

# PRESS RELEASE



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## ***Education for All: Vanier College gets students involved***

Canadians don't even give it a second thought: September comes and children head back to school. But they're the lucky ones because worldwide more than 72 million children never attend a school. To shed light on this problem, Vanier College has received funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for a public engagement project entitled *Joining Canada's Fight to Achieve Universal Primary Education*. "The goal of the project," says Judy Macdonald responsible for the International Education Office, "is to get Vanier students involved in issues related to access to primary education around the world, and to give them the chance to support Canada's participation in international cooperation. Overall the Vanier project will focus on education in sub-Saharan Africa and especially the inaccessibility of education for girls."

The International Education Office will officially launch the project during ***Education for All Awareness Week*** from October 27-31, 2008. On Tuesday and Thursday, several NGOs will also be on campus informing students of the specific ways they can help increase access to education in Africa. A book drive to benefit Africa will take place all week. As part of the project the International Education Office will display materials all over the campus and construct a website containing information on the need for universal primary education in sub-Saharan Africa.

During ***Education for All Day***, a one-day conference on October 29, guest speakers will expose the difficulties surrounding access to education worldwide. Wanda Bedard, who established *60 Million Girls*, a foundation to support education for girls in developing countries, will be the first speaker, followed by Michelle Manks from the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) which fosters human development and global understanding through education and training. At 12:30 PM, Glynis Williams from *Action réfugiés Montréal* will share her experiences of working with Syrian refugees. The last speaker of the day will be Sharon Peters from *Teachers without Borders*.

The highlight of the Vanier project will be a Malawi Study Program in June, 2009 when ten students will travel to Malawi to work in rural primary and secondary schools. On their return to Montreal, the students will share their discoveries and observations with fellow Vanier students as well Montreal high school students. Finally, in early 2010, there will be an essay writing contest on the topic, "Canada's participation in the global campaign to achieve universal primary education."

This project is Vanier's second CIDA public engagement project. Currently the College is involved in *Vanier AIDS Action in Africa*, a highly successful project where the follow-up actions of the participating students have been extremely positive. And the ***Education for All*** project promises to be equally great. "The response has been overwhelmingly positive," says Judy Macdonald. "So far, even without publicity, more than 60 students have signed up to help with events and to create displays. And soon, others will apply to go to Malawi."

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