

*Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) 2020-2023 Performing & Visual Arts,
Afrocentric Literacy and Peace Education Programs*



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Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) Mission & Vision Statements

The Mission of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) is to promote Liberian/African arts and culture through the performing and visual arts and Afrocentric literacy. Its motto is to: “Educate and entertain through cultural awareness.”

The Vision of Dehkontee Artists Theatre is to establish a school of the performing and visual arts and Afrocentric literacy in Liberia and in the United States of America for the expanse of universal knowledge.



Original Dehkontee Artists Theatre in 1977

DATI was founded at the University of Liberia in 1977 by Dr. Joseph Gbaba and some conscientious university students who felt the dire need to promote Liberian arts and culture. Their aim was to create national consciousness and Pan Africanism through drama, music, dance, and literature. Dehkontee Artists Theatre’s debut/open house performance was held at the University of Liberia W.V. S. Tubman Hall Auditorium in 1977. The opening prayer for the historic event was conducted by Pastor Joseph Weah and the group performed excerpts from two Gbaba plays: “Love for Mymah” and “The Chains of Apartheid”.

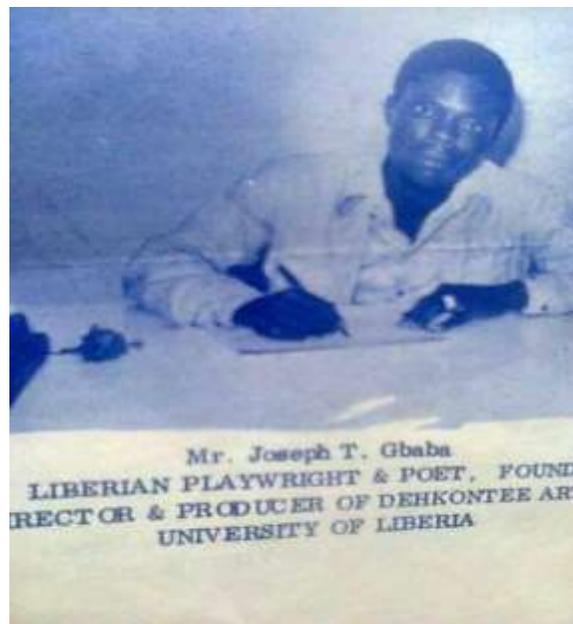


Many prominent Liberian citizens graced the open house performance with their presence, including but not limited to: Dr. Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, President of the University of

Liberia, Honorable Dr. Edward Beyan Kesselley, Jr., Minister of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism. Liberia's Deputy Minister for Culture and Tourism, Honorable Bai T. Moore was present as well to provide support and blessings to his mentee, the young playwright Joe Gbaba. Though not present at the open house, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh was a staunch supporter. He provided logistics to help Gbaba mount his theatrical productions. Tipoteh attended DATI's first public performance at the E. J. Roye Building Auditorium in December 1977.

Since its founding forty-three years ago, DATI has struggled to fulfill and maintain its mission in Liberia, on the continent of Africa, and in the diaspora. Over the span of four decades, Dehkontee Artists Theatre gained the recognition of renowned African leaders and diplomats from across the globe. The organization has to its credit numerous presidential, diplomatic, and public performances that have earned DATI national and international repute on the global cultural stage. All DATI's theatrical productions were written and directed and produced by Dr. Joe Gbaba, a Liberian American playwright, theatre director, actor, and Jesuit-trained educator and qualitative research scholar.

Some Literary Works Written, Directed & Produced by Playwright Dr. Joe Gbaba within the Span of 46 Years!



1. "Love for Mymah" (1977): An African romance drama between two Liberian royals.
2. "Chains of Apartheid" (1977): A drama depicting racial discrimination in South Africa.
3. "Kekula" (1977): A play promoting national integration and unity through intermarriage in Liberian society.
4. "No More Hard Times" (1977): Satire depicting socio-economic hardships of the masses.

5. “My Redeemer Liveth”: (1977): A play about conversion to Christianity.
6. “Chakla Wedding”: (1978): a comedy that ridicules unfaithful marriage/romantic relationships.
7. “The Disappointed Godma” (1977): Depicts relationships between young men and their older godmothers.
8. “Zon Ninneh Taryee” (1978): a traditional Liberian Krahn fable about a legendary Krahn warrior named Zon Ninneh Taryee.
9. “Gee, the Mighty Warrior-King” (1982): a ballad depicting traditional African warfare.
10. “The Resurrection” (1984): A story about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
11. “The Minstrel’s Tales”: (1987): A drama that promotes cultural awareness & national consciousness.
12. “Yah” (“Vision”) (1988): A story about the redemption of God’s chosen people.
13. “Town Trap” (1995): A drama about the planning and implementation of the Liberian Genocide.
14. “The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville” (2015): A drama depicting the importance of unity and making informed decisions at the polls.



L-R:DATI performing Joe Gbaba’s “The Frogs & Black Snake in Frogsville” at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts in Bowie, Maryland; on the right Dr. Joe Gbaba acting in his play, “Love for Mymah” at The Ibrahim Theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

15. “Mardea” (1996): A three-month radio drama series that educates and entertains Liberians and residents in Liberia about gender equity and women empowerment. The program reached an estimated population of over two hundred thousand people.

16. “Wheh-gba” (1996): Live traveling theatrical production that educates Liberians about HIV/AIDS & STDs prevention. It was performed in displaced persons centers and in several counties after the cessation of hostilities. The production was watched by more than one hundred thousand internally displaced people in Liberia during the period of gun violence.
17. “Road to Recovery” (1995): A one-year radio drama series that projects the various aspects of loss and grief and trauma healing. The production was played on national radio twice (ELBC) every week for fifty-two weeks. It reached a total population of over two million people!

Impact of DATI Cultural and Educational Programs in Africa and around the Globe



DATI’s 2nd Grand Patron & First Chief Sponsor (L-R: President William R. Tolbert, Jr., Republic of Liberia and DATI’s First Chief Sponsor, Dr. MacKinley A. Deshield, Jr., Former Dean, College of Agriculture & Forestry, University of Liberia).

Dehkontee Artists Theatre has made significant impact in the lives of millions of Liberians, Africans and citizens of the world with respect to fulfilling its mission and motto: to promote Liberian/African arts and culture through the performing and visual arts and Afrocentric literacy and to educate and entertain its audiences through cultural awareness. Further, DATI has made its presence felt both on the continent of Africa and in the diaspora (mainly in the United States of America). We hope to expand very soon our services to European nations like Germany, Holland, Belgium, England, France where many Liberian refugees reside through intergovernmental and non-governmental agency cooperation.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. uses the performing and visual arts and mass media (dance, music, drama, television, radio, local dailies, etc.) to convey very important political and economic messages to targeted audiences. The purpose is to help improve the lives of the people DATI serves. Hence, mainly, DATI strives to keep its audiences awake, using Peter Hanke's Volks Theater style to actively engage the audience as we educate and entertain them. Consequently, DATI's programs arouse the critical thinking faculties of its targeted audiences around the world so that they may step outside of their collective or individual closets. In addition, DATI's programs provide a conducive space where different cultural and political views can be shared to improve human relations across the globe.

Using Theatre Arts to Conscientize Citizens and Arouse Critical Thinking!

In the mid to latter part of the 70s DATI was actively involved in cultural reawakening. The organization featured theatrical productions that conscientized Liberians and foreign nationals residing in Liberia. For an example, DATI promoted African liberation, cultural awareness and national consciousness in Liberia and on the continent of Africa through drama, traditional Liberian music, songs and dance steps. The following Gbaba plays had great impact on the lives of the Liberian people. Gbaba's didactic and critical thinking Afrocentric style of writing and directing made Liberians to realize the power of the arts in conscientizing the citizenry. "No More Hard Times", "Chains of Apartheid", "Zon Ninneh Taryee", "Kekula", and "The Resurrection" are examples of the effect of the arts in changing the mindset of the citizens, thus effecting social and political change through the arts.

The theatrical productions mentioned supra were among the playwright's literary works that grew the organization's reputation as a renowned Liberian cultural institution. Through these theatrical productions the playwright discussed a wide range of socio-economic and political issues affecting Africans, Liberians, as well as issues related to interracial and cultural diversity among citizens of the world.

For an example, Gbaba wrote "The Chains of Apartheid" in support of President Tolbert's National Fund Drive for the Liberation of Southern Africa in the mid-70s. During this period several southern and southwestern African countries were struggling for their independence and liberation. The drama gained Dr. Gbaba international prominence when it was first staged at the E.J. Roye Building Auditorium in Monrovia in 1977. It was attended by some of Liberia's progressive personalities at the time, including Professor Dew Tuan Wleh Mayson and Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh (aka Rudolph Roberts). These were two top Liberian intellectuals who promulgated political and social change in the interest of the masses.

The following year (1978) DATI went on an international performance tour in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Dehkontee Artists Theatre performed at Fourah Bay College, and at the Freetown City Hall. Also, at the request of Sierra Leone's Acting President, First Vice-President S.I. Koroma, DATI held its first presidential and command performance on July 26, 1978 on Liberia's Independence Day, in the parlors of Sierra Leone's State House for all Sierra Leonean

government/cabinet ministers, and members of the diplomatic corps accredited near Freetown. Due to the vivid portrayal of the brutalities of Apartheid, the City Mayor of Freetown burst into tears during the performance at the State House. In the audience that day was His Excellency Dr. Joseph Morris, then Liberia's Ambassador accredited near Freetown.

So excited and proud of President Tolbert's "Precious Jewels", Ambassador Morris relayed to President Tolbert the good news about the youths of Liberia promoting Pan Africanism through the performing arts and soon the rest was history! A staunch supporter of Pan Africanism and African liberation, as well as fund lover of Liberian culture and youths whom he referred to as his "Precious Jewels", President Tolbert took it to the next level. He invited Gbaba and his crew to perform at the Executive Mansion Theatre on three separate occasions to perform Gbaba's "The Chains of Apartheid"!



Sierra Leone's First Vice-President S. I. Koroma (1978) DATI's First Grand Patron!

"No More Hard Times" depicts the socio-economic hardships of the underserved of the Liberian society, while "Kekula" promotes national integration and unity among all Liberians through intermarriage. "Zon Ninneh Taryee" is a true African/Liberian story about a legendary Krahn warrior named Zon Ninneh Taryee from the Ivory Coast. The play relays Zon Ninneh Taryee's odyssey, his battle feats and demise at the hands of formidable Liberian Krahn warriors the likes of Gahleh-Menyeah and Yanway Quaye. "The Resurrection" portrays the death and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. However, the production concept of the play is Afrocentric and creative. It intersperses traditional Liberian music and dance steps to make the story culturally meaningful and relevant for Liberian and African audiences, while teaching new theatrical production concepts for producers from around the world.

Showcasing Liberia's History and Culture to the World at Global Prestigious Performance Centers!



Dehkontee Artists Theatre performed at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington, D. C., July 13 & 14, 2017.

1. William V. S. Tubman Hall Auditorium, University of Liberia (1977,78)
2. E.J. Roye Building Auditorium (1977)
3. Parlors of the State House, Freetown, Sierra Leone under aegis of S.I. Koroma, First Vice President of Sierra Leone (July 26, 1978)
4. Fourah Bay College Auditorium (1978)
5. Freetown City Hall Auditorium (1978), Freetown, Sierra Leone
6. Executive Mansion Theatre (twice) under auspices of President William R. Tolbert, Jr. (1978,79)



Audience at the Smithsonian Institute during DATI's two-day performance in Washington, D.C.

7. Bong Mines Club House, Bong County (1978)
8. LAMCO-Buchanan Club House, Grand Bassa County (1984)
9. Aycock Auditorium, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA (1984)
10. Greensboro City Stage Events (African Marketplace) 1984
11. Calvary United Methodist Church Auditorium, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (2002)



L-R: Delivering a lecture on “The Art of the African Masquerade” Smithsonian Museum. Master traditional dance artists Komossa Bobo dancing her heart out and Dr. Gbaba with Dr. Johnetta Cole, outgoing Director of the African Museum.

12. St. Francis de Sales Auditorium, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (2003)
13. Allen Town Town Hall, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (2001)
14. St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A. (2001)
15. Republic of Liberia Chancery grounds, Washington, D.C. (2015)
16. Bowie Center for the Performing Arts (2016)
17. Robert Gray Elementary School (2016)
18. Apple Grove Elementary School (2016), Fort Washington, Maryland, U.S.A.
19. Pin Oak Village Old Folks Home (2017), Bowie, Maryland, U.S.A.
20. Smithsonian Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C. (2017)
21. African Cultural Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (2017)
22. The Ibrahim Theatre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (2018)
23. Francis J. Myers Recreation Center Gymnasium, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
24. PhillyCAM Television Studio (2019)
25. Providence Baptist Church Shrine, Monrovia, Liberia (November 19, 2019)
26. Harper City Hall, Maryland County, Republic of Liberia (November 22, 2019)

DATI's Contributions towards the Liberian Peace Process: Using Culture to Build Diplomatic Bridges and Communications (1992-1997)



Dr. Gbaba and U.S. Ambassador Peter Jon de Vos accredited near Monrovia (1992)

Dehkontee Artists Theatre used the power of the arts to promote nonviolence, disarmament, peace and reconciliation and to de-traumatize genocide-afflicted Liberian and foreign victims. The organization also extended its partnership with diplomatic missions and international nongovernmental agencies to help restore civility to the Liberian society through its trauma-healing programs. Between the years 1992-1997 during cessation of hostilities, Dr. Gbaba reorganized Dehkontee Artists Theatre with the help of some conscientious and patriotic Liberians who were willing to risk their lives to promote peace and reconciliation through live drama, music, and dance performances. Due to the destruction of many public buildings, DATI held rehearsals and public performances at the historic Centennial Memorial Pavilion. Later, DATI was duly incorporated as a nonprofit organization under the Liberian nonprofit laws as a nongovernmental organization (NGO).



Members of the international and diplomatic community at DAT's post-genocide theatrical production of "The Minstrel's Tales" production at the historic Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia. In front role (r-l: U.S. Ambassador & Mrs. de Vos, Nigerian Ambassador & Mrs. Ayo Ajaikeye, and members of the Nigerian Chancery in Monrovia (1992)

During this timeframe, DATI served as a non-governmental implementing agency for the United Nations Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) in Liberia. Dr. Gbaba also served as local

consultant to UNICEF and he helped to organize the UNICEF/DATI Kukatonon Peaceful Conflict Resolution Project. It consisted of one-week peace education workshops for schoolteachers, educational leaders and local government officials around Liberia. The project also included a children's peace theatre comprising of children between the ages eight to thirteen. They performed live theatrical performances through songs, dance, and drama.

The UNICEF/DATI Kukatonon Children's Peace Theatre was a dazzling sight to watch as the kids used drama, music, dance to appeal to child soldiers their age group and combatants to disarm. The project was successful because it used children who were victims of the Liberian conflict to mediate peace and disarmament. Consequently, hundreds of child soldiers laid down their weapons to return to normal civilian life.

Other projects DATI implemented for UNICEF included "Mardea", a radio drama series that promotes gender equity and women empowerment and "Wheh-gba", a live traveling theatre production that educates Liberians on prevention of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. The production was performed in various counties and displaced persons centers around Liberia and it reached an estimated one hundred and fifty thousand people.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre also undertook some projects for the United Nations Military Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) and the World Health Organization (WHO) but they were not successfully implemented due to on-and-off hostilities during that time frame. The unfinished dramas were: "Borh-fun-fuenh" (Kru expression meaning, "Stop fighting") and "Basic Health Care".

One of DATI's post-conflict radio drama series was "Road to Recovery", a play that provides war trauma counselling, healing and reconciliation through drama. The series consisted of fifty-two episodes that were played twice a week for one entire year! It reached an estimated population of two million people. "Road to Recovery" was a collaborative effort between DATI and the Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL).

Establishment of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. USA Chapter



Dehkontee Artists Theatre was first organized in the United States of America on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1982. It coincided with Dr. Gbaba's sojourn at that American institution to pursue his MFA in Directing and Acting from the prestigious UNC-G School of Theatre. Upon graduation Dr. Gbaba returned to Liberia and happily married Lady Ariminta Porte on November 19, 1983. He taught at several institutions of higher learning

and some secondary schools such as Cuttington University, the University of Liberia, served as Principal of the Zwedru Multilateral High School, and taught at College of West Africa (CWA) and St. Teresa's Convent, respectively. Dr. Gbaba briefly served as Acting Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Liberia in the Interim Government of National Unity before going into private practice as Executive Director and Founder of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc.



Prince Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh & Princess Ariminta Gbaba on their wedding day at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Gbarnga, Bong County, Liberia, November 19, 1983. The union is blessed with five children and nine grandchildren. The wedding between the royal couple is symbolic and controversial. Gbaba is from a royal indigenous Liberian family and his wife, Princess Ariminta is an Americo-Liberian descendant from the Porte family of Crozierville. Hence, their children and grandchildren are regarded as the core-lineage of the Liberian society. The couple have been married thirty-seven years which proves sociologically that with love and understanding both "Congaus" and "Country" Liberians can live together in peace and harmony. Thus, the couple are proponents of national unity and the Liberian peace process.

Gbaba sought political asylum in the United States in 1997 due to political reasons. He reorganized Dehkontee Artists theatre as a nonprofit 501 ©(3) educational and cultural organization in 1992 in the City of Philadelphia. Hence, the United States Chapter serves as the headquarters of all DATI operations across the globe. Some of the major events the USA Chapter implemented include: 1. Performance at the Liberian Chancery in Washington, D.C. in celebration of Liberia's Independence Day in 2015; 2. Production of Gbaba's "The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts"; 3. DATI's 40th Anniversary celebration in 2017 at the African Cultural Center 4. Celebration of DATI's 41st Anniversary at The Ibrahim Theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 5. Conducting a couple of community engagement events at Francis J. Myers Recreation Center in Southwest Philadelphia; and 6. Collaborative projects with PhillyCAM and producing "Love for Mymah" on community TV for the entertainment of Philadelphia residents. Since the establishment of DATI USA Chapter until now, Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) has been one of the beacons of African history and culture through the performing and visual arts in the diaspora and in the United States of America.

Promoting African Cultural Heritage and Production of Culturally Relevant Curriculum and Textbook for Children of Color in Schools and Communities

The institutionalization of African history and culture is very significant for the onward transmission of cultural and historical knowledge from one generation to another. This process can be enhanced through educational and cultural research, as well as the establishment of cultural institutions to preserve our history and culture. Our African cultural heritage can be further enhanced through the development and production of culturally relevant curriculum and textbooks to suit the learning needs of diverse learners. This advocacy is especially relevant for children whose cultures and histories are marginalized in mainstream curriculums across the globe. For example, Dr. Gbaba's doctoral dissertation and qualitative research study entitled, ***"The Chiandeh Afrocentric Curriculum and Textbook Experience: Exploring Children's Responses to an Afrocentric Curriculum"***, addresses the need to create a culturally relevant curriculum and produce culturally relevant textbooks that address the teaching and learning needs of children of color. It also advocates the immersion of African-centered materials in mainstream curriculums around the world to diversity teaching and learning for all learners globally.



One of DATI's target populations are children and youths. We consciously attempt to reach children and youths around the world to teach them the precepts of African culture and history to promote cultural diversity and improve human relations across the globe.

As part of its outreach and community engagement strategy, DATI visits local schools and communities in various parts of the United States including Pennsylvania and Maryland, respectively, to promote, educate, and entertain diverse populations (particularly children and youths), and peoples of all ages and races, about the history and culture of Africa. Consequently, DATI-USA has performed several Gbaba plays at numerous prestigious performance halls across the United States with the aim to both educate and entertain its audiences and at the same time reduce racial and cultural prejudice in society. Some Key DATI-USA productions in the United States include, "Town Trap" (staged at the Calvary United Methodist Church auditorium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), "The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville" was staged at the Bowie Center for the Performing arts in Maryland, U.S.A., and "Love for Mymah" was produced at The Ibrahim Theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Scenes from Joe Gbaba’s “The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville” at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts, Bowie, Maryland, U.S.A. January 9, 2016.

Other performance spaces include, St. Francis de Sales Auditorium, the grounds of the Liberian Chancery during the July 26 Independence Day ceremonies in 2015 in Washington, D.C., and at Pin Oak Village Old Folks Home, Bowie, Maryland. DATI also performed at Robert Gray Elementary School, Apple Grove Elementary School, African Cultural Center, and in PhillyCAM Television Studio in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dehkontee Artists Theatre-USA is also focused on gun violence prevention through its production called “Storms of Violence”. This year DATI will collaborate with the Philadelphia Cultural Fund to promote cultural diversity and gun violence prevention programs in the City of Brotherly Love.



In 2017-2018, Dr. Gbaba was recipient of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Traditional Folk-Art Program as Master Artist and mentor to Apprentice Saigay Sheriff. The project included Dr. Gbaba teaching his mentee traditional African fireside storytelling techniques as a way of transmitting traditional Liberian and African cultural beliefs and customs to younger generations of Africans and Liberians. DATI also began its gun violence prevention program in 2019 with the production of an excerpt of “Storms of Violence” during its community engagement programs at the Myers Recreation Center in Southwest Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The gun violence prevention program is in support of Philadelphia City Mayor’s campaign against gun violence in Philadelphia. It aims to help create a safe environment and permanency for Philadelphia’s children and their families.



DATI-USA in PhillyCAM studio on left and on right DATI's "Love for Mymah production at The Ibrahim Theatre at the International House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Establishment of DATI Chapters in Liberia: Using Liberian College Youths as Peace Advocates to Resolve the Liberian Crisis



Montserrado (Dougbor) Chapter on the left comprise of various universities in Southcentral Liberia while the Maryland (Gbenlue) Chapter comprises students of Tubman University in Southeastern Liberia.

In 2019 it became apparent that there was an acute need to promote peace and reconciliation in Liberia due to mounting political tensions. Also, the change of regime and the withdrawal of the international peace negotiators created a vacuum that needed to be immediately filled by Liberians themselves. Dr. Joe Gbaba consulted with DATI-USA Board of Directors and received the Board's consent to expand DATI's peace and cultural programs to Liberia. Consequently, he approached four young college students in Liberia to take on the herculean task to establish a DATI chapter in Montserrado County, Liberia.

The purpose was to recruit patriotic college students who would be willing to volunteer their services to their native land and fellow compatriots as DATI Peace Advocates. Also, another reason for recruiting college students to serve as Peace Advocates is because most combatants during the Liberian conflict were children and youths between the ages of eight to sixteen who were forcibly conscripted by Liberian warlords and politicians to fight the politicians' political battle to regain political power and wealth in Liberia. Hence, it was in place to actively engage and empower Liberian college youths to work towards securing a safe environment for themselves and to become forerunners of their own destiny.



Thus, the daunting task was cast upon Hillaryson Soe, Jr., Henry Garjay Brumskine, Albert Ninneh and Roland Yowah. It was also spelled out that the formation of DATI in post-conflict Liberia should be culturally and ethnically inclusive and diverse to reflect the varied populations and ethnicities of Liberia. The youths were also asked to select their own leaders and to establish a governance structure that was suitable for them. Roland Yowah was selected from among his peers as Country Representative, Hillaryson Soe as Regional Director for Southcentral, Western, and Northern Liberia, Henry Garjay Brumskine as County Director of Montserrado and Grand Bassa Counties, and Albert T. Ninneh, Jr. as DATI's National Secretary General. Initially, roughly twenty students responded positively to the concept of launching a peace initiative to prevent violence in Liberia. However, before a year's time that number has soared to more than one hundred and twenty-five DATI volunteers and Peace Advocates.



Maryland (Gbenelue) Chapter

While the youths in Montserrado were making progress to get organized Executive Director Gbaba contacted his former student Jerry Michael Mwangbe, an Assistant Professor at Tubman University, to explore the possibility of establishing another DATI chapter in Maryland County, Southeastern Liberia. Dr. Gbaba also contacted a student leader at Tubman University named Meshach Elliott and the youth warmly embraced Dr. Gbaba's proposal.



Again, the students were asked to elect their own officers and set up their own governance structure. The following persons were elected from among the Gbenelue Chapter Cohort I recruit: Jerry Michael Mwangbe, Regional Director for Southeastern Liberia, Meshach Sieh Elliott, Director for Gbenelue Chapter, Antonio Leroy Nimely, General Secretary, and Philomena Arkue, Treasurer. Other Gbenelue Chapter's officers include Johanna Sackey, Deputy Director for Administration and Melvin Seh, Deputy Director for Operations. Initially, thirty students signed up and the DATI Kukatonon Peacebuilding initiative began in Southeastern Liberia. Thus, today, there are three unique Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. chapters: DATI-USA Chapter, DATI Montserrado Dougbor Chapter, and DATI Maryland Gbenelue Chapter.

DATI Peace Advocate Virtual (Online) 2 ½ Months Training



The DATI Peace Advocate virtual training program lasts for two and a half months. Its theoretical framework is based on Pan African philosophy of African unity and on the notion of Africa for Africans and Liberia for Liberians. The fundamental objective of the training is to create cultural awareness and national consciousness among trainees and to approach peacebuilding from the African and Liberian cultural perspective. Hence, at the center of the training is the Kukatonon Theoretical Framework. The word “Kukatonon” derives from the Kpelleh language of Liberia. It means, “We are one.” Thus, there are four basic components of

the training which aims to create a balanced culturally relevant peace diet for DATI trainees. The basic training components include:

1. ***The Kukatonon Theoretical Framework*** is based on Pan African philosophy and several postmodern learning theories: constructivism, multiculturalism, Critical Learning Theories, and ideological literacies. Combined, these multiple concepts and theories serve as guides to DATI Peace Advocates. The postmodern theories may help all Africans and Liberians in general, to develop the level of consciousness Africans and DATI's Peace Advocates need to make sacrifices for their country and people. The Kukatonon Theoretical Framework provides trainees the impetus to stand up for justice and rule of law and to respect constituted authorities and promote national unity through Liberia's diverse cultures. The training also aims to instill discipline and love for country and culture within participants so that they may preserve their common patrimony through the performing and visual arts and Afrocentric literacy.
2. ***Brief History about Liberia and its cultural and ethnic backgrounds*** provides trainees the knowledge they need to promote the "Kukatonon" concept of oneness and national unity. This segment of the training helps to situate every trainee within his or her cultural heritage and context and to help trainees understand some of the root causes of the Liberian conflict so that they may be in better positions to mediate as DATI Peace Advocates.
3. ***The Trainee's Individual Genocide Experience***: Each trainee is required to provide his genocide experience and the impact the conflict has had on his or her life. Trainees are also assured that information released will be held confidential. However, the purpose for granting trainees an opportunity to vent out their frustrations, is to help them gain closure to their war traumas by expressing their feelings about the Liberian genocide and resolving to put an end to impunity and the travesty of justice in post-conflict Liberian society.
4. ***Trainees' Cultural Heritage***: Trainees are required to write a paper on their cultural, ethnic and family backgrounds and to relate their background to the overall cultural matrix of Liberia and how they can use their cultural composition to help resolve the Liberian conflict peacefully and culturally.

DATI Playwright Training and Writers' Workshop and Afrocentric Literacy Program



Three of DATI's first playwright trainees: (L-R) Statesmen Alfred Nugba, Albert Ninneh, Jeremiah Claya.

Due to the high illiteracy rate in Liberia, DATI Management realizes that there is a dire need to include in its peacebuilding program literacy activities that will assist DATI Peace Advocates to improve their communications skills in writing and speech so that they may be effective communicators. The program is also intended to assist beneficiaries of our peacebuilding activities who would like to learn how to read and write, speak and understand the English language that is the lingua franca of Liberia. Also, due to the disruption of educational activities in Liberia during the drawn-out periods of hostilities many Liberian youths received inadequate academic instructions and one of them is lack of proper communications skills. Hence, there is a need to teach remedial English courses to help our youths catch up on some of the basic grammar and composition lessons they missed during their elementary and high school education. The same applies to millions of students in the United States who cannot conjugate their verbs correctly.

The DATI Playwright Training and Writers' Workshop is a one-month program. By attending this online class, trainees or DATI Peace Advocates who are interested in improving their communications skills may have an opportunity to learn basic grammar, and acquire basic literacy skills in reading, spelling, speech, pronunciation and composition. Those in the playwright training stream learn how to transcribe traditional fireside stories or fables into plays. They learn basic knowledge about theatre arts and management so that they can write, direct, produce their own plays and contribute towards the production of culturally relevant literature that can be used in Liberian and American schools.

DATI's Visual Arts Program in Collaboration with PhillyCAM to Produce TV Productions



Dr. Gbaba chatting in PhillyCAM TV studio with two PhillyCAM personnel in preparation for the live TV production of “Love for Mymah” on Friday, February 1st, 2019. The production aired every week throughout the Black History Month.

DATI's visual arts program is a significant component of the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia. It may enhance our peacebuilding efforts in areas we are unable to reach physically. Our peace messages contain in our films, videos, photographs, paintings, and drawings will capture and present the landscape, events, and circumstances we want to relay to the people. Subsequently, these documents can be shared with libraries, museums and institutions of learning in Liberia and across the globe to enhance research and universal teaching and learning experiences.

To achieve this goal, DATI collaborates with an organization in Philadelphia called PhillyCAM, an acronym for “Philadelphia Community Access Media”. As a member organization of PhillyCAM, DATI personnel are entitled to attend any PhillyCAM training classes and use its equipment to film, video and audio record, etc. DATI also has an awesome professional videographer and webmaster, Mr. Harrison Jiedueh who has a wealth of experience in videography. He is also an accomplished world class painter and artist and a long-standing member of DATI's Board of Directors! Mr. Jiedueh possesses the technical know-how to run DATI's Visual Arts Program successfully and to help DATI implement the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia. Through his prowess, the management of DATI hopes to produce Liberian and African movies, videos, documentaries, and to conduct research, promote cultural diversity and tolerance and universal understanding among mankind.

Further, filming and video recording our peacebuilding activities may help us reach thousands of people at one time than live appearances can. They can be used to teach civic and voter's education to electorates across the country. Also, other visual art forms like paintings and drawings are significant because they may provide illustrations, picturesque sceneries of the different landscapes of Liberia and reflect events and circumstances that occurred during the Liberian conflict. The paintings and drawings can also be used in the production of culturally relevant textbooks for Liberian schools and other institutions around the world.

DATI Agricultural and Healthcare Programs



DATI Farm Manager Fawen Varmah and County Director Henry Brumskine doing soil testing and agro-reconnaissance survey at the proposed DATI Farmland.



DATI needs Farm Trucks to successfully implement its agricultural projects in Cape Palmas, Monrovia, and Voinjama.

Many DATI Peace Advocates and trainees are Agriculture, Public Health, and Civil Engineering majors. Several of them have earned their degrees in Agriculture while others are still studying and may be completing their studies soon. The same applies to some of our Peace Advocates who majored in Biology and Chemistry with the aim of going to medical college soon. In addition, there are some Peace Advocates and trainees who are majoring in Public Health. Though we do not have the funding to undertake these programs, the Management of DATI believes that it is expedient to be proactive and to begin to discuss how DATI can garner the requisite funding and

logistical supports to help these gifted Liberian youths who have ambitions to become medical doctors, public health professionals and hopefully future farmers of Liberia. They also need scholarships to further their studies and to eventually qualify to give back to their country.

We also believe that the promotion of peace and national unity can be more effective when the population is able to feed itself and if there are better health facilities available to keep everyone healthy and agile. Another reason for adding this program is that most Liberian youths earn their college degrees but soon end up idling their time away doing nothing with their college degrees due to the lack of job opportunities or employment. Thus, we have determined to establish a DATI Farm so that those who are Agriculture majors may have an opportunity to put into use what they have learned.

Also, our farm project will be used as a teaching opportunity for our Peace Advocates who are Agriculture majors to conduct workshops for elementary and high school youths who may be interested in the field of Agriculture to grow our own foods. Further, crops grown from DATI' farm project may be sold to the public to raise funds to sustain the agriculture program. The same applies to our Public Health majors and those who would like to become medical doctors. We would like to establish a mini clinic with the help of a couple of medical doctors so that DATI Peace Advocates who are healthcare majors or those who want to become medical doctors may begin to gain practical experience in their respective fields while they are studying and after they have completed their studies.

Urgent Need for Logistical Supports for the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia



DATI needs two buses for now to commence its nationwide peace tour.

To effectively carry out the Dehkontee Artists Theatre Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia, here are some basic logistics that are needed. It is our hope that donors reading this brochure can donate one or two or more of the items we need to jumpstart the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia.

1. ***National Headquarters & Local Office Space for Administrative, Educational & Cultural Purposes***



Proposed DATI office site in Paynesville, Montserrado County

we have found a very spacious compound on Duport Road in Paynesville, Montserrado that is suitable for the types of business we do. The property has several rooms that can be used for offices, conference room, meetings and for training workshops. There is a spacious yard where we can rehearse our productions and entertain the public, with enough room for parking etc. We have been requested to sign a two-year lease at the cost of Six Thousand United States Dollars (\$6,000).

2. ***Office Equipment, Furniture:*** desktop computers, laptops, printers, scanners, fax machines, telephones, TV, internet facilities, communication devices, stationery, etc.
3. ***Operational Budget:*** to effectively implement and sustain the goal of DATI Kukatonon Peace Project, pay corporate bills such as internet, electricity, occupancy, salaries, repairs, maintenance
4. ***Transportation:*** Transportation is very crucial for the success of our peacebuilding program. Presently, we have over one hundred and twenty-five Peace Advocates, and applicants and trainees and the numbers are still increasing exponentially. There are two more chapters in the making: one in Kakata, Margibi County and one in Voinjama, Lofa County. When added to the number we have already, our total strength may add up to two hundred Peace Advocates. And, based on the logistical supports we receive soon, there will be a need to establish a DATI

chapter in all fifteen counties. The bulk of our peacebuilding activities require DATI Peace Advocates to travel from county to county.

Presently, our Chief Sponsor, Honorable Herbie McCauley, has offered to provide temporary transportation for us to jumpstart the DATI Kukatonon National Peace Tour beginning in March through May during the Dry Season period. However, as a nonprofit educational and cultural organization we will need vehicles of our own because our operations are not only confined to peace tours but we will be engaged in other day-to-day activities that border on maintaining peace in the country such as conducting peace education literacy workshops in urban and rural areas, providing Liberians civic and voters' education, and transporting DATI Peace Advocates to and from their classes, etc. Against this backdrop, we will need at least:

- a. two twenty-four-seater buses, one for the Montserrado Chapter and one for the Maryland Chapter in Southeastern Liberia.
- b. Two four-wheel-drive pickups for our agricultural projects and to transport our props and production materials when we go on our peace performance tours.

How to Donate to Dehkontee Artists Theatre Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia

Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) is a 501©(3) nonprofit African-centered cultural and educational organization. Any donations made to DATI are tax-deductible. Here are ways through which you can donate to help us sustain our peace project in war-torn Liberia.

1. Via mail: Make check or money order payable to:
Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc.
P. O. Box 143
Clifton Heights, PA 19018
2. Via DATI's website: <https://www.dehkonteeartiststheatreinc.com> and click on the "Donate" icon to make your donation.
3. Via our Wellsfargo Checking Account #: 3931972677; Routing Number: 055003201; Routing Number for wire transfer: 121000248

Contact Phone Number: (267) 973-1709

Dehkontee Artists Theatre Boards of Directors and Local & International Staff

Dehkontee Artists Theatre Administration (USA)

Dr. Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Ed. D.
Executive Director & Founder

Andre Minkins, BFA, MFA
Assistant Director, Operations

Timothy Gardiner
Administrative Assistant & Chairman, Board of Directors

Mrs. Julia Cooper-Grear, MBA, CPA
Business Manager

Mrs. Ariminta H. Gbaba, B.A., M.S.
Secretary to the Board of Directors, U.S.A.

Harrison Jiedueh, MA
Webmaster, Scenic Designer, Videographer

Kormassa Bobo
Traditional Dance Instructor

Saigay Sheriff, B.A.
Culinary Arts/Hospitality Manager

Lars Tomo McCritty
Stage Manager

Zeze Konie
Assistant Videographer

Sianei Jackson
Public Relations

Hawa Porte-Quaye
Props Manager

Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc.(DATI) USA Board of Directors

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William Deiyon Towah, Ph.D.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) Republic of Liberia Administration

Jerry Michael Mwangbe, MA
Regional Director, Southeastern Liberia

Hillaryson Soe, Jr.
Regional Director, Southcentral, Northern, & Western Liberia

Albert Ninneh, Jr.
National Secretary General & Youth Representative
Kukatonon Peace & Reconciliation Initiative, Inc. (KPRI)

Hawa Promise Guwor, B.B.A.
Assistant National Secretary General

Officers of Montserrado (Dougbor) Chapter

Henry Garjay Brumskine
Director, Montserrado & Grand Bassa Counties

Henry Fayiah Tamba
Assistant Director for Administration

Precious A.S. Sampson
Assistant Director for Operations

Grace Kiazolu-Ninneh
Treasurer

Fawen Varmah
DATI Dougbor Farm Manager

Roland Yowah, B.Sc.
Director of Health Services

Officers of Maryland (Gbenelue) Chapter

Meshach Sieh Elliott
Director, Maryland County

Johanna Sackey
Assistant Director for Administration, Maryland Gbenelue Chapter

Melvin S. Nugba
Deputy Director for Operations, Maryland Gbenelue Chapter

Antonio Leroy Nimely
General Secretary, Maryland Gbenelue Chapter

Philomena Arkue
Treasurer, Maryland Gbenelue Chapter

Jasper Sheriff Biohtweh Tweh, B.Sc.
DATI Gbenelue Farm Manager

Official DATI Rooster (February 2020)

DATI U.S.A. Chapter

Dr. Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Executive Director & Founder
Andre Minkins, MFA, Assistant Director
Ariminta H. Gbaba, M.S., Box Office Manager
Lars Tomo McCritty, Stage Manager
Kormassa Bobo, Traditional Dance Artist
Zeze Konie, Assistant Videographer
Siane Jackson, Public Relations
Saigay Sheriff, B.A., Culinary Art & Hospitality Manager
Harrison Jiedueh, M.A., Videographer & Scenic Designer
Hawa Quaye, Props Manager
Assuamane Silla, Traditional African Dance Artist
Prince Julian Gbaba
Jacques Gbaba
Jaeden Gbaba
Journey Gbaba
McKenzy Gbaba
Jade Gbaba

DATI Montserrat (Dougbor) Chapter

Mapoe Wogbeh	A	Magna Cum Laude	Nimba	Mano
Moore Kollie Haba	B+	Cum Laude	Lofa	Kpelleh
Edwin Dormie	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Nimba	Mano
Shak Fawen Varmah	A	Magna Cum Laude	Lofa	Lorma
Hillaryson N. Soe	A	Magna Cum Laude	Grand Gedeh	Krahn
Grace Kiazolu-Ninneh	B	Honorable	Grand Cape Mount	Vai
Abraham F. J. Fokoe	A	Magna Cum Laude	Lofa	Kissi
Faith Dokpah	B	Honorable	Nimba	Mano
Henry Garjay Brumskine	A	Summa Cum Laude	Grand Bassa	Bassa
Jeanelle Paye	A	Cum Laude	Nimba	Mano
Hawa P. Guwor	B+	Cum Laude	Lofa	Lorma
Henry F. Tamba	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Lofa	Kissi
Ali G. Tuweh	A+	Summa Cum Laude	River Gee	Grebo
Albert T. Ninneh	A	Cum Laude	Grand Gedeh	Krahn
Lamine T. J. Munyah	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Lofa	Kissi
Jerry Kandaika	B+	Honorable	Lofa	Kissi
Roland Yowah	A	Magna Cum Laude	Nimba	Mano
Matina Walley	A	Magna Cum Laude	River Cess County	Bassa
Precious Sampson	A	Magna Cum Laude	River Gee County	Grebo

DATI Maryland (Gbenelue) Chapter

Name	Final Grade	Ranking	County	Ethnicity
Siafa Joseph Phillips	A	Cum Laude	Lofa	Kissi
Leroy Antonio Nimely	B+	Cum Laude	Grand Kru	Kru
Anthony C. Kwarbo	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Edith Komo Neufville	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Aaron K. Cabbage Massaquoi	A	Cum Laude	Lofa	Kissi
Alfred J.K. Nugba	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Grand Kru	Kru
Melvin S. Nugba	A	Magna Cum Laude	Grand Kru	Kru
Sylvester O. Charlie	A	Cum Laude	Lofa	Kissi
Jeanet G. Toe	A	Cum Laude	River Gee	Grebo
Philomena Arkue	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Lofa/Maryland	Lorma/Grebo
Meshach Sieh Elliott	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Jeremiah M. Clayea	A	Cum Laude	River Gee	Grebo
Alphonso Nah	C+	Honorable	Grand Kru	Kru
Morris Bannie Blanyon	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Johanna Sackey	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Daniel Seatine	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Mano
Emmanuel Dio Elliott	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Jonathan Moses	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Alice Kidio	B+	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Rufus Tokpah Myers	A	Cum Laude	Bong	Kpelle
Wah Woart, Jr.	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Emmanuel G. Howe	A	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
J. Sheriff B. Tweh, B.Sc.	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Jackson Wleh Williams, Jr., B.Sc.	A+	Cum Laude	Maryland	Grebo
Oliver Garlo	A+	Summa Cum Laude	Grand Gedeh	Krahn