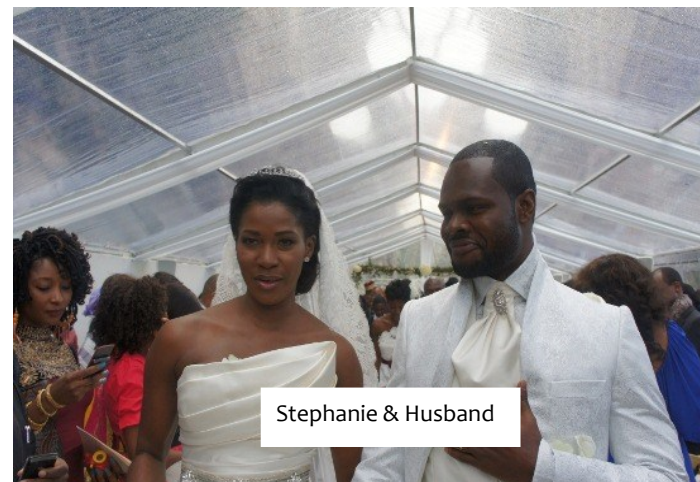


DR. EDITH WAMBAYI

**Edith** is a Research Consultant with "Health and Life Promotion Research Consultancy" (HELP) in Toronto. Services include: proposal and report writing, research, training/educational workshops and capacity building.

## Nollywood's Stephanie Okereke Weds in Paris

"The bride chose a princess look for her big day as she wore a dramatic strapless ballgown with an asymmetric neckline ..."



Stephanie & Husband

Actress Stephanie Okereke on April 21, 2012 painted Paris red with her hubby, Linus Idahosa as they exchanged their matrimonial vows amidst pomp and pageantry. The wedding which was held in a beautiful century castle in Paris put to rest several months of speculations on whether it would hold as planned. The couple tied the knot in the presence of over 400 family mem-

bers from all walks of life, colleagues and friends who stormed Paris to witness the colourful ceremony. They were engaged in 2010 when Linus proposed to Stephanie on her birthday anniversary. The bride chose a princess look wearing a dramatic strapless ballgown with an asymmetric neckline and cathedral length veil paired with a lace veil and bejewelled belt. Stephanie's dress is the "Euterpe" dress from Lebanese Couture Master Elie Saab's Elie by Elie.



## Becoming a School Teacher in Ontario



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- ⇒ have successfully completed a one-year acceptable teacher education program apply to the College for certification and pay the annual membership and registration fees. Application process includes providing proof of identity and a Canadian Criminal Record Check Report.

Teachers of Technological Studies do not require a postsecondary degree for certification. They must, however, provide the following in addition to the rest of the items listed above:

- ⇒ a secondary school diploma
- evidence of five years of wage-earning experience proof of competence in their field of specialization (for example, a trade certificate).

Teachers who completed their teacher education outside of Ontario in a language other than English or French or who are not Canadian citizens must also provide:

- ⇒ proof of proficiency in either English or French
- ⇒ Canadian employment authorization
- ⇒ proof of certification/authorization to teach in a jurisdiction outside of Ontario even if they have never taught there
- ⇒ a Statement of Professional Standing, which is a letter from a licensing institution such as an education ministry, that says the teacher's right to teach has never been suspended, revoked or cancelled.

## Immigration Minister Amends Controversial Refugee Bill

“Minister bends to pressure, dials back detention provisions in omnibus bill”

Immigration Minister Jason Kenney is bending to opposition pressure and amending his controversial refugee omnibus bill, C-31. The amendment will introduce a 14-day and six-month review of the detention of so-called "mass arrivals" of refugees. "People have raised concerns about this. We've studied the issue closely as a result of which the government has decided to amend the bill to allow for an initial detention review at 14 days initially, and then subsequently at six months," Kenney stated to reporters. The bill originally stipulated a judicial review would only be necessary after those refugee claimants designated as "mass arrivals" by the minister had been in detention for one year. Kenney also introduced another amendment to clarify that the government would not have the power to revoke the permanent residency of successful refugee claimants if conditions improve in their countries of origin, unless it was found they obtained their status through fraudulent means. "The govern-

ment has no intention of removing permanent residency from bona fide refugees if things have changed in their countries of origin," he said. Even with the amendments Kenney announced, the bill still gives the immigration minister sole authority to decide which groups of refugee claimants are "mass arrivals" — a term which is not clearly defined in the bill. The measure was sparked by the arrival of two boatloads of Tamil migrants off the coast of Vancouver in recent years. The bill would allow for those cases to be designated retroactively as "mass arrivals." Several legal experts have argued that provision would almost certainly generate costly court challenges because it is inconsistent with the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Charter of Rights and Supreme court precedents. Refugee law professor Peter Showler was among the legal experts who have warned it's not yet clear how much the government has backed down. While changing the controversial clause was "excellent news," Showler said, he noted that the first review at the 14-day mark won't give migrants enough time to prove their identities. He said that several other aspects of the



bill remain too punitive. "We need far more amendments," he said. "Canadians should understand that this bill really dismantles Canada's refugee system." Showler said the government needs to clarify what exactly would prompt it to release those claimants at the 14-day mark or the six-month mark. "We need to see more information about that." He also called the current timelines "outrageously fast" and said they would hamper the ability to make fair decisions. "The minister has given no hint he's willing to give ground on any of those [timelines]," he said. (CBCNews)

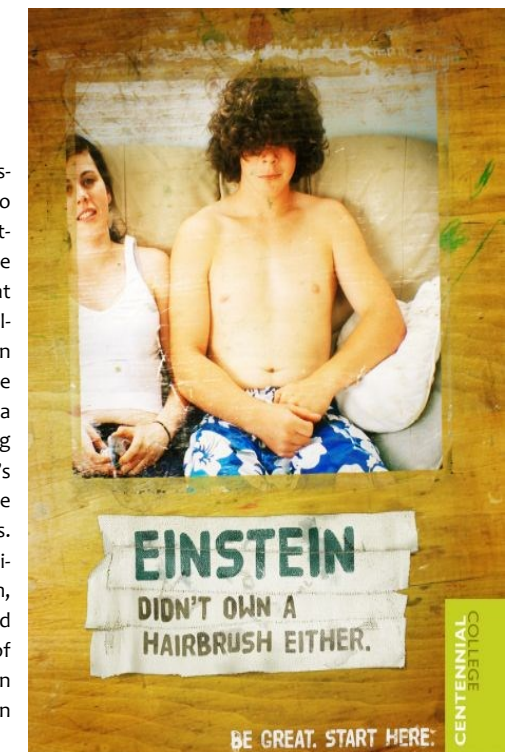
## Immigration: Consultations to Begin for New "Start Up" Entrepreneur Visa



Canadian Immigration and Culture Minister, Jason Kenney, has announced that consultations have begun regarding the possible creation of a new program for immigrant entrepreneurs. "Our government's top priority remains jobs, growth and long-term pros-

perity. Canada cannot afford to lose out in the competition for foreign entrepreneurs among immigrant-receiving countries," he said in Toronto. "We need to proactively target a new type of immigrant entrepreneur who has the potential to build innovative companies that can compete on a global scale and create jobs for Canadians". Exactly how the government will target these entrepreneurs is the focus of upcoming consultations. Citizenship and Immigration Canada will begin meeting with industry associations to craft a visa program that will bring in

desired groups of business-people. A key element to this program will be connecting entrepreneurs to private sector organizations that can assist them in successfully navigating the Canadian business environment. The "start-up" visa is one of a series of changes being made to bring Canada's immigration system in line with its economic needs. This is an example of a possible short term program, which could be implemented for a probationary period of 5 years, with application restricted to no more than 2,750 a year. (Canadavisa)



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**"To be sure, the challenges before them are great. Using the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a barometer..."**

## MADAM PRESIDENTS Join Forces for Women

By TRAVIS LUPICK

he only two female heads of state in Africa, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Malawian President Joyce Banda, have just committed to using their positions to improve the lives of women across the continent. Both Sirleaf and Banda have long championed women's rights. And on Apr. 29 in Monrovia, two years into what the African Union (AU) has declared the "Women's Decade", they pledged to work together to accelerate those efforts. "Today is a day African women must rejoice," Banda said as Sirleaf stood by her side. "This is our day. And this is our year. And this is our decade!" Sirleaf affirmed her

and Liberia's - commitment to empower women. To be sure, the challenges before them are great. Using the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a barometer, Liberia and Malawi generally score low in the areas of gender equality. "The two of us have great strength," Sirleaf said. "Together, we can do more to empower women and to ensure that women's role in society is enhanced." She added that her country would work with the new Malawian government to advance women's empowerment. Surely, enormous challenges face these women going by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a barometer, Liberia and Malawi and not up to par in the areas of women's empowerment, education for girls, and maternal health. According to 2010 U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) reports on the two countries, Liberia is only likely to meet certain goals on equality and education,

and Malawi remains unlikely to meet its targets for any of the three MDGs that focus on women. But as Banda noted during her speech, there has never been a better time to advance women's rights in Africa. Sirleaf, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, was elected as Africa's first female president in 2005 and reelected in 2011. While her first term in office focused on reconstructing a country devastated by two civil wars, one from 1989 to 1996 and the second from 1999 to 2003, she has set out to use her second term as president to make women's rights and health a national priority. Banda succeeded former President Bingu wa Mutharika after his sudden passing on Apr. 5. After she was elected vice president in 2009, she had a falling out with Mutharika, and was subsequently expelled from the ruling Democratic People's Party and essentially barred from participating in government. However, she remained vice president, and in 2011 she formed the opposition People's Party.

Since Mutharika's death a number of MPs have left the former ruling party to join her. Both Sirleaf and Banda govern countries with significant development challenges. So devastating were Liberia's civil wars that nearly a decade since the end of the conflict, the country is still in a state of reconciliation and reconstruction. In Malawi, Mutharika's last years in office were characterized by an economy crumbling under government mismanagement, which was compounded by the withdrawal of donor aid because of human rights abuses. Yet despite the fact that Sirleaf has had to focus her efforts on reconstruction and Banda is barely one month into her time as president, there is concrete evidence indicating that both women have put the advancement of women at the top of their agendas. At her office in Monrovia, Liberian Minister of Gender and Development Julia Duncan-Cassell described advances in women's empowerment as observable through representation in government, as well as in ordinary women's participation in the democratic process in Liberia. In 1997, market women didn't know much about elections," she told IPS. "In 2005, they tried, but they all voted with thumb prints. But in 2011, most of the market women were able to mark their names." - Continued on Page 11



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## South Africans in Toronto Celebrate "Freedom Day"

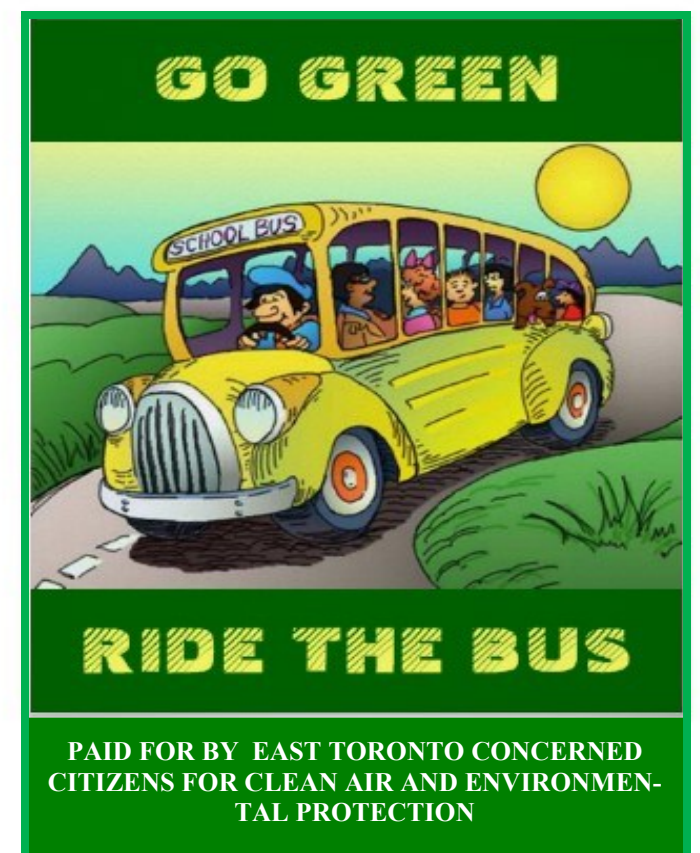
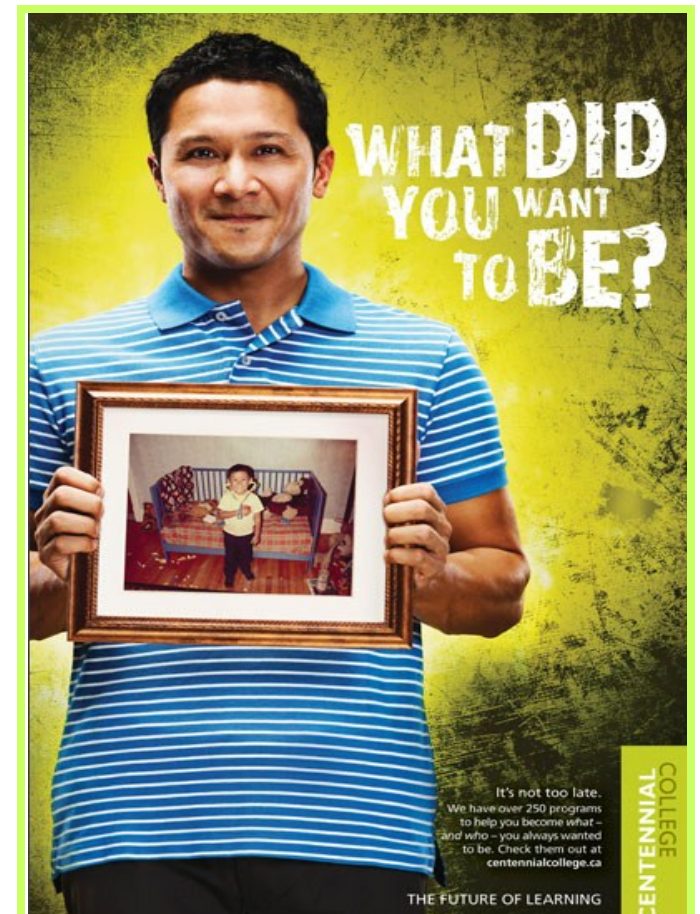
By Prof. Phil Tam-Ai Alalibo



Above, South Africa's Consul-General, Tselane Mokuena, delivering her address as attendees (below) listen intently.



On April 27, 2012, South Africans, well wishers and friends of South Africa gathered at the North York Memorial Community Hall at 5110 Yonge Street to commemorate the 18th anniversary of the first multi-racial post apartheid elections. They were the first national elections in South Africa where the franchise was not dependent on racial background. In that election, South African patriot and perhaps it's most revered personality in modern times, Nelson Mandela, emerged the winner and became the first black, non-white president of this multi-racial country. Mandela's presidency marked a new beginning for a country that had been torn for the better part of four decades by racial tensions and gripped by the ugly tentacles of apartheid. The struggle for freedom began soon after the Nationalist Government instituted the policy of Apartheid after coming to office in 1948 with Mandela's ANC spearheading the course for freedom. That struggle that claimed thousands of innocent lives and left indelible emotional and psychological scars on millions more culminated into freedom in 1994 when this country with a rich heritage truly became independent. Addressing the celebrants, South African Consul-General, Tselane Mokuena, reiterated the significance of this day in the annals of the country's political history as celebrants mingled and danced away the evening to mark the re-birth of the southern most country on the African continent.





# Jammin' With The MAASAI

## A Look at the People of Africa Maasai's Life & Tradition

The Maasai live in the semi-arid Rift Valley region of Kenya and Tanzania. They own large herds of cattle, sheep and goats which they follow around seasonally in search of new grazing grounds and water sources. Traditionally the Maasai have always been a proud and independent tribe. They did not cultivate the land and depend on a cash economy as many of those around them did, rather they lived off the blood, milk and meat that their cattle provided them. Cattle plays a central role in the life of the Maasai. Cattle represents food and power; the more cattle a Maasai has, the richer he is and therefore the more power and influence he will have within his tribe.

### Maasai Traditions

These days the Maasai have a more mixed diet as they have been forced to settle into ever decreasing areas of land and adapt to a more sedentary lifestyle which in some cases includes growing or buying cultivated food. Traditionally the Maasai have always looked down upon those who tilled the land since this rendered it useless for grazing. While the Maasai lifestyle has undergone some changes in the past three decades in particular, their strong social traditions remain intact. Maasai men are first and foremost warriors. They protect their tribe, their cattle and their grazing lands. Often standing over 6ft tall the Maasai warrior with his beaded hair, red checked blanket (*shuka*) and balled club, looks both fierce and beautiful. Maasai boys go through a circumcision ceremony at the age of 14 and then traditionally spending up to 8 years looking after livestock far from their villages. They become warriors upon their return to the village to get married.

### Maasai Women

The Maasai women are responsible for all domestic tasks which include making their homes. Houses are made from mud, sticks, grass, cow dung and urine. The women also milk the cows, collect water (a heavy and arduous task), cook and look after the children. The Maasai women are as impressive as the men in their looks. Tall, slender and bedecked with large beaded necklaces and long braided hair, they are a favorite among tourists taking their holiday snapshots.

### Maasai Struggle to Keep their Traditional Way of Life

While part of the attraction of visiting national parks in Kenya and Tanzania is viewing the wildlife as well as the indigenous people, it is the wildlife parks that present the biggest problem to the Maasai. The largest tracts of land that have been taken and protected for the wildlife has been taken from the Maasai's traditional grazing lands. The Maasai feel that their society has been



**Maasai boys go through a circumcision ceremony at the age of 14 and then traditionally spending up to 8 years looking after livestock far from their villages. They become warriors upon their return to the village to get married."**

given less thought and respect than that of wild animals. Here's a quote from the Maasai Association:

*When a lion attacks a cow, the authorities from wildlife and conservationist organizations would bury their heads under the sand. When a Maasai warrior kills a lion because of killing his cow, the authorities would ferry security personnel to arrest the warrior. In other words, it is acceptable for a lion to kill a cow but not acceptable for a warrior to kill a lion. Lions are more important than the Maasai cows.*

Killing a lion in Masaai culture is a test of manhood and so the idea that authorities don't care about their culture as well as their cattle, is a double insult. On the other hand, most tourists go to the Masai Mara, the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater precisely to see lions, one of the Big Five. So it is also understandable that the authorities wish to protect their tourist trade which is vital for their economy. (About.com)

## Sustaining Inter-Cultural Marriage

By SANNA JAWARA



Issues relating to sustenance of intercultural marriages continue to occupy public and individual debates, in the context of commitments from both cultural and religious perspectives as well as events taking place across the globe. Marriage is a religious requirement for both men and women of age and ability, based on mutual consent. People are at liberty to select their partners for marriages; hence the institution being

described as a contract between the consenting parties, who agree to live according to the terms and conditions of the sacred institution. Religious principles governing marriage recommend among other things the parties to stay in union till death separates them or other unpredictable conditions which may warrant the parties to separate in their best interest. Before the advent of science and technology and before the arrival of colonial masters in Africa and the Gambia in particular, people were not exposed to the ideals of intercultural marriage. People in those days were only allowed to marry within their families, Kabilos, especially at the village and community level. However, as the world undergoes changes through the world of science and technology, people no longer observe those traditional norms and values covering the sacred institution of marriage, as in line with religious teachings and principles across the globe. People are now free and at liberty to select who to marry and who not to, regardless of race, color, tribe and what have you, as illustrated in numerous intercultural marriages involving people of different age and categories from different parts of the globe. This cannot be compared to the time when parents had the exclusive right and privilege to select partners for their sons and daughters with or without their consent. The children too did survive it with perseverance, commitment and determination to honour and respect the decision of their parents at all costs.

### The surge in intercultural marriage

Of recent, there is an unprecedented surge in intercultural marriage in The Gambia and other African countries than before. Most of these types of marriages have common agenda, which revolve around economic security, poverty reduction, foreign cultural influence and the desire to escape hard work on the part of most partners like our very brothers and sisters. But then the question of sustainability remains on the lips of all as pointed out in the number of crimes, divorce and disappointments. These are all owing to lack of exhibiting human virtues such as endurance, commitment towards each other (couple), embracing deeper sense of love, respect, honour and gratefulness as contained in religious teachings and principles governing the institution of marriage. It is upheld by many religious scholars that the marriage forms part and parcel of human recycling system in the world and therefore emphasis has been placed on the need to have that system clean and pure. This point is illustrated in the wisdom and rational behind parents selecting marriage partners for their children, based on their own experience and foresight for their beloved children. But unfortunately such is no longer the issue in today's generation, characterized by intercultural marriage and its accompanying crime, divorce and disappointment rates as indicated earlier. Our mosques, churches and other religious places are common sites for conducting intercultural marriages and these are most often than not encouraged and endorsed by both parents and other members of the community. The most striking aspect of it centres on the manner in which some of these intercultural marriages are conducted. The way some of the so-called intercultural marriages are conducted leave a lot to be desired as far as both religious and traditional cultural norms and values are concerned. If the famous adage that 'Everything that shines is not gold' is anything to go by, then not all intercultural marriages, especially involving European-Gambians are all ends in themselves; rather more have to be done towards sustaining them for the interest of human decency.

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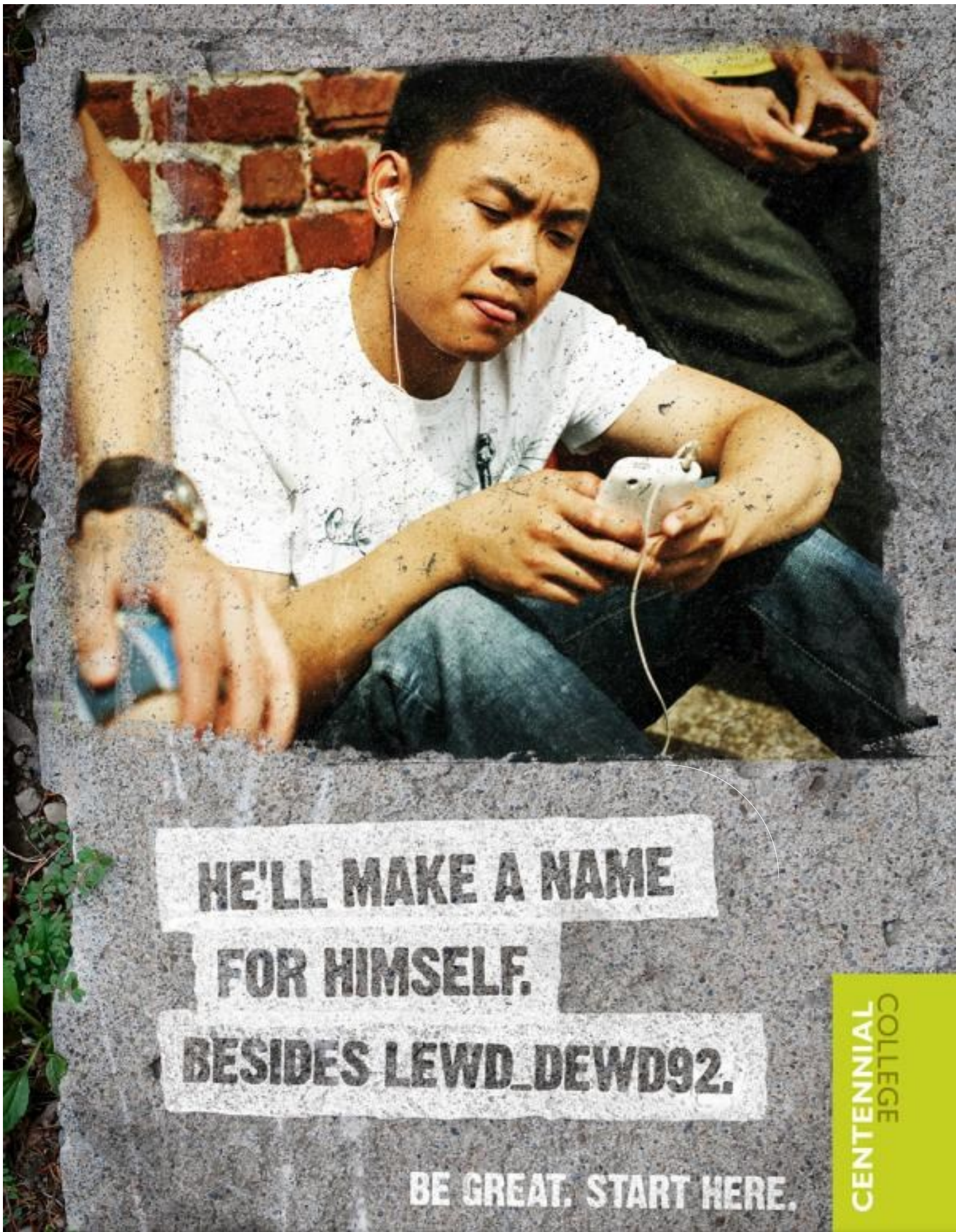
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# A DIGITAL PANOPTICON

## The DANGERS of the Internet

It is no secret that the structure of our society is firmly rooted in surveillance. Nowadays, nothing escapes the eye of the law, especially with the numerous monitoring technologies enconced throughout our society. Consequently, we are generally very cautious and hesitant regarding forbidden behavior, even when we are alone. Conversely, though the Internet traffic is just as closely monitored, stored, and scanned, our inhibitions seem to disperse once we are online. We live in an age that fosters a milieu where billions of people worldwide are encouraged to constantly broadcast personal information online, and somehow view it as appealing. Also, the Internet is increasingly becoming a second home to progressively younger generations. The collective result is a database bursting with personal information on every single individual that is currently, or has formerly been, subscribed to such sites. I find this deeply unsettling, especially for youngsters; and for this reason I believe the Internet can be likened to a digital Panopticon.

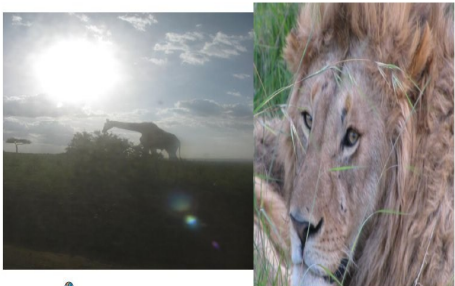
A Panopticon is a circular prison in the form of a cylindrical wall of cells surrounding a central tower. In this central tower is an armed guard, made visually inaccessible to all inmates in the surrounding cells by means of a one-way mirror. As a result, the inmates are without the ability to estimate when exactly they might be targets to the unseen guard. This idea was forwarded by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham and can be applied to various institutions. (The Panopticon Writings). A crucial factor that is not as emphasized on the Internet as it is in both the Panopticon and our society, is the knowledge of our activity is being scrupulously scrutinized. In the panopticon, the inmates have the predominant knowledge that the guard in the central tower is watching them. In our society, we have the

knowledge that we are being watched by cameras alike. However, online, there is more emphasis on horizontal privacy than on vertical privacy. What I mean is that we tend to focus more on what other users see than what the authorities see; we focus on privacy settings and deleting past unflattering information, as opposed to what we actually post in the first instance. We tend to forget that things we post online are not only closely monitored, but remain there forever, never to be erased from our Internet footprints. Of course, if you post nothing that shows cause for concern, no damage will be incurred. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case more often than not. Getting too comfortable online causes us to post more than is necessary, and post them profusely, which increases our likelihood to post certain things that are seemingly harmless at first, but really are foolish when reviewed in hindsight. I am also personally guilty of this.

There are many times I have sat down to look through some things I posted in the past and cringed with embarrassment at my naiveté and folly! It is important to note that in this day and age, our online reputations are crucial to both our long and short-term success. For instance, employers are allowed to use online profiles to gauge whether or not potential employees are suitable for certain positions. People with aspirations to go into politics are aware that competitors often search up the histories of their opponents for disparaging information to use against them in order to gain an advantage. More so, especially after past notorious attempts at airplane bombings, there is the “No-Fly” list to contend with. As African immigrants, a minority group within the Canadian society, it is therefore, imperative that we take extra precaution with what we publish online. It is also important that we ensure that our younger ones, who are more likely to post injudicious things, are fully aware of its possibly devastating consequences.



BY AMAKA EKENKWO



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More emphasis on language skills and youth; a re-write of the outdated points system for assessing applicants; requiring investor immigrants to plunk down more than the \$800,000 that now gets them in: Those are among the radical reforms Kenney has been outlining, for economic immigrants. Canada would continue to welcome family-class immigrants and refugees, Kenney says. There's more. Employers and professional associations also would loom larger at the gateway to Canada, not only to help identify those who could be fast-tracked but also to pre-assesss whether their credentials meet the standards needed to work in their fields.

"Let the market decide who is needed," says Kenney, sounding more like the human resources boss of Canada Inc. than a minister of the Crown. Kenney foresees a more nimble, streamlined immigration system, able to respond quickly to national needs while avoiding the bureaucratic inefficiencies of the past that led to an eight-year backlog of applicants and, oddly, a points rating system he says recognizes no difference between, say, a low-level U.S. college education and one obtained at Harvard.



# Immigration changes stir 'rap'sody

By GREG VAN MOORSEL, QMI AGENCY

First, the rappers trooped in. Next up was Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney. No, it wasn't an audition that brought a London, Ont., music act and one of the Conservative government's most prominent ministers to The London Free Press. The rappers were there to shoot a video. Kenney followed into the same room minutes later to pitch his case for a sweeping overhaul of Canada's immigration system. Rap and the hot-button politics of immigration are worlds apart, but make no mistake: What Kenney is proposing will be music to the ears of many in a country facing severe labour shortages in skilled occupations, but jarring to some Canadians who look upon the immigration system more like a social program than an obvious business solution to keeping the economy humming in the face of a declining birth rate. More emphasis on language skills and youth; a rewrite of the outdated points system for assessing applicants; requiring investor immigrants to plunk down more than the \$800,000 that now gets them in: Those are among the radical reforms Kenney has been outlining, for economic immigrants. Canada would continue to welcome family-class immigrants and refugees, Kenney says.

There's more. Employers and professional associations also would loom larger at the gateway to Canada, not only to help identify those who could be fast-tracked but also to pre-assess whether their credentials meet the standards needed to work in their fields. "Let the market decide who is needed," says Kenney, sounding more like the human resources boss of Canada Inc. than a minister of the Crown. Kenney foresees a more nimble,

streamlined immigration system, able to respond quickly to national needs

while avoiding the bureaucratic inefficiencies of the past that led to an eight-year backlog of applicants and, oddly, a points rating system he says recognizes no difference between, say, a low-level U.S. college education and one obtained at Harvard. It all sounds very bottom-line, but Kenney is right. Half a century ago, in a move that reshaped Southwestern Ontario for one, the country turned to the war-shattered economies of Western Europe to find the labour it needed to fill voids at home. So loosey-goosey were the rules and expectations at the time, some immigrants—tired of the long train trip to get where they were going—simply hopped off at places where they never intended to stop, and started new lives short of their destinations.

Today, many countries are competing for the best and brightest immigrants. A South African doctor can go just as easily—maybe more so—to the U.S. or Britain to practice as to Ontario. Why would a top software engineer from India choose Canada when Australia might expedite her faster? If those arguments for reform didn't hold, there's another: The cruel, cab-driving, dead-end jobs that await many who were led to believe they had the right stuff, only to find out their language skills, education or credentials aren't up to snuff. Kenney notes economic outcomes for immigrants have been declining, their jobless rate double that of the general public. "Many end up in survival jobs, ironically, in a country that has labour shortages." No, it's not your grandfather's immigration system Kenney has in mind. If anything, it might have shut grandpa out. The difference is that your kids, if you have them, will live in a Canada that can continue to punch above its weight despite the handicap of its small population. That should be music to everyone's ears.