

***Dehkontee Artists Theatre Celebrates 44th Anniversary This Year: Prioritizes Revival of Stalled Liberian Peace Process!***



Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. celebrates its 44th Anniversary this year. Funny how time flies! [Congratulations](#) to all those who helped to keep DATI afloat for the past four decades plus!

This report is designed to give readers and donors a glimpse of what is trending in Liberia with respect to the revival of the stalled Liberian peace process. The peace process is being resuscitated through grassroots [efforts](#) initiated by Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) and Liberians both at home and in the diaspora. We are also receiving a growing number of supports from African Americans in the United States of America and from Liberian citizens from various ethnic groups.



***DATI Gbenelue Chapter***

The report also contains statistical information about our donors, who they are and where they are from. It as well provides information about the youths and active participants that run the project, and, it gives a brief description of their academic performance as DATI Peace Advocates

and victims and survivors of the Liberian genocide. We also provide a synopsis of the theoretical framework upon which our project is founded so readers and donors will better understand our philosophical leaning as a peacebuilding project.



*DATI Dougbor Chapter*

Our decision to provide this update is informed by the fact that too many Liberians are misinformed about how to promote peace and social justice across Liberia. Most Liberians are made to believing or thinking that being mute about what took place will make the ugly memories they experienced go away. Even some Liberians in government do not see the need to provide rehabilitative or any type of socio-therapeutic services to address the needs of traumatized genocide victims and survivors. They are also the key proponents of the “Let bygones be bygones” fiasco to evade prosecution of Liberian warlords and economic criminals.



Sadly, all that governments that were instituted after the cessation of hostilities have focused on is their exploitative agendas to keep post-genocide Liberian citizens perpetually subdued and held hostage, while they plunder the meager resources of Liberia. Against this backdrop, attempts made through the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), to restore rule of law and reinstitute accountability in post-genocide Liberian society, are continually crushed by the Liberian Legislature and the Executive branch of the Liberian government.

The TRC recommendations that were submitted to the Liberian Legislature in December 2009 called for the establishment of a war crimes court and banning of corrupt and troublesome politicians from participating in politics for thirty years. In response, Liberian politicians and lawmakers defied the mandate of the electorates. Politicians that were banned resisted the

mandate. Liberian legislators, some of whom were themselves accused of abetting the insurrection that led to the deaths of a quarter million people, threw the TRC document in dustbins at the Capitol Building. In addition, both the Executive and Legislative branches surreptitiously designed a huge salary scheme to hush Liberian lawmakers to preach the “let bygones be bygones” adage, instead of implementing the TRC recommendations.



*H.E. George Manning Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia*

Since then, succeeding post-genocide Liberian governments, including the Weah government, continue to suppress the establishment of a war and economic crimes tribunal in Liberia. For an example, Weah vowed to protect Liberian warlords, including former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who helped to finance the insurrection that led to the deaths of a quarter million people.



*Liberia's outstanding traditional master dance artists Kormassa Bobo teaching dance lessons at the Smithsonian Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.*

In view of the foregoing, DATI Kukatonon Peace Project is designed to help revive and successfully implement the stalled Liberian peace process by actively engaging and educating Liberians on peaceful ways they can attain sustainable peace, including but not limited to the provision of civic education, creating cultural awareness and introducing mass literacy to keep the Liberian people informed. The project also employs the performing and visual arts and literacy module as conduits to promote peace, reconciliation and rule of law in post-genocide society.

***What Do the Words “Dehkontee” and “Kukatonon” Mean?***



***The original Dehkontee Artists Theatre members at the [University of Liberia](#) forty-four years ago!***

The traditional Liberian terms “Dehkontee” and “Kukatonon” that drive our peacebuilding program derive from the Kwa and Mande linguistic clusters of languages in Liberia and West Africa. “Dehkontee” means, “There is time for everything” in various Kwa languages of Liberia (Krahn, Kru, Grebo, Bassa).



***Rabbi Prince Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba during his student days at the University of Liberia forty-four years ago.***

Dehkontee Artists Theatre was founded at the University of Liberia forty-four years ago by Liberian playwright and theatre icon, Dr. Joe Gbaba and his colleagues at the University of Liberia. Some of DATI founding members include the following personalities: Joshua Howard, Kathy Lokko, Mona Bedell, Claude Langley, Melvin Smith, Bill Ross, III, Josephine Ross, Christopher Diggs, Henrique Scott, Nathaniel Doe, Raymond Kromah, Christian Fenning, etc. The mission of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. is to promote Liberian and African arts and culture globally through the performing and visual arts and Afrocentric literacy and by using dance, music, theatre, literacy, and civic education to transmit our peace messages. Our vision is

to establish a school of the performing and visual arts in the United and in the Republic of Liberia.

This year, DATI celebrates its 44th Anniversary as a citadel for the preservation of Liberian history and culture through the performing and visual arts. Dehkontee Artists Theatre was once a household word during the Tolbert administration in the late 1970s. The group has to its [credit](#) several presidential (Executive Mansion and State House) and diplomatic performances featuring major literary works of Dr. Joe Gbaba affectionately pen-named “Liberia’s Shakespeare”. Some of his outstanding plays include: “Chains of Apartheid”, “No More Hard Times”, “The Minstrel’s Tales”, “Town Trap”, and “Zon Ninneh Taryee”, to name a few.



“Kukatonon” means “We are one”. It is a Kpelle expression. The Kpelle language falls within the Mande linguistic cluster of Liberia and West Africa (Lorma, Kpelle, Mahn, Dahn, Mandingo, Kissi, Bandi, Vai). The expression “Kukatonon” was chosen as a theme to stress the need for oneness after several decades of bloodletting in Liberia. However, as a research project, the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project’s theoretical underpinnings are pivoted on Pan African philosophy, findings of Dr. Joe Gbaba’s doctoral dissertation and qualitative research study titled, *“The Chiandeh Afrocentric Curriculum and Textbook Experience: Exploring Children’s Responses to an Afrocentric Curriculum”*, as well as postmodern theoretical frameworks such as constructivism, multiculturalism, equity pedagogy, and the democratic principles of inclusion.

DATI’s Kukatonon Peace Project also focuses on teaching and learning, using the “Chiandeh Afrocentric and qualitative research methods to address the Liberian genocide from the cultural and theoretical perspectives. DATI also provides manpower development training in the areas of peaceful conflict resolution, reading and writing and speech exercises to better equip DATI Peace Advocates with peacebuilding and communications skills.



*Teaching children of African descent about their history and culture is centerpiece of the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia and in the diaspora.*



*As part of their training DATI Gbenelue Chapter members paid a courtesy call on their traditional elders in Gbenelue as part of their field trip before they were sworn in as DATI Peace Advocates. This is done to connect the youths with their traditional elders and to help them appreciate where they come from.*



*Members of the Montserrado Dougbor Chapter visited the elders of Barnersville, Kebbah in Montserrado County as part of their field trip before graduation.*

DATI Peace Advocates were well vetted before being admitted to participating in a rigorous two-month training in peace education, behavior modification, cultural studies and communications. They also took a field trip to a traditional Liberian village to meet and interact with traditional Liberian elders to gain more knowledge about their traditional Liberian and African history and culture as peacebuilders.

Thereafter, the youths were sworn in as DATI Peace Advocates. They took oath to serve as peace advocates in their communities, neighborhoods and across Liberia. This year Dehkontee Artists Theatre celebrates its 44th Anniversary as a cultural and educational institution devoted to the promotion and enhancement of Liberian and African cultural and historical heritage in Liberia, on the continent of Africa and throughout the entire universe.

### ***What the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project Does Not Support***



***Dehkontee Artists Theatre does not support the conscription of children to engage in armed conflict. Liberian warlords who perpetrated heinous acts of violence and mayhem against Liberians and humanity must have their day in court! All Liberian youths who were forcefully conscripted as child soldiers but who are now adults must be pardoned because they were recruited under duress, they were minors, and they must serve as state witnesses in the prosecution of Liberian warlords. They must also be rehabilitated, provided opportunities to attend vocational and technical programs to acquire some professional skills they can use to successfully reintegrate into mainstream post-genocide Liberian society.***

As a peacebuilding project it is important that we clearly state where we stand with respect to the stalled Liberian peace process. Categorically, the Kukaonon Project does not support the notion of ***“Let Bygones Be Bygones”***. The expression “Let bygones be bygones” breeds impunity to the highest level in any society. It glamorizes violence, crime and mayhem, economic corruption, human rights abuse, without holding perpetrators legally accountable for the consequences of their actions. It also creates a pathway for more atrocities, mayhems, and lawlessness to brew because those who commit crimes are hailed as heroes and as ‘godfathers’ and ‘godmothers.’ Hence, this laid-back attitude towards rule of law signals to the outside world and Liberian youths that it is okay to murder a quarter million Liberians, Africans and other nationalities and you will be rewarded with a big government post in Liberia.

Hence, *the present peace module in Liberia reinforces corruption, murder, injustice, mayhem, and disrespect for the Constitution of the Republic*. Above all, it counters the universal perception of applied behavior analysis and behavior modification techniques *whereby unacceptable social behaviors are punished to reduce their frequency and acceptable behaviors are reinforced to increase their frequency*.

### ***What the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project Supports and Is***



***All perpetrators of war and economic crimes in Liberia must have their day in court! DATI supports the establishment of a war and economic crimes court in Liberia to prosecute Liberian warlords forthwith!***

The DATI Kukatonon Peace Project supports the execution of the law and the active use of the Liberian Constitution to guide the path of the nation in our peacebuilding process so millions of aggrieved Liberians may get justice and closure to the traumas they have experienced over the decades. The project supports rule of law, social justice and equality under the law, as well as respect for the sanctity of human lives and properties. The Kukatonon Peace Project fully supports the establishment of a war and economic crimes tribunal for Liberia during which some DATI Peace Advocates who are victims and survivors of the Liberian genocide, may be willing to testify.

Further, the Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. Kukatonon Peace Project is research-based, youth-focused, and results-driven. The project was officially launched in November 2019 in two separate but strategic regions of Liberia by Dehkontee Artists Theatre USA management and Board of Directors in collaboration with Liberian college youths and graduates of various institutions of higher learning in Liberia. Presently, there are two vibrant DATI Chapters in Liberia: the Maryland Gbenelue Chapter in Cape Palmas, Maryland County in Southeastern Liberia and the Montserrado Dougbor Chapter in Paynesville, Montserrado County in Southcentral Liberia.



The Gbenelue Chapter will serve as headquarters for the Gbenelue Chapter and as DATI's Regional Headquarters in Southeastern Liberia. The Dougbor Chapter's headquarters will serve as DATI County Headquarters and National Office in Liberia. It is hoped that with appropriate funding and logistical supports (vehicles, office equipment, operational budget) in the future, DATI will expand to all fifteen counties in Liberia to actively engage in a vibrant democratic reawakening and to officiate a genuine cultural renaissance in post-genocide Liberian society.

### ***What DATI's Donors Statistics Projects***



***Our statistics shows that citizens of Grand Kru County are in the majority among our donors. Grand Gedeh County is second in line, and Sinoe, Grand Bassa, and Bomi are in third place. Other counties represented on our donors list include, Bong, Montserrado, Margibi, Lofa, and River Gee.***

Due to the request of some donors for privacy, we cannot disclose the names of our donors, but we will provide you some statistics that indicate who supports our concept of peacebuilding in Liberia and in the United States. In this light, we have decided to track the demographics of our donors and participants of the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project to help us determine the trend the stalled Liberian peace process is taking and to determine who actively and genuinely supports efforts to pursue justice for lives and properties lost and destroyed in Liberia.

Our research and analysis are inconclusive currently as our fundraiser is still gaining momentum and is ongoing. However, for the time being, The list of donors tells you where they are from demographically and who is supporting DATI's grassroot efforts to revive and successfully implement the stalled and fragile Liberian peace and to restore genuine rule of law in post-genocide Liberian society.

***Poor Application of Applied Behavior Analysis & Behavior Modification Techniques during the Liberian Peace Process!***



***In the western world anyone who murders or perpetrates the murder of one human being (not to mention 250,000 people) can never participate in elections or be allowed to hold public office because to do so is to reinforce murderous behaviors and lawlessness or disrespect for the sanctity of human lives. In the Liberian case, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter oversaw an election in which a Liberian warlord could participate and was declared winner--a contradiction of the principles of rule of law and violations of Universal Declaration of Human Rights!***

As a research-based project, we seek to understand the dynamics involved in galvanizing grassroots support to implement the stalled Liberian peace process. Several international bodies like the United Nations, African Union, Economic Community of West African States, European Union, and the United States government have attempted to resolve the Liberian crisis but they have failed to succeed because the conflict resolution procedure they supported contravenes the universally accepted applied behavior analysis and modification techniques. Below are reasons to support our assertions:

1. ***Instead of punishing the bad behaviors of Liberian warlords and politicians who perpetrated heinous crimes against Liberians and humanity, international ‘negotiators’ rewarded Liberian warlords and economic criminals by allowing them to negotiate for government jobs at ‘peace conferences’ and to sign ‘accords’ that contravened the Constitution of Liberia.*** In most instances, these so-called job-seeking and job-distribution ‘accords’ were not followed through to the letter by signatories and their various political and warring factions.

2. ***By rewarding perpetrators with the spoils of the war they financed and perpetrated it empowered and emboldened Liberian warlords to do more economic, political, physical and bodily harm to their victims and survivors*** by: a. ransacking Liberia's national coffers, b. orchestrating mysterious murders and deaths of prominent and ordinary citizens with inconclusive and unsatisfactory investigative results or pending results, c. economic and social sabotage and deprivation of the Liberian masses and denial of basic utilities such as safe pipe-borne drinking water, constant supply of electricity, lack of good road and communications network, d. high unemployment rate, e. poor medical and educational facilities, etc.

3. ***The vast majority of Liberians are muted about seeking justice and standing up for their rights because having people who killed their relatives as legislators, judges, or as members of the President's cabinet, puts fear in Liberians and it makes them to experience more trauma and to suffer from Stockholm Syndrome.***



***Most Liberians suffer from Stockholm Syndrome and effects of war trauma. Most times they jump in the streets without knowing the reasons why. Liberians need rehabilitative and counseling services to help them heal from the wounds of war trauma and effects of the Stockholm Syndrome.***

### ***Our Donors and DATI Peace Advocates Statistics***

Based on our current donors list, here are the nations and counties that are represented: 1. So far, we have only two countries represented. The United States of America and the Republic of Liberia. There are three African American donors, and one African American fraternity (Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.). The following counties in Liberia are represented: Gran Kru (9), Grand Gedeh (6), Sinoe (5), Maryland (4), Montserrado (3), Grand Bassa (3), Bomi (3), Lofa (2), Margibi (1), Bong (1), River Gee (1) and one anonymous donor. In terms of regional representation, Southeastern Liberians are in the majority. Four counties out of fifteen are not represented on DATI's donor's list: Nimba, River Cess, Barpolu, and Grand Cape Mount.

With respect to demographics of youths participating in the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project here is the breakdown for DATI Montserrado Chapter Cohort I: 1. Nimba (6) all are members of the Mahn ethnic group; 2. Lofa (6), four Kissi, 1 Lorma, 1 Lofa Kpelleh; 3. Barpolu (1) Lorma; 4.

River Gee (2) Grebo; 5. Grand Cape Mount (1) Vai; 6. Grand Bassa (1) Bassa; 7. Grand Gedeh (2) Krahn.

With respect to the academic performance here is the result of Montserrado Chapter Cohort I: 1 Summa Cum Laude (5), 2. Magna Cum Laude (8); Cum Laude (4), Honorable Mentioned (2). No female earned Summa Cum Laude; two female Magna Cum Laude.

The DATI Maryland Chapter Cohort I, the following counties and ethnic groups are represented: 1. Lofa (4), 3 Kissi, 1 Lorma; 2. Grand Kru (4) Kru; 3. Maryland (15) Grebo; 4. River Gee (2) Grebo; 5. Bong (1) Kpelle.

Based on their academic performance during their training, 14 students acquired Magna Cum Laude, 3 Cum Laude, 7 Summa Cum Laude, and 1 Honorable Mentioned.

***DATI Promotes Gender Equity and Women Empowerment and Sound Scholarship***

DATI promotes gender equity and women empowerment and sound scholarship. We made a comparative analysis of the students' performance based on gender and here are the results of Cohort I.

***Grading Scale***

Cum Laude	B+ (85-89)
Magna Cum Laude	A (90-94)
Summa Cum Laude	A+ (95-98)
Honorable Mentioned	C+ (75-79)

***Gender Ratio and Participation***

Women	Men	Ranking
3	6	9 Cum Laude
6	16	22 Magna Cum Laude
1	11	Summa Cum Laude
2	1	Honorable Mentioned

## *Opportunities for DATI Peace Advocates to Improve Their Education*



*DATI Inaugural Ceremonies at the Harper City Hall in Maryland County. DATI's goal is to actively engage Liberian youths in peacebuilding activities.*

Apart from obtaining peacebuilding skills, DATI Peace Advocates have other learning opportunities available to them. The Administration offers Advanced English courses and Playwright Apprenticeships for Peace Advocates who would like to improve their writing and communications skills. Classes are taught online and DATI Administration sometimes provides stipends for participants to purchase data to attend virtual classes. It has been difficult to continue these programs due to lack of funding. It is our hope donors will take interest in our comprehensive peacebuilding program so that Liberian youths and the entire citizenry may benefit from the promotion of peace and democracy in post-genocide Liberian society.

### ***How to Donate***

1. Log on our website: [www.dehkoneeartists theatreinc.com](http://www.dehkoneeartists theatreinc.com)
2. Via cashapp: \$JosephGbaba, tel. (267) 973-1709
3. Via postal service: Write money order or check to:

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