

## Reviving Ancient Promise

**E**AST AFRICA IS THE REGION of the world where most scientists agree the earliest human-like beings walked the earth. It is, in effect, our common cradle. From Australopithecus Afarensis, the earliest known member of the Hominid family who lived in what is now Ethiopia 4–2.7 million years ago, through Homo habilis, the oldest known member of the genus Homo, to modern man, all our origins are there. High-level civilizations have been noted in the region since the earliest days of written history. The Greeks traded with the local inhabitants along the East African coast in the classical period, as did the Arabs and Chinese in Medieval times and later, the Portuguese explorers.

However, the last few hundred years have not been kind to this ancient region. Colonial occupation, poverty, ethnic strife, disease, and many other factors have left this once important and proud area in a very difficult

state. As noted in our cover story by Susan Ladika, “Limited Resources, Endless Possibilities,” from 1991 to 2004, the gross university enrollment rate in Africa grew by more than 15 percent per year; yet the total enrollment rate for this region was a dismal 2.2 percent in 2004. Given the direction of the world toward a so-called knowledge economy this lagging development of higher education in East Africa has the potential to be devastating to the region’s long-term potential.

But many initiatives are now underway that could help alleviate some of the serious regional educational resource problems and offer opportunities to promising young East African students through the efforts of local universities and governments and international institutions of higher learning. Cooperative undertakings involving Cornell University, University of Arizona, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Northeastern Illinois University,

Virginia Tech, University of Florida, Tufts University, the British Council, and the University of Bergen and Bergen University College in Norway are all examined here.

### Also in This Issue

In “Making A World of Difference,” writer Karen Leggett examines recent expansion in the global context of social work that began in the later part of the last decade and is now resulting in an explosion of interest in overseas field placements, study tours, research initiatives, cross-border collaborations, and the infusion of international content into social work curricula at the graduate and postgraduate levels.

Also, our annual directory of international education recruitment tours and fairs around the globe appears in this issue. We want to thank *USJournal of Academics* for once again partnering with us on this project. **IE**

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