

**Presentations at the National Conference on Culture and Education on the 15<sup>th</sup> to the  
21<sup>st</sup> May 2005 in Elmina  
Konrad Adenauer Foundation co-sponsored the conference**

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1. **The Importance of Culture in Formal Education and Preparation towards Community Life** – by Prof. George Hagan, Chairman of the National Commission on Culture (NCC)

In the presentation, Prof. Hagan informed that if education is defined as the acquisition, dissemination and transmission of knowledge to an individual to enable the individual live a worthwhile life and serve the community, then, in organisation, form and content, a nation's system of education should not only embody the values, ideals and the intellectual heritage of the people, it must also manifest as a product of their culture.

On education in African cultures, he said knowledge was held as the means to a worthwhile life and indeed the measure of one's mental, emotional, spiritual and social maturation.

Under the school and the community, he described the education from the western world as a cultural tool to subvert the African traditional civilisation in some sense. He continued, while denigrating everything African, it imparted to the educated African European cultural values outlook, lifestyles and tastes and then left them with a dependency syndrome. This according to him distanced the educated Africans from their cultural roots and divided communities along social, religious, economic and political lines.

Talking about culture in schools, he said, formal education inherited from the colonial metropolis had created a culture space for the promotion of foreign value, beliefs, language and modes of behaviour, which needed to be defined and analysed for better understanding.

Under the classroom as a culture space, he said the focus was not on indigenous knowledge acquisition, rather the impartation of literatures, histories of foreign peoples and ecological and weather conditions of very distant countries. He said modern education should aim at giving the knowledge that is relevant to our national economic interest and good governance.

He described culture in school life – the school as a social community as a body corporate with an authority and structure with various grades of responsibility and seniority. He said this social community could be affected by gender culture which might define the character of the school – either co-educational or non-co-educational. He added that multi-ethnicity was also an issue in school culture because of cultural diversity.

On the way forward, he said African cultures cannot be preserved if future generations are not given the opportunity to learn it and live it. It is a knowledge that maintains and sustains a people's culture. In conclusion he cited the Akan proverb: "Nyim dze nsee dze".

1. **The State of Education in the Light of the Cultural Policy of Ghana** – by Dr. Esi Sutherland-Addy, Lecturer, University of Ghana, Legon

Dr. Esi Sutherland-Addy intimated that it was worthy to note that among the inevitable consequences of our dealing with Europeans the past 500 years had been the weakening and marginalisation of indigenous institutions, forms of knowledge and skill base. She described a regime whereby Africans had effectively abandoned their knowledge and skill base to become dependent on those of other peoples. She described western education as possessive of a style that could make Africans incompetent in both our own speaking culture and that of the Europeans whose culture we have been partially exposed to.

Speaking about what the Cultural Policy says on education, she said the Chapter 3 of the document was dedicated to education. She said the acquisition of both material and non-material culture was a process of enculturation, which helps to integrate and develop the individual within the culture of one's society.

Talking about the interaction between the formal and informal system she said the hope that the whole notion of what a learning environment is, who a learner is and how other environments outside the formal school locations could be validated for teaching and learning would be taken up. According to her, this constituted an important area for reassessment and implementation of the tenets of the Cultural Policy.

Under Tertiary Education and the Cultural Policy, she said the training function at the tertiary level is called into play and that teachers, policy makers and managers in the field of education needed to be solely equipped with a wider range of facts and tools to enable them facilitate and help release the creativity of learners by imbuing them with self knowledge.

She said the Cultural Policy has a very strong link between Science and Technology because it urges the application of science to the exploration of indigenous knowledge for the solution of challenges in our society.

She described the Universal Pre-school Education as a wake up call. She added that pre-school education must be approached with the greatest of care and deliberation as far as methodology, content and concepts are concerned.

She challenged writers and publishers to promote Ghanaian culture and values in textbooks by drawing attention to portions of the Cultural Policy of Ghana on Educational Material and Book Development.

On self-renewal by artists and leaders in cultural practice and transmission, she said it would be fallacious to suppose that artists, writers, religious persons, chiefs etc who are deeply involved in the development and sharing of culture may not be in need of self renewal.

2. **The Study of Culture in the Formal System of Education** – Mr. Freeman Aguri of the Ghana Education Service (GES)

Mr. Aguri informed the conference that Cultural Education is one of the major concerns of the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ghana Education Service.

He said the Cultural Education Unit of the GES was set up in January 1987 in pursuit of the relevance of Culture in the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

He outlined the subject that come under the umbrella of Cultural Education as: Religions and Moral Education, Art, Technical/Vocational Skills, Ghanaian Languages, Dance, Drama and Music. He stated the mission statement and objectives of the Unit and also commented on its traditional role. He added that the unit has an inter-sectoral relationship with all recognised national cultural organisations and associations. He said the unit operated at the district, regional and national levels and that the unit was responsible to the Ghana Education Service Directorates at the district, regional and national levels as well.

Among the programmes of the unit, according to him, was the National Cultural Festival, which alternates from one region to the other.

On the way forward, he said propagation of important messages on HIV/AIDS would be intensified as well increased collaboration with NGO's, educational institutions and other stakeholders of culture.

3. **Culture and the Sciences** by Prof. Kwesi Andam, Vice Chancellor, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)

Prof. Andam reiterated that Africa lags behind in terms of technological advancement when compared with the industrialised countries of the world.

He described the traditional culinary arts as labour intensive particularly the milling of corn, fufu pounding and the intense heat that emanates from open fires.

He said the establishment of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was meant to provide appropriate technology to reduce the unyielding demands of the labour force as a result of traditional methods of doing things.

He briefed participants on the UNESCO Conference on Science in 1999 in Budapest during which the state of art of science and technology to create wealth was discussed and several resolutions made by Member States.

According to him, traditional methods of farming were too laborious as compared to mechanised farming. He called for scientific approach to farming.

He said science and technology make substantial contribution to the growth of a K-based economy. He called for the strengthening of junior and senior secondary schools through the provision of good laboratories and workshops.

On the road map to inculcating science into Ghana's culture, he said it should start from the kindergarten through primary, secondary to the tertiary levels.

4. **The State, Multilingualism and the Media** by Prof. Kwesi Yankah, University of Ghana, Legon

Prof. Yankah informed the conference that Ghana with a population of about 20 million has between 45 – 5- languages. He said Ghanaian languages may be divided into two categories; 'Kwa' and 'Gur'. 'Gur' comprises languages spoken in the north and 'kwa' comprises languages spoken in the south.

He said English was the language of education in Ghana and was the language in which government business was conducted. He added that the medium of instruction in schools was largely English. He said the global dominance of English would leave one wondering about the political significance of indigenous languages in Africa.

He informed that language served as the vehicle in which culture is conveyed and that the loss of language or its denigration is often suicidal to a nation and nation building in general.

He mentioned that language-planning policies have not been backed by the required political will. Speaking on Linguistic/cultural activism, he said out of the 6,800 languages the world over; about 50% are endangered and may die before the end of this century.

He said there are over 70 newspapers and magazines in Ghana but none of them was presently in Ghanaian language. He added that with the liberalisation of the airwaves, 124 FM radio stations are in the country and that FM radio stations had increased the linguistic revival of Ghanaian languages. New idiomatic expressions and proverbs used or instantly coined by radio presenters and contributors have been adopted overnight, thus enriching the language.

According to him, the contribution of FM radio stations to the development of Ghanaian languages demonstrates a process of language revitalisation or linguistic counter-penetration and that this had led to greater facilitation of consensus building and grass-root development in the democratic process.

5. **Language in a Multi-Lingual Nation – As a Medium of Instruction** by Prof. Akosua Anyidoho of the University of Ghana, Legon

Prof. Akosua Anyidoho informed that nowhere has language received more attention in Africa than in the area of education where it is commonly posed as a question about choice of language of instruction.

She said Government's white paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee published in October 2004 reiterated that a child's first home language and Ghana's official language, English, should be used as a medium of instruction from kindergarten through primary level. She said with the multiplicity of languages in Ghana ranging from 100 – 44, it was difficult to implement the language policy. She added the multiplicity of languages spoken in a single classroom, lack of unified orthography, insufficient relevant Ghanaian language textbooks and insufficient teachers with Ghanaian language proficiency led to the seeming abuse of the language policy.

Other concern raised in her presentation was that the English language was the lingual Franca of the Ghanaian elite with high levels of education because the majority of the Ghanaian population do not speak English. She said majority of the Ghanaian population function in indigenous languages in all domains of life. She added it was crucial for the school system to provide its graduates with communication skills that will enable them to interact with the rest rather than alienate the well educated from their people. The increasing trend of chiefs and public office holders addressing their people in English when most of them do not understand the language is unacceptable.

6. **Culture as a Basic Tool in Teaching all Subjects** by Rev. Samuel Enninful of the Centre for Culture and African Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)

Rev. Enninful informed that Ghana has a unique culture that identifies Ghanaians and that the values and institutions represent the collective national heritage that evolves and needs to be developed from generation to generation.

He said Chapter 3 of the Cultural Policy of Ghana revealed the Cultural Education Strategy. He compared culture with art and said like art, it would be difficult to understand subjects taught if they are torn from their cultural setting so he commended the use of cultural elements in the teaching of all subjects.

He continued by saying culture itself is education and it involved teaching the child to make use of his cognitive skills like in mathematics, sciences and other problem solving subject or the use of the affective skills like in religious and moral education and the social sciences. He added that the cultural approach to teaching also involved the use of the psychomotor skills, which lead to the art of using the hands to create as pertains in vocational, technical, home economics, physical education, secretarial subjects etc.

He said several methods could be used in disseminating cultural values into the younger generations alongside the advanced technology which includes the use of computer, scientific calculators etc.

7. **Learning in Culture and Learning through Culture – a Ghanaian Perspective** by Dr. James Flolu, Dean, Faculty of General Culture and Social Studies, University of Education, Winneba

Dr. Flolu intimated that every culture is an end as well as a means of attaining an end, a process as well as a product of the process. Every culture grows, changes and develops and the agents of these are the products of the same culture. He said the quality and power of any culture is determined by the creative consciousness of its people. For it is these people who set the standards, identify our needs and help to define the national aims and objectives.

He added that when Government is tasking the education system to produce graduates who are imaginative, creative and can engage in critical thinking, Government is not saying we should specifically produce painters, dramatists, biologist or engineers. Rather Government is simply tasking educational institutions to develop well-rounded productive human beings who will apply their talents in whatever domains will most enrich them and the society around them.

He said traditional African education is that natural-social, cultural and political – growth that arises from the acting and interacting with the environment, individuals and groups of society. The ways of life and living are transmitted from the older to the younger. He said the process is practical and aural-oral and encompasses organised, non-formal, informal pedagogical styles.

He informed that dance is a physical manifestation of thinking and expression of ideas, feelings and a way of knowing and communicating.

He added that performance of folktales serves as a means by which children and adults share cultural experiences directly. He said story telling combined various teaching strategies such as lecture, demonstration, dialogue, questions and drama all of which are interwoven to make easy and enjoyable lessons which otherwise would have been difficult to assimilate, thereby enhancing memory.

8. **Gender and Culture in Education** by Mrs. Joana Opare, Gender Consultant, Accra

Mrs. Opare informed that gender discrimination on whatever basis is a source of endemic poverty, of inequitable and low economic growth, high HIV prevalence and of inadequate governance.

Speaking on the meaning of gender, she said, the division of labour along the lines of gender is a key concept in attempts to understand and address inequalities between men and women. She said it both reflected and reinforced the subordinate position of women.

Under gender relationship, she said women generally have less access to power and decision-making positions, choice and control as well as resources of all kinds including training, land, secured employment and leisure.

Under the rationale for gender planning she said development activities included the following: -

- more realistic, enabling proper targeting;
- more effective, enabling precise resource use; and
- more equitable, ensuring women are equal beneficiaries and equally part of the process.

She added that while culture can be a tool for broad-based qualitative and human-centred development, it can also be used to oppress or liberate, to augment or retard growth development.

She said in this part of the world, the male factor is culturally paramount and because of the strong impact of communal ethos and the desire to conform, many women suffer in silence.

Under education and training of women and the girl-child, she said according to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, 54.3% of females, 15+ have never been to school or are illiterate. Despite efforts made at increasing women's education, women still lag behind in educational attainment and in training.



9. **Cultural Values and Discipline – Character Formation** by the Archbishop Akwasi Sarpong, Catholic Archbishop of Kumasi

The Archbishop narrated his childhood experiences. He said through formal, informal and non-formal education, children were made aware of what was important in life, the principles and the philosophy upon which the good of the society depended.

The bad was punished for wrongdoing and the good was praised with incentives for the good deeds and according to him this constituted character formation. He said this provided the ability to appreciate collective qualities and characteristics of the society and the endowment for self-control necessary to avoid what went against the community interest and what promoted it. Children were generally made aware of their cultural values and had the discipline, through education to respect them.

Under value of respect for life, he said life must be lived worthwhile, good, enjoyable, respectable, transmitted, long, remembered and must exceed anything else. Speaking on the value of the community, he said one's life could be fulfilled only when he lives in the community and involves himself in what goes on into the community to promote its good.

He said the environment is us and so we must keep it sacred. According to him, respect for authority is a great cultural value.