

*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.

Core Values

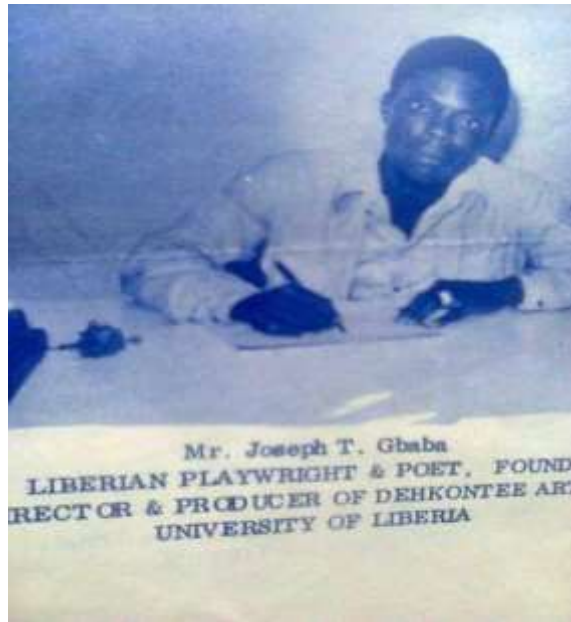
1. To exhibit mutual respect and cooperation among Board members, administrators and staff of DATI and its clientele;
2. To provide the requisite on-the-job training prior to administrators and staff participating in all DATI programs and productions;
3. To promote creativity and to think outside the box from the Afrocentric perspective, thereby enhancing the long-and short-term goals and objectives of DATI as a pacesetter educational and cultural organization;
4. To promote peace, human understanding, and cultural exchange through DATI’s peace theatre performances and advocacy;
5. To strive for excellence and customers’ satisfaction in the execution of DATI’s goals and objectives and interactions with DATI’s clientele.

History of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI)



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, first female 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

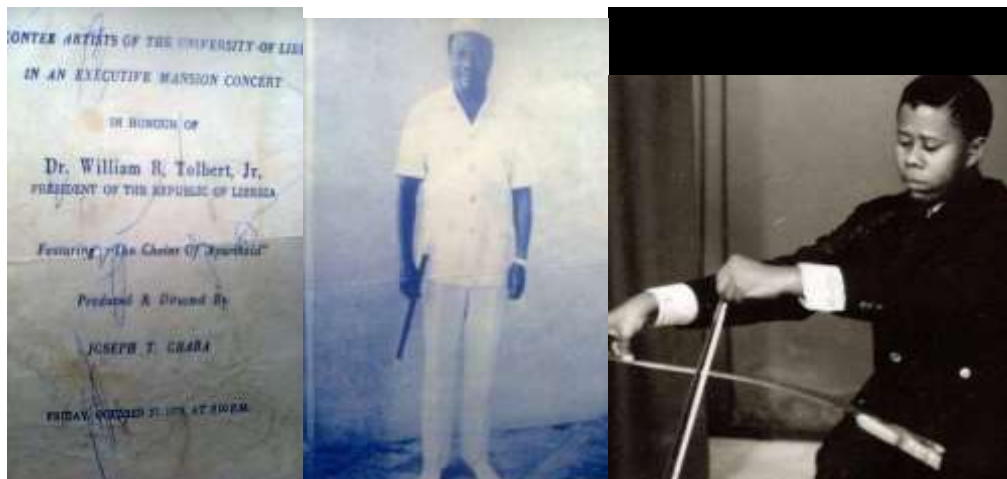
cultural stage. All DATI's theatrical productions were written and directed and produced by Dr. Joe Gbaba, a Liberian American playwright, theatre director, actor, and Jesuit-trained educator and qualitative research scholar. Below are examples of some of his literary works, including the various subject matters ranging from appreciation of African cultural values, to issues relating to race, injustice, and the need for cultural diversity in society.

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.

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 impacts 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) for more than three decades. In the future, we hope to expand our services through intergovernmental and non-governmental agency cooperation to European nations like Germany, Holland, Belgium, England, and France where many Liberian refugees reside.

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's programs arouse the critical thinking faculties of its targeted audiences around the world. DATI's programming also provokes its audiences to step outside of their collective or individual closets, to embrace new thoughts and experiences that are novel to their everyday living. 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 about the day to day happenings around them. For an example, the following Gbaba plays had great impact on the lives of the Liberian people: “No More Hard Times”, “Chains of Apartheid”, Zon Ninneh Taryee”, “Kekula”, and “The Resurrection”. Gbaba's didactic and critical thinking and Afrocentric style of writing and directing awoke Liberians to realize the power of the arts in conscientizing the citizenry. These plays are great examples of the effect of the arts in changing the mindset of the citizens, and to create social and political change in society.

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, economic and social change in the interest of the masses.



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

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 the Liberian leader 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 being a fond 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”!

“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 fable about a legendary Krahn warrior named Zon Ninneh Taryee. He migrated from the Ivory Coast during the colonial era in the Ivory Coast in the early 1900s. Zon Ninneh Taryee was a fugitive and a rebel leader who resisted French colonial rule. He sought refuge in Liberia to avoid being arrested and killed by French soldiers who had placed a bounty on his life. 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. Moreover, the production concept of the play is Afrocentric. It intersperses traditional Liberian music and dance 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 Prestigious Performance Centers across the Globe!

Dehkontee Artists theatre has made immense contributions in showcasing Liberia’s history and culture to the world. The organization has performed at some global centers of the performing arts in Liberia and abroad. The following is an inventory of performance halls where DATI performed over the past four decades.



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)
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 victims and survivors of the Liberian genocide. 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.



Dr. Gbaba conducting rehearsals at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion shortly after the first ceasefire among the warring factions.

Between the years 1992-1997 when the West Africa peacekeeping troops (ECOMOG) brokered peace among the warring factions, 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).



Dr. Gbaba in 1992 recruiting children during the heat of the Liberian Civil War in Monrovia to participate in the UNICEF/DATI Children's Peace Theatre that performed peace education dramas advocating for the disarmament of Liberian child soldiers conscripted by Liberian warlords.



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 row (r-l: U.S. Ambassador & Mrs. de Vos, Nigerian Ambassador & Mrs. Ayo Ajaikeye, and members of the Nigerian Chancery in Monrovia (1992)

The DATI/UNICEF Kukatonon Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Project

During the dark days of Liberia's history, DATI served as a non-governmental implementing agency for the United Nations Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) in Liberia. Dr. Gbaba was also hired as local cultural consultant to UNICEF and he helped to organize the DATI/UNICEF Kukatonon Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Project, along with Dr. Esther Guluma and staff of UNICEF Education Unit in Liberia.

The Kukatonon project consisted of one-week peace education workshops for schoolteachers, educational leaders and local government officials around Liberia. It also included a children's peace theatre component comprising children between the ages eight to thirteen. They performed live theatrical performances through songs, dance, and drama using disarmament as the theme. The Kukatonon Children's Peace Theatre was a great success because it used children who were victims of the Liberian conflict to mediate peace and disarmament. Through their vibrant performances and untiring efforts many child soldiers and combatants surrendered their arms and returned to non-combative life.



Members of “The Minstrel’s Tales cast, and foreign diplomats and guests post for a post-production photo. In the background are the American and Nigerian Ambassadors accredited to Liberia.

Other projects DATI implemented for UNICEF included “Mardea”, a three-month radio drama series that promotes gender equity and women empowerment. The other successful UNICEF-sponsored project DATI implemented was “Wheh-gba”. It was a live traveling theatre production that educated Liberians on prevention of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). The production was performed in various counties and displaced persons centers around Liberia. Ultimately, it reached an estimated one hundred and fifty thousand people across Liberia.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre also undertook some projects for the United Nations Military Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Unfortunately, these projects were not successfully implemented due to on-and-off hostilities in Liberia. They included: “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 messages for victims and survivors of the Liberian genocide. The series consisted of fifty-two episodes. They were played twice a week on the Liberian Broadcasting System (LBS) radio network and the Catholic Charitas FM 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). It was sponsored by UNICEF.

Establishment of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. USA Chapter



A newspaper article culled from the Greensboro Daily News in 1982. Courtesy of Archie P. Williams.



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. Gbaba taught Drama at College of West Africa (CWA) and English at 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 (IGNU) 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 ten 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.

Immediately after elections were held that brought Charles Taylor to power, Dr. 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. DATI's first production was "Town Trap". It was staged at the United Methodist Church edifice on Baltimore Avenue. Other 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.

Current DATI Programs and Services



*An illustration from Dr. Gbaba’s children’s book entitled “The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville”.
Illustration by Thomas N. Tweh and coloring by Nicole Katkin.*

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, and the establishment of cultural institutions to preserve African history and culture. Also, African cultural heritage can be further enhanced through the development and production of culturally relevant curriculum and textbooks that 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, with the United States being no exception.

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 diversify teaching and learning for all learners globally. The following passage vividly explains the rationale for the provision of DATI's educational and cultural programs and services that are aimed at creating awareness of African history and culture in societies where they are denigrated and deliberately discriminated against. The segment also provides examples of how the DATI Chiandeh Literacy and Peace Education After School Program can be successfully administered in schools around the world.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) Chiandeh Literacy and Peace Education After School Program (CALPEASP)



In photo American-Liberian playwright, theatre director and actor and educator Rabbi Dr. Joe Gbaba, Sr. conducts and launches the DATI Children's Peace Theatre and Literacy Project in the United States.

The "Chiandeh" literacy concept derives from the doctoral qualitative research work conducted by Dr. Joe Gbaba at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 2008-2009. It is entitled: "The Chiandeh Afrocentric Curriculum: Exploring Children's Responses to an Afrocentric Curriculum" (Gbaba, 2009). The research focused on the immersion of African-centered materials and information into mainstream curricula in order to provide equity education and at the same time produce a balanced and inclusive education that addresses

the teaching and learning needs of all members of society, particularly for minority students and children of color.



The DATI Chiandeh Literacy Project provides children of color an opportunity to read culturally relevant texts that center their heritage to actively engage them in their learning experiences.

The Chiandeh study is a qualitative Afrocentric research project that uses several postmodern theoretical lenses (i.e., constructivism, ideological literacy model, transactional theory, multiliteracies, and multicultural concepts). The study also included the use of the educational and philosophical arguments of Molefi Kete Asante (1980, 1991, 1992), Carter G. Woodson (1938), W.E.B. DuBois (1908), Marcus Garvey (1977), Maulana Karenga (1990), and many others, to investigate two research questions: (1) What ways do children respond to the Chiandeh project, and (2) How does the Chiandeh project shape children’s cultural esteem?



The project provides children the opportunity to explore their innate talents and inner expressions through dance, music, drama.

The Chiandeh project centers African American children in their own ancestry to enhance their cultural esteem and learning. It specifically highlights the term “cultural esteem” and the lack thereof by many Blacks as an important issue affecting Black children’s learning in our classrooms due to the monolithic Euro-centered curriculum that drives their instruction.



The program advocates the use of African-centered materials in mainstream curricula to provide children with equity pedagogy and equality of educational opportunities, and to combat the negative stereotypes about Africa in most American published materials and textbooks. The study revealed that when African American children were centered in their own history and culture, they exhibited more interest in literacy projects involving Afrocentric content; they displayed awareness of certain Afrocentric values and exhibited greater affinity for their ancestry, and ultimately developed self-awareness and cultural esteem.

The research further revealed that when introduced to literary materials that related to the history and culture of the research participants, they developed more likeness to learn about themselves and their cultural and historical heritage. They also developed interest in reading, writing, speaking, arguing, and behaving appropriately and they remained focused and actively engaged in their own learning activities. In addition, the Chiandeh Research dispelled the common notion held by most mainstream educators in the United States and western world that most minority students and children of color are “learning disabled”. Rather, it corroborates the perception that culturally relevant instruction and textbooks may develop children’s interest in learning and develop their expressive skills and self-confidence as well as their cultural esteem.

The research culminated with the participants mounting an African ballad depicting the African cultural norms and mores they learned and assimilated over the course of the experiment. Indeed, the parents of the research participants were also very delighted to see the product of the Chiandeh Afrocentric Curriculum and Textbook Experience! They realized their children evolved from being termed “learning disabled” to being “motivated learners”! The parents also requested a continuation of the project due to its effectiveness.

More about the Chiandeh Afrocentric Literacy and Peace Education After School Program (CALPEASP)



The Chiandeh Afrocentric Literacy and Peace Education After School Program (CALPEASP) is appropriate for students of all grade levels—elementary through high school. It is designed to expose learners to basic tenets of African cultural norms and values (love for self and fellow man; respect for elders, authorities and self; the dignity of earnest labor and self-fulfillment; belief in ancestral spirits; being one’s brother’s and sister’s keepers; the sociological practice and concept of communalism and extended family relationships; learning peaceful conflict resolution techniques, etc.). Participants are introduced to African cultural norms through various artistic and creative media: drama, short stories, acting, storytelling, dancing, writing, speech, drawing, painting, etc. CALPEASP is research and performance-based and it has proven to improve children’s responses to Afrocentric literacy (particularly children of color). Principally, it has motivated research participants (children) to develop active listening, speaking, and writing skills when they are introduced to African culture and history. The program is results-driven and hands-on as well. During the course each participant develops his or her portfolio and makes a presentation at the end of the training period.

Providing Early Literacy Intervention and an Inclusive and Least Restrictive Learning Environment to Develop Children's Reading, Speaking, and Creative Writing Skills



Above a twenty-three-month-old child (the youngest member of the DATI Children's Peace Theatre) sits in an inclusive and least restrictive literacy class with her older siblings who are seven up to nine years of age. The purpose is to provide her an early literacy intervention and least restrictive learning environment. Further, her placement in an inclusive and least restrictive learning setting was also meant to help develop her listening and speaking skills and to motivate her to develop a keen interest in reading and writing (scribbling on a piece of paper with her pencil) by imitating what she sees her older siblings doing.

Thus, when provided the opportunity to participate in the experiment, the twenty-three-month-old child felt she was an integral part of the inclusive classroom setting. Consequently, she developed keen interest in reading and writing as exemplified by the child's scribbles in her notebook (see photo above). Also, she emulated her older siblings who participated in the DATI Chiandeh Afrocentric Literacy program by pretending she was reading and writing. She asked questions as did her older siblings, even though her speech was not well developed to clearly express a thought. Notwithstanding, it showed she was motivated in a least restrictive learning environment.

Furthermore, the child felt empowered to construct knowledge and at the same time she became the centerpiece of her own learning experience that was facilitated by the professor. It also supports the notion about the need for home-school congruence in the education of minority children to provide them a continuum of lived world learning experiences in school and in the communities in which they live. It further connotes the need to actively engage all stakeholders in children's learning process to provide them maximum support.

Thus, through the process of inclusion, and by allowing a young child to sit in an inclusive and least restrictive literacy class among older children (below); and, by providing appropriate differentiated instruction, it is safe to assert that the toddler was motivated not only to emulate what her siblings or older kids were doing in the classroom environment but it also motivated her to develop interest in literacy activities. Hence, early literacy intervention is one way that school

districts and communities can address the learning needs of minority students and children of color to prevent labeling them as ‘learning disabled’ or as children with behavioral problems in the United States and other parts of the western world.

Moreover, the widely held notion of labeling African American and other minority students as ‘learning disabled’ was theoretically disproven during the Chiandeh Qualitative Research experiment by presenting culturally relevant instruction and a least restrictive learning environment to a group of African-American elementary students that were officially ‘diagnosed’ and labelled as children with learning disability in a public school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2009). It was discovered during the experiment that the children’s lack of motivation or disruptive behaviors in class was primarily due to lack of congruence between their home-school environments, as well as the lack of culturally relevant instruction and textbooks whose contents reflect their heritage in the mainstream curricula that drive their instruction in the educational system in the United States of America and other parts of the western world. It is for this reason the production of Afrocentric literature is a major component of the DATI Chiandeh Literacy Program to ensure children of color feel represented or see their own image in the books they read in school.



Children as centerpiece of their own learning experiences

Creating a conducive and least restrictive learning and teaching environment is essential in inspiring children to actively engage in their own creative writing and learning processes. Usually a small class size provides an enabling teaching and learning atmosphere in which each individual learner gets the attention he or she needs; and it provides learners more advantages to interact among themselves and with their facilitator (s). Above the children are actively engaged in discussions and back and forth conversations with one another and the facilitator. The facilitator does not dictate to the learners what they should do but he empowers the children to be the centerpiece of their own learning process through an inquiry-based and interactive process to

explore the fund of knowledge the children bring to the teaching and learning environment (constructivism). This process of teaching and learning is unlike the traditional method of ‘imparting’ knowledge and rote learning that is prevalent in most traditional classrooms throughout the United States and other parts of the western world.

Part of the Chiandeh Curriculum includes drama, creative writing, history lessons about the culture of Africa and Liberia and a comparative analysis exercise to enable the children to learn cultural and historical differences between the western world and African way of life or culture.



Dr. Gbaba working with African American children

A significant aspect of DATI’s Afrocentric Chiandeh Literacy and Creative Writing Program is to produce culturally relevant textbooks that reflect the cultural history and beliefs of minority students and/or participants or learners. Also, providing children with colorful picture books and readers with picturesque natural scenes and illustrations may motivate them to develop more interest in reading and writing. It may also inspire them to write their own short stories, dramas, and poems, etc. Further, it may engender children’s creative skills and ability to develop more coping and communications skills as well as exhibit better academic performance.



*An illustration from Joe Gbaba's children's book **The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville**. Illustration by Thomas N. Tweh, III and coloring by Nicole Katkin.*

Colorful children's readers inspire the creative genius in children. It helps them develop good storytelling skills and additionally engages their various senses of seeing, listening, feeling, smelling, and their ability to apply what they learn to real life situations. The illustrations above are from ***The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville*** written by Joe Gbaba. They were created by Thomas N. Tweh, III, a Liberian artist, and the coloring was done by American artist Nicole Katkin.

Public Performances, Cultural Festivals and Art Exhibitions



DATI's public performances and engagements provide both members of the children's peace theatre and adult theatre an opportunity to showcase their talents and to interact with members of the public through face-to-face dialogues or interviews. For an example, five years ago DATI participated in the cultural extravaganza hosted by the Embassy of Liberia near Washington, D.C. on 25 July 2015. DATI mounted an exhibition stand that displayed photographs of past

DATI theatrical productions, as well as Afrocentric literature that includes African fireside fables, dramas, and short stories.

Actively Engaging Stakeholders

In the photo on the previous page, Dr. Gbaba, Executive Director (first from right) and Mr. James Krischen Wah, Sr., President Emeritus of DATI (second from right) engage visitors at the DATI stand during the cultural extravaganza. DATI offers a variety of programs and services including art and cultural exhibitions and festivals, summer playground activities, literacy and creative writing workshops, as well as actors training and theatrical productions. DATI also conducts a children’s peace theatre program to teach children peacebuilding skills and to prepare children to serve as peace advocates because they are most often the victims of violence in our communities.



DATI also seeks the advice of families as stakeholders to determine the types of programming they need. This enables DATI to receive feedbacks from the audience and to design appropriate educational and cultural programs that suit the educational and entertainment needs of the population DATI serves.



Also, stakeholders learn to exchange points of view in an amicable manner to induce understanding among persons of varied opinions. A major part of this process is to spur discussions on topics or issues that arouse stakeholders' interests.



Promoting cultural and social interaction among persons of varied sexes also espouses free expression and shared democratic values. It engenders respect for the opinions of others, as well as encourages mutual respect and active listening skills. Above, the three gentlemen actively listen to a female express her views. DATI's programs provide a suitable milieu to engage in respectful conversations where individuals may disagree to agree and at the same time appreciate one another's diverse points of view.

The DATI Children's Peace Theatre



The education and involvement of children in cultural activities is also a key focus of DATI's community outreach programs. Children are introduced to various forms of cultural activities such as speech exercises, historical and cultural lessons about Africa, as well as teaching children about African family values and the role of children in society. This provides children an opportunity to know they are appreciated and a chance for them to receive instructions that educate them about the difference between acceptable and unacceptable social behaviors, such as dressing appropriately, taking turns to speak when involved in a conversation that includes two or more persons, and learning to be courteous—to show respect for self and others. In the photo above, members of DATI's Children's Peace Theatre cordially interact with one another in a family friendly atmosphere while the adults provide supervision.



Above, members of DATI's Children's Peace Theatre pose with Dr. Gbaba after their successful first public performance. Rewarding children when they behave and conduct themselves well

reinforces their ability to perform better, become more creative, and to be happy and productive kids. In the picture one of the children holds a bouquet of flowers presented to the group as a sign of appreciation for their successful performance.



Publishing and providing children with culturally relevant textbooks and Afrocentric literacy is a key component of DATI's programs. Above, DATI's President Emeritus James Krischen Wah, Sr. encourages a parent to purchase an African children's reader written by Executive Director Joe Gbaba. Parents are also encouraged to read African texts and apply their parenting techniques some of the moral lessons they learn from reading African literature. This may enable parents to: 1. Help children understand the importance of the rule of law; 2. Obey their parents, adults, and those in authority; 3. Learn to channel their grievances through non-violent means; and 4. To take responsibility for the consequences of their own actions.



A DATI staff engages a mother and her kids at the cultural extravaganza.

Manpower Development

What makes DATI's programs very effective is due to the fact that DATI provides training for its personnel before they engage the public in the conduct of DATI activities. Hence, it helps to cement a concrete bond between DATI's staff and the public because DATI's staff members are equipped with the knowledge and expertise required to actively engage adults and children who are interested in patronizing or participating in DATI programs. Above Mr. Wah engages a mother and her kids on the essence of providing children of color culturally relevant education and literacy materials in order to boost their cultural esteem (Gbaba, 2009) and develop their interest in reading and writing activities at home and at school.



A scene from the technical rehearsal of “The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville” at the Bowie center for the Performing Arts on January 6, 2016 from 2-10:00 p.m.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre Wows the Crowd at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts with a Broadway Style Spectacular African Theatrical Performance!



A scene from Dr. Joe Gbaba's "The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville" staged at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, January 9, 2016.



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 and 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. DATI-USA has performed several Gbaba plays at numerous prestigious performance halls across the United States. The aim is to educate and entertain its audiences and at the same time reduce racial and cultural prejudice in the American 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 Grant. He served 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 (Gbenelue) 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 so that they may 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 Norther 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 four unique Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. chapters: DATI-USA Chapter, DATI Montserrado Dougbor Chapter, DATI Maryland Gbenelue Chapter, and the recently formed DATI Lofa (Wologizi) Chapter.

DATI 2 ½ Month-Virtual Peace Advocate 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 that aim 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 Clayea.

Due to disruption of educational activities in Liberia during the drawn-out periods of hostilities many Liberian youths received inadequate academic instructions and a glaring example is their lack of proper communications skills. Hence, 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 also assists beneficiaries of our peacebuilding activities with grammar, reading and writing, and speech lessons to make trainees more fluent in speaking, reading, writing the English language that is the lingua franca of Liberia.

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 helps to enhance our peacebuilding efforts in areas we are unable to reach physically. Therefore, we inculcate our peace messages we want to relay to the people in our video productions. 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 visual aspect of 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 through the visual art.

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 in Liberia. 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. One way they can put their learning to use is 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 projects can be sold to the public to raise funds to sustain the agriculture program and to create a national awareness about the need to prioritize agriculture in post-genocide Liberian society. 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 to provide guidance for our young health practitioners 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 County, near Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia, 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).

Also, we intend to use the office building as a youth study center to provide after school and extracurricular programs such as traditional music, dance, drama, culinary art and tutorials for school kids. The DATI Youth Study Center can also be used for post-war Liberian youths who may not have access to computers and tutors because most Liberian parents are illiterate. They cannot read and write. Any individual or organization that provides the funding for this project may have the youth study center named in their honor as a token of appreciation for their generosity.

2. ***Office Equipment, Furniture:*** desktop computers, laptops, printers, scanners, fax machines, telephones, TV, internet facilities, communication devices, stationery, etc., are direly needed to

carry out our day to day operations at the national headquarters. We will also appreciate in-kind donations that will help us equip our national headquarters and youth study center with the modern equipment and supplies we need to effectively carry out our peacebuilding and cultural awareness programs in Liberia.

3. **Operational Budget:** We need an operating budget to effectively implement and sustain the goal of DATI Kukatonon Peace Project, pay corporate bills such as internet, electricity, occupancy, salaries, repairs, maintenance, and so forth. The estimated annual operational cost for a staff of forty Peace Advocates including per diems, travel allowance and accommodation is One Hundred Thousand United States Dollars (\$100,000).
4. **Transportation:** Transportation is very crucial for the success of our peacebuilding program. The bulk of our peacebuilding activities require DATI Peace Advocates to travel from county to county to actively engage the Liberian people about their role in the peacebuilding process. 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, to transport DATI Peace Advocates around the country to conduct their peace programs and functions. When not on tour, the buses can be used to transport the youths to and from school daily.
 - 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 around Liberia.

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; email: gbaba5@aol.com

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. 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

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Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Ed.D.

William Deiyan 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 Operations

Precious A.S. Sampson
Assistant Director for Administration

Grace Kiazolu-Ninneh
Treasurer

Fawen Varmah
DATI Dougbor Farm Manager

Roland Yowah, B.Sc.
Manager, 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 & Drummer
Prince Julian Gbaba

Jacques Gbaba
 Jaeden Gbaba
 Journee Gbaba
 McKenzy Gbaba
 Jade Gbaba

DATI Montserrat (Dougbor) Chapter Cohort I Graduates (November 16, 2019)

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

About the Executive Director and Founder



Rabbi Prince Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Ed. D.

Founder & Executive Director of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI)

Historical and Cultural Backgrounds

Rabbi Prince Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr. is the Founder and Executive Director of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI). He is descendant of ancient traditional African/Liberian royal heritage from the Krahn ethnic group of Liberia. Further, Dr. Joe Gbaba is the son of Prince Jack Tomoonh Yeleyon Gbaba, offspring of Prince Yarlee Gbanh, the founder of the City of Zwedru. Zwedru is the capital city of Grand Gedeh County in Eastern Liberia, and the home of the Krahn ethnic group of Liberia. Prince Yarlee-Gbanh was also grandson of King Boduo, II, of the Nien Dynasty of the Tchien Kingdom of the Krahn ethnic group of Liberia. Dr. Gbaba’s mother was Princess Martha Gbeh-Nyennonh-Garh Gaye, granddaughter of Prince Wrihyee-

Kpodeah, and great, great, great-granddaughter of King Boduo-Chelley of the Nien Dynasty of the Tchien Kingdom of the Krahn ethnic group of Liberia. Therefore, both of Dr. Gbaba's parents were distant relatives from the same Krahn royal lineage. It was commonplace back in the day for members of the same royal family that were distant cousins to marry in the family.

The Meaning and Origin of the Krahn Language and People

In the beginning of time, after the earth was formed and peopled by God, the ancestors of the Krahn people asked God to protect them from their enemies and to give them a "Promise Land" where they would live freely and happily, and where they could grow their crops and raise their cattle. The Krahn people originate from the Lake Tana region—the source of the Black Nile in Northern Ethiopia. They are remnants of ancient African Jews. The meaning of the word "Krahn" is, "Covenant". They got their name when their ancestors made a "Covenant" with their God to whom they refer as "Younsuah" (the Old One). They asked that God be their God and they would be God's people.



Dr. Gbaba dressed in traditional Kwa royal regalia of Liberia.

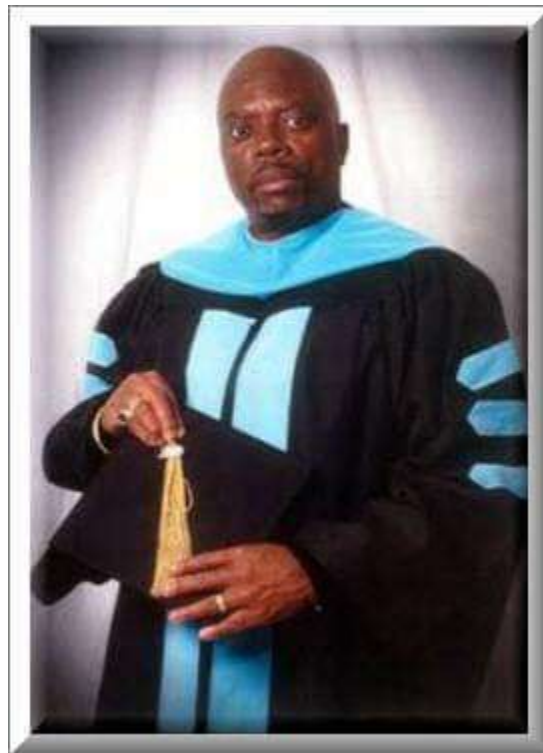
Consequently, God favored the Krahn people and accepted them as his people. Then he instructed the forefathers of the Krahn ethnic group to travel westerly until they saw a holy sign

that would indicate they had reached the Promise Land. The trek from East to West Africa took many millennia to complete. However, when the Krahn finally reached Liberia, the Promise Land, they received a sign from God indicating that they had reached their final destination.

Thus, Rabbi Gbaba inherited his Jewish heritage by birth and not through conversion from one religious belief to another. Against this backdrop, Dr. Gbaba grew up learning from both of his parents, the rich cultural values, and mores of their ancestors. And, over the span of forty-six years, Rabbi Gbaba has been the leading custodian of Liberian history, arts, and culture. He has been an advocate for the poor and he is globally recognized through his literary and artistic contributions to the world of theatre, literature, education, and human rights advocacy, on the continent of Africa and here in the United States of America.

Dr. Gbaba's name is written on the Wall of Tolerance at the Civil Rights Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A. He is the self-published author of three books: *The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville*, *Ah-zeo, Ma Garh*, and *Conflict Resolution and the Concept of Change*.

Educational Background



As a scholar/artist, Dr. Gbaba is a Jesuit-trained scholar and the product of several outstanding academic institutions and universities from the Republic of Liberia, and the United States of America, respectively. He began his early career as a playwright at the renowned Carroll High School—an all-boys Catholic secondary institution run by English and Irish Christian Brothers

of Edmund Rice. At Carroll High, Joe trained under the adept tutorage of multi-linguist scholar Brother E.D. Egan, and Brother David Walsh, a very prolific speaker.

Gbaba studied World Literature (Drama, Poetry, Prose) and French under Brother E.D. Egan, and Expository Writing and Dialectics under Brother Walsh. Through their instruction and God's guidance, Joseph received his calling as a playwright, director, actor, and producer. He wrote, directed, produced his first drama entitled "Life Story of Kekula" during his senior year in high school. The play was staged at the Open-Door Theatre in September 1974, in Yekepa, Nimba County, in Northern Liberia. The production was directed and produced by Joe Gbaba.



A scene from Dehkontee Artists theatre's production of Joe Gbaba's "The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville" at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts. In this photo, Dr. Gbaba displays his multiple artistic talent as a playwright, theatre, director, actor, and producer. He (far right) co-acts with his son Julian and second and third from left are his son Jacques and wife Princess Ariminta on stage with him.

Dr. Gbaba received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Liberia College, The University of Liberia, in 1980. He also established his theatre company, Dehkontee Artists Theatre at the University of Liberia in 1977 while a student at his Alma Mater. Joe earned his Master of Fine Arts in Drama from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1983. He also established a branch of Dehkontee Artists Theatre at UNC-G.

Later, Gbaba pursued his second Masters in Elementary and Special Education and Doctorate in Educational Leadership at St. Joseph's University, a Jesuit institution located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 2002 and 2009, respectively. As an educator, Rabbi Gbaba has served on the faculties of many distinguished institutions in Liberia and here in the United States: he taught English and Literature at St. Patrick's High School, A.M.E. Zion Academy, College of West Africa, St. Teresa's Convent, Cuttington University, University of Liberia, A.M.E. Zion

Community College, Mother Pattern College of Social Work, Principal of Zwedru Multilateral High School, Special Education Teacher at Jay Cook Middle School and Grover Cleveland Elementary School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, etc.



Rabbi Gbaba once served as Acting Deputy Minister for Culture and Tourism of Liberia in 1992. He has also served as consultant to the United Nations Children’s Educational Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Military Mission to Liberia (UNMIL), and the World Health Organization (WHO), among many others.