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SOUTH AFRICA

SUCCESS STORY

Harvesting the Future of Journalism

USAID course boosts young woman's career in newspaper industry



Photo: Douglas Edwards

Gloria Edwards (left), who participated in a USAID-funded investigative journalism course, covers the story of a house fire in the city of Boksburg, South Africa.

"I ... wish to thank USAID once more for affording me the opportunity of the investigative course at Rhodes [University], without which I would not have been accepted onto the honors program," said journalist Gloria Edwards

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Financial constraints prevented South African journalist Gloria Edwards from obtaining a degree in journalism on her own and furthering her career. But after completing a USAID-funded investigative journalism course at Rhodes University in 2006, she has had several doors open for her.

Since the course, she has proven herself in the field. She was named the Caxton Community Newspapers 2006 Journalist of the Year. She also won second place in the national competition's investigative journalism category.

One of Gloria's biggest successes as a journalist came just a few months after completing the course, when she investigated and exposed a woman who had been posing as a doctor and prescribing medication and fake sick notes to the public. Gloria's news stories based on her recently honed investigative skills helped result in the bogus doctor being sentenced and jailed for three years.

Gloria has since continued her journalism education. Due in part to her participation in the USAID-funded course, Gloria was selected as one of only 12 students internationally to further advance her education at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she completed a mid-career honors degree in journalism. This program is designed especially for journalists with little to no formal qualifications but whose past experience and participation in courses, such as the one funded by USAID, can count towards acceptance into the program.

"I have now come to the end of my honors degree and wish to thank USAID once more for affording me the opportunity of the investigative course at Rhodes [University], without which I would not have been accepted onto the honors program," she said.