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BIEA praised for its world-leading research

In July 2010, the British Academy assessed its sponsored institutes for the quality of their research outputs. We have just received the results of this evaluation. We are very pleased to have received excellent ratings. Over forty per cent of our submissions received the highest rating of 4* (signifying quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour).

The assessors commented that the BIEA's 'profile would do great credit to a top-level University within the context of research quality ratings for the RAE 2008.' Comments received from reviewers of the BIEA submitted research outputs described our work as 'excellent and pioneering' and 'the best of academic scholarship'.

We were also commended for the quality of the new extended facilities (especially the library), the excellent relations we have fostered with local and regional scholars, and the impact of our new journal, the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*.

Women and Land Rights

In October 2010, BIEA Director, Dr Ambreena Manji, presented a paper on Women and Land Rights at Strathmore University in Nairobi. In her presentation Dr Manji addressed the issue of women's participation in setting the policy agenda on land rights.

Dr Manji's paper offered a detailed analysis of the development policies of the World Bank and bilateral donors on financial inclusion. The paper connected the current plans for the expansion of financial sectors in developing countries with policies that promote the formal land titles. The paper argued that commercial banks will come to play an increasingly important role in third world economies as asset-backed lending expands. The paper assessed the implications of expanding access to credit for gender equality and raised the question whether the promotion of financial inclusion can be reconciled with the aim of international development to end poverty.

Dr Manji has subsequently been invited to present this ongoing research at USAID in Washington DC in July this year.

The Annual Nairobi Lecture: The Public Understanding of Science in Africa

On September 22-24, 2010, the BIEA hosted a three-day workshop organized by the Centre for African Studies as part of the 'Cambridge University/the Collaborative Research Programme'. The workshop, which coincided with the BIEA's Nairobi annual lecture held on the 24th September, brought together researchers, journalists, science educators, scientists, policy makers and academics, both from within the continent and abroad. The objectives of the two events were to explore the public engagement with science in Africa, and to identify who these publics are and how they are conceived. Speakers addressed the publics' relationship and commitment to science, and the implications to decision-making, policy and public debates.



Dr Ambreena Manji presenting a paper at a governance conference in Strathmore University, Nairobi

The relationships that exist between various actors, and what these reveal about the meanings of citizenship and development, were also discussed.

The first day tackled the issue of environment and conservation, and presentations ranged from the public understanding and engagement with the environment, to climate change and the role of media reporting, especially science journalism. The theme for the second day was science, public representation, and health. Presenters engaged with issues surrounding medical research and engagement with the various publics, science journalism in Africa, and global disease programmes and their publics.

On the third and final day, speakers addressed topics on science, technology and development. The sessions addressed biomedical technology, using case studies on cancer management and uncertainties from Botswana and Kenya.

Professor Sewankambo wrapped up the workshop by delivering the inaugural BIEA Nairobi Annual lecture, which emphasised on the need for a healthy tension between scientists and the public within an environment of mutual respect. The public understanding of science, he argued, should aim at facilitating comprehension of both the meaning and implications of knowledge, action and process, based on appropriate community accepted principles. He acknowledged the lack of comprehensive national and regional studies in Africa as a major challenge for Africa and African institutions in the assessment of the publics understanding of science. Professor Sewankambo also highlighted the need for the exchange of best practices as well as the engagement of the youth as a means of shaping, promoting and advancing public engagement in science.



Professor Nelson Sewankambo delivering his lecture at the inaugural BIEA Nairobi annual lecture

The British Institute in Eastern Africa and the British Academy wishes to thank the Liverhulme Trust, the Isaac Newton Trust, and the London School of Tropical Medicine for their generous sponsorship towards the workshop. Special thanks also go to all those who attended the workshop and the annual lecture for making it such a success.

Renovation and re-launch of Kapenguria Museum, NW, Kenya

Opened in 1994, Kapenguria museum is run by the National Museums of Kenya and is centred on the 'Heroes' Cells' in which Jomo Kenyatta and associates were held by the British during their trials at the height of the Mau Mau rebellion in 1952. The museum also houses significant displays of both Pokot and Charangani/Sengwer material culture. Unfortunately the museum had become seriously dilapidated in recent years. In early 2010 the then Assistant Director (Dr Matthew Davies) in conjunction



BIEA graduate attachée Jessica Petts with Pokot dancers at the Kapenguria Museum re-launch

with The Western Region, National Museums of Kenya, offered to create displays of his own research and assist with the ongoing rejuvenation of the museum. With the immeasurable assistance of BIEA graduate attachée Jessica Petts, the AD undertook a series of visually impressive but highly cost effective measures to improve the displays, including the reprinting and remounting of photographs and text labels for the ethnographic displays, and the repainting of galleries. Jessica also created new standardised text boards for the heroes' galleries. In addition a display board and a small cabinet were produced for the archaeological exhibit and incorporated artefacts from the AD's research.

In April 2010 the AD and NMK held a 're-launch' event which was attended by some 300 local people as well as a corpus of local officials, the media and NMK senior



staff. The attendees were treated to speeches, traditional dancing, refreshments and guided tours of the museum. The event was also covered by both Nation and Citizen TV. The event was a great success for a very modest outlay and hopefully raised the profile of the museum, contributed significantly to local heritage education, and firmly established local support for the AD's future research.

Archaeological research in Karamoja, Uganda and renovation of the Archaeological store at the Uganda Museum

BIEA has a long and prestigious history of archaeological engagement in Uganda and of cooperation with the Uganda Museum (UGM). The then Assistant Director, Dr Matthew Davies, renewed this commitment in 2009 with the establishment of a new research project assessing the recent archaeology of the Karamoja region in eastern Uganda. To date this research has identified a number of potential Late Stone Age to Late Iron Age sites and has extensively



Meeting of elders, Nadunget, Moroto, Karamoja

investigated one large Late Iron Age site at Nadunget, near Moroto. In order to properly preserve BIEA related finds already stored at the Uganda Museum, and to ensure the proper curation of future finds, BIEA has extended an offer to the Uganda Museum to assist with the renovation of its archaeological stores and the cataloguing of its materials. The first phase of this project was begun in late 2009 with a small renovation grant and a BIEA supported fact-finding mission by UGM staff to Nairobi. In addition, BIEA graduate attachée Jessica Petts spent a few weeks at the Uganda museum helping to establish a new cataloguing system and oversee the renovation. This initiative will be further supported by the work of another graduate attachée, Oli Bowles, in February 2011. BIEA looks forward to further collaborative work with the Uganda Museum.

BIEA research on Female Circumcision in West Pokot

A team led by Kerry Kyaa, East African research fellow at the BIEA, and assisted by Hannah Waddilove, a graduate attachée at the BIEA, set out to conduct an introductory study on female circumcision in Tamkal, a small village in the rugged hills of West Pokot in north-western Kenya. In the field the team was assisted by Emmanuel Lotilem, Esther Lotilem and Kipkeu who are BIEA's research assistants in Pokot and Marakwet respectively. The aim of the study was to inquire into the lived experiences of a cross-section of women in this community and consequently their attitudes toward this enduring tradition.



Kerry and Hannah conducting oral interviews

Our team employed various data collection methodologies, mainly in-depth interviews with key informants and written questionnaires. On occasion, we used conventional approaches such as conversational exchanges with key informants as well as immersing ourselves into our interlocutors' realities through participation in the various daily 'feminine' routines of socio-culturally 'upright' women in this community. Our approaches proved to be highly informative, providing us with valuable information on the meaning and future of female circumcision in this community. Our data for instance suggests that the girl-child education is gradually being preferred over female circumcision, with most young and middle-aged women opting to complete high school education rather than undergo circumcision. Our respondents also singled out the fear of HIV transmission, pain at circumcision, education, religion and perineal tears during delivery as reasons why they wish to abandon the practice. As expected, a few, particularly the older cohort, expressed their wishes for the practice to continue, citing advancement of their culture as their overarching reason. Interestingly and unlike most circumcising communities which allude to the preservation of virginity as a main reason for circumcising their women, as long as conception does not occur, virginity prior to

circumcision holds little significance in this community. Clearly, this holds great promise in advancing scholarly insight into the future of female circumcision in this community and in the country as a whole.

Announcements

Post of Assistant Director

In October 2010, BIEA bid farewell to the Assistant Director, Dr Matthew Davies, as part of a staff restructuring program. In the same month, however, BIEA welcomed Matthew back into the fold in the newly created post of 'Research Fellow in East African Archaeology'. This is a joint position between BIEA and the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge. The BIEA would like to thank Matthew for the enormous contribution he has made to the work of the Institute during his tenure and to wish him all the best in his research. We look forward to having him with us over the next two years as he splits his time between Cambridge and Nairobi.

BIEA Research Day - Saturday 19th March 2011

BIEA will be holding a Research Day on Saturday 19th March 2011 at St Hugh's College, Oxford. The programme is in preparation and will be published on our website soon. The Research Day will start at 10.30 am and end around 5.00 pm. Lunch and Tea will be provided. The cost of participation will be £15.00. Please contact Jane Gillespie, the London Secretary, for further information or to express interest in attending the Research Day (biea@britac.ac.uk).

Forty-seventh Annual General Meeting

BIEA's 47th Annual General Meeting was held in the rooms of the Royal College of Pathologists, 2 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, on Tuesday 23rd November 2010 at 5.15 pm. The meeting considered the Report and Accounts 2009-10 among other issues. The Meeting was followed by a lecture at 5.45 pm by Professor David Taylor, Trinity College Oxford, titled: "Never raining but pouring. The development implications of changing environments in eastern Africa."

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Graduate Attachee Scheme

We are pleased to announce that we are now taking applications for the 2011-2012 graduate attachee scheme. Full details can be on our website (www.biea.ac.uk). Applicants should send a C.V. with a covering letter explaining how participation in the scheme will assist the development of their career and the names and contact details of two academic referees to the director by the 31st of March 2011. All submissions should be by email to gts@biea.ac.uk. Applicants will be informed of the outcome by the 1st of May 2011. (Applicants should note that there is currently a separate application process for students registered for a University of Oxford degree). For more informal enquiries, contact the Director on: ambreena.manji@biea.ac.uk

Membership

Membership subscriptions for 2011 are now due. Please subscribe ASAP to ensure the timely arrival of your copies of *Azania* and/or *JEAS*. *Azania* will still be published three times a year but from 2011 onwards, *JEAS* will have four issues a year".

Membership applications and renewals are now being handled in our London office. Jane Gillespie, our London Secretary, has sent out membership renewal forms to all current members, asking that you check the information we hold about you. If you have a new address or other changes to make, do let her know either by post (10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, UK) or by email (biea@britac.ac.uk). We have also made some changes to our UK payment methods. The London office can no longer process CREDIT CARDS, and those wishing to pay by card should use the PayPal option on our website. [Members should note that we had difficulties with our link to PayPal from 1st to 8th January 2011. If you tried to pay your subscription then, please can you check if it was successful? If not, can we ask you to try again?] The BIEA also has a new UK bank account; so please cancel all existing STANDING ORDERS to BARCLAYS or we will not receive your payment. There are no changes for those who pay in Nairobi.

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