



**Rwanda Initiative partners with U of T's New College and Toronto Community News to launch new media internship for Rwandan journalists**

(April 30, 2008) Rwandan journalist Collin Haba will be the first to take part in a new media internship established by Carleton University's Rwanda Initiative in collaboration with New College at the University of Toronto and Toronto Community News, part of the Metroland Media Group.

The internship in Canada for Rwandan journalists marks a new phase in the Rwanda Initiative project, which has been working since 2006 to build the capacity of the media in Rwanda by sending journalism teachers and media interns to the central African country. From now on, more and more Rwandan journalists will come to Canada for training.

Haba starts work on Monday, May 5 as a reporter with Toronto Community News, which produces a dozen publications from newsrooms in North York and Etobicoke, reaching hundreds of thousands of readers.

"We are very much looking forward to getting to know Collin and providing him with a wide range of experiences in our busy newsroom," said Deborah Bodine, Editor-in-Chief of Toronto Community News.



Haba, 28, was one of the first to graduate from the School of Journalism established at the National University of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, which decimated the country's media sector. He worked at the New Times newspaper in Kigali and as a communications officer for Rwanda's First Lady Jeannette Kagame before joining Carleton's Master of Journalism program last fall. The summer placement with Toronto Community News will help him to hone his journalism skills.

"I'm excited to be doing this as the experience will be of great value when I return to Rwanda next year," Haba said.

This summer placement is the first in a series of opportunities for young Rwandan journalists that will emerge from a new partnership between the Rwanda Initiative, New College and Metroland, which is owned by Torstar. The internship program is supported by former Toronto Star publisher John Honderich, now chair of the Torstar Voting Trust.

At least three Rwandan journalists will get the chance to come to Toronto to experience life in a Canadian newsroom and interact with students in New College's African Studies program.

New College, well known for its commitment to diversity and social equity, will make Haba and future journalism interns from Rwanda a part of the university community, offering them a place in residence and drawing upon their expertise. Haba will work with Prof. Tom Tiekou in the development of materials for a course called Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

“This is the start of a tremendously exciting partnership that will benefit journalism in Rwanda, the African Studies Program at New College, and the whole idea of meaningful international exchange. It is a classic win-win-win situation,” said Rick Halpern, Principal of New College.

"It's incredibly rewarding to partner with another great Ontario university to bring a rising generation of African journalists to Canada. Our students will benefit enormously, and we're certain that the Rwandan journalism fellows will return to their country with sharpened professional skills," Halpern said.

The Rwanda Initiative is a partnership between the School of Journalism and Communication at the National University of Rwanda, in Butare, and its counterpart at Carleton University. The project was launched in January, 2006, by Allan Thompson, a journalism professor at Carleton University and former Toronto Star reporter.

The Rwanda Initiative has sent nearly 75 Canadians to Rwanda to teach journalism at the university, work as media interns with news organizations in Rwanda or as media trainers in Rwanda's newsrooms. The initial focus was a visiting lecturer program at the National University of Rwanda, through which Carleton provided journalism educators and senior journalists as professors to fill the gaps in the teaching staff at the National University. In January the Rwanda Initiative also began providing visiting lecturers to the new Great Lakes Media Centre in Kigali, a night school for working journalists.

From the beginning, one of the primary objectives of the project has been to address the shortage of journalism educators in Rwanda, a country where the media sector, while devastated by the 1994 genocide, also remains key to the post-genocide reconstruction of the country. Another key priority is raising levels of professionalism in the Rwandan media.

This new media internship program in Canada will eventually help many young Rwanda journalists to improve their skills by spending time in Canadian newsrooms. In a pilot project last year, Ugandan journalist Gaaki Kigambo, a former Sunday Editor at the New Times in Kigali, did an internship at Toronto Community News, laying the groundwork for this new program.

“We are delighted to once again have the opportunity to host an intern from the Rwanda Initiative. We had a very positive experience with the journalist placed with us last year. I think we learned as much from him as he did from us,” Bodine said.

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