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PRESS RELEASE

Ghana's Child Art Education in Crisis

Ghana's educational system has succeeded in training few artistic entrepreneurial minds and inventors who could produce her functional and decorative needs. This has coerced her to get stuck to the colonial legacy of import-based economy rather than adding value to her bountiful natural resources for local consumption and export purposes. One of the underlying reasons is that there exist a serious longstanding art curriculum deficiency in teacher training institutions. The artistic potentials of her learners are killed at the very foundation of their formal school education (Pre-school and Basic level). Various researches have confirmed the inevitable role of art as potent vehicle in the holistic development of children which translate into their inventive skills, problem-solving ability, creative thinking and how to manage their environment for the benefit of the nation. For this reason enlightened nations treat art as a core subject for all in the school curriculum and or educate their people through their creative arts.

Teachers who handle the learners at the basic level have little or no knowledge in child art psychology and obviously doom the children's artistic precocity with which to invent, think critically and to manipulate materials in creating two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. Per their sheer ignorance these teachers deny children the most essential guided interactive learning experiences that would cudgel and sharpen their artistic brains. Over 80% of class teachers hardly teach the Creative Arts subject. Those who make an attempt to teach treat it as hobbies or activities for pleasure. As a result learners who progress to Senior High School end up in a pool of creativity crisis since they were educated with weak artistic foundation.

Currently the colleges of education who train teachers for Ghanaian basic schools continue to use curriculum that has indirect link to the Creative Art subject (for Basic 1 – 6) and the Basic Design and Technology (for Junior High School 1 – 3). In addition, the Art-Related Course done in Colleges of Education is not a core subject, however teachers who man the basic school need rudiments of this course in teaching Creative Arts and B.D.T subjects. At the primary school, teachers are suppose to teach all subjects including Creative Arts in classes assigned to them but ironically many lack knowledge and skills in Child Art Psychology and Creative Art. In this regard, their teaching prowess in art becomes highly deficient and learners are enormously affected.

To reverse this unproductive trend, Artwatch Ghana is calling on the Institute of Teacher Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana Education Service and the Curriculum Research Development Division for an immediate curriculum review to make Art as a core for all teacher trainees meant for basic schools. Child Art must also be made a core due to its broad scope and essential role in child development. The Ghana Education Service must organize periodic in-service training on Child Art for the basic school teachers on the field.

Artwatch Ghana also suggests the inclusion of Child Art Education (Child Art Psychology and Creative Arts) as a compulsory course in all teacher training universities who award degree, diploma and certificate in Basic Education and Early Childhood Education.