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Education for Liberation

Ghana's move from western to appropriate education system

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Claremont McKenna College
SIT – Ghana: African Diaspora Studies
Independent Study Project
Spring 2003

“It s sad that people are educated and still not liberated”^{**1}

^{**} Dr. Kofi Sam, Appropriate Technologist and former professor, Education” paper provided in interview by author, 28 April 2003, Cape Coast, notes taken manually, in possession of the author.

¹ Duah Ishmael, Linguistics Graduate Student at the University of Cape Coast, interview by author, 21 April 2003, UCC, notes taken manually, in possession of the author.

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It is hard to believe that this time of study has truly come to a close. As many who know me can attest, there were times when I did not believe that I would make it here, let alone make it through. If it were not for the care and support of bunches of wonderful people I probably would not have made it.

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why the innocent suffer, but in the midst of all the horrors in that makes me believe peace and love.

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Abstract

A western based education system that is used throughout Ghana's school system. Education is defined then the study looks at the education system and evaluates whether or not it is successfully educating students based on this definition. Observations are made, interviews carried out and surveys filled in order to gain an understanding of what Ghanaians know about their culture and themselves. People are in need of more knowledge about the society and the education system is one place where that information can be imparted. Suggestions are made for new teaching methods that can be used inside and outside of the school system.

Introduction

The, I suggest, is culture, the purpose and goal of all our upbringing our education from cradle to the grave – that we might be true and worthy Ghanaians and not imitation Englishmen – men and women with only a borrowed culture²

This study examines Ghana's education system by observing the direct products of the system, the people. Test scores in mathematics or English proficiency will not be used as a measurement tools, but rather knowledge, opinions and views that Ghanaians hold about their culture will be the standard by which quality of education is measured. "The goal of education, both traditional and formal is the continuance of society and it's members by passing along ideas, skills and practices"³, thus to investigate the success of an education system the efficiency of passing cultural values should be assessed.

Ghana, since gaining independence in 1957, has been turning to outside resources for funding to improve the education system. In the early years of post-colonialism Ghana received aid from European nations and western powers to develop its education systems.⁴ Recently, within the last couple of months, the Ghana accepted a \$5 million loan from the World Bank to educate children on the streets and fight against poverty. At the same time the World Vision Development organization was officially opening school blocks in seven communities in Ghana that had been donated because it is believed that "education is the best route to development".⁵ If almost 50 years after becoming an independent nation Ghana is still relying on large donations from other governments then there is a problem with the system that is presently in place.

Firstly the study will give the reader a brief overview of the history of Ghana's education system and contrast it with the education system of the west. The author will provide the definition of "education" as the term applies to this work, as well as defining other key terms. The means in which data was collected and the conclusions that can be drawn from its analysis will be expounded on. The study will also focus on potential solutions to the problems that are discussed. Finally the paper will be concluded with the shortcomings of this study and a look to future studies in this and similar fields.

Please note that in referring to the western world the author will not use a capital "W". This is not a typographical error, but a conscious decision made on the part of the author

² K. Twum Barima, *The Cultural Basis of Our National Development: The J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures 15th Series*. (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1985), 7

³ Moses K. Antwi, *Education, Society and Development in Ghana*. (Accra: Unimax Publishers Ltd, 1992), 209.

⁴ Paul Spector, *Improving Educational Quality for Sustainable Development in Africa*. (Institute for International Research, VA: Improving Education Quality Publication),5.

⁵ GTV News, 7pm, 24 February 2003, notes taken manually by author.

Section I – Education in pre-colonial and colonial Ghana

Ghana, before it was even known as Ghana, had a system of education, contrary to the ideas held by many of the explorers, missionaries and colonists who came to West Africa. The traditional education system, although not set up in the same structure as the European system, served as a means of acculturation. Traditional education operated to bring the individual into a level of social consciousness. Societal practices and values were introduced to members of a community through study of history, music, environmental studies, philosophy and rhetoric.⁶ However, with the arrival of Europeans on the coast of West Africa came new teaching methods.

The Islamic religion, which has been in Ghana for about 700 years,⁷ holds strong beliefs about education being continuous.⁸ There was the first system of formal education prior to the coming of the European schools.⁹ Muslim merchants would settle in communities and establish Quranic (Koranic) schools. In the early 19th century the spread of the Islamic religion, and in turn, their education system, has been attributed in part to the British and French, who preferred it to the traditional religions practiced by locals.¹⁰ Islam was seen as a lesser of two evils. Although their religion was deemed a “dignified religion for the African,”¹¹ the Muslims, too, were considered to be illiterates because they did not speak French or English.¹²

Western education was introduced in Ghana in the early 16th century, not because there was a high demand, but because it went along with Christianity.¹³ The first along the coast were established inside the castles and forts that were built by the Europeans.¹⁴ The Portuguese had a school operating out of the castle in Elmina as early as 1529. This school mainly served the male children that Europeans had with the local women. The subjects taught consisted of reading, writing, religion and occasionally math, all of which were taught in the language of the Europeans.¹⁵ The first government financed colonial schools established were followed by a steady influx of missionary schools.

Missionaries worked to spread western education while spreading their religious message. By 1638 the missionaries were attempting to move inland and make converts of the local people who did not live on the coast. As author Moses K Antwi describes it in his book, Education, Society and Development In Ghana (1992), the missionaries’ movement was driven by a care for the welfare of the people and “at their own expense” they worked to convert and educate and

⁶ Antwi, 23

⁷ Dr. M. Sey, ‘Islam in Ghana’, lecture, 21 March 2003, UCC, notes taken manually by author.

⁸ Antwi, 27.

⁹ Sey, lecture, 21 March 2003.

¹⁰ Antwi, 27

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Sey lecture, 21 March 2003.

¹³ Antwi, 29

¹⁴ Antwi, 29; Elmina Castle Tour, 7 February 2003, notes taken manually by author; Dr. Naana Opoku-Agyemang, “The Education of Women”, 10 March 2003, Wa, notes taken manually by author.

¹⁵ Antwi, 29-30, Dr. N. Opoku-Agyemang lecture, 10 March 2003

indigenous people in the “face of fearful odds”.¹⁶ The Bremen missionaries of North Germany established a school in the Volta region that taught a curriculum in the vernacular that placed and emphasis on craftsmanship.¹⁷ This type of education, which was centered on the needs of the people, was not a common occurrence in colonial West Africa. Ghanaians in Cape Coast established Mfantshipim Boy’s school in 1876 as an alternative to the missionary and castle schools and the kind of curricula being taught in the.¹⁸

In 1882 the Education Ordinance was put into place and it instilled the British education system as the system that would be used in all schools in British West Africa.¹⁹ The Europeans implemented their system in West Africa and continued to use it even though there was evidence of it not being sound. The colonial education structure was plagued with problems, like a high unemployment rate among those who had exited school, which there is record of in 1846. However, no moves were made to reform the education system. Little was taught to the students about themselves; local history and geography could not be found anywhere in the curricula. There was no coursework concerning economic, social or political issues of the local area.²⁰ Through western education Ghanaians were not being raised to know who they were. The teaching was completely shaped to educate locals to western ways.²¹ Almost 100 years later when textbooks with local history were available to schools, the notable works were written by men of European descent.²² In the words of the African proverb, until the lion writes his own story, the tale will always glorify the hunter. The lack of Ghanaian history books written by Ghanaians undoubtedly had an affect on how people in Ghana view history. This is important since knowing one’s own history is integral to knowing one’s identity.²³

During the colonial times there was an increasing demand for education as Africans began to associate formal western education with occupations, such as teaching, Interpreting, and being clerks and clergymen, in urban areas. The local people who were in direct contact with the colonialists drew a connection between formal education and a steady income, prestige, authority, and a chance to travel abroad. More schools were built to supply the demand for edcation.²⁴

When there came an official in colonial Ghana concerned with bringing change to the education system it was 1923. Governor Guggisberg, who realized that “education is the keystone of the ‘edifice forming the Government’s policy’, made sure that there was character building throughout the school system. In order for the character building to take place the governor

¹⁶ Antwi, 29.

¹⁷ Antwi, 31

¹⁸ Dr. N. Opoku-Agyemang lecture, 10 March 2003

¹⁹ Antwi, 31-2

²⁰ Ibid, 33.

²¹ Dr. N. Opoku-Agyemang, lecture 10 March 2003.

²² Ibid, 36

²³ Dr. Akosua Perbi, “History of Ghana/ The Slave Trade”, lecture, 5 March 2003, University of Ghana, Legon.

²⁴ Antwi, 31 - 2

insisted that post-primary institutions should be residential. In effect he removed the influence of family entirely from the equation of education, while instilling his character values.²⁵

Section II – *Running before crawling: Education in post-colonial Ghana*

Upon the arrival of independence in 1957 Ghana used education systems modeled on those of the European and western education systems were intended to fulfill the needs of an industrialized nation, which Ghana was not.²⁶ A country just starting down the road of modernization and globalization does not an education system that is based in a foreign language and meant for a population well beyond its present point. Ghana using English in the schools does serve functional purposes, seeing that a significant portion of the world is using English, however, the strong influence of the study of the English language shows a cultural dependence of Ghana's institutions.²⁷

Ghana's imitative habits in the field of education did not stop with curricula, but carried into education administration as well. Ghana, in trying to educate masses as quickly as possible, got into an economic bind. The finances of the newly independent country were not ready to support such explosive growth in the education sector. Ghana was not the only sub-Saharan African country experiencing these kinds of problems. Some sub-Saharan African countries that had one tenth of the gross domestic product (GDP) of larger more Industrialized countries devoted the same proportions of their national budget to education. An inordinate portion of the nations education budget was going to tertiary schooling although about 90% of students who entered primary school did not graduate from any sort of tertiary school (1994).²⁸

Are the problems Ghana and other sub-Saharan African countries are experiencing normal in the development process? Looking toward western, "developed" nations that use the same systems a comparison can be made. Europe and The United State of America took years from the dawn of the industrial age to reach 100% enrollment in their primary schools. Over the course of one 45 year long period. The United States of America's percentage of primary school students that moved on to secondary school increased by 26%. The majority of students completed primary school then went on to assist with the family business.²⁹ The people of the western world first saw to supporting the economic needs of their own nations and as their national budget became more stable their school systems increased in stability as well. These now industrialized nations had the benefit of there being no outside pressure for them to modernize. They could grow and evolve at their own pace.

²⁵ Antwi, 33 – 4.

²⁶ Spector, 5

²⁷ Bill Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Society Since 1800*. (London: Macmillan, 1984), 215.

²⁸ Spector, 5

²⁹ Ibid.

Ghana is trying to reach the same place where industrialized nations are in less than half the amount of time that those nations took.

Section III – *Education: What is it?*

A problem that faces many of today's developing nations is that large proportions of their populations are considered to be illiterate. Even those who were once leaders in their communities are labeled as uneducated. Ghana for instance is an oral culture, thus those who are proficient in oral literature should not be labeled as illiterate.³⁰ So the question becomes who decides what the standards are for literacy and education? For the purpose of the study the author will put forth a definition that will serve as the ruler by which education systems are measured

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary offers that the verb "to educate" is: to provide schooling for or train by formal instruction, especially in a skill, trade or profession. According to the dictionary to educate can also be "to develop mentally, morally or aesthetically especially by instruction". Another view puts forth that education is "information learned that equips individuals to be able to sustain life".³¹

Education is a combination of the pieces of information given in the other definitions. Education must equip and individual mentally, morally and physically to be able to survive in their environment. In order for any teaching to be categorized as education it must fit an individual with the tools necessary to adapt when placed in situations that are not exactly like the original learning environment. The essence of education is being able to defend the truths and values that have been instilled when placed in a situation that contradicts what is known and having the awareness when your views need to evolve.

A concept that is easily confused with education is the idea of indoctrination. The difference between, though subtle, is vital. Indoctrination gives individuals what they should believe rather than presenting the facts and allowing a conscious choice to be made. Education that is not neutral is indoctrination.³²

The ability to bestow information on others is a power that most individuals possess of which they are not aware. Educationists, who have gone to school study how to teach, often times are seen as the only conveyors of education. However, the role of educator can be filled by not only most people, but inanimate objects as well. Media is an example of a system that puts forth information that is often overlooked as a teacher. Having defined the terms Ghana's "education" system will be examined.

³⁰ Dr. N. Opoku-Agyemang, lecture, 10 March 2003.

³¹ Kofi Sam, Appropriate Technologist and former professor, "Education" paper provided in interview by author, 28 April 2003, Cape Coast, notes taken manually, in possession of the author.

³² Ibid.

Methodology

Ghana's education system was originally the overarching subject for this project. Specifically the incorporation of hands-on activities into the syllabus on the primary level was the intended topic of study. In order to gain an understanding of the syllabus and the amount of interactive learning tools being used it was imperative that classes be observed and students and teachers interviewed. The content of the syllabus was also essential to deciding what kind of activities could or should be used in conjunction with lectures, so a copy of the syllabus needed to be obtained.

Several of the P4 students of the University Primary School on the campus of the University of Cape Coast were interviewed individually and also participated in a group discussion with the author. There was an even number of male and female students interviewed whom ranged in age from 9 to 11 years. An informal set of interview questions were used to set the students at ease and to encourage free speaking. Occasionally questions were asked to guide the students toward particular areas of discussion. A sample of some of the questions asked is provided in Appendix A. The students' Integrated Science and Math teacher was also interviewed.

It was through the interviews with the students and review of some literary works that it became apparent that a new thesis needed to be proposed. Although still within the realm of reform of the education system, the new thesis focused on the relevance of the information taught in Ghana's education system, rather than how it is taught. The ineffectiveness of the present system is examined by looking at various aspects of the present culture. The intention behind researching this subject matter was not to only highlight the problem, but also to look to finding solutions.

The strongest and most prevalent form of data collection was the use of personal observations done by the author. It was through observation that the concepts, which provided the foundation for this work, were established. Furthermore, it was observation that led to the education theory that is presented. Other data sources were used to buttress the conclusions that were drawn after observations had taken place.

Interviews and informal discussions served as a main support for the topic of study. People of all ages were talked to and provided insight about the concepts that are held by many Ghanaians and where those ideas stem from. Although the majority of interviewees had a direct association within the academic world, the men and women interviewed came from a wide variety of academic backgrounds. Students from the primary levels up to graduate levels as well as faculty and staff and contributed to data collection.

Written literary sources provided the technical information that could not come from interviews and observations. Books and reports covering every aspect of education could be found. There was data to be found about all facets of education from many different time periods.

With so much information readily available it was important not to let literature become the driving force behind the study. The written works proved helpful in giving me hard facts to support the ideas and theories that I developed from fieldwork.

Surveys were used in addition to the other forms of data. The surveys were a good source of numbers and statistical evidence. Although surveys provide some general information, they lack the in depth explanation that can be derived from personal interviews. The surveys did prove to be a gateway for discussion. The author held conversation with survey takers.

Two different sets of survey questions were used. The first survey (Appendix B) was given on 15th of April to 21 students of Holy Child Secondary School, a female boarding institution in Cape Coast. The students were selected at random; the only parameter was an attempt to have an even amount of students in each of the form levels. They were between the ages of 15 and 19. After the girls completed their surveys a group discussion was held in an open forum style. Some students who had not participated in the survey joined the discussion. The discussion was started by giving the students permission to put forth any question that they wished.

The second survey (Appendix C) was a variation of the first survey. It covered a broader spectrum of information, but still had many questions of the same questions. The survey was distributed to people at random on the University of Cape Coast campus on the 17th of April. There were 38 surveys distributed to both women and men alike and most of them were filled in the presence of the author and returned immediately. Survey participants ranged in age from 18 years to 54 years of age. Several people engaged the author in further discussion after filling out their questionnaires. Some simply wanted to know what was the subject matter that was under study, whereas others wanted to express feelings of frustration with the present issues in Ghana and in the world.

The theoretical nature of this literary piece made data collection a unique process. The data collected will be presented and analysed with the sensitivity that is due such important material.

Discussion

Section I – The Problem Is There

Walking through the campus of the University of Cape Coast (UCC) something seems a little off. It takes a moment to become completely aware of what it is, but then it hits with a flash, it feels like any school in the United States. In a different country, on a different continent, it feels as though I am on the campus of any predominantly black university in the States.³³ The overwhelming majority of students are in western clothing and you hear pidgin, a version of English being spoken .

The odd phenomenon of feeling transported back to the U.S. does not only take place when walking through UCC's campus, but at the University of Accra, Legon and even when in town in some of the larger cities of Ghana. It is not rare to hear one of the latest songs from the U.S. top ten music list – Ja Rule, Nelly, Eve, etc. – or to hear a soft rock classic, like Elton John, Brian Adams, or Michael Bolton. As if this were not enough to send a foreigner into a fit of confusion, listening carefully will reveal that most of the locals around know the words to the songs.

How can this influx and open acceptance of western culture be explained? There are several lies that are being told to the people of Ghana. The misconception is being spread that the United States is heaven;³⁴ that any place outside of Ghana is better. Ghanaians have been told they have nothing to offer, in order to be something they have to “globalize”.³⁵ Another idea that is being passed down through the generations is that nothing from Ghana is good enough. These few comments have the power to shatter self-esteem and ruin an individual's, an entire nation's, belief in themselves. A person [in Ghana] has to be truly confident to believe they have something to offer.³⁶

The repercussions that have been caused by the negative information Ghanaians have been given about themselves can be seen in what people do and heard in the comments that are made. Individuals in the SIT African Diaspora Studies (ADS) group have been told by local women how much prettier they are because of their lighter complexions. The continued market for skin lightening creams gives testament to the fact that the desire for a complexion closer to that of Europeans is not the desire of a few. There is large poster advertising such bleaching creams in the store in the hostel where I reside that is predominantly inhabited by locals.

It is not in skin complexion alone that people strive to look more European. A young woman in town was noted to say that she wanted her hair to be like that of a white female sitting

³³ Pandwe Gibson, informal interview with, 22 April 2003, UCC.

³⁴ Holy Child Senior Secondary students, open forum discussion, 15 April 2003, Cape Coast, notes in possession of author; Jessamyn Mayher, informal interview after trip to Komenda, UCC.

³⁵ Professor Takyiwaa Manu, University of Ghana, Legon, ‘Africa and African-Americans’ lecture, 7 March 2003, Accra, notes in possession of author.

³⁶ Ibid.

nearby.³⁷ My experience thus far with having natural hair in this country tells me that I'm moving in the wrong direction in the eyes of many. I should be moving closer to the European ideal. I have even been told that I may be considered insane by people who see me with my hair without chemicals in it.³⁸ After giving surveys to 21 Holy Child students, when there was an opportunity for open discussion, the first question posed to me was why I wear my hair natural. A salonist informed me that she has no customers who have natural hair. There was a sign on her wall that read:

"Flowing hair is back: hair that moves when you move...."³⁹ This is a problem because there are very few, if any, Ghanaian women who are born with "flowing" hair.

It is not only women who view lighter skin and long flowing hair to be the epitome of beauty, men as well seek these things. The popular local song "*M'Obrounyi*" is a very public example of the desire for a woman who is not local, or at least who does not look like she is. The term *obrounyi* is used to refer to anyone who is a foreigner, although it is most often used specifically for Caucasians.⁴⁰ Men often inquire as to why I do not per my hair. One man referred to it as "making my hair nice".⁴¹ The ideals of beauty have been adulterated by the desire for anything western.

These ideals are present for men as well as women. The men who wear the most western labels, such as Fubu and Tommy Hilfiger, are the most sought after males. One young man on campus explained that university students will go abroad and work the most menial tasks to make money to be able to afford the western clothes that are considered to be most stylish.⁴² Outside of the young adults, those who older are also willing to work jobs well below their training in western nations.⁴³

Ghana's culture is being eroded away and cultural habits are being lost without people realizing their worth.⁴⁴ It does not take much to realize that as a foreigner in Ghanaian clothing I stick out in Ghana more than I blend. This has been the consensus among the American students here with SIT's African Diaspora Studies program. Dr. Kofi Sam, speaking on the loss of cultural practices in Ghana, mentions the example waist beads and how the original use behind them has been lost.⁴⁵ His statement is supported by the fact that of the 59 people I surveyed, only two knew the real function of the waist beads. This fact would have been completely lost to me had it not

³⁷ Female bread seller, informal interview by author, 4 April 2003, Kotokraba Market, Cape Coast.

³⁸ Anonymous, informal interview by author, 14 February 2003, UCC, Cape Coast.

³⁹ Barbara Kyei Mensah, Salonist of Comb & Scissors Palace Beauty Salon, interview by author, 3 March 2003, Cape Coast, notes taken manually, in the possession of author.

⁴⁰ *obrounyi* is a Fante term that holds many meaning and does not transliterate into English.

⁴¹ Male taxi driver, informal interview by author, 21 April 2003, Science Taxi Station, UCC, Cape Coast.

⁴² Male UCC student, informal interview by author, Cape Coast.

⁴³ Manu, lecture 7 March 2003.

⁴⁴ Rev. Prof. S.K. Adjepong, interview by author, 14 April 2003, UCC, notes taken manually, in possession of author; Koiichiro Matsuuro, Director General of UNESCO, Achiaw, Nehemia Owusu, "Science, Technology Hold Trump Card." *The Daily Graphic*, No. 148768. 10 March 2003., front page.

⁴⁵ Sam, interview 28 April 2003.

been for Dr. Kofi Sam, because the older woman that I questioned to find out the purpose of waist beads misinformed me about their use, driving home the point that meaning of waist beads has almost been completely lost.

Further evidence of the Ghana's culture slowly being eradicated is seen in the results of the surveys that were filled out. It is important for the reader to be aware of the fact that almost the entirety of the group that were interviewed are presently students or faculty in academic institution of Ghana. Of the Holy Child Students who were surveyed 19% could not name the first prime minister of Ghana. Out of all the people surveyed overall 11% could not name Dr. Osaagyefo Kwame Nkrumah. More surprising was the numbers of people who could not name the clans of their parents or ten crops in Ghana. These are all signs of Ghana moving away from its own history and culture.

The acronym AIDS – Acquired Import Deficiency Syndrome.⁴⁶ – has been used to refer to the desire for all things that can be imported. This “disease”, which has infected multitudes in Ghana, is very serious because it is going undetected. Education can be the cure Acquired Import Deficiency Syndrome. As one form 3 student from Holy Child said, “we have to tell younger students that we have more in Ghana” in order to make them want to stay and want what is here. However, it does not need to stop with the younger students, the adults must be told as well.

⁴⁶ Dr. Kofi Sam, “Appropriate Technology in Ghana”, lecture, 31 March 2003, UCC.

Section II –

What is keeping the cycle going

The education system, although it may not be teaching the wrong things, is not effectively teaching the right things. The curriculum has a strong academic focus. There are sections in the JSS social studies syllabus titled, “How Ghana Cooperates with Other Nations”, “Tourism and Leisure in Ghana” and “Keeping Useful Institutions in our Community Active”,⁴⁷ yet how useful will that be to a population primarily comprised of agriculturalists and pastoralists.⁴⁸

In every year of primary school there is a section devoted to the physical environment and how it should be cared for,⁴⁹ and yet no one seems to hesitate to throw empty water bags to the ground. The primary school also addresses personal hygiene and the syllabus even makes a note to teachers that they should discourage their students from using of hair chemicals.⁵⁰ Upon my visit to the University Primary School, every female teacher I saw had treated hair. There is room in the curricula for education about the land in the environment, but two teachers informed me of how field trips are rare.⁵¹ The information without the hands on ability to see it at work is not an effective way of helping students learn.

People like to believe that with more schools Ghana is moving closer to development. However, the nation still imports more than it exports⁵² and 31% of Ghana’s population was below the poverty level (1992).⁵³ Worse than the physical number is what is going on in the minds of Ghanaians. 27% of the people surveyed would leave Ghana and would do so within 24hrs of notification if given the chance. Three individuals said they would leave even if it meant they could never return. Although that number is not statistically significant, it still speaks volumes.

It is evident that the message that the west is best is coming in louder than any messages that try to tell people otherwise. Ghanaians are participating in actions that are damaging to their pride and detrimental to their health. People are willing to accept looking more “western” at almost any cost. Individuals are willing to leave everyone and everything they have known for the unknown. The media’s role in helping to indoctrinate Ghana’s people is a large one. People take such shows as *Passions*, which give a very skewed and inaccurate view of American life, to be the truth. One member of the SIT ADS group had multiple people liken her to one of the characters on the show because they share the same name. Another member was said to be evil because one of the characters on the show who is a witch wears a similar bracelet. Although not all of Ghana takes the media as being the exact truth, “the images that we receive through the media have been

⁴⁷ Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies: Junior Secondary School (Accra: Ministry of Education, Sept. 2001)

⁴⁸ Spector, 12.

⁴⁹ Teaching Syllabus for Environmental Studies: Primary 1-6 (Accra: Ministry of Education, Sept. 1999), iv

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Yao Berima, JSS Social Studies Teacher of Komenda, interview by author, 22 February 2003, Komenda, notes taken manually, in the possession of author; Alex Kofi Aikins, Primary 4 Integrated Science and Math teacher, University Primary School, interview by author, 10 April 2003, University Primary School, Cape Coast, notes taken manually, in possession of author.

⁵² “Ghana Home Page: Economic Indicators”, www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/economy/statics_28 April 2003.

⁵³ CIA – The World Factbook 2002, Ghana”, www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbok, 28 April 2003.

so well constructed and packaged that for most people these images are the definitive article. In other words, these images become the reality through which many people look at the world".⁵⁴

It is time Ghanaians are given accurate information about both outside world and Ghana itself. These are problems in Ghana, but there is no perfect place. The people of Ghana need an education system that applies to this environment and to their needs. Education should be practical and appropriate⁵⁵ and provide people with the facts so that conscious and informed decisions can be made about the worth of Ghana and the value of the western world.

⁵⁴ William B. Ackah, *Pan-Africanism: Exploring the Contradictions*. (Ashgate, 1999), 8.

⁵⁵ Dr. Kofi Sam, lecture 31 March 2003; Sam, interview 22 April 2003; Sam, interview 28 April 2003; 3 Form 3 Holy Child Senior Secondary Students, interview by author, 15 April 2003, Cape Coast, notes taken Manually, in the possession of author

“Knowledge is Power” – Sir Francis Bacon

Information is filtering into Ghana in several ways. Thus, to bring about change, all the various sources that indoctrinate the population will need modification. There are steps that are integral to getting Ghana started down the right track.

Step One – *Change the definition of “education” and “educators”*

There are words and ideas that the western world has defined with respect to itself and these definitions have been accepted and applied universally. The word “education” is an example of a term that is used in a variety of societies, yet in each context it is almost always understood to mean the western style of formal education. Ghana needs to reclaim education and define it in way that is suitable for Ghanaians. It is slowly coming to the awareness of those who are in the academic world that “education [is] seen to always occur within a particular society, given by the society, for the society”.⁵⁶ It is not necessary for the style of education used in Ghana to be adapted to any other nations needs, but Ghana’s. the tactics used to educate and the end goals of education will vary between peoples and nations.⁵⁷

Upon the arrival of a new concept of education will come the freedom to let the present education system evolve and adapt to an appropriate one. Dr. Kofi Sam proposes that at the tertiary level schools should require students to spend a year doing field study. He believes that this will lead to a greater sense of responsibility to the community. The research done by students would be specific to Ghana and meeting Ghana’s needs.⁵⁸ The output, or products, of the education system should be information that can be used to advance Ghana.⁵⁹ The “brain drain”, the migration of educated professionals to foreign countries, is seen as a major problem,⁶⁰ but if the education system was designed to produce an output that benefited the country then the brain drain would no longer be an issue.⁶¹ Individuals would leave, but all the products of the education system would be able to help Ghana move forward towards development, so the impact of the departure of a few individuals would not as great.

Redefining education allows everyone to become an educator, not only the few that carry degrees. As Paul Spector, a researcher of education, says, the use of institutional certifications as standards for hire should be discontinued. Programs should be devised that allow jobs to be given

⁵⁶ Antwi, 23.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Sam, interview, 28 April 2003.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Duah Ishmael, Linguistics Graduate Student at the University of Cape Coast, interview by author, 21 April 2003, UCC, notes taken manually, in possession of the author; Marion King, local woman, 65 years in age, interview by author, 19 April 2003, Cape Coast, notes taken manually, in the possession of author.

⁶¹ Sam, interview 28 April 2003.

based on experience to allow those who have not been through formal schooling to take jobs for which they are qualified.⁶² The members of the community who have valuable experience with the use of herbal medicines, farming, fishing, crafts and other culturally rich traditions could pass their knowledge on to younger generations. The continuance of societal practices would be proof that education was taking place.

Step Two – Becoming aware that everything can be an educator

In order to change the education that students are receiving it is necessary to re-evaluate the school systems. Yet, as was pointed out previously, formal schooling is not the only way that the community is fed information and school students are not the only people learning. To do a complete overhaul of the education system would be useless without also making changes in other aspects of society.

The job of moving a country toward development is a large one that cannot be left in the hands of the few who control the government. However, Ghana's administration will not get the citizens of Ghana to follow without exhibiting a willingness to step out of what is comfortable for them and began to make a change. An editorial, in *The Ghanaian Times*, written by a concerned local, addressed just this issue. The article called for a cease to the wearing of imported clothing by head officials and a return to local clothing. The individual also questioned the example that was being set for the children: "what are we teaching the children – to become second rate Europeans?"⁶³ Although the elected and appointed officials do have the responsibility of leading the country both law it is imperative that they also lead by example.

The media is an effective teacher. The television couples every message with an image and, occasionally, a memorable tune or jingle. Young children can recite the entire "Stop AIDS – Love Life" commercial.⁶⁴ The message that is sent out to the public needs to be one that is beneficial to the betterment of Ghana. The suggestion that the Media be cut off entirely from the western world was put forth.⁶⁵ One researcher felt that Ghana should borrow media from other nations and stop trying to create their own and "reinvent the wheel in the name of nationalism".⁶⁶ Measures taken to adjust the medias influence need not go to either of these extremes. Television, radio and other forms of media can be regulated, so that what is allowed to be seen or heard can be selected carefully. Public shows can be used to counter those false images that are put out on private stations that cannot be stopped.

⁶² Spector, 6.

⁶³ Kweku Asare, "Our Leaders Must Dress Like Ghanaians", *The Ghanaian Times*, No 13,997, ISSN 0855-1502, 15 Februaary 2003, 6.

⁶⁴ Authors observations of the Asomani children.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, interview by author, 15 April 2003, Cape Coast, notes taken manually, in the possession of author.

⁶⁶ Spector, 2.

There should be community programs created that help those who are in school to be educated further. Informal education programs can be introduced to equip all citizens with basic skills.

Step Three – Making a Choice

The people of Ghana need to make the conscious decision to want a change. When the question “how can the government make Ghanaians want to stay in Ghana?” was posed to people, the answer most often given was the need to fix the economy.⁶⁷ If Ghanaians wait for the government to stabilize the economy alone a change will never occur. The people of Ghana need to begin taking action instead of waiting for the government.

Dr. Kofi Sam is an example of a Ghanaian who has made the choice to bring about change in his own life. Dr. Sam is using the materials that are found on Ghana’s land to supply his needs. He has created a soap made from banana peels and other natural sources.⁶⁸ He has also decreased his water bill by over 50% by collecting rain water and using it to flush his toilets and for other needs that do not require treated water.⁶⁹ Like Kofi Sam and a few others, Ghanaians cannot only hear of the changes that need to take place, they must also take action.

⁶⁷ Ishmael, interview 21 April 2003; King, interview 19 April 2003; Holy Child Students, open forum 15 April 2003; Survey participant, informal interview 17 April 2003.

⁶⁸ Sam, lecture 31 March 2003.

⁶⁹ Sam, interview 22 April 2003.

“Is there more to development than simply rediscovering what has been lost?”⁷⁰

The topic that has been addressed is being discussed and debated in all areas of academia. Is something as simple as education the answer to the question of what countries need in order to develop? The response is a firm and resounding yes. The solution to development issues has always been education, but trying to apply a system that has proven successful for one place to a completely different environment has been the obstacle that has continued to inhibit progress. In the words of President Kufour, Africans need to obtain a quality and culturally relevant education for development to occur.⁷¹

The European style education system did not work in 1882 when it was first officially instituted, nor is it working now. The formal school system removed the family and the society from being contributors to education. The study shown that there is a need to reintroduce these other influences as valid sources of information. Incorporating the community within the education will lead to the greater sense of nationalism that is necessary for forward progress.

The study, although it supports the hypothesis made, is flawed. Various aspects of the research acted as a hindrance to the collection of data and the creation of the report. The largest factor that served as a constraint on the research was time. The allotted month for gathering data and compiling it for presentation did not allow much time for in depth case studies. In order to obtain an accurate assessment of people’s cultural knowledge and opinions about the education system a broad range of people should be surveyed or interviewed. Ideally people of all ages and educational backgrounds should be represented in the data. However, there are many individuals who are not able to read making it impossible to gather information from them in any way other than personal interview, which takes a considerable amount of time. Diversity in the sample group is sacrificed for sample size. A large amount of surveys were passed out, but it limited most of the data collected to those who had reached a certain level in academia.

The topic of study is one that is theoretical in nature and this posed a problem over the course of the independent study project. Ideas that are abstract are difficult to convey across language barriers. It was difficult to avoid questions that were not somewhat leading when interviewing people who were not familiar with the terminology pertaining to the topic. It was necessary to ask questions in a way that could be comprehended. The alternative was to exclude from the study those who could not understand complex and vague ideas when they are presented in English, further limiting the population being studied.

In addition to being theoretical, the material being researched is also emotionally provoking since the issue is still being dealt with presently. People often got on the defensive when the topic

⁷⁰ Ackah, 4.

⁷¹ Achiaw, Nehemia Owusu, “Science, Technology Hold Trump Card.” *The Daily Graphic*, 148768. 10 March 2003, front page.

was broached, taking offense to what was taken as a critique of the culture. Understandable though it may be, it caused interviewees to give information with more of a bias than was inevitable from the start. The data collected was further skewed by the perceptions held about the interviewer. The gender and Nationality of the person conducting the interview affected how the interviewees responded to questions. An American coming from what is considered to be a “higher” culture may appear to be condescending, when only asking questions.

In the future when the study is recreated changes should be made in order to eradicate the present problems. There should be time that allows for individual interviews with a significant portion of the sample group, especially those who cannot express themselves in written word. The interviewer should be someone who can speak the language of the subject being interviewed in order to alleviate any misunderstandings that may arise due to a difference in languages spoken. If possible the interviewer and interviewee should be of the same gender so that discomfort caused by cross-gender communication can be avoided. Although this would be beneficial, it is not pertinent to the success of the study.

There are many potential studies that could stem from this study and the issues that are brought up in this study. Some of the information presented in this work is the result of studies done through use of government funds from other nations, including the United States. A study that looks into the original source of donor funds, the motivation of the governments that provide funding and how these nations benefit from the information that is gathered would be enlightening. The study established a major problem with the focus of the education system in Ghana, and although an integral issue, it is not the only problem that is being faced. In order to continue moving forward reform cannot stop after the first steps have been taken. Researchers should investigate further such things as second language acquisition and how nations are affected when teachers teach and students learn in a language other than the one that is native to them. The study can be taken even deeper to look specifically at the feasibility of Ghana being able to evolve into a system where everything is done in the vernacular.

To Ghanaians who are not only desirous of change, but also are taking up the fight against continuance of a cycle of erosion of Ghanaian culture, be encouraged. Whether working to further educate a single individual or working to bring multitudes into an awareness of the riches Ghana holds, on whatever scale it may be let the words of Marcus Garvey be a beacon of light at the end of a dark and seemingly endless tunnel:

“God and Nature first made us what we are, and then out of our own creative genius we made ourselves what we want to be. Follow always that great law. Let the sky and God be our limit, and eternity our measurement...” Marcus Garvey⁷²

⁷² Marcus Garvey, “African Fundamentalism” quoted in Martin, T(ed), *African Fundamentalism; A Literary Cultural Anthology of Garvey’s Harlem Renaissance* (1991), 6., found in Achah, William B. *Pan-Africanism: Exploring the Contradictions*. (Ashgate,1999), 3.

Good things can come from Ghana and the Ghanaian people have the capability to produce them.

Appendix A

<p>What are subjects are you learning?</p> <p>What is your favorite subject?</p> <p>How many students are in your class?</p> <p>Would you want a smaller class?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Why or why not? <p>Do you learn science?</p> <p>Do you do experiments during your science lessons?</p>
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Table 1: General outline of interview questions for University Primary School level 4 students.

(please turn over sheet and answer questions on the back when you are finished this side)

Appendix B

Fun Survey

Age _____ Level in School or Level Finished _____

Town you are from _____ Town of your parents _____

Language(s) spoken at home _____

Who was the first prime minister of Ghana?

What date and year did Ghana gain its independence?

What is your mother's clan ?

What is your father's clan?

Who was the first president of the United States?

When you enter a room from which direction do you greet people?

What day does a newborn baby receive his/her name?

What does the United States celebrate its independence day?

Name the Big Six of Ghana.

Name five tribes of Ghana.

What are 10 crops that are native to Ghana?

Why does a woman wear waist beads?

Name 3 traditional wraps of cloth for men and name 3 traditional wraps of head cloth for women.

Circle the names that you are familiar with:

GTP	batik	Versace
Fubu	Nike	Adidas
Levis	Cowrie	Kente
ATL	Adinkra	Polo

Circle the names that you are familiar with:

Kojo Antwi	Backstreet
Ja Rule	Paapa Yankson
KK Kabobo	Christina
Celine Dion	Puff Daddy
Micheal Bolton	Rex Omar
Nana Acheampong	Boyz 2 Men
Gyedu Ambolley	Akwesi Ampoto Adjei

(please turn over sheet and answer questions on the back when you are finished this side)

If you were given the chance opportunity to go to United States would you leave?

If you were told that you must leave tomorrow would you leave?

If you were told that once you leave Ghana you could never return would you leave?

(please turn over sheet and answer questions on the back when you are finished this side)

Appendix C

Fun Survey

Age _____ Level in School or Last Level Finished _____

Town you are from _____ Town of your parents _____

Language(s) spoken at home _____

Who was the first prime minister of Ghana?

What date and year did Ghana gain its independence?

What is your mother's clan?

What is your father's clan?

Who was the first president of the United States?

When you enter a room from which direction do you greet people?

What day does a newborn baby receive his/her name?

When does the United States celebrate its independence day?

Name the Big Six of Ghana.

What are 10 crops that are native to Ghana?

Why does a woman wear waist beads?

Name 3 traditional wraps of cloth for men and name 3 traditional wraps of head cloths for women.

Who is Yaa Asantehenwa?

Who wrote Ghana's National Anthem?

What is the first line of Ghana's National Anthem?

(please turn over sheet and answer questions on the back when you are finished his side)

Circle the names that you are familiar with:

Kojo Antwi
Ja Rule
K.K Kabobo
Celine Dion
Micheal Bolton

Nana Acheampong
Gyedu Ambolley
Backstreet Boys
Paapa Yankson
Christina Aguilera

Puff Daddy
Rex Omar
Boyz 2 Men
Akwesi Ampofo Adjei

Who is Ama Ata Aidoo?

If you were given the chance or opportunity to go the United States would you leave?

If you were told that you must leave tomorrow would you leave?

If you were told that once you leave Ghana you could never return would you leave?

Thank you for completing the survey. If you have any additional comments for please write them below.

*** Note: Only last three questions were on this page of the survey

(please turn over sheet answer question on the back when you are finished this side)

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