

# CACAO / CCAWA

## CONCERTATION DES ACTEURS CULTURELS D'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST/ CONGRESS OF CULTURAL ACTORS IN WEST AFRICA

Cacao/Ccawa is a non profit organisation founded in March 2003 by about twenty cultural actors from different ECOWAS countries, with the view to increasing professional exchanges and thus contribute to the reinforcement of the opportunities in the field of culture in West Africa.

Cacao/Ccawa is a network, a web of links. It aims at stimulating the wills and ideas, giving birth to new projects, partnerships and networks. Meant for all the professionals in any field of arts and culture (visual arts, performing arts, letters, film, heritage, cultural promotion...), it welcomes individual people and non governmental cultural organisations.

Its regional mission (because the region embodies specific opportunities in the field of culture) and its multidisciplinary (because the professionals from all the sectors of arts and culture are facing new challenges which need new solidarity) make it an unprecedented project in Africa.

### GOALS

- To contribute to the implementation of a cultural civil society committed in the fight for cultural diversity, freedom of speech, dialogue between cultures and the acknowledgement of the other.
- To contribute to broaden cultural exchanges within West Africa and to encourage networking.
- To contribute to the development and to improve the quality of cultural exchanges with the other regions of Africa and the world.
- To contribute to the development of cultural cooperation policies and programmes to meet the concerns of the actors in the field.
- To contribute in sensitising populations and new private partners.

### MISSIONS

Cacao/Ccawa has got four main missions. It aims at implementing :

- a professional dialogue setting,
- a dialogue with the institutions,
- an observatory and a research tool,
- an instrument to act with.

### ORIENTATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### Promoting the dialogue between professionals

- ⇒ To develop contacts and collaboration with professionals from all the countries of the region and their associations.
- ⇒ To establish relationships with international cultural associations.
- ⇒ To organise a yearly plenary meeting. These meetings will take place in a different country of the region. They will gather the greatest number of members and will be enlarged to non members. They will hold many activities : the general assembly of the network ; topical meetings ; morning sessions devoted to the presentation of activities, projects and proposals from members ; an artistic and cultural schedule which will enable participants to have an idea of the host country's cultural agenda. Furthermore, they will serve as a setting for other regional associations and networks willing to cease this opportunity to hold their general assemblies.
- ⇒ To organise topical meetings, during plenaries and out of plenaries, to the intention of targeted groups of actors. There are four types, according to their subject : research groups ; discussion groups, in order to gather actors who share the same interests and would like to identify common actions ; information meetings ; training workshops.

#### Developing the dialogue with the institutions

- ⇒ To develop relations with the regional institutions, particularly ECOWAS and UEMOA.
- ⇒ To build relationships with national and local authorities and to lead actions which contribute to improve their cultural policies.
- ⇒ To relate to other States and inter-State organisations which manage cultural cooperation programmes with West Africa.

#### Obsversing and analysing

Cacao/Ccawa will be on four big fronts :

- the organisation processes of non State cultural actors,

- the evolution and implementation of policies and regulations dealing with culture,
  - cultural exchanges within the region and with the other African regions and the world,
  - culture in conflicts, threats on freedom of speech and diversity.
- ⇒ To set up a working group comprising actors from different countries of the region whose role will be to keep an eye on the situation in his or her country. In 2004 and 2005, this group will attend a series of meetings in the margin of the great specialised events in the region, with the view to deepening the four issues with the professionals from different fields of culture and arts so as to give a regional outlook of the situation.
- ⇒ To achieve studies : investigations, case-studies, discussion fora, documentary researches...
- ⇒ To disseminate the results during meetings, through the internet, publications...

## Acting

The actions will be adapted as the network goes on, bearing in mind the evolution in the sector and the priorities of its members. For the first years, they will turn around 5 main points.

- ⇒ To facilitate the dynamic exchange of information and documentaries.
- To publish and disseminate a periodical newsletter.
  - To create a web site.
  - To produce and disseminate the publications.
  - To organise information meetings.
  - To meet the individual information demand.
- ⇒ To reinforce skills and to strengthen West African expertise.
- Cacao/Ccawa aims at reinforcing the capabilities of its members in setting up multilateral organisations and projects, increasing their competence in fields such as: the implementation of consultation processes, the defining of professional organisations regulations, the accountability of international projects, fund raising strategies... It also aims at finding out solutions to the needs of training expressed by actors from many countries and who can be satisfied more at a regional level than at a national one (we have in mind, for example, training

sessions on cultural centre management, designing and assessing local cultural policies...). It also aims at contributing to the acknowledgement and a better implementation of the expertise in force in West Africa. Its activities will take many forms :

- Organising conferences and workshops.
  - Producing workbooks, practical guide books.
  - Providing a support and advice for the development of projects and programmes of regional interest.
  - Working out lists of experts for technical studies and support in the different fields of arts and culture.
- ⇒ To implement pilot projects.
- Cacao/Ccawa will lead pilot projects in order to stimulate new waves and new forms of exchanges. These actions will be defined as time goes by according to the outcomes of researches and the priorities of members. One of the targets is about developing multilateral cultural actions in enclaved areas or disturbed by conflicts.
- ⇒ To lead actions in order to sensitise populations.
- To build relations with national and regional associations of journalists.
  - To achieve campaigns to sensitise about issues related to the protection of the patrimony, creativity, diversity and freedom of speech.
- ⇒ To encourage cultural patronage
- To work out a repertory of partners interested in multilateral cultural actions.
  - To facilitate relationships between actors who have projects of regional interest and sponsors willing to support them.

## HOW DOES IT FUNCTION ?

Cacao/Ccawa is an association under the law in force in Benin where its headquarters are located. The board of directors comprises twelve members presently. The chairman is Joe Nkrumah. The board will be renewed during the first plenary meeting (early 2005). The board will hire, as soon as possible, a permanent secretariat comprising three full-time employees (to be in charge of the overall coordination, research programmes and communication) and a part-time manager-accountant.

**CACAO/CCAWA**

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