



# International Association of African Educators

IAAE Newsletter, Fall 2013

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the IAAE Newsletter! This is an exciting time for educators of African descent and their allies across the globe. As Dr. Ukpokodu, the founder and president of IAAE, and co-founders say, there is a great need for a platform for African scholars. I hope the organization and the newsletter provide such a platform. In accordance with the mission of IAAE “to create a productive and professional network of African educators that builds a sustainable, supportive, professional collaborative network and academic space for African educators,” the newsletter provides space for African educators to debunk myths about Africa as a continent and Africans. The pervasive myths of inferior continent and its people have been utilized to justify slavery, colonialism, apartheid, and contemporary neo-colonialism. Moreover, the newsletter provides a space of support, sharing, and community for African educators. In this issue, founders of IAAE posit that an organization like IAAE is necessary in order to reclaim humanity of Africa as a continent and its people.

## Message from the Founder and President Dr. Ukpokodu



*Do not leave for tomorrow the building of a new society in which the noblest dreams are not frustrated and in which you can be the principal agents of your own history (Pope John Paul II, 1998)*

### Greetings and Welcome!

I am most delighted to welcome and introduce you to the International Association of African Educators (IAAE) in this inaugural newsletter! First, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to several people for their contributions to the birth of IAAE. For the past one year the co-founders and I have worked tirelessly to bring the dream of IAAE to reality. I am grateful to the co-founders—Dr. Immaculee Harushimana (Lehman College, CUNY, NY), Dr. John Kambutu (University of

Wyoming/Casper Center, Casper, WY), Dr. Lydiah Nganga (University of Wyoming/Casper Center, Casper, WY), and Dr. Ernest Pratt (University of Mount Union, Alliance, OH). I thank them for their time, energy and financial investment. I also would like to thank Dr. Shirley Mthethwa-Sommers, (Nazareth College Rochester, New York) our newsletter editor, for her leadership on this inaugural newsletter. I also would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Lewis-Asimeng Boahene (Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg, PA), for leading the membership recruitment. My gratitude also goes to Mr. Sarfo Nimoh who has graciously and generously accepted to manage our website. Finally, I thank those of you that I have met, conversed with about IAAE, and offered support and inspiration. We are off to a good start!

As you will find in the section on the board members' pieces, I have provided a brief narrative of the genesis of IAAE. My main message is to invite all African educators in U.S. colleges and schools of education, African immigrant students, and friends of Africa to join us on this new journey with IAAE. As many of you know, no organization can survive without a viable membership. I would like to ask for your support and ask that you join IAAE today. Two years from now, IAAE will elect a new slate of officers of the board. According to IAAE's bylaws, one must be a member in good standing, for at least one year to be eligible to serve. We also have vacancies on several committees that need to be filled. Please share the good news with your friends, colleagues and others with

interest in African immigrant education and community. I look forward to welcoming you to IAAE when you join (<http://iaaeorg.org/>). Thank you in advance for your support!

### Why the need for IAAE now?

In the following essays, the founder and co-founders of IAAE reflect on why an organization like the IAAE is important and what it means to them.

**Founder and President: Dr. Ukpokodu**

#### The International Association of African Educators: The Idea, Need, Vision, and Birth

##### The Need

The International Association of African Educators (IAAE) is a 501-c.3, non-profit organization with its primary aim, to foster professional network of African educators and students in the Diaspora. IAAE operates exclusively as a charitable, benevolent, scientific, literary, cultural, and educational purpose. The idea, to form IAAE has been a personal quest since the commencement of my career in the U.S. academy. I have taught at two institutions since I began teaching in U.S. higher education. For the first 15 years of my teaching, I was the only minority in my department. As I have documented elsewhere, I struggled with feelings of isolation and exclusion. Unlike many African immigrant professionals and scholars, I also found myself a statistical "minority" in my field of social studies. I attended national conferences where I was always alone although I occasionally met a few other Africans—about two. Until most recently, I have negotiated and

navigated the rugged landscape of U.S. academia alone (see Ukpokodu, 2003, 2009, 2013). This changed most recently when I began to encounter more African educators at conferences and listened to their stories about their experiences traversing the U.S. academia. Reading books like *Voices of foreign-born African American teacher educators in the United States* (Obiakor, Grant, & Obi, 2010), *Immigrant teachers, American students: Cultural difference, cultural disconnections* (Florence, 2010) and *Reprocessing race, language and ability: African-born educators and students in transnational America* (Harushimana, Ikpeze & Mthethwa-Sommers, 2013) that highlighted our distinct collegiate experience of our “otherness,” it became very clear to me that an organization like IAAE was needed.

Additionally, although reports indicate that African immigrants are the most educated ethnic group in the U.S., research show that African immigrant students are marginalized, invisible, bullied, and struggle academically in schools. I believe that IAAE is well positioned to provide and increase the visibility of African educators and students in P-20 institutions across the Diaspora, highlight their contributions, as well as challenges and concerns, and serve as a mechanism for advocacy and social activism in order to foster their social integration and to equitably serve them.

Three years ago, I knew it was time to act on my idea of IAAE. At the 2011 conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), I met some African educators at a reception hosted by the

AERA *Research Focus on Black Education SIG*. At this reception my African colleagues and I quickly noticed that we did not belong. We talked about our exclusion and discomfort. It became very clear to my colleagues and I that although we are Black, we are not Black enough to be part of the group. Upon my return from the conference, I began contacting all those African colleagues I had encountered and had conversations with about creating an organization that would be “ours.”

I am very grateful to all those African colleagues from the U.S. and Canada who were ecstatic about the idea and inspired the birth of IAAE. I am thankful to my co-founders who have invested their time, energy, and financial resources as we formalized the organization.

In the United States, a glance at the list of professional and ethnic organizations reveals the absence of an African immigrant educational organization. IAAE effectively fills this void. To summarize, IAAE is needed because it:

- Provides a network support, mentorship, and community for African immigrant educators and students in P-20 institutions and a voice for addressing the needs, interests and concerns of African immigrant educators, students, parents, families, and communities.
- Provides opportunities to influence public policies on matters relating to African immigrants including professionals and students and communities
- Allows members to live our core value of service to our Diaspora community and Motherland.

**What IAAE Means to Me**

To explain what IAAE means to me, it is necessary to provide a brief context. Throughout life most people can look back and point to individuals who touched and transformed their lives or gave them the inspiration for great things. For me, two people stand out—my mother and maternal grandmother! Both my mother and grandmother never had a western education but they understood the call for human agency. They demonstrated for me the power of one to make a change and difference. My mother modeled for me the force of social empowerment, activism and change agency when she defied all orders by my extended family to take me out of school, and get me married at age 12 so that my older brother would have the needed resources to further his education. My grandmother modeled service to humanity when she served as a local midwife, and delivered more than three-quarters of the babies in our community, cared for the babies for the first three months of their lives giving them the traditional morning and evening herbal bath and physical and moral education, a service she rendered without receiving monetary compensation.

In my role as a teacher educator and multicultural scholar, diversity and social justice are at the center of my work. What IAAE means to me is that I have the privilege and opportunity to make a difference and become a change agent for my African brothers and sisters, both in the Diaspora and Motherland. IAAE means that I have the opportunity to become a member of the community of practice of a people who share my cultural worldview and unique

collegiate experience of being the “other” in an academic space that is racialized, genderized, and linguistically dehumanizing. It means that I have an outlet for nourishing my soul as I interact with people who share my cultural heritage and travel the same rugged road of American academia.

### My Vision for IAAE

As founder and president, my vision for IAAE is that it will be a dynamic, powerful, viable, sustainable, and premier organization that truly lives the core values of humanism and change agency. It is envisioned as an empowerment organization that provides academic, cultural, social, emotional, political and economic support for its members. I also envision IAAE as an activist organization that will advocate and act in the interest of its members. As a bridge-builder, I also see IAAE building a bridge between education professionals and students in the Diaspora and education professionals and students in the Motherland. As educated African immigrants, we are well aware of the “brain drain” effect. I see IAAE providing opportunities that allow its members to give back to our respective African countries. As Africans, we were socialized to the values of communalism, obligation, and reciprocity. Many of us got our start in the world from our respective countries. We had teachers, families, and communities that provided the challenge, inspiration, support and empowerment that laid the foundation for what we have become today. As members of IAAE, we have the privilege and responsibility to give back and change the lives of others.

Cesar Chavez, the Latino civil rights activist, speaks poignantly of this responsibility when he wrote: “We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.”

To all African educators and students and friends of Africa, I invite you to join me in making IAAE a dynamic, powerful, life-and professional-changing organization. There is so much we can do for each other, for our African immigrant community, and Motherland. Please join!!

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**Co-Founder: Dr. Pratt**



#### IAAE: What it means to me

It is with great pride that I am contributing to the inaugural edition of the IAAE newsletter. As one of the co-founders of the organization, I strongly believe in IAAE’s mission of creating a productive professional network of African educators that builds a sustainable, supportive, professional collaborative network and academic space for African educators. I have spent the greater part of my adult life in education that started with teaching at the secondary school level in Sierra Leone, before migrating to the United States of America, where I first spent seven years teaching in a high school, after which I transitioned to my current position in higher education. I believe that IAAE will provide the much needed space that has been lacking for African educators and students in the Diaspora, as well as the homeland (Africa) where they can share experiences and collaborate in a professional setting. I envision the IAAE newsletter serving as a platform where African educators and students can collaborate and share their knowledge and expertise with the global community. Such collaboration will be beneficial to the individuals involved and in turn help in achieving the organization’s goal of building a sustainable, supportive network and advocacy group.

The number of African educators and students in the Diaspora and at home (Africa) has been increasing over the years. Although it will be difficult to quantify the number, collaboration and sharing our knowledge and expertise with each other is one way to

stay connected. Our world as well as the role of the educator is continually changing. We no longer need to work in isolation. As educators, we find ourselves in educational settings in which we are no longer the sole 'fountain of information' but facilitators of learning. With globalization we are observing an emerging global society driven by developments in science, technology, and communication. This presents a challenge for educators to keep abreast of what is happening in their field, as well as outside of their field. To become lifelong learners, educators need to be active participants in their learning. IAAE provides a forum where African educators and students in the Diaspora as well as in the homeland can collaborate and share their knowledge for professional growth. This collaboration will be beneficial to not only the educators, but to the students they teach as well. As we move forward, I am very optimistic about IAAE's future

**Co-Founder: Dr. Harushimana**



The Significance of an Association for African Educators in the Western World

When I first came to this country, a prospective employer left me a voicemail message telling me that the position that had been offered to me had been altered and the salary reduced. I cried and agonized over this injustice until a friend said to me in a firm tone, "Dr. Immaculee (he knows me by my first name), stop crying. Never in this country has a black person acquired anything without standing up. You are a Ph. D.; act right!" I immediately dried my tears and composed a very strong letter to the program director demanding immediate reinstatement of my salary. Lo and behold, my appeal was granted in no time, though without an apology. This incident, which marked my debut in the US workforce, was unfortunately not going to be a one-time occurrence. My friend's words still resonate with me and encapsulate what the International Association for African Educators (IAAE) represents to me.

One of the places where Africans experience the most rejection in the U.S. is in the education domain. Due to misinformation perpetrated by the western media and the false accounts published in textbooks, the American people are under the impression that African people are descendants of apes and, therefore, lack intellectually. As a result, African educators tend to endure hostility from the colleagues and students, who question their knowledge and authority. It is such a relief to note that African educators have decided not to remain silent to the malicious attacks. Through publications and conference symposia, they have counterattacked by exposing the myths, documenting their struggle and proving their

abilities. Given the gravity and the damage that acts of public degradation can do to a race, I salute the idea of an organization led by Africans where the truth can be told, and dignity can be recovered. IAAE is a safe space to organize, unite our voices and fight back.

Historically, in the United States, immigrants and people of color have had to resort to court and petitions to obtain equal educational rights for their children as demonstrated by civil rights court cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, *ASPIRA v. New York City Board of Education*, and *Lau v. Nichols*. I strongly doubt whether these cases would have been successful had they not been presented by well-established, and recognized movements. IAAE can be a path to such a movement for African-born educators and students—in the U.S. The Somali refugee communities in the United States have set an example. When a school district in Pittsburgh failed to address the educational needs of the Somali refugee children the community organized and filed a civil rights complaint against the district; they won (Smydo, 2006). In Minnesota, the Somali community has successfully created an International Elementary School (Twin Cities Elementary School) with the specific goal to address the needs of East African (and Middle Eastern) immigrant and refugee children (Rimer, 2009), who are predominantly of Somali descent.

As in the case of Somali children, the cultural heterogeneity of African immigrant children in US schools cannot be adequately addressed through the services provided to other language minority children under the

banner of ESL instruction. There have been testimonies that African children who are put together with Hispanic children and taught by Spanish-speaking teachers feel neglected while their peers are receiving adequate help (Agyepong, 2013). Visibly, Okome's questions are yet to be answered, How do [schools] factor [African students'] needs into those of the nation? What do we do to ensure that their children are well-educated? The challenge is often posed as that between Spanish and English, thus driving the needs of others into the deep background. Even more complex than this is the fact that there are numerous African languages. If a child is fluent in Yoruba, Wolof, Hausa, Shangaan, or the parent is, how do we ensure that their needs are served? (Okome, 2002, n.p.) Recently, a high school teacher shared with me the case of a newcomer Senegalese student who was given a Spanish-English dictionary to assist with her taking of the NYSESLAT (a test given to English language learners to determine if they are ready to transition into the mainstream classroom). Due to lack of representation, numerous voiceless African immigrant children spend their precious time in a classroom that is not advancing them in anything. This is where the issue of voice, authority, credibility and audibility becomes critical for African educators. An organization like IAAE, which empowers African educators, might be able to intervene on behalf of these students. To serve as role models and mouthpieces for the younger African immigrant generations, African educators must feel trusted and

respected in the workplace. Research by African educators overwhelmingly shows that we are not valued at all (Harushimana, Ikpeze and Mthethwa-Sommers, 2013; Obiakor, 2010; Ochupue, 2009). We need to come together as one, bring our voices together, and affirm our place as other immigrants in this nation of immigrants (Deaux, 2006).

An Association of African educators (and students), IAAE is more than a network or crossroads for African educators. It is a safe haven for everyone in need of support and comfort. It is a fountain of wisdom for young students who might need assurance that their culture is precious and as good as any other cultures and deserves to be preserved. It is a resource hub for anyone who is interested in knowing true facts about Africa and her people. The International Association for African Educators (IAAE) provides a space where, we, Africans in education can proudly and loudly celebrate our *Africanness* while acknowledging our diverse national, linguistic and ethnic identities.

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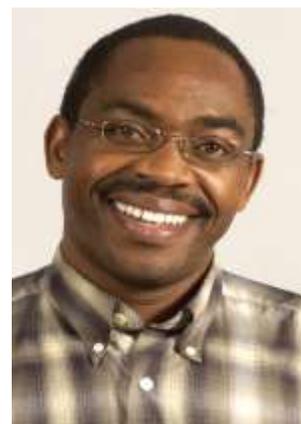
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**Co-Founders: Drs. Nganga & Kambutu**



### Africa Is a Continent

Africa is a continent that houses 54 different countries. It is not a country. Yet, the dominant culture in the U.S., both educated and otherwise, generally have an erroneous notion that Africa is a country. As a result, Africans in the diaspora<sup>1</sup> are asked frequently whether they speak African. There is no language called African; rather, a variety of languages are spoken. In Kenya, for example, over 43 different ethnic languages are spoken. In addition to language generalizations, the dominant culture in the U.S. considers Africa as a place of only human suffering. This is a troubling mindset that originates from stereotypical and ethnocentric ideas about Africa. The following questions, frequently asked to Africans in the diaspora by people in western countries paint a clear ethnocentric pedagogical portrait:

- Is there food in Africa?
- Are there houses in Africa?
- Do people wear clothes in Africa?
- Are there roads and airports in Africa?
- Is there technology in Africa?
- Are there schools in Africa?
- Given that Africa has a lot of ethnic wars, HIV/Aids cases, strange diseases, poverty, and drought, are there people there?
- Why is there an abundance of marathon runners in Africa? Is it because they (Africans) have to run after gazelles for “bush meat?”

**Ethnocentrism, or the practice of judging negatively “other” cultures using one’s own culture as the standard, is misinforming**

and unjust. Although ethnocentrism is largely destructive (Traore, 2006) reported that living in a culture that continually demeans a person’s cultural practices is likely to impair an individual’s sense of value as a human being.

To counter the possibility of developing impaired sense of value, Africans in the diaspora need to act proactively. Thus, African scholars and educators have consistently developed strategic approaches to challenge misinformed pedagogies about Africa. For example, to counter the prevailing stereotypes, Kambutu and Nganga (2008) designed and implemented international cultural immersion and service learning programs that helped participants to develop critical understanding and appreciation of Africa’s diversity. Anzaldúa (2001) postulates that when people of different cultures are immersed in unfamiliar cultures, they are likely to freely cross cultural bridges/borders, that is, invisible entities, yet very real in the socialization and allocation of societal power and privilege. To that end, Mark Twain once wrote “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness” (Quoted in Wit, 1998,p.6,par.1)

Reflecting on the meaning of cultural immersion, a participant in our cultural program said “being immersed in another culture gives you a new cultural perspective and understanding.” Another participant who before travel associated Kenya with extreme poverty, tribal wars, deadly diseases and “lack of toilet supplies and hot running water” reported being surprised after he experienced “five star hotels in Kenya

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term Africans in the diaspora to denote all African-born immigrants who generally speak English with a foreign accent. A foreign accent serves as a first marker of their “alien” status.

offering quality food in buffet style. I didn't need to bring a toilet paper from the U.S.”

Although cultural and service learning programs have value in the process of deconstructing stereotypical notions about Africa, Africans in the diaspora generally lack an ideal platform to educate. In the U.S. for example, African scholars and educators are often invisible and silenced by both the dominant culture and US-born people of color. This reality became especially obvious to us when a group of faculty of color excluded us from a scholarship undertaking because we were “international scholars” to them. As social justice workers in the U.S. since the early 1990s, this exclusion particularly painful. As a result, we got essential motivation to organize a platform that will facilitate the sharing of African canon freely.

What is known about Africa, particularly in the western world, is/was framed within the contexts of multiple social injustices including the enslavement of Africans by western countries and the colonization of Africa by the same people. To that end, it is no wonder that African scholars are frequently silenced, and a global pedagogy that views Africa as a place of deficit advanced. Therefore, it is necessary that responsible educators develop an alternate discourse to elucidate African experiences in an objective manner. The newly formed International Association of African Educators (IAAE) is a welcome outlet that will not only make African scholars and educators visible, but it will also serve as an outlet for authentic African pedagogy.

An African pedagogy, for example,

does not just describe issues in Africa. Rather it seeks to understand, for example, why Africa became poor while western countries amassed extreme wealth from the continent. A discourse that shows a direct link between Africa's underdevelopment (Rodney, 1972) and the development of high living standards in western countries will be resisted. Thus, African scholars and educators must have the courage to engage in an education that seeks societal transformation in the contexts of historical and contemporary justice.

We salute IAAE's primary purpose of fostering a “productive, sustainable, and professional network of African educators and students in the Diaspora” (<http://iaaeorg.org>). To the extent that IAAE is organized to empower African scholars and educators to examine and disseminate African experiences objectively, a new and true image of Africa and African scholars will likely emerge. Indeed, in the current contexts of contemporary globalization that has transformed the world into a “virtual” place of interdependence and interconnections, *vis-à-vis* a physical place that is governed by rigid cultural, economic and political boundaries, African scholars must be fully engaged and committed to the task of positioning Africa as an equal partner in all ways.

In closing, we extend a warm invitation to all African scholars and educators in the diaspora to embrace IAAE's mission. As a start, we should teach “others” that Africa is not a country. Rather, it is a powerful continent that is enriched by the national and ethnic diversity of her people.

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### Dr. Asimeng-Boahene



Situating and Highlighting African Voices in Academia and Research Publications: A Case of International Association of African Educators (IAAE) as an Agent of Change

#### What is the International Association of African Educators (IAAE)?

IAAE is a registered non-profit organization that aims to foster professional collaboration and network of African educators in the diaspora. It is organized to operate exclusively as a charitable, benevolent, scientific, literary, cultural, and educational purpose. Its mission is to create a productive and professional network of African educators that builds a sustainable, supportive, professional collaborative network and academic space for African educators (<http://iaae.org/>).

More specifically, in order to build supportive and professional collaborative network, IAAE aims at

establishing an international journal and other publications for disseminating research and scholarship on African educators and students in the diaspora and increase the visibility, productivity, and social integration of African-born educators in academia and public schools.

In effect, this organization is fighting against, *inter alia* epistemological ethnocentrism, which deals with not only individual and group beliefs and biases, but rather with those familiar to the whole gamut of mainstream academic discourse. Here, IAAE is concerned with highlighting the globalization of indifference that greets the writings of African-born scholars within the dominant paradigm, which establishes the parameters within which "legitimate" discourse operates. Thus, the establishment of IAAE is particularly timely as it creates positive momentum in the fight against epistemological ethnocentrism, encourages communities of dialogues, and creates space where African-born scholars feel welcome, can interact, grow, develop ideas, propose collaborative endeavors and start new academic territories.

#### Change Agent as a Concept and IAAE

Research suggests that any action that recognizes that schools/society reproduce inequalities and thus participate in a broader struggle to change society and the education system that enhances opportunities for the disadvantaged can act as an "agent of change" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Thus, if IAAE is to be recognized as a change agent, we need to ask ourselves, what change entails, and who is a change agent? It is been

asserted that change is an ongoing natural phenomenon and usual part of people and groups' lives. It is an avenue which helps people/organization grows to maturity. Planning and implementing change are professional duties as well as largely unrealized power sources that are essential to the practice of teaching. Change can also involve acquiring new knowledge or adjusting to what is currently known in light of new information. Change can also embrace acquiring new skills, and it can be unnerving when it challenges one's vested interest, values and beliefs, ways of thinking, or manner of relating to one another. Ultimately, change can involve individuals, families, communities, organizations and the whole educational enterprise (Kozier et al., 1995, as cited in Asimeng-Boahene, 1999).

I want to deduce from the above discussion that IAAE fits the profile as an agency for change. By working to uplift the image of African born-educators, by advocating for equity and inclusion, and by engaging in collaborative research activities and thereby increasing the visibility, productivity, and social integration of African-born educators in academia through its vision and mission statements, the organization's acts stimulate change. The leaders and members, bounded by a strong esprit de corps, are highly skilled in their fields of endeavors in terms of investigation, evaluation, observation, organization, and management. The struggle to combat pedagogical racism may take a long time, but every long journey begins with a first step, and IAAE is here to be part of that journey. Consequently, by creating

ripples of hope, giving voices to those who have endured a treacherous life of injustice of exclusion, helping to evoke the authentic wisdom of the supposedly *ordinary* Africans from the periphery of mainstream academia, IAAE is more than an organization; it is a movement that is trying to hoist the flag of equality for non-mainstream scholars to make them Stay Connected.

### Global academy & disturbing trends in the Politics of mainstream publication

The underpinnings of the global academy are such that Western researchers and institutions have jurisdiction or control over the construction, reconstruction, and dissemination of knowledge. This is imbibed with unidirectional power relations, and its implications in the broader field of academic discourse is that the "others" vis-à-vis ethnicity and language are given less visibility in the world of publication. It is therefore not surprising that non-Western academics continue to witness the disturbing trends of the preponderance of the first world norms in maintaining the privileges in academia while marginalizing non-Whites and thus erecting barriers and obstacles on the path to advancement in academia. As Yankah (1999) succinctly puts it:

In the area of publishing, African scholars have lamented the marginalization of their manuscripts by Western publishers who complain of 'intrusive' African vocabularies in titles and text, intrusive because they are not mainstream languages. Such 'intrusions,' it is said, could pose problems for marketing and smooth reading in the Western world. Other times, manuscripts and contributions have been rejected for being rather 'descriptive,' 'too data-oriented,' 'lacking theoretical grounding,' or 'not in tune with global jargon and meta-discourse' (p. 13).

Such situation calls for critical attention because it continues to create a misleading impression, and pigeon-holes Third world scholars, thereby putting a ceiling on their ambitions in the academic landscape.

Furthermore, other challenges include the disturbing trends in the politics of the academy. These include the domination of global academic discourse and publishing by Euro and American-centric standards; the monopolistic control of the center of academic authority; and, subsequently, the marginalization of other intellectual and their local academic agendas. Consequently, the Western academy also controls the strategic outlets of knowledge dissemination. Thus, scholarly publications and other relevant parameters become solely an agenda for esoteric discourse within the Western academy. This implies that “Africa and its disciplines are exotic intrusions that are outside of global discourse and require segregation” (Yankah, 1999, p.13). The Akan of Ghana have expressed grief over such omissions in their proverb, “The poor man’s proverb is never quoted” or “The poor man’s proverb is quoted but never acknowledged.” This is a perfect description of what is facing African scholars especially in the field of publication.

Thus, the establishment of IAAE as an organization is a response to such Western attitudes and to further remind the Western world that non-Western scholars may be coerced to work and publish in Western epistemological paradigms, but they cannot turn into White Anglo-Saxon. This assertion is better established if one is reminded of an Akan (Ghana)

proverb that says, “No matter how long a log may stay in the river, it can never turn into a crocodile.” Thus, Yankah’s (1999) insistence that “such editorial segregation implies, once again, the existence of sanctified epistemological paradigms with which data and scholarship from all corners of the universe should come to terms if they are to attain ‘mainstream’ recognition” (p. 13) is a poignant description of the current trends in the fields of publication in academia. Consequently, I can assert that IAAE’s contribution will critically engage in the theoretical implications of pedagogical ethnocentrism in, among others, hegemonic historical, anthropological, and literary production by situating and highlighting the voices of African educators in academia and research publications.

The 21st century promises the incorporation of cultures as frontier lines of competing geo-political ‘isms’ are now disappearing and the “global village” has become a trend of the day. However, as noted from the above narratives in this essay, the path to the global village is cluttered with unfulfilled dreams, uncertainties, truths, and half-truths as not every participant is allowed to tell his or her own lived experiences and stories but rather is being told by others for him or her through their own perceived lenses. Thus tired of being considered as token participants when it comes to publications of research papers, African scholars, through such organization as IAAE, are ready to blaze their own trail by cultivating their own gardens, being writers of their own stories and in their own terms. I end this essay for potential

readers with the wisdom sculpted in the Akan (Ghana) maxim which says *to koro nko agyina*, literary, a single head cannot exchange ideas. Therefore, in this era of globalization, there is the urgent need to embrace all heads, White, non-White, Global South, Global North, First world, Second world, Third world, to generate and distribute the knowledge which captures the essence of this world. As Kwegyir Aggrey of Africa poignantly lends a listening ear, one can play the piano with either white or black keys only, which cannot generate any harmony; therefore, we need a blend of both white and black keys to produce symphonic and euphonious music which will be mollifying to all ears. This is what IAAE's remarkable breadth of vision is about as it asks for equality to bridge the gap in the mainstream academia thereby creating longed-for space for African-born scholars to also have equal opportunity to march toward the promised land of academia and research publications. An African proverb poignantly captures this succinctly: "Knowledge is like a baobab tree; no single person can embrace it." If the stakeholders, opinion leaders or policy makers in the field of research publication will subscribe to this view, and alter the existing landscape of winners and losers, the world of academia will not continue to be a zero-sum-game in which a gain for one side involves a corresponding loss for the other side but, rather, a better place for all and sundry.

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#### Way Forward

As the founders have articulated, there is a great need for counter-stories from African-born educators and students in the diaspora. In pursuit of counter stories, the newsletter will be published quarterly. The winter issue of the newsletter will be issued in January, 2014. Education related articles, stories, book or movie reviews which focus a positive gaze on Africa and its people wherever they may be are welcome. Submission deadline is December 1, 2013. Please note that the newsletter is not an academic journal; therefore submissions have to be 1000 words, maximum, and subject to approval by the newsletter editor. You may send articles or reviews to the editor, Dr. Shirley Mthethwa-Sommers at [iaaenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:iaaenewsletter@gmail.com)



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