

From VOA Learning English, welcome to AS IT IS!

AS IT IS --- our new magazine show in Special English. Today and in the days to come, we will be expanding on major world events and reporting on issues that concern you. We will be talking with newsmakers, experts and VOA's own reporters to help make sense of this quickly changing world --- AS IT IS.

Hello, again. I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. It's nice to have you with us. On today's program, the big cats of Africa are disappearing, and Zambia has decided to act. Also, a look at the growing movie business in China, and how it is affecting Hollywood. But first, a trip to New York City to a bakery that helps to change lives with every loaf of bread it sells.

Ahhh! The air is filled with the wonderful smells of freshly baked breads ...walnut raisin, grindstone rye, and sourdough. Welcome to the "Hot Bread Kitchen." Six years ago, Jessamyn Rodriguez left her job at the United Nations and started the business. But bread was not all she had in mind.

"Many women who immigrate to the United States have passion and skill in the culinary arts but often end up in jobs with no professional trajectory."

Ms. Rodriguez's idea was to hire women to bake the kinds of bread they made in their home countries. She knew that immigrant minority women were hard workers, but often very poorly paid.

"And I'm also a firm believer that if you invest in a woman you are investing in a family and a community."

She has eighteen women working in her bakery. They come from Mexico, Bangladesh, Togo, Morocco, Haiti, and other places.

"A head baker in New York City can make up to sixty-five thousand dollars a year. We're hoping that within a few years our women will be headed toward head baker management track positions in the city."

The women who work and learn at the Hot Bread Kitchen are paid nine dollars an hour. They also receive health care and get English lessons two times each week. Fatiha Outabout is from Morocco.

"Before, I don't speak English...nothing. Just "Hi, bye, goodnight" ...that's it. But when I start to have class here, I'm speaking English little bit well."

The breads the women bake are sold to markets and expensive restaurants in New York City. Ms. Rodriguez says her business is the only bakery in the city that produces breads from so many different cultures.

“I like to say that we’re like the United Nations of breads.”

When asked Fatiha if the job was what she expected it would be, she smiled and said, “Yes.”

“So I love this program. We learn a lot of stuff. We work like a family.”

Experts say there are twenty to forty thousand lions in Africa. There are even more leopards. But, their numbers are sharply lower than they were 20 years ago. Now, Zambia has decided to act to slow the loss of these extraordinary animals. Caty Weaver tells us more.

In January, Zambia banned the hunting of lions and leopards in several areas. The country’s Tourism Minister Sylvia Masebo says Zambia has not fully profited from permitting hunting by visitors.

Ms. Masebo says a number of the parks have areas that private businesses pay to use for safari hunting operations. Recently the government advertised 19 game management areas for safari hunting. But Ms. Masebo says the process was marred by corruption.

The hunting ban covers those 19 areas. However, there are other national park areas where safari hunting will still be permitted. And Ms. Masebo says there is no ban on private game properties that are fenced and have the legal permits for hunting. But the surrounding community will now play a part in such operations.

“We need to ensure that the people that come from these areas must benefit. The government itself must benefit. The animals themselves must be protected.”

Gavin Robinson is chairman of the Professional Hunters Association of Zambia. He says the ban in the 19 areas means fewer jobs for professional hunters in Zambia. And he does not share the government’s concern about the lion population in the country.

“We have always looked after the remaining lion to ensure that we have lion for the following year. We as professional hunters are very involved in conservation.”

The ban in Zambia follows similar action in Botswana. That country announced last November that it would ban sport hunting in 2014. I'm Caty Weaver.

China has become a huge market for films. It is second only to North America. China is also extending its entertainment work with other countries. And this is changing the way the American film industry does business. Steve Ember has a front row seat.

A foreign army invaded the United States in last year's remake of the movie "Red Dawn." But the filmmakers changed the movie just before its release. The invaders had originally been Chinese soldiers. They became North Koreans. The "Red Dawn" filmmaker did not want to offend Chinese audiences or censors.

A team of censors in China watches movies to decide if they contain offensive material. The James Bond movie "Skyfall" had parts removed for that reason. And, the censors cut 40 minutes from the recent film "Cloud Atlas." Most of the scenes showed sex and violence. But, films also may be cut if they are judged critical of China or its government.

Stanley Rosen is a Chinese film and culture expert at the University of Southern California. He says Chinese censors also influenced other films, like the disaster story "2012."

"Even if you're not shooting in China, a film like '2012' will be very careful to include positive references to China. Negative references will simply kill the market."

Stanley Rosen says more Hollywood studios are finding Chinese partners for joint productions. Hollywood needs China because the North American market has not been strong, the professor believes. But, he says, China needs Hollywood as well.

I'm Steve Ember.

And that's AS IT IS for today. I'm Jim Tedder.

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