

NCC NEWSLETTER

February

2023

Issue #2

International Mother Language Day

February 21



INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

INTRODUCTION

The National Commission on Culture is mandated to manage from a holistic perspective the Cultural life of Ghana. The Commission has 16 Regional Centres for National Culture with offices in all district and Municipal Assemblies.

The introduction of this newsletter is to continue to inform and educate the masses on our mandate, programmes and activities of both the Centres and the Commission.

This newsletter is designed by the PR unit of the Commission, headed by Mrs Ama Amponsah Painstil

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The diversity in the Ghanaian culture does not only hover around our tradition, practice, what we eat and wear but also our spoken words which is our indigenous mother languages. These languages which gives unique historical background to a person's cultural identity embody the composition of songs and folktales which depicts the cultural setting of a peculiar enclave. A mother tongue, linguistically known as L1 is the first sign of connectivity/ bond of socialisation between the mother and child and also contributes immensely towards the total development of a child in terms of their cultural beliefs and character formation. Needless to say, weakness in the mother tongue means a paralysis of all thought and power of expression. This means that, the mother language is an indispensable instrument for the intellectual, physical and moral aspects for the promotion of social and educational development as a country.

Celebrating today as an International Mother Tongue/Language Day on the theme; "**Multilingual Education - a necessity to transform education**" marks a unique day alienated for the promotion of our cultural and linguistic diversity in the world of which Ghana is inclusive.

Currently in our Ghanaian society, many are under the influence of linguistic determinism and relativity because of their present environment. The quest for greener pasture, westernization and migration by most Ghanaians have resorted to the learning and speaking of other languages, thereby neglecting our rich indigenous languages.

These acts of acculturation and language imperialism by most government officials, business moguls, students and general Ghanaian populace have led to the speaking of English language at all social functions thereby relegating our rich Ghanaian languages to the background. In our pursuit to promote multilingualism, students are still penalized for speaking their own mother language even at the early childhood educational levels. On the other hand, most students are now addicted to uneducational social media platforms which tends to expose them to abusive languages instead of surfing academic sites which will enhance their language skills. How then do we present and promote this agenda?

There is an urgent need for adroit strategies implemented by the Ghana Education Service to preserve our language to be strictly adhered to by all educational establishment in the country. As stipulated in Ghana's Language Policy, *it mandates the use of the child's L1 as the language of instruction from kindergarten to grade 3 with English language as L1 thereafter.* By so doing, there would be the promotion of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and sheer tenacity in the mode of transmission of our practices and cultural heritage to broaden the knowledge spectrum of the learners as they familiarize themselves with our cultural identity to aid in its preservation for the future.

More so, this global advocacy would only come to fruition through tireless determination and commitment from the family as a basic grounds for socialisation. The fight to preserve our linguistic identity calls for a national backing from guardians to establish strong home language policy with persistent efforts to help their wards and everyone in the household to increase their native language proficiency.

According to a quote by Nelson Mandela, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart". Dr. Nana Anima Wiafe-Akenten (First PHD Holder in Twi) was in secondment to this quote during a conversation on the Mother Tongue. She opined that "**by promoting and encouraging the speaking of our own languages, we will teach our generation to appreciate and use our own ideology for the development of our nation.**"

The speaking of our Mother tongue is a basic tool for communication at home and school to empower both children and adults to mutually understand and appreciate each other's culture. Indeed, the role of language imperialism is placing the Ghanaian languages in a ditch as we usually prioritise other languages over our rich Ghanaian languages and this is gradually defacing the pride of speaking the language of our mother tongue.

Language and culture are inextricably interwoven. Hence, the agenda to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism in Ghana requires tactical strategies to table this all important agenda for the continuous presentation, preservation and safeguarding of our languages on the face of technology through an all inclusive approach to revitalize and enhance the speaking of the mother tongue both in school and at home.



GHANAIAN TROUPE DEPARTS TO INDIA FOR 36TH SURAJKUND INTERNATIONAL CRAFT MELA

EMMANUEL KWARTENG

A 14 member folkloric group from the National Commission on Culture has left Ghana to India to participate in the 2023 edition of the Surajkund International Craft Mela Festival.

The troupe which was meticulously selected from the Commission’s regional Centres consisted of eight dancers, five drummers and one official was entrusted to honor the invitation extended to the Commission by the Indian government through its High Commission in Ghana.

The 36th Surajkund International Craft Mela is the third time since 2019 Ghana has participated in the festival to demonstrate its rich culture, traditions and customs through craft and dance.

As part of measures to deepen the ties between Ghana and India, the Indian government through its High Commission in Ghana extends its invitation to the National Commission on Culture to select troupe to participate in the Surajkund Craft Mela to showcase its culture and rich heritage.

The Surajkund Mela is one of the most famous, unique and celebrated international craft mela in India and it is organized every year in Faridabad, Haryana during the first half of February by the Haryana Tourism Department.

The festival is celebrated to give opportunities to artisans and folklorics to showcase their immense creativity and talent to help realise the forgotten culture of handlooms and handicraft as technology has taken over almost all aspects of our lives.

The leader of the team Nana Adobea Sarpong who doubles as the Deputy Director of the Creative Arts Department of the National Commission on Culture stated that, the team will do everything possible to raise the standard which has been set by previous groups to merit an invitation come next year.

“As a cultural institution, it is our mandate to maintain and promote our culture and traditions internally and internationally, and this offers us a perfect opportunity to do so”, she added.



TRADITIONAL BAMAYA DANCE IN GHANA

GIFTY ADJEI

Ghana is endowed with ethnic diversity, and each ethnic group has its unique element that makes it stand out. Each ethnic group in Ghana has its own traditional dance; these dances are specifically for different occasions like festival, marriage ceremonies and funerals. These cultural dances are not only to entertain; they are mostly performed to educate the people.

Among the different dance in Ghana, Bamaya meaning “The River (valley) is wet” is one of the most popular social music and dance among the people of Dagbon of the Northern part of Ghana. The Bamaya dance is performed to remember a drought that befell the people of Dagbon in the middle of the 17th century.

Bamaya dance is popularly performed by men dressed as women in a solemn celebration. The lead dancer and drummer perform as singers to sing along while the dancers perform the Bamaya dance. Every step during the Bamaya dance has its meaning.



Dancers perform the Bamaya dance by moving their feet very swiftly and twist their waist many times as they dance around the drum. However, the performance depends on the rhythm of the drums and flute.

The sound of the drums and flute dictate the dance movement, the leader picks and communicates movement to the rest of the dancers. Dancers usually display their own skill when they are about to leave the stage.



TOMORROW'S PUPPETRY IN AFRICA

Dramaturgies & digital experiments

A cycle of 5 workshops / Free on selection

Organised by National Centres of UNIMA in Tunisia, Togo, Kenya, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Zambia, with Uganda UNIMA representative and Kijiji in Tanzania

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A project supported by UNESCO and coordinated by UNIMA with its Africa and Professional Training Commissions

More information
WWW.UNIMA.ORG



GHANA PARTICIPATES IN PUPPETRY OF TOMORROW IN AFRICA WORKSHOP CYCLE DRAMATURGIES & DIGITAL EXPERIMENTS

After the Spotlight on puppetry in Africa, 2020-2021. UNIMA and its Africa Commission propose the project "Tomorrow's puppetry in Africa - Digital Dramaturgies and experimentations", for the period of 2022-2023. It is with the National Centres of the UNIMA in Tunisia, Kenya, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Togo, and the National Centre in prefiguration in Uganda developing the project of professional training aiming to touch 12 countries of Africa. Two trainings are planned for French-speaking countries and a cycle of three trainings aimed at the realization of small digital formats will be held for English-speaking countries. This hybrid project is made between presence (physical) and digital (online).



The workshop cycle:

The workshop cycle is scheduled to be a cycle of three weeks of training, separated by a period of few months that will allow you to work independently towards the final project goal. Between training sessions, the main local practical facilitator from the previous session will hold monthly meetings with participants to review progress. The three training sessions are continuous and further lead to the final product.

Dramaturgy and Scriptwriting

This workshop is the introduction to writing drama for puppetry using the writing process as a combination of intuition and the specific rules of puppetry. The participants went through the writing process, focusing on the step by step on each important part. The writing for puppetry workshop started with building the characters and the figures of the play – how and why we choose them and how we construct them, what to avoid when you think of puppets and what to trust. Then other important aspects like language suitable for puppets, the plot with its main topics, the background world we create, the rhythm, dialogue or songs if needed.



Ghana had a number of individuals and groups who were interested in the workshop, however by the criteria set out by UNIMA worldwide and Africa Commission, each country needed to select only eight participants for the duration of the cycle of the workshop. The workshops would be hosted by the Community Education and Youth Development Directorate of the National Commission on Culture. A centre noted for its initiatives with puppetry in communities and schools.

The workshop was delivered in two parts. After some theory which was viewed by the participants in video formats via Youtube and Zoom online meetings, the second part were the practice with tasks and writing exercises that were aimed mostly at discovering the creative ways for participants to trust their intuition (which is essential for any artistic process), but also at making some drama-miniatures, scenes or even short one-act plays which will serve as a starting point for further work.



The workshop ended on Tuesday 14th February with a three-hour interactive session that made it possible for all participants to ask questions and network with other participants from other African countries namely South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine and Kenya. The next session of the workshop starts on 6th March -10th March 2023 which looks at the basic creation of puppets.



PUBERTY RITES AMONG THE GA ADANGBE

ADELAIDE ASONG

Puberty rites in Ghanaian culture are a ceremonial act among the various ethnic groups, where children are transitioned into maturity. One of the most popular puberty rites practiced in Ghana is called DIPO. This traditional festival is celebrated by the Dangme Group particularly, people of Odumase Krobo in the Eastern Region of Ghana. This rite is used to usher virgins into womanhood. The ceremony takes place between the months of April and May every year. Dipo is a very essential practice to the people of Krobo hence; they ensure every young female in the tribe experiences it.

The duration for Dipo takes place within four days. In the course of preparations towards the rite, the young girls spend time in the Dipo house and dress up in a manner that indicates they are initiates. Meanwhile, they are also cautioned on the food they should and should not eat whereas they are made to specifically drink their water from only the well.

The first ritual is when the initiates have their hairs shaved, and then gets dressed with only cloth tied around their waist to the knee. This act executed by a special ritual mother depicting a transition from childhood to adulthood. The chief priest precedes with a spiritual bath for the girls the following morning after which libation is poured to seek blessings upon them. After all of these, the young girls are made to sit on a sacred stone to confirm whether they are truly virgins, however if any of the girls are found not to be a virgin, she will get stuck on the sacred stone.

The prideful initiates after going through the rituals successfully are trained and schooled for a week in cooking, childbirth and housekeeping. They are dressed in beautiful Ghanaian cloth with beads around their waist, neck and arms and are paraded at the durbar grounds. The young girls are also made to perform the klama dance with singing and drumming at the grounds so that if any man finds any of the girls attractive and is interested to marry her, can probe further about her.

The people of Kroboland believe Dipo is a very pertinent ceremony that brings probity to young girls and show them a better way to have a good marriage and put their family in a high esteem.

THE GHANAIAN WOVEN SMOCKS

ADELAIDE ASONG

The Ghanaian smock originated from the Northern part of Ghana is a beautiful cloth which comprises of criss-crossed horizontal and vertical bands. It's made of hand-loomed strips commonly known as strip cloths which is produced from a mixture of dyed and undyed cotton loom. The strips are sewn together either by hand or by the use of a machine giving the smock a plaid appearance. Some of the smocks have an embroidery on the neckline as well.

It is known as the most popular traditional wear in Ghana. The Dagbani's refer to it as "Bingmaa", the Mosi's call it "Fugu", Maprusi's call it "Bana" or "Bunnw)", "Dansika" in Frafra, the Kusaal's call it Bana whilst the southern regions refer to it as "Batakari". Although it can be worn by both men and women, it is usually seen worn by royals and civilians. It is widely used in West Africa and even those in the Diaspora. It is one of the National outfits of Ghana. The smock can be worn with a Kufi cap but also chiefs in Ghana wear the smock with a red fez hat. Aside the beauty and cultural significance of the smock, it also serves as recreational purposes at special cultural events and it is very lucrative because people who sell them make very good income from it.

Smocks are made in colours like red, white, blue and black. The use of a red coloured yarn in weaving smock from Bolgatanga largely influenced its naming. The red and black yarns greatly impacted the names given to weaves produced from Northern Region. Traditional weaving of smocks in Ghana has also contributed to the sustainability of art and practical hands on skill in the North which will take place from generation to generation. The art of smock weaving has also cognized in some areas such as Daboya, Yendi, Tamale, Paga, Bawku, Wa with notable colour significance and naming characteristic features.





GHANAIAN FASHION

CLAUDIA AKOTO

Fashion is elusive but important form of self-expression and identity. The patterns, styles, fabrics and colours of clothing as well as the ways in which they are worn reflect one's history, culture, as well as current attitudes and viewpoints.

The Ghanaian fashion industry has been one of the greatest influencing fashion industries in the world. Most people from the diaspora who hear about Ghana get to know about Ghana's indigenous Kente cloth.

Kente is a hand-woven fabric which originates from the Akan traditional area, the Ashanti region of Ghana. It is true that Ghanaians take pride in Kente, but what most people do not know is that there are other Ghanaian fabrics which are beautifully made, quality and comfortable to use. Some of these are the Tie and Dye, Cotton fabrics with imprinted Adinkra symbols, the Gonja fabric and the list goes on.

Among all the African textiles, Kente was and still the most well-known clothes that Ghanaians pride themselves with as an authentic indigenous cloth. The thick nature of the strips of cloth as well as the symmetrical geometric shades of colours distinguishes genuine Kente cloth from other traditional cloths.

The Ghanaian traditional wears are mostly used for traditional occasions such as durbar, festivals, rites, but to mention few. Each design bears a meaning making them suitable for specific occasions however most kente are designed for the purpose of honouring.

Ghana's traditional cloth are cotton and hand-made from the beginning to the end of the process. This adds to the uniqueness and how natural most of the Ghanaian products are made.

Ghanaians have not disowned their culture and lifestyle even in the era of modernisation. Foreigners patronise made in Ghana products whenever they visit the country. This brings out the importance of cultural preservation and promotes the Ghanaian fashion industry.

Everybody loves made in Ghana products!



WHY GHANAIAANS LOVE FUFU SO MUCH

EDWARD SAKYI



For most individuals like myself when we think about food what springs through our thought is the smell or the aroma of something that triggers our taste buds.

Food is another way we express our culture and exhibit our inkling for refined taste. In Ghana, we say that "fufu has dropped into soup" to describe a happy accident. One does not long for a scenario that is more agreeable. For many Ghanaians, fufu provides a filling supper, whether it is made with yam, cassava, cocoyam, plantains, or combinations of these.

Despite the innovative and modern ways to prepare fufu, one still finds fulfillment in the hectic preparation of pounding fufu that they refuse to abandon it because it is one of the most beloved staple foods in Ghana.

Preparation of fufu takes a long time due to the energy exerted. Fufu is not a dinner that one person would typically prepare because of this factor. Fufu effectively becomes a family activity at home.



Sunday is the day in Ghana where the fufu phenomena is most prevalent. Everyone is at home, and there isn't much going on. As a result, fufu takes on a ceremonial role. However, fufu is a common occurrence in rural or traditional societies.

Fufu is unique in a variety of ways depending on the soup that will be eaten with. Fufu is unusual in that it arrives cold, but this is tastefully offset by the hot soup that is required to go with it.

I am certain there are many reasons why Ghanaians love fufu so much. However, the one that stands out for me is the familial nature that comes with its preparation because it signifies the companionship that exists among many Ghanaian families and even fosters closely knit relations among extended families.



A LOOK AT THE INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD IN CONTRACTING MARRIAGE AMONG THE GA SOCIETY

There are a lot of things that happen behind the scenes before a Ghanaian couple are joined together in marriage. Amongst the Ga people, marriage is not a partnership agreement between just the two will-be-couple but it includes both families.

In view of that, these families do not take it lightly the decision they are about making. Thus, giving their daughter and son to each other's family without cross examination of the history of the families involved.

This is known as "Weku saji amli taw mo", that is to say background checks. This investigation of the background of families is done after the man's family comes in with a token of money and a bottle of alcohol drink (Schnapp) to notify the woman's family of their intension to pluck a beautiful flower they have sighted in the family.

This practice is known as the knocking (Agbo Shimo), literally meaning when you are coming into someone's house you knock at the door and you are granted the permission to come in before you do. The knocking is an official introduction of the man's family to the woman's family. After the knocking is done then the background checks begin.

The investigation covers the health history of the families, financial capabilities of the families in terms of laziness or a hardworking lineage including the type of unique family trade they do whether they are skillful hunters, farmers or fishermen.

It also includes the fertility account of the families, especially with the African belief and strong desire for procreation. This informs them of the possibility of having more children in the course of the marriage, which is considered as a mark of strength and responsiveness to the number of children one has.

After the checks have been done and have reached a satisfied result the families now go ahead with the next stage of the marriage process. If the family or families are not satisfied with the results then the marriage process is not able to proceed and is brought to an end.

These practices done by the Ga society shows how families are so much involved when a member of a respective family is about to marry. It also depicts how the investigative period within the context of a Ghanaian marriage is key because for Ghanaians, marriage unites different families together and so it is imperative to understand and know the kind of family you marry into because Ghanaians believe that marriage is a lifetime commitment.



THE DEATH RITES OF THE AKANS



The Akan people are one of the largest ethnic groups in Ghana, with a rich cultural heritage that spans centuries. One of the most important aspects of Akan culture is their death rites, which are deeply rooted in tradition and spirituality. In this article, we will explore the fascinating world of Akan death rites and how they reflect the beliefs and values of this vibrant community.

The Akan people believe in a dual existence that encompasses both the physical and spiritual realms. They believe that death is not an end but a transition to the spiritual realm, where the departed will continue to exist as ancestors.

As such, Akan death rites are centered around ensuring a smooth transition for the departed from the physical world to the spiritual realm.

The first step in Akan death rites is the washing and dressing of the deceased. This is usually done by family members, who bathe and dress the deceased in clean clothes.

After the deceased is prepared, a series of rituals are performed to honor and appease the ancestors. These rituals vary depending on the Akan subculture, but they all involve the pouring of libations and the offering of food and drink to the ancestors. Libations are usually poured by a designated elder or priest, who recites prayers and invocations to the ancestors.

The Akan people believe that the ancestors have the power to protect and guide the living, so it is important to keep them happy and appeased. As such, Akan death rites are seen as an opportunity to connect with the ancestors and seek their blessings and guidance.

The next step in Akan death rites is the funeral, which is a major event in Akan culture. Funerals are usually attended by large crowds of people, including family members, friends, and members of the community.

The funeral is a celebration of the deceased's life and achievements, and it is typically marked by singing, dancing, and the sharing of stories and memories.

The funeral also serves as an opportunity to announce the deceased's passing to the community and to express condolences to the family. It is a time for the community to come together and support each other in their grief.

After the funeral, the Akan people believe that the deceased has officially transitioned to the spiritual realm. However, they also believe that the deceased can continue to influence the living, so they often perform a series of rituals to honor and remember the deceased.

One of the most important of these rituals is the annual remembrance ceremony, which is held one year after the deceased's passing. During this ceremony, family members and friends come together to pour libations, offer food and drink, and share memories of the deceased.

TECHNOLOGY

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON THE GHANAIAN CULTURE

CHARLES NANA ASIEDU

Technology has had a significant impact on the culture of Ghana in recent years. This country has embraced technology and is using it to improve various aspects of daily life. Here are a few ways in which technology is affecting the culture of Ghana:

Improved communication:

Popular social media platforms in Ghana include Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, with many people using them to stay in touch with friends and family. For example, WhatsApp groups are commonly used for business networking and for organizing events.



Education:

The Ghana Education Service has launched an e-Learning platform, providing students with access to educational resources from anywhere in the world. The University of Ghana has also embraced technology, offering online courses and hosting virtual lectures.



Economic growth:

Ghana is home to several tech startups, such as Andela and mPharma, which are using technology to drive economic growth. The rise of e-commerce has also created new opportunities for businesses to reach customers online, with platforms like Jumia and Tonaton becoming popular in Ghana.



Cultural preservation:

The National Museum of Ghana is using technology to preserve the country's rich cultural heritage. The museum has digitized its collections, making them accessible to the public online. The Ghana Film Archive has also been established, preserving the country's rich film heritage.

New forms of Entertainment:

Streaming services like Netflix and Showmax are becoming increasingly popular in Ghana, allowing people to access a wide range of entertainment content from anywhere in the world. Online gaming is also growing in popularity, with many young people playing games like Call of Duty and FIFA online.



Technology has had a profound impact on the culture of Ghana. It has changed the way people communicate, learn, work, and entertain themselves. While there are still challenges to be addressed, such as digital inequality and the need for better internet infrastructure, the benefits of technology are undeniable and will continue to shape the culture of Ghana in the years to come.



2022 END-OF-YEAR PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETING HELD AT CENTRE FOR NATIONAL CULTURE, KUMASI FROM 22ND TO 24TH FEBRUARY, 2023.

CARL-RHULE JAMES

The 2022 edition of the end-of-year performance review meeting for first time was moved from Accra to Kumasi. The meeting saw the gathering of Directors and Accountants from the sixteen regions of Ghana.

The formal opening of the meeting was graced by the board chairman of National commission on culture (NCC) and the deputy minister for the tourism, arts and culture ministry, Mr. Mark Okraku Mantey and two other CEO's from the ministry. Mr. Kingsley Ntiamoah the CEO of Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) and Kojo Antwi for Ghana Tourism Development Cooperation (GTDC).

In his address the board chairman commended the Executive Director and the Commission for once again organising sure an important programme and doing so outside Accra. He very much appreciated the resolve of the Executive Director of the Commission in the organisation of NAFAC at 60 in Cape Coast. He add, that the ministry is passionate about cultural activities as it is passionate about activities of tourism.



In her speech the Executive Director of the National Commission on Culture madam Janet Edna Nyame, said the core activities of the Commission in ensuring effective and efficient operations within the Centres for National Culture across the country. She added that her office is particularly concerned about building capacities for effective management of the Centres and their resources, both human and material, and to ensure accountability and transparency towards achieving the desired goals of the Commission. She reiterated that the review meeting has been instituted by the Commission as a means of bringing the offices of the Regional Centres for National Culture closer to the Commission to appraise their performances and activities, identify implementation challenges or gaps, and to espouse pragmatic solutions towards the coming year.



She acknowledged the contribution of all regional directors but most especially the effort of the Ag. Regional Director of Cape Coast Madam Dorcas Salamatu Alhassan and her team for their efficient organisation of NAFAC @ 60 and hoped that the 2024 edition in the Bono East Region will be better and bigger than what was witnessed in Cape Coast. She charged the Bono East Director to as a matter of urgency, start working on the festival now as 2024 is just close by.

The Executive Director stated two other reasons for which the meeting was being held in Kumasi. the first was that, the Board of the Commission believed that as part of the efforts to reposition and brand the Commission is to identify the institution with a unique logo. This will complement efforts in making the Commission and the Centres for National Culture, better.



The second was the reunveiling of the Dr. A. A. Yaw Kyerematen's statue. The idea is to reemphasize the contributions of Dr. Kyerematen for the establishment of the CNC and for the initiation of the National Festival of Arts and Culture.



Picture Caption: The statue of Dr. A. A. Yaw Kyerematen was reunvailed by the Board Chairman of NCC and the Exeucive Director of NCC with support from the Kyerematen family.

WEAR GHANA 2023


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PRESENTS



WEAR GHANA FESTIVAL 23'
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