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To: Erika Zynda, Contracts and Grants Coordinator
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Office of International Programs, IUB

Subject: IUSB Faculty Research Grant - summer 2001
Final Report on:

“Toward Global Conflict Resolution: Lessons from the Akan Chieftaincy and judicial systems”

Attached, please find the final report of the research I conducted in Ghana from July to August 2001 on IUSB faculty research grant in the amount of $7,790.00 and additional $1000 form Indiana University Bloomington International Enhancement Grant.

The grant was used to defray airfare to and from Ghana, boarding and lodging for one month and other logistical support necessary for the research. The description of the research activity is outlined in the preface of the report.

I was able to complete the project without any difficulties. Cultural specialists in Ghana granted me the necessary interviews. I was allowed to observe different traditional court proceedings as well. Customary protocols did not pose any strain whatsoever inasmuch as my own cultural background prepared me for a ‘participant observation’ strategy that was required in the qualitative research methodology I adopted for the study.

The final project is being proof read for submission to Third World Press for publication. I am also submitting a synopsis of the project for publication in the Journal of Social Studies.
Foreword
I undertook the research between July and the end of August 2001 as a continuation and reorganization of an earlier project that was uncompleted.

This study evolves from my long-term interest in and questions about African philosophies and their contribution to Western Education, politics and the other social science disciplines. I gave a keynote address at the Council for the Social Studies Conference in Ohio in 1997 on the topic Conflict Resolution and Critical Thinking in the Ghanaian Chieftaincy System. My presentation was based on my personal experience in the Ghanaian cultural philosophies and chieftaincy system and some short interviews I conducted among some students from Ghana at Ohio University. The applause and feedback I received as well as the spate of school violence in American schools gave me the impetus to expand the presentation into a full-blown academic research paper, and if possible, into a book form. President Bill Clinton particularly influenced me in reaction to the school shooting in Columbine High School that claimed the lives of school children. He said that, teachers needed to teach students to resolve conflicts through dialogue rather than resorting to weapons. The irony of the statement, however, was that, at that point in time, the United States, with NATO, was gravely bombing Kosovo and other countries in Asia. Since school is a Microcosm within a Macrocosm, it is important we realize that students do not only apply the school culture to the community where they live but also rehearse happenings in the world at large in the schools.

My trip to Ghana in 1998 was primarily to conduct doctoral dissertation research on the Akan philosophy of education, but also to understand the Ghanaian’s love for peaceful co-existence through conflict resolution. Conversations and inquiries led me to
the court of the chief of Techimantia, a town in the Akan land. I witnessed to a land
dispute brought before the chief’s court. The analysis of the proceedings revealed very
exciting and dramatic philosophies that whetted my appetite to probe further into the
section on conflict resolution.

With a grant from Indiana University South Bend, I went back to Ghana to conduct
further research into conflict resolution between July and August 2001. This time, I spent
most of my time in Kumasi, visiting the Asantehene’s traditional court at Manhyia. The
rest of the time was spent in Sunyani and Techimantia in the Brong Ahafo region where I
compared the information I got from Kumasi with the interviews I conducted to test the
authenticity and restoration of the data by other Akans.
The data for this study, thus, in part comes from previous interviews conducted in Ghana
for my dissertation, personal family experience, life histories of participants and
documentary analysis of writings of Akan cultural specialists and other related literature.
There were more than 20 cultural consultants and chiefs in Ghana including prominent
politicians and educators who provided useful and undiluted information. Nana Akuoko
Sarpong, a paramount king in Agogo (Akan) and a lawyer by profession, who served as
the presidential advisor on chieftaincy affairs in the 4th republic of Ghana, was an
important informant. The chief director of the National Commission on Culture, Nana
Brefo-Boateng also a traditional king, the king of Techimantia, Nana Oti Ampem II, the
deputy director of the center for national cultural in Sunyani, Mr. Kingsley Kwasi Obeng
and Mr. J. H. Amponsah Kusi Kakabo, a research fellow at the Center for National
Culture granted me extensive interviews, and indeed were eager to have their lives
documented in this way.
Another reliable informant that needs exclusive mention is Nana Kwame Ampadu I, “the living legend” of Ghanaian highlife music. Nana is a distinguished celebrity with a unique accomplishment as the musician who has produced the highest number of songs in the world. He educates his listeners in all aspects of Akan tradition including conflict resolution.

Again, for two years, between 1996 and 1998, I had the opportunity to conduct several interviews with Nana Owusu Kwarteng Brobbey, the king of Maase-Offinso, and then Master’s student in Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

An overarching methodological concern was to allow, as far as possible, kings and cultural specialists to explain traditional philosophies and strategies that have not been swept away by the hurricane of modern judicial systems. They were also shared their visions in the 21st century and contribution to world peace.

I have organized the project into different sections, highlighting the aspects of chieftaincy institution, different conflicts, and judicial procedures, which seem most significant for understanding the Akan society. Topics examined in the study thus, include: origin of chieftaincy; enstoolment of chiefs; functions of chiefs; types of conflicts - “dwanetoa” (seeking a mediator); breach of normal relations; land case; taboos; deferred-to-the-elders; spousal conflicts; witchcraft accusation and invocation of curses; educational implications and reflections.

Customary protocol and use of the Akan language was not a barrier to me since I am an Akan, have lived in the Akan culture and have studied the Akan language and culture to college level. Moreover, as the former national state/presidential court poet and
linguist, not only do I possess mastery over the language and the culture but also have access to all cultural places and information in Ghana

remaining 45 pages on file in Office of Research