Migration, biofuels, food security – These topics have been at the center of a year of rewarding collaborations for WGGP. The Center for Advanced Study initiative, Immigration: History and Policy, has permitted us to bring in a wide array of speakers as well as to draw on UI specialists (see p.6). Among the visitors, WGGP associate Prof. Jean Pyle, addressed gender issues related to Asian migration and the global economic crisis. The Center for African Studies worked with WGGP and many cosponsors to examine social and sustainability dimensions of biofuel production in Brazil and southern Africa through a conference here in April (p.4). Speakers stressed regional and global contexts and identified the need for more case studies. Check out the award-winning graduate students who are making important contributions to work on women, gender, development, and globalization (p. 11) as well as the article by this year’s Goodman Fellow that brings together scientific work on entomology with the application to increasing poor women’s income through silk production in Madagascar (beginning on p.1).

I am Maminirina Randrianandrasana, a PhD student in entomology under Dr. May Berenbaum’s supervision. The Rita and Arnold Goodman fellowship has allowed me to continue with my study during the academic year 2008-2009. My PhD research focuses on ecology of wild silk moth species in rainforests of Madagascar with the ultimate goal of improving rearing methods and silk production.

I volunteered for two months (April-May 2008) in a non-profit organization called Conservation through Poverty Alleviation International (CPALI) during which I participated in evaluation of feasibility of outdoor farming of wild silkworm by using pre-existing host plants located in the border of Makira forest (north-east). This experience helped frame my research goals, which are to: 1) ascertain whether the chemical

Randrianandrasana, continued on p. 2
comprehension of host foliage influences the chemical composition and physical characteristics of the cocoon silk of the wild silkworm *Antherina suraka*; 2) investigate cryptic lineages in this widely distributed and polyphagous moth. This research will not only provide information about the characteristics of the moth species but also determine regionally specific optimal food for the larval stage to enhance silk production.

Knowledge of silkworm food requirements can be used in improving silkworm rearing techniques and cocoon production, which constitute a potential alternative source of income for rural women. This will reduce expansion of local agricultural areas by deforestation and will in turn promote conservation of remaining forests.

Funding from the Department of Entomology of University of Illinois allowed me to go back to Madagascar during last November for collecting samples in Vohimana (east) and Anjà (south central) reserves. I would like to thank them and the Goodman Family, and the Department of Entomology of University of Antananarivo, my host institute of research, as well as the NGOs l’Homme et l’Environnement, Anjà Miray Association, and Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Malagasy Direction of protected areas. I also recently received a field equipment support from IDEAWILD, which will help meet travel expenses of future field trips. Enough samples were gathered for analyses.

In all sites I visited I usually noticed that men, women, and even children were most of the time enthusiastic about learning the rearing techniques. They even volunteered to look for the wild silkworms of interest, or to accompany us to do our daily recording. Also, local women, apart from their daily task of farming, are trained at a very young age in handicrafts, such as making hats and baskets out of sedges in the Makira region, as well as making silk textiles by using yarns from landibe (a typical wild silkworm) in the Anjà region. Because they are already good at making handicrafts, it should not be difficult to convince them to use cocoons as raw materials for home products (such as table clothes) that they can sell. CPALI is training local farmers to produce *A. suraka* cocoons and also plans to teach women villagers how to make handicrafts by using these new wild silk products.

Maminirina is the 2008-09 Goodman Fellow and a doctoral candidate in Entomology at the University of Illinois. She can be contacted at mrandri2@illinois.edu. Further information on CPALI can be found at http://www.cpali.org/.
Beit el-Hanane:
(Home of Tenderness, 
Maison de la tendresse)

Home of Tenderness is a non-profit, non-denominational, non-discriminatory, charitable organization that deals with the problems of abused women in Lebanon. It was co-founded by UI alumna and WGGP Associate, Evelyne Accad, and her sister, Jacqueline Hajjar, also a UI alumna, to promote community awareness and education to break a cycle of violence and abuse; and it provides an environment of encouragement, compassion, and support for all who come in contact with it. Based initially in Lebanon, the project aims to provide assistance for young women in distress as a result of battery, substance abuse, and sex crimes. The goal is to open centers that will help these women regain confidence and rebuild their physical, mental, and spiritual health, in order to allow them to rejoin society. The program will also deal with literacy, teaching creative, artistic and various trade skills, as well as other means of self-support. As women seeking refuge are often without adequate help and protection, well-trained staff will be available: a licensed nurse, social worker, and psychotherapist. Someone will also be hired to live at the home on a permanent basis. An apartment is in the process of being bought to provide housing. Beit el-Hanane will provide a temporary shelter where first-aid, medical, and psychological care will be given. Food and care will be provided for a short period of time until long-term solutions can be found and implemented. Thus far, several community leaders are supporting the project: two judges (one female Christian, the other male Muslim), a doctor, and a lawyer. There is an immediate and urgent need for volunteers and financial support. For more information on this project, refer to the Bridges of Peace International web site at http://www.bopint.org/.

An Easy Way to Support WGGP Research

Evelyne Accad has also established a scholarship through WGGP, the Evelyne Accad International Research Award, for graduate students at U of I who are working on issues related to women in North Africa and the Middle East. This WGGP award, as well as our other awards (The Due-Ferber and Yates Awards and the Goodman Fellowship), can make a real difference in promoting research efforts on global gender issues. Please consider making a contribution, even a small donation, to support any of these student awards. It’s easy to make an on-line, tax-deductible gift by going to our web page at http://www.ips.uiuc.edu/wggp/ and clicking on Giving Opportunities, the last link in the blue column on the left-hand side. We greatly appreciate your support.

Beit-el Hanane founding sisters and UI alumnae, Jacqueline Hajjar and Evelyne Accad

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An International Hewlett Conference
Sustainable Biofuels and Human Security:
A Comparison of Brazil and Southern Africa

April 16 - 17
Levis Faculty Center
Third Floor
919 W. Illinois Street
Urbana, Illinois

Conference Speakers:
Edmund Amann, Economics, University of Manchester, England
Mary Arends-Kuenning, Agricultural and Consumer Economics, U of I
Carlos Azzoni, Economics, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil
Werner Baer, Economics, U of I
Jason Barton, Institute fpr Genomic Bioly, U of I
Hans Blaschek, Center for Advanced BioEnergy Research, U of I
Merle Bown, Center for African Studies, U of I
Salem Fakir, Living Planet Unit, World Wildlife Fund, South Africa
Anil Hira, Political Science/Latin American Studies, Simon Fraser University, Canada
Anna Locke, Ministry of Agriculture, Mozambique
Jürgen Scheffran, CABER/ACDIS/EBI, U of I
Gale Summerfield, Women and Gender in Global Perspectives, U of I
Carol Thompson, Political Economy, Northern Arizona University

Jointly sponsored by Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program and Center for African Studies
Co-sponsored by Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Center for Advanced BioEnergy Research, Center for International Business Education and Research, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The Hewlett-Lemann Program, International Programs and Studies, Center for Global Studies, ACES Global Connect, and Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security. This conference is funded in part by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. For Program Details: www.ips.uiuc.edu/wggp/humansecurity.shtml
Gains and Costs When an Ethanol Plant Moves into Town

When a small city or town considers adding an ethanol plant or biorefinery to their community, often times it’s the financial and property capital that’s counted. But what are the cultural and social effects on the community? That’s what University of Illinois professors Gale Summerfield and Stephen Gasteyer and graduate student Keith Taylor are analyzing in two real-life cases in Illinois.

Palestine is a small community with a population of about 1,300. The Lincoln Land Ethanol plant opened in 2004. Summerfield and Gasteyer have been comparing and contrasting the issues this town faced and the effects the plant had on this community with other communities where ethanol plants have been sited, including an proposal by The Andersons for an ethanol plant in Champaign.

They use a framework that looks at gains and costs from many different angles. “We use what’s called the community capitals framework for examining the effects on community development, capacity, resiliency as well as global linkages, not just the financial effects,” Summerfield said.

For example, water is natural capital. “Water is really important with ethanol plants because you have to have a source nearby and what came up in the comparison study is that in some places the water source was perceived as more threatened and in other places it wasn’t,” Summerfield said. Palestine’s water source is a river, but in Champaign, water comes from the Mahomet aquifer and became a major concern, playing a role in eventually putting the project on hold.

Looking at the cultural capital has to do with the legacy of the community. “We have this sense of community and history -- what’s accepted, what’s valued in common, what’s expected. Palestine is a tiny farming community so there is less diversity and more uniformity of heritage,” Summerfield said. It wasn’t a stretch for them to add a refinery to the community that would help farmers. In comparison, Champaign is a much bigger community with many different kinds of cultural heritage. “Ties to the farming community are there, but there are also a lot of people who aren’t tied so you see that in the opposition to the plant coming in.”

Summerfield studies gender issues in her research and noticed some striking differences there as well. “Energy isn’t an area that you typically see a lot of women. But in Palestine, the mayor is a woman and the chair of the ethanol board of managers is a woman. Women are often more involved in alternative energy rather than the petroleum industry, so in the case of Palestine, the women involved brought balance, looking at how it would benefit the community.”

How the plants would affect the job market in the two communities was also a point of contrast. “An ethanol plant only hires about 35 people, which isn’t a lot, but for a really small community like Palestine, that’s bringing in jobs that are geared toward people with more training which can benefit the community as a whole,” Summerfield said.

Summerfield also examined some of the differences in the political climate of the two communities and how the plant has helped Palestine financially, although she said that with the excess of capacity of ethanol right now combined with the plummeting price of petroleum it has not been a good year for alternative energy of any kind. “There’s so much volatility that it’s very hard for small groups and communities to deal with this,” she said. “And when you’re dealing with a co-op situation like in Palestine, it’s good when times are good and the benefits come back to the community but when times are bad, you don’t have the diversified base that you would if you were a larger company.”

Summerfield found the most remarkable differences in what she calls “social capital.” This aspect has to do with networks and interactions between people. For Palestine, time will tell whether they will be able to make connections with groups throughout the state and nationally. The recession has affected the potentials for entrepreneurship there. “There might have been by-products or other businesses like local development groups who could give small loans to start up businesses,” Summerfield said.

Using the community capitals framework, you look at a much more systemic approach to communities rather than one little piece,” Summerfield said. “The shortcoming is that you can’t really evaluate which one is more important than the other unless you assign a value to one so it’s not going to give you a clear cut answer when you’re comparing one community to another. But, within one community it can help you see that it’s not just one thing that’s happening.”

She said that she likes to think that this methodology could help bring several capitals together and see how it can help the sustainability of communities. “I’m concerned that we’re not encouraging the building of the next generation of rusted out infrastructure – you want to have a longer term view so these communities don’t get a couple of years of gain and then 10 years of cost.”

The next step will be more in depth interviews in the communities.

Funding for the preliminary research was provided by the University of Illinois.

Contact: Debra Levey Larson, Media Communications Specialist, Ag, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, dlarson@illinois.edu or Co-PIs: Gale Summerfield (summrfld@illinois.edu) and Stephen Gasteyer, and Keith Taylor.

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Immigration: History and Policy, the Center for Advanced Study (CAS) campus-wide initiative for 2008-09, is in full swing this semester, chaired by Jim Barrett, History, and Gale Summerfield, WGGP and Human and Community Development. Bringing together scholars from numerous disciplines, this initiative explores new approaches to immigration and its implications for our society and our own lives.

Spring 2009
CAS Immigration Initiative Events


Spring 2009 WGGP and Co-Sponsored Events


Wednesday – Friday, March 4-6, Joint Area Centers Symposium on A New Green Revolution?: Meeting Global Food and Energy Demands, Keynote Speaker: Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Professor of Entrepreneurship, Cornell University, From Food Crisis to Sustainable Food Security: Can we get there from here?, I-Hotel Conference Center. As part of Panel VI on Combustion vs. Consumption, on Fri., March 6, Gale Summerfield (Director of WGGP, U of Illinois) spoke on Social and Gender Dimensions of the Biofuels and Food Debates. Sponsored by Area Centers, WGGP, CIBER, ACES and others.

Monday, March 9, Noon – 3 pm, Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure: Building Rural Economies in a Time of Crisis, Cornelia Butler Flora, Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Sociology, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, Sponsored by WGGP and the Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership.

Friday, April 10, Noon, Luncheon with Maminirina Randrianandrasana, 2008-09 Goodman Fellow, Entomology, U of I, and May R. Berenbaum, Professor, Entomology, U of I, on An Endemic Wild Silkworm: Knowing its ecology for conservation and integrating rural women in riparian forests of Madagascar, Illini Union, General Lounge, (1401 w. Green St., Urbana).

Thursday – Friday, April 16-17, A Hewlett Conference on Sustainable Biofuels and Human Security: A Comparison of Brazil and Southern Africa, Levis Faculty Center, Jointly Sponsored by WGGP and Center for African Studies with support from other units. (For more details, see page 4 and http://www.ips.uiuc.edu/wggp/humansecurity.shtml.)

Wednesday, April 22, Noon, Provost’s Annual Lecture on Gender Equity, Advancing Faculty Diversity in Science and Engineering, Abigail Stewart, Professor of Psychology and Women’s Studies, Director of U-M ADVANCE Program at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan, Law Auditorium, (504 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Champaign;) Reception following in the Pavilion. Sponsored by the Office of the Provost, Council on Gender Equity, Gender and Women’s Studies, WGGP, and others,

Thursday, April 23, 7 pm, Sabine Alkire, Oxford, Panel Discussion on Global Humanitarianism with Robert McKim, Religious Studies, UI and Paul McNamara, Ag and Consumer Economics/Nutritional Sciences, UI; Levis Faculty Center; Sponsored by CU Schools F,oundation IPS, WGGP and others.

Thursday, April 30, 2:00 – 3:30 pm, WGGP Spring Reception honoring GRID graduates and WGGP Award Recipients, Room 101, International Studies Building, (910 S. 5th St., Champaign).

Friday – Sunday, May 1-3, Conference on Sexual Selves. Keynote Speakers: Martha Nussbaum, Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics, University of Chicago and Cressida Heyes, Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality, University of Alberta, Sponsored by Philosophy, WGGP and others.

Thursday – Friday, May 7-8, Feminist Futures, Patricia J. Williams, Prof. of Law at Columbia, MacArthur Foundation Fellow, and columnist for The Nation; Sponsored by Unit for Criticism and GWS; cosponsored by WGGP and others.

Eskar, a village in Northeastern Afghanistan, has always been a safe haven for my family during wartime in Afghanistan. After establishing my local contacts and evaluating the conditions of the village, I decided to establish a program for mothers in the community. This was the foundation of the 100 Mothers Literacy Program. This program was designed to teach mothers how to read and write in Dari (national language of Afghanistan). After attending the Global Engagement Summit (GES) at Chicago and advertising my project thorough Global Giving website, I raised funds to start the project in December of 2008. Currently, 100 Mothers Literacy Program has enrolled 105 mothers for three months to teach them to read and write for the first time in the history of the Eskar community.

Since the beginning of the last year, I have been in touch with my sister in Afghanistan to organize this program. At first, when my sister along with some other volunteers visited the village to recruit mothers for this program, there were no volunteers ready to attend this program. Such a reaction was very much expected from a community that had not been privileged with any access to education. Some mothers requested building of restrooms in the village instead of participating in the literacy program while others believed that at their age, education was no more a priority. After receiving this news, I wrote a letter, which stated the importance of education, particularly for mothers, and the intended goals and impact of 100 Mothers Literacy Program. It was after a few weeks that I realized the impact of what I had written. My sister had returned back to the village and read the letter to the groups of villagers and in due time, we were successful in registering 80 women who are willing to learn, read and write.
in Dari. These women are from three villages of Eskar: Sar-e-bid, Talakhtan, and Paikutal. They are very passionate and excited about getting started with their education. However, from talking and interacting with some mothers, I could see some of them were very nervous and not sure whether or not they will be able to learn. For example, I overheard a mother saying, “I don’t know if I will be able to read properly but I think I will be good with writing.” It is understandable that anyone from a society that has never been even exposed to a basic non-traditional education before would feel nervous. I also witnessed some commitment and enthusiasm in learning. For instance, in the second day of classes, a mother said, “After school, I quickly cooked for my children and I went to do my homework. My children asked, ‘What are you doing, Mom?’ and I told them, ‘I am doing homework so tomorrow I don’t lag behind and embarrass myself in front of other mothers.’” Such reactions inspire me and raise my confidence in the mission of 100 Mothers Literacy Program.

We are continuously striving to expand our program so we could reach out to more mothers and educate them in the most rural areas of Afghanistan.

Rahila Muhibi is a senior at Methodist University in Fayetteville, NC. For further information about the literacy program, please contact Rahila at rmuhibi@student.methodist.edu.
NEWS FROM WGGP ASSOCIATES


Joy Coates, GRID Alum, History, accepted a tenure-track position in African history at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC.

Eric Custar, GRID Alum, African Studies, recently finished an MBA in maritime, port, and logistics management at Old Dominion University (it’s the only program like it in the US and one of 3 in the world). His research and analysis of landside cargo theft, security measures, and response is included in the reference book Maritime Safety, Security, and Piracy (Informa Law, 2008). He has started his own consultancy, Maritime and Transportation Solutions, and is working on projects involving the transportation aspect of bio-security and bio-violence/terrorism.


Batamaka Some, PhD GRID student, Anthropology, returned from dissertation field research last summer and is currently in the writing process. He was invited to Washington, DC to participate in the Women Thrive Worldwide Gender and Agriculture Symposium sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Nov. 17, 2008. His talk centered on farmers’ perspectives about food and export production and women’s potentials as a result of a gender-conscious approach to agricultural development. His paper was entitled: “You can’t make porridge with cotton. But you can eat unsold rice: Gender and Agricultural Development in Export-oriented Rural Africa.” Women Thrive sent him a second invitation to participate in a panel on Foreign Assistance Reform at the US Congress (date not yet specified), and the extent to which it can improve to make meaningful impact on the lives of women, their families, communities, and countries. Batamaka also presented a paper at the American Anthropological Association Annual Mtg in San Francisco, Nov 19-22, 2008, entitled: “Selective Inclusion, Collaboration, and Engagement: Efficient Negotiation Tools within the Cotton Farming Household,” in which he argued that women’s and household dependents’ agency is constraining male heads into including them in allocation of resources while conceding spaces for bargaining and negotiations.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Rita and Arnold Goodman Fellowship:
Eeshani Kandpal (Agricultural & Consumer Economics) for research on Child Nutrition and Female Bargaining Power in India

Due and Ferber International Research Award & Barbara A. Yates International Research Award:
Eva Chian-Hui Chen (Psychology) for research on Sino-Vietnamese Transnational Marriages, Immigrant Mothers and Children

Evelyne Accad International Research Award:
Ozge Sensoy (Social Work) for research on Gender, Culture, and Religion among Kurdish Migrant Mothers

Barbara A. Yates International Research Awards:
Emilia Poppe (Human and Community Development) for research on Social Justice and Medical Service in Vietnam

Tahreer Araj (Human and Community Development) for research on Women and Community Agency in Palestine

Seon Mi Kim (Social Work) for research on Women's Community Enterprises in South Korea

Veronica Mendez (Latin American and Caribbean Studies) for research on the Impact of Chile's Democratic Transition on Women

Rose Koran-Okrah (Social Work) for research on Women's Property Rights in Ghana

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Perspectives: Research Notes & News

Perspectives: Research Notes & News is a publication of the Women and Gender in Global Perspectives (WGGP) program. WGGP offers a graduate minor in Gender Relations in International Development (GRID). Perspectives is published once each semester and distributed to WGGP associates and other individuals interested in issues of women and gender in global perspectives.

WGGP welcomes your input in the form of news and articles for our newsletter as well as financial contributions of any amount. Please contact us at address and email below:

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