



 **Dagbe Cultural Institute and Arts Center**

The Dagbe Cultural institute is located in the picturesque village of Kopeyia in the Ewe -Speaking region of West Africa. The Dagbe institute is a facility for the study of West Africa's vibrant art forms and culture in a typical village with a natural setting. Recently deceased Godwin Agbeli, an Ewe master musician and widely recognised expert on the traditional music styles of West Africa, founded the Institute. The institute offers instruction in traditional drumming, dancing, singing, weaving of kente cloth, tye and dye, woodcarving and drum making.

Kopeyia is a traditional Ewe village approximately three hours Northeast of the capital, Accra.

Since the inception of the institute in 1982, professors, teachers, musicians and students from USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand had participated in teaching and learning program. Other students and their professors from the University of North Texas, Bowling Green State University, and Berklee College of Music had all participated in this program.

GODWIN AGBELI, the Founder of the Dagbe Culture Institute and Arts Center is a virtuoso performer, experience teacher and traveler.

Godwin Agbeli worked with many local (Ghanaian) schools, artistic groups and International Institutions (Universities) in Canada, America, New Zealand, Germany, and Holland as music, dance and drummer tutor and performer.

Among them are:

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| ■ Winneba Specialist Training College | Ghana |
| ■ Advanced Training College | Ghana |
| ■ Labone Secondary School, Accra | Ghana |
| ■ National Forloric Company, Accra | Ghana |
| ■ Founder - Sankofa Dance Theatre | Ghana |
| ■ New York University (NYC) | U.S.A |
| ■ Tufts University | U.S.A |
| ■ Boston University (B.U) | U.S.A |
| ■ Berklee College of Music | U.S.A |
| ■ Brooklyn College of Music | U.S.A |
| ■ Harvard University | U.S.A |
| ■ University of Florida | U.S.A |
| ■ New World School of the Arts, Miami | U.S.A |
| ■ Victoria University, Victoria | N. Zealand |
| ■ Auckland University, Auckland | N. Zealand |
| ■ University of Canada - Toronto | Canada |

Godwin Agbeli Founded the Dagbe Cultural Institute and Arts Center in the Volta Region, Ghana in 1982. The Chairman of the National Commission on Culture inaugurated the institute on March 22nd, 1997.



AIMS OF THE INSTITUTE

- To train people from all walks of life interested in Africa arts, culture through the medium of music, dance drumming etc.
- To provide research assistance to students and associate Professors to study traditional music, dance weaving of various types of kente, cloth, woodcarving, drumming production, religion and life skills
- To offer lessons from Mondays to Fridays.
- To Introduce students and visitors to funeral and festivals celebrated in the region. Students shall also be introduced to shrines where they watch their operations
- To create the enabling environment for visitors to funeral and festivals celebrated in the region.
- To encourage drumset (jazz Drum) players to play the African music on the drumset.
- To offer boarding and lodging facilities to students in both Africa and Abroad



MUSICIANS, PROFESSORS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Since the inception of the institute in 1982, Musicians, Professors, Teachers, and Students from USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand had participated in teaching and learning program.

Other students and their professors from University of North Texas, Bowling Green State University, University of Tennessee, Berklee College of Music, High school Teachers from Vermont, individual musicians and students from various parts of the world had all participated in our program.



THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE AND THE VISITORS

The population of Kopeyia is about 3000 people. Kopeyia is a farming area where many people speak the Ewe language.

Only few people speak both the Ewe and English Languages at the same time. Our visitors are encouraged to learn some of the Ewe words through interaction with the adult and children population.

The Kopeyia-Bloomfield School is the second institution of Dagbe Institute and Arts Center. This was also founded by Messrs. Godwin Agbeli and Robert Levin, an American tourist from New York, USA who was himself a student of the Dagbe Institute. Majority of the people in the village has natural skills in drumming, dancing and music. Their expertise is always at the disposal of the students at the institute.



FESTIVALS OF KETU DISTRICT

The Festivals of various Yeve (Shango in Nigeria) The Thunder god Shrines begin in December and fades out in March. The Godigbeza, which is occasionally performed by the people of Aflao traditional area, is in August.

CLASSES

Classes at the institute begin from 9 A.M. to 11 A.M. and 4 P.M. to 6 P.M. In the performance Hall or under an open air shed which is between the performance hall and the dormitory.

Traditional drums and Western Drumset (Jazz Drums) are available for the use of the students and our teaching staff. Tools and thread are available for the use of our weaving staff and students.

Also available for the use of staff and students are set of tools and wood for carving and drum production. Children of the village would assist students to do their private practice during break period.

Drumming and dancing starts at the Center from 7.00 A.M. till 8.00 P.M. when everybody is getting ready to go to bed. There are many opportunities of rearranging classes to coincide with fieldwork, i.e. funerals or burial ceremonies, shrine performances and other performances that the students have to witness.

VISIT TO THE SHRINES, FUNERALS, THE BEACH AND THE MARKETS

SHRINES: There are many shrines in the Ketu District where the Dagbe Center is situated. Some have sooth saying facilities. Some can fall in trance. We take students to the performances of these shrines for their observation.

FUNERALS: Funerals are also celebrated in two phases: The burial ceremonies, mini funeral and grand funeral. Students and their teachers are always part of these celebration.

BEACHES: kopeyia area has a very clean beach on the Coast of the Pacific Ocean in town called Denu, just three (3) miles from Kopeyia, the Dagbe Center where students who know how to swim and those who want to relax on Saturdays and Sundays are taken to.

MARKETS: The traditional cloth markets of different printed cloths and woven cloths are open to everybody on different days of the week. One would also have the rare opportunity to see beads and other traditional wares being sold at the market.

The Center accepts Students throughout the year from January to December. Students and / or Researchers are allowed to stay with the Dagbe Institute and Study as long as they wish.

PROCUREMENT AND SHIPMENT OF TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The Dagbe Institute is always careful when it comes to the procurement of good and durable traditional musical for the Students who would want to purchase them. The Center assist with the shipment of the instruments to Students destination. Students



can buy or order their instruments and leave. The Center arranges shipment to their destination by CASH ON DELIVERY (C. O. D)