

## Keynote Speech for the launch of Sankofa Youth Journal SYJ by Aleakwe Odior GC Correct Connect Africa Foundation – CCAF on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you on behalf of all the members of Correct Connect Africa Foundation - CCAF. Allow me to recognize the presence of Don Franciszek Krason rector of St. Thomas community which generously hosts us. I also acknowledge the presence of Don Amable Musoni, rector of Domenico Savio's community, and Don Gabriel Ngendakuriyo, rector of Don Rua's community. To all of you friends, well-wishers and supporters here present, I warmly welcome you.

The education of young, aimed at bringing them to the light of knowledge was for Don Bosco a vocation and mission. For this, he was ready to give up everything, even his last breath. CCAF is resolved to follow the footsteps of Cheikh Anta Diop and other illustrious African personalities, who devoted their lives to educating young people. We are committed to continuing the legacy they left behind. For this reason, our foundation primarily is focused on education. We want to promote a new form of education in Africa!

The word *Sankofa* summarises our philosophy of education. The term *Sankofa* originates from the Akan People of Ghana, and it means, "to go back and take it." That is, we want to foster a form of education that brings us back to the paths of history to recuperate what we have lost and left behind. There is no time we believe that this is the right time to return to form and inform ourselves of the African classical humanities. That is everything that concerns the perennially strong African classical heritage. I want to be more precise: by "African Classical Humanities" we mean the tangible and intangible achievements of the ancient Pharaonic, Nubian, Ethiopian and sub-Saharan civilizations.

In our vision of education, we also insist on a concept called *Kheper Ankhu*. It is an ancient Egyptian term which means, the "continuous improvement of the human person". We cannot achieve *Kheper Ankhu* if we are not educated in the right way. That is if our education does not take into cognizance our societal and cultural experiences. African youths need this education. They have the right to an education that allows them to appreciate Africa, an education that instils patriotism. One that makes them understand that they can build a beautiful life, aspire towards scientific discovery and work for the development of their continent. An education that helps them to retrace their historical and cultural legacy, and therefore, allowing them to engage as equals with the cultures of the world.

The decision to found the CCAF movement was birthed almost three years ago. As theology students in Rome, we used to take classes on African studies on Friday nights, when university matters and community affairs less consume us. We named these meetings, Sankofa Night School - SNS. In these meetings, a priest, our dear Don Mahougnon Sinsin, familiarised us with knowledge about Africa. It was new to some of us, and for others, it was a confirmation of what they used to know, albeit without authoritative support. This new knowledge personally caught me, and I told myself why not share this with my fellow Africans, the youth in particular? As a result, I proposed to other members of the group to form a movement that would focus on spreading this knowledge, and they accepted, and from that moment, we commenced.

We at Correct Connect Africa Foundation have committed to do something in this line. The Sankofa Youth Journal is one of our products, and we officially launch it today.

The idea is to spread it massively through the internet. So that our young people, especially Africans everywhere, can consult it.

Presently in the university, we hold some courses under the umbrella: Sankofa Political Studies. Last academic year (2018/2019), we animated a series of lectures on the theme "Pan-Africanism: history and philosophy". This academic year (2019/2020), we are opening a new cycle of discussions on the subject: "Fundamentals and Principles of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights". These are some of our initiatives to promote African studies.

Finally, I wish to conclude with some insight from Cheikh Anta Diop regarding African culture. He says: "The ease at which we often renounce our culture can only be explained by our ignorance and not by a consciously adopted progressive attitude."

Thank you for your rapt attention.