

Report of the First Exploratory Meeting of European GaDangme Associations

St. Paul's Parish Church, Tottenham, London
29th June 2007



Facilitators

- ✍ Alhaji SA Abbey, Netherlands
- ✍ Pastor Nii Okai Am-Quaye, Netherlands
- ✍ Naadu Tse Awuley Doku, UK
- ✍ Nii Laryea, France
- ✍ Charles Quist, UK
- ✍ Ade Sawyerr, UK

10th July 2007

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1 Opening Prayer

Pastor Nii Okai Am-Quaye, GDF Netherlands, Chair

2 Introductions

Participants all had to opportunity to introduce themselves stating the country they came from, their role in their organisations and their objectives for attending the session.

3 Welcome address

Dr. Vince Padi, GDF UK Chair

In his welcome address Vince the Chair of GaDangme Foundation acting as hosts for the session provided a background of how the idea of the conference came from a radio programme that had been hosted by Nii Yartey of GFM and how the groups themselves had slowly worked towards the development of the idea and what should form the basis of the conference.

He hoped that the conference would meet the expectation of all participants and that in order to ensure that the conference came up with some tangible results he had asked some GaDangme process facilitators to assist in the deliberations. He expected that they would provide structure to the event.

He stressed that some planning and gone into the organisation of the event and introduced the facilitators for the day. He proceeded to hand over the conduct of the sessions to the facilitators

4 Ground rules

The facilitators led the conference through the development of the ground rules for the session. This was deemed as very important to enable the session retain some rigour and for the conference to have ownership of the ground rules as established so that they would be adhered to be all.

Members contributed to this development and the ground rules are attached in the Appendix

5 Morning Group Work

In the morning the group was divided into 5 groups to consider:

1. What make us feel good about being a GaDangme
2. What make us feel bad or not so good about being a GaDangme

Each group was asked to consider the above issues and to appoint a spokesperson to feed back to the entire group.

These following were the general themes that were fed back from the groups.

5.1 Feeling good about being a GaDangme

- ? The seat of government and the capital for the country is located in GaDangme land.
- ? Proud because of our rich heritage, culture and festivities such as Homowo and Dipo.
- ? The part played by GaDangmes in Ghana's independence.
- ? Love for the characteristics of the Ga people, including being friendly and happy people.
- ? Feel good about passing on our heritage to my children.
- ? Proud about our attitude; proud within and content with the little they have.
- ? Pride of GaDangme names.
- ? GaDangmes are peace loving, generous, and flexible in everything they do.
- ? Proud that Ga and Dangme are no longer divided but act as one people (GaDangme).
- ? In the past people like the Gas they even claim to be Gas.
- ? Natural talent such excelling in sports.
- ? GaDangme people are welcoming and accommodating.

5.2 Feeling less comfortable about being GaDangme

- ? Not nurturing our talents.
- ? Lack of unity and solidarity.
- ? Lack of self-confidence.
- ? Too liberal and accommodating.
- ? Very forgiving and not fighting for their rights.
- ? Disregard for authority.
- ? Not good team players.
- ? No foresight
- ? GaDangme people are easily swayed.
- ? They fail to favour their own.
- ? We lack unity in every area of our actions.
- ? We are selfish
- ? We expose ourselves by looking down on one another in form of Titles.
- ? Lack of respect for one another.

5.3 What we hope to achieve from this meeting

- ? Need for a new forum to give us a platform to voice out our problems.
- ? To have our own radio station.
- ? One voice, one harmony within members, respect for the organisation, commitment to oneself and the organisation.
- ? Visits from the large organisations like The Foundation to the sub-organisations.
- ? Collectively, to identify our problems to find a solution to solve them and to move forward.
- ? To re-educate GaDangme people both inside and outside Ghana.
- ? Better link between GaDangme (Europe) and Ghana.
- ? To start to re-educate our chiefs.

5.4 Other comments:

What individual contributions we can commit in the future to this process forward. Some individuals volunteered the following commitments.

- ? President of a wider group
- ? Public Relations
- ? Vice President
- ? Advisor/Organiser.

6 Summary of Morning Session

The afternoon session started with a summary of the key point that had been raised in the morning.

The negatives arising from all the groups were summarised under the following key points:

- ? Selfishness
- ? Lack of leadership
- ? Lack of unity
- ? Lack of steadfastness
- ? All these culminating in lack of a voice for GaDangme

The positives however far outweighed the negatives if we were intent on working on these. The positives could be summarised as:

- ? Great history
- ? Rich cultural heritage
- ? Accra as the Capital of Ghana
- ? Stronger unity between Ga and Dangme, a greater awareness and recognition that our destinies are linked

There were several ways that delegates were interested in contributing to the GaDangme cause.

Most felt that they were prepared to serve in any organisation that was directed at resolving GaDangme issues but they however felt that the key issue that needed addressing related to education in all its facets.

7 Group Work – Identifying Key Problems

4 small groups to identify current key problems areas for us to focus on Groups identified the following areas.

- ✍ **Group 1- Lack of Communication**
- ✍ **Group 2- Education, Education, Education**
- ✍ **Group 3- One Voice; Unity of purpose**
- ✍ **Group 4- Strong Effective Leadership**

8 Plenary – Brainstorm Solutions

Brainstorm ideas identifying solutions to key problems identified in during the group work

8.1 Lack of Communication

- ? Our radio station in Ghana outside of the GBC
- ? GaDangme newspaper
- ? Also TV Channel
- ? Use all media for communication including CDs and DVDs
- ? Vision
- ? For Radio – a project is already underway from Switzerland which requires everyone's support
- ? Develop print media – along the lines of 'Mansralo' and 'Mijaku' lines
- ? Men folk should take their responsibilities seriously too many single mothers borne out of a desire by men to have children everywhere but none of the responsibility
- ? Develop communication into wider issues – health, education, economic security etc etc.
- ? New ideas okay but essential to build on ideas already off the ground e.g. Obonu, GFM etc
- ? Strive for one nation with one voice
- ? One united leadership means better communication

8.2 Education, Education, Education

- ? Make it our responsibility (not govt's) to educate our children
- ? Education must be linked to cultural values
- ? Too much emphasis on western education detracts our culture
- ? Organisations need to adopt children to help others in Ghana
- ? We need to let our children know education is our major concern
- ? Examples of good practice - some individuals already sponsoring families member and being rewarded in various ways by the results of the children Requires immense effort but not beyond reach for us to adopt family members to start with
- ? Some organisation are already sponsoring up to 20 children
- ? We must supplement Ga Traditional council work
- ? People understand importance of education but cannot afford it, and we must support such people
- ? Everyone one of our many organisations should strive to adopt at least 5 children for adoption
- ? Help to the brightest kids first
- ? Create employment by focusing on vocational education as well
- ? Ga Dangme Heritage has a educational project which should be a beacon for all
- ? Education must include sex education as well to protect our youth especially young girls.

8.3 One Voice; & Strong effective Leadership

- ? Associations and Groups should be stronger
- ? Executives/leadership to create a Europe-wide group
- ? Concern about lack of leadership
- ? Require Leadership that will coordinate all groups
- ? Do we need to revamp current structures; or
- ? Create new ones entirely?
- ? Need to have a system which ensures leadership by collective responsibility not just few individuals
- ? Lack of vision – we need visionaries
- ? Amalgamate all GaDangme associations into one big European group
- ? Can GDF London and GaDangme Council be revamped to support formation of a new Europe wide group?
- ? Need for one office to coordinate activities
- ? Careful selection of officers – not based on friends and nepotism
- ? We must have leaders with vision
- ? Also vet officers - especially financial officers, carefully
- ? We must ensure this meeting continues somehow
- ? We must provide leadership to the rest of GaDangme in Europe
- ? There must be feedback to all organisations
- ? Find ways of burying our differences
- ? Support for appointment of executive group to take ideas forward

9 Conclusion - 'Way Forward'

An important issue that arose out of the discussion was the explanation by some delegates of the need for a European wide organisation that would be more powerful than the existing sister organisations that are grouped at the conference.

The fact of European Union is with us and Europe takes a critical look at how it deals with other countries from that strategic approach of Europe. This makes it necessary for any group that wishes to engage with any part of Africa in terms of problem solving to adopt a Europe wide approach.

Whilst there were delegates who were intent on forging ahead with the development of a new organisation, it was useful to first determine what that new organisation would be working towards and what were expected to be its main activities.

It was therefore agreed by all that the conference would select a steering committee that would be responsible for furthering the deliberations of the conference.

It was decided that delegates be asked to volunteer to this steering committee.

The committee has been charged with the duty of setting out the roadmap or blueprint for bringing together all GaDangme organisations in Europe under a greater GaDangme organisation in Europe. The 7-member Committee include the following:

- ✍ Solomon Awah, Belgium
- ✍ Theresa Boye-Doe, UK
- ✍ Sarah Coleman, German
- ✍ Carl Lokko, Germany
- ✍ Nii Laryea, France
- ✍ Pastor Nii Okai Amoo-Quaye, Netherlands
- ✍ Mr Enoch Laryea, London

10 Recommendation

It was not possible at the conference to set the terms of reference for the steering committee or set a time frame for them to come up with the results of the meeting.

We, the main facilitators however wish to recommend after revisiting the deliberation of the sessions and writing up this report what the terms of reference should be.

We therefore recommend that the steering committee should be charged with:

a. determining in a general way the way forward for the conference

b specifically we would expect the steering committee to come up with:

1. The objectives of any new grouping
2. the activities that this grouping should be involved in to achieve the objectives
3. the type of grouping or forum that should be formed
4. the membership of that network
5. how and who should serve as executive members
6. how the activities would be funded
7. how the network will related to other GaDangme organisations in the Diaspora as well as in Ghana
8. what constitution the organisation should have and under what government it should be under if it is expected to be a charitable organisation – this may require some research relating to Europe
9. any other issues that will facilitate our acting in a concerted and effective way

c. report to the main group within a three month period from the end of the conference.

11 Concluding Remarks

Dr Vince Padi, GDF UK Chair

Thanked members for the opportunity for the meeting and hope that the steering committee would be able to show us the way.

12 Vote of thanks

Carl Lokko, GDF Chair, Germany

Gave special thanks to:

- ✍ Organisers – Nii Yartey and GFM Radio
- ✍ Facilitators
- ✍ Caterers and venue organisers

13 Evaluation and Days Achievements

This was an enjoyable and fruitful day that achieved a lot for the delegates but whilst it was not possible to undertake a formal evaluation we believe that the following were achieved:

- ✍ Attendance: 48 participants representing Belgium, France, Germany, Ghana, Netherlands, Sweden, and UK.
- ✍ Identify some weaknesses in GaDangme; also issues of strength
- ✍ Networking & personal contacts
- ✍ New beginnings of enduring friendships with GaDangme peoples across Europe
- ✍ Created open and safe space to explore themes
- ✍ One voice declaration of key problems requiring a common focus

14 Appendices

14.1 Delegates

| Name | Address | Phone |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Charles Quist | Guildford Surrey UK | 01483-233622 |
| Nii Yartey | GFM, London UK | 0208-5208218 |
| Alhaji SA Abbey | Bokemei, Netherlands | |
| Enoch Laryea | La Kpee | 0208-8041384 |
| Francis Agor | DACUGA, France | 0033-613516065 |
| Emmanuel Kamara | France | 0033-146997706 |
| King Quarcoo | Cheam Surrey | 07958-292194 |
| Naadu-tse Awuley Doku | GDH, UK | 07751-333631 |
| Theresa Boye Doe | Battersea, UK | 0207-4989776 |
| Lea Kloosterman | Bokemei, Netherlands | 206826352 |
| Sarah Coleman | Hamburg, Germany | 00-4969704274 |
| Carl Lokko | Hamburg, Germany | 00-4964508831 |
| Fred Okoe Lartey | Amsterdam, Netherlands | 020-6906442 |
| Prophet Am-Quaye | Amsterdam, Netherlands | |
| Alex Amarteifio | GDF UK | 07958-984118 |
| Martha Tawiah Cofie | Amsterdam, Netherlands | 020-6980391 |
| Torto-Morgan | Amsterdam, Netherlands | 020-6001070 |
| Matey-kai Afotey | Amsterdam, Netherlands | 020-6001070 |
| Violet Adukwei Bruce-Vandepuije | Amsterdam, Netherlands | 020-6389522 |
| Aryee Ankrah | Amsterdam, Netherlands | 020-6389522 |
| Nii Arday Ankrah | Amsterdam, Netherlands | 020-6389522 |
| Willie Amoi Quarcoo | Manchester, UK | 01254-661700 |
| Angelina Kwarley Quarcoo | Manchester, UK | 01254-661700 |
| Frank Dornu Agbloo | GDF UK | 0207-5114019 |
| D Lamptey | GDA, Sweden | |
| Henry Tom-Aggrey | GDA, Sweden | |
| Ade Sawyerr | London, UK | 07971-985076 |
| Solomon Awah | GaDangme, Belgium | 0032-9-2262246 |
| Bishop T | Bishop T Ga Club | 07947-670769 |
| Nii Laryea | France | 0033-66576780 |
| Joyce Doku | France | |
| Nii Okai Cofie | GDF UK | 07957-578356 |
| Nii Martey Korley | France | 0033-674964000 |
| Caroline Acquaye | Bishop T Ga Club | 07940-087214 |
| Mrs Emelia Tetteh | Bishop T Ga Club | 0208-3208818 |
| Nii Okai Mensah | Box 6637, Accra | 00233-244323906 |
| Josiah Aryeh | Legon | |
| Nii Ashaley Asuku | GDF UK | 07956-661084 |
| Nii Nortei Omaboe | GDF UK | 07947-453034 |
| Ben Nii Ayi Cofie | London, UK | 07761-968311 |
| Danny Tawiah | GDF UK | 07960-827547 |
| Abeka Gogo | La Kpee | |
| Nii Ashitey Ollennu | La Kpee | |

14.2 Final Agenda

- 1 **Session One** (whole attendees participation as a single group)
(1hr)

Self Introductions (*by each participant*)

- A Who I am, where I am coming from who I am representing
- B My experiences of living in the western world
- C What makes me passionate about GaDangme
- D Why I am attending this meeting
- E What I expect this meeting to achieve by the end of the sessions

- 2 **Session Two (In 5 groups)**
(2 hrs)

1. What is wrong with GaDangme, what are its problems, its worries and its fears?
- 2 What is wrong (from your perception) with GaDangme organisations, their processes of operation and their results to date?
- 3 Do we need a new organisation or a new Forum that will give us the platform to start **thinking through** the issues and **solving** them?
- 4 How do we ensure there is love and respect within this organisation without which it will be just another organisation?
That is: How do we ensure discipline among ourselves?

- 3 **Session Three** (2hrs)

The way forward: 5 of the major items that emerge from Session 2 will then be listed and discussed in detail in this session.

Facilitators: To date we have got 3 volunteers as facilitators from London and need **4 more from main land Europe. Volunteers please!**

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Ataa Ade | London |
| Naadu-tse Awuley | London |
| Charles Quist | London |
| Daniel Lamptey | Sweden |
| J Am- Quaye | Holland |
| Mr Lokko | Germany |
| R Laryea | France |
| Alhaji Sulemanu Abbey | Holland |

14.3 Ground Rules

- A. Housing Keeping
Toilets, fire exits, tea, coffee, refreshments etc.

- B. Participatory Agreement
 1. Confidentiality
 2. Patience with self and others – time and space for all to contribute
 3. One speaker at a time
 4. Mobile phones off/silent
 5. Question by appointment only
 6. Opinion and personality (separate)
 7. Learning zone - no personal criticisms / respect for everyone's opinion
 8. No silly jokes /serious issues at stake
 9. Time keeping
 - 10.Mind our language - duty to create "abuse free" zone

14.4 Cost of the Event

a. Proposal – After the lunch break Naadu-tse Awuley advised the delegates of the cost of organising the event. The cost included the hiring of the venue, refreshments, and Ghanaian-style lunch. The total cost was **£439.69**. Naadu-tse Awuley proposed that the cost be shared amongst the invited organisations and also asked if individuals who did not represent a particular organisation may wish to make a contribution. The delegates agreed and accepted the proposal by Naadu-tse Awuley.

Offer – King Quarcoo started the pledging process by offering to make up the difference between what is collected on the day and the total cost. The following pledges were immediately made:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| ✍ GaDangme Heritage | £50.00 |
| ✍ GaDangme Sweden | £50.00 |
| ✍ GaDangme Germany | £50.00 |
| ✍ GaDangme Holland | £50.00 |
| ✍ GaDangme France | £50.00 |
| ✍ GaDangme Foundation - | £50.00 |
| ✍ Gangme Bi Akpee France - | £50.00 |
| ✍ GaDangme Manchester - | £50.00 |
| ✍ GaDangme Belgium- | £29.69 |
| TOTAL AMOUNT COLLECTED: | £439.69 |

**King Quarcoo, London £20.00 ** (Please note Comment).

In a discussion between Nii Yartey and Naadu-tse Awuley the day after the meeting, it transpired that Nii Yartey had inadvertently missed out one item of expenses at the coast of £20.00. Naadu-tse Awuley contact King Quarcoo and explained the situation. King Quarcoo offered to pay the £20.00 as his contribution to the meeting. The total cost of the event was therefore **£459.29 and the amount collected was exactly **£459.29**.

It is pleasing to note that the event organisers have met the total cost of the event and do not anticipate any further cost relating to this event.

14.5 Background and Directions

GaDangme European Exploratory meeting

June 29 2007

1. Background:

It is suggested that the Proposed Agenda needs to be in 3 sessions.

The first session will give each of us the opportunity to introduce ourselves and voice our aspirations.

The second session looks at what the challenges are and what is in place currently to deal with these issues.

The third will try to work out the way forward.

It is expected that by the end of these sessions there is clarity as to what needs to be done to make GaDangme a heritage we are all proud of.

2 Level of attendance as indicated by the National Organisations:

Belgium, Germany, Holland, France, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, Manchester, London.

NB: These numbers of attendees are projections not allocations. Any concerned GaDangme is welcomed to attend.

3 The Location for the meeting

**The New Church Hall,
St Paul's Parish Church,
60 Park Lane
Tottenham, London, N17 0JR**

(Just behind Tottenham Hotspurs Football Ground)

From Victoria, London: Take Victoria Line (Underground) to Seven Sisters Station

From Waterloo, London Take the Underground and change for the Victoria line

To take you to Seven Sisters Underground station

From Seven Sisters (Victoria Line Underground) Station: Take Bus 279 or 159 or 149 and 349 going towards Edmonton.

Stop at Park Lane at the Tottenham Hotspur Football Ground. **Please see attached Map.**

Please if you have some queries at any time please contact Vince Padi on 07789 230 524 or Nii Yartey on 07958 210 163